

Prayer of the Breath

~Abu Bakr Tony Hoeber

This one thing
That you have heard about for so long,
Are you ready to give it your time?

All the traditions all the teachings
All the secrets all the poems
Are ferns and baby's breath,
The florist's artful filler
Around the rose of your breath.

Have the courage to admit
That the one prayer you really care about
Is this: Let my breath dissolve into Yours.
Let every constriction every sign of separation Every trace of what
seems to be other
Disappear
Leaving only the open space of
Witness to Your breath.
Oh – and I would like to be there too for that, If that could be arranged.
But if not, then let it be You.

Let the subtle structures in my body
That I will never know the names of
And can't see or touch because they're too close Too far inside too
pervading
Let them melt and settle all the way
With each outbreath.

Let all the diaphragms and all the joints
And all the thousands of points that can
Move and pivot and sigh – let them do so!
Let them stretch and flex and open
And fill with each inbreath.

Even if my breath is very small,
Let it be easy and complete
Let it be perfectly
Insignificant
Insignificantly
Perfect.

Let me watch over this tender thing –
Whether it's body or soul doesn't really matter –
With the tender attention of a mother
Toward her child in a moment of quiet
That opens into the silent holy night.

I have read about the cosmos and the stars And the light and the shining
realms of bliss.

I would like to go there.

I have read about the great saints
The Kings and Gandhis and Mandelas
That bestride the century.

I have read about the prophets and the Rassouls That preside over the
millennia.

I would like to know them.

I would like to follow Murshid
and make space in my heart

For the world

And for the mystery

Of time

And hold what I love

In the womb of my heart

And invite the divine gaze

To bless what I love

And shape it

In the direction

Of its destiny.

Ah, but all that is a dream for another day. Now, this day, let me aspire
To – just this once – take the breath that God Had in mind for me to take.

And if that's too much for me

As I am right now, let me

Dream about God's perfect breath

While I take the breath that I can.

And if my reach exceeds my grasp

This time around,

If my aspiration exceeds my inspiration, Well, let my fumbling sporadic
practice Become the seed that blossoms,

In the fullness of time, as

A thousand perfect roses that secretly tune The breath of a thousand
beautiful cities

In a thousand spinning worlds.

Now, this day, let me begin, To learn
To breathe.