

Look Around, by Mark Nepo:

*If you try to comprehend air  
before breathing it,  
you will die.*

*If you try to understand love  
before being held,  
you will never feel compassion.*

*If you insist on bringing God to others  
before opening your very small window of life,  
you will never have honest friends.*

*If you try to teach before you learn  
or leave before you stay,  
you will lose your ability to try.*

*No matter what anyone promises—  
to never feel compassion,  
to never have honest friends,  
to lose your ability to try—  
these are desperate ways to die.*

*A dog loves the world through its nose.  
A fish through its gills.  
A bat through its deep sense of blindness.  
An eagle through its glide.*

*And a human life  
through its spirit.*