

Where the Breath Begins

Dry,
and dry,
and dry in each direction.

Dust dry. Desert dry. Bone dry.

And here in your own heart: dry,
the centre of your chest a bare valley
stretching out every way you turn.

Did you think this was where you had come to die?

It's true that you may need
to do some crumbling, yes.
That some things you have protected
may want to be laid bare, yes.
That you will be asked to let go
and let go, yes.

But listen. This is what a desert is for.

If you have come here desolate,
if you have come here deflated,
then thank your lucky stars the desert is where
you have landed—
here where it is hard to hide,
here where it is unwise to rely on your own devices,
here where you will have to look, and look again
and look close to find what refreshment waits
to reveal itself to you.

I tell you, though it may be hard to see it now,
this is where your greatest blessing will find you.

I tell you, this is where you will receive your life again.

I tell you, this is where the breath begins.

—Jan Richardson
from *Circle of Grace*
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