

# FOR A NURSE

*(from John O'Donohue's book To Bless the Space Between Us: A Book of Blessings)*

Your mind knows the world of illness,  
the fright that invades a person  
arriving in and out of the world,  
distraught and grieved by illness.  
how it can strip a life of its joy,  
dim the light of the heart  
put shock in the eyes.

You see worlds breaking  
at the onset of illness:  
families at bedsides distraught  
that their mothers name has come up  
in the secret lottery of misfortune  
that had always chosen someone else.  
you watch their helpless love  
that would exchange places with her.

The veil of skin opened,  
the search through the body's night  
to remove tissue, war-torn with cancer.

Young lives that should be out in the sun  
enjoying life with wild hearts,  
come in here lamed by accident  
and the lucky ones who leave,  
already old and in captive posture.

The elderly, who should be prepared,  
but are frightened and unsure.

You understand no one  
can learn beforehand  
and elegant or easy way to die.

In this fragile frontier-place, your kindness  
becomes a light that consoles the brokenhearted,  
awakens within desperate storms  
that oasis of serenity that calls  
the spirit to rise from beneath the weight of pain,  
to create a new space in the persons mind  
where they gain distance from their suffering  
and begin to see the invitation  
to integrate and transform it.

May you embrace the beauty in what you do  
and how you stand like a secret angel  
between the bleak despair of illness  
and the unquenchable light of spirit  
that can turn the darkest destiny toward dawn.

May you never doubt the gifts you bring  
rather, learn from these frontiers  
wisdom for your own heart  
may you come to inherit  
the blessings of your kindness  
and never be without care and love  
when winter enters you own life.