

In Praise of Air

By John O'Donohue

Let us bless the air, Benefactor of breath,
Keeper of the fragile bridge
We breathe across.

Air waiting outside The womb, to funnel A first breath
That lets us begin To be here, Each moment
Drawn from
Its invisible stock.

Air: vast neighborhood

Of the invisible, where thought lives, Entering, to arise in us as our own, Enabling us to
put faces on things That would otherwise stay strange And leave us homeless here.

Air, home of memory where

Our vanished days secretly gather, Receiving every glance, word, and act That fall from
presence,

Taking all our unfolding in, So that nothing is lost or forgotten.

Air: reservoir of the future

Out of which our days flow, Ferrying their shadowed nights,
The invisible generosity,

That brings us future friends And sometimes stones of sorrow On which our minds
refine.

Air along whose unseen path

Presence builds its quiet procession;

Sometimes in waves of sound, Voices that can persuade Every door of the heart;
Often in tides of music

That absolve the cut of time.

Air: source of the breath

That enables flowers to flourish, And calls the dark, rooted trees To ascend into
blossom.

Air, perfect emptiness For the mind of birds To map with vanishings;

Womb of forms

That shapes embraces

To hold animal presence.

Air makes the distance kind, Opening pathways for the eye

To reach the allecations of things, Yet never lets its invisible geography Come anywhere
near thought Or the voyage edges of the eye,

Air: kingdom of spirit

Where our departed dwell, Nearer to us than ever, Where the gods preside,

Let us bless the invigoration Of clean, fresh air.

The gentleness of air
That holds and slows the rain,
Lets it fall down,
The shyness of air
That never shows its face,
The force of air In wall after wall Of straining wind.
In the name of the air, The breeze, And the wind, May our souls Stay in rhythm With
eternal Breath.