

**How I Go to the Party**  
*after Mary Oliver*

by J. Adam Collins

Ordinarily I go to the party already lit, among many friends, because it makes all the smiling and talking more convenient.

I don't want to be seen sick like a cat in the corner or an old blackout pro, so I have been counting drinks — my way of coping, as you no doubt have yours.

Besides, when I drink alone, I am nobody. I sit in front of a screen making the same movement without words in between. And before too long it's all I can hear — the sound of me swallowing.

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*If you've thought this much about it, a friend says, stop for a while. Go to the woods alone. See if that's the kind of love you need.*