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
clapsed 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.