

For one working in healthcare

Your mind knows the world of illness
The fright that invades a person
Arriving in out of the world
Claimed 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 distraught
That their loved ones 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 if they could

Those who should be prepared
But are frightened and unsure
You understand no one
Can learn beforehand
An elegant or easy way to die

In this fragile frontier-place, your kindness
Becomes the light that consoles the broken-
hearted
Awakens within desperate storms
That oasis of serenity that calls
The spirit to rise from beneath the weight of
pain



May you embrace the beauty in what you
do
And how you stand like a secret angel
Between the black despair of illness
And the unquenchable light of spirit
That can turn the darkest destiny towards
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 your own life.

Words by John O'Donohue (abridged)