**For Loneliness**

*by John O’ Donohue*

When the light lessens,

Causing colours to lose their courage,

And your eyes fix on the empty distance

That can open on either side

Of the surest line

To make all that is

Familiar and near

Seem suddenly foreign,

When the music of talk

Breaks apart into noise

And you hear your heart louden

While the voices around you

Slow down to leaden echoes

Turning silence

Into something stony and cold,

When the old ghosts come back

To feed on everywhere you felt sure,

Do not strengthen their hunger

By choosing fear;

Rather, decide to call on your heart

That it may grow clear and free

To welcome home your emptiness

That it may cleanse you.

Like the clearest air

You could ever breathe.

Allow your loneliness time

To dissolve the shell of dross

That had closed around you;

Choose in this severe silence

To hear the one true voice

Your rushed life fears;

Cradle yourself like a child

Learning to trust what emerges,

So that gradually

You may come to know

That deep in that black hole

You will find the blue flower

That holds the mystical light

Which will illuminate in you

The glimmer of springtime.

From *Benedictus – A Book of Blessings*

Bantam Press (2007).