

## *Lung Song*

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1.

You saw it too: a man strangled, his last breath  
taken. That summer the sickness that stole breaths

came, the streets were in flames, our lungs filled  
with shouts that felt like fire, the forests filled

with smoke that summer, life's breadth  
was expiring, an almost-extinguished breath

such a hot season, such a tired earth  
the expanse filled with caught breath

private breath, lonely breath, labored breath  
a father's breath, a child's brief, breath

a quarantine breath, wet breath, covered breath  
Lungs working in couplets. cold breath.

We did not share breath—our breath  
suspended in air like the cartoon breath

that used to be funny: all dots. Now our breath  
clasped like small animals to our breast

in cloth slings: fragile births. Now the earth  
seems tender & ample. People say trees are the earth's  
lungs & you've seen how lungs are branched, like trees

The Breath asks *Who am I to you?*  
*Do you own me or give me away?*  
*what forests are aflame, whose hearts & lungs inflamed?*  
*And what do your lungs sound like*  
*when you fill them with love?*

2.

A wish  
for the breathing: to inhale easy, fall & rise.  
for the grieving, the bereaved: to dream with softest breath.