The Waking

By Theodore Roethke

I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.
   I feel my fate in what I cannot fear.
   I learn by going where I have to go.

We think by feeling. What is there to know?
   I hear my being dance from ear to ear.
   I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Of those so close beside me, which are you?
   God bless the Ground! I shall walk softly there,
   And learn by going where I have to go.

Light takes the Tree; but who can tell us how?
   The lowly worm climbs up a winding stair;
   I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Great Nature has another thing to do
   To you and me; so take the lively air,
   And, lovely, learn by going where to go.

This shaking keeps me steady. I should know.
   What falls away is always. And is near.
   I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.
   I learn by going where I have to go.
