

# I Can't Breathe

by Darryl Price

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."--Desmond Tutu

and all the animals are migrating away from us. That can't be good. I can't breathe and the moon is on fire. I can't breathe and the ground is starting to rise again. Maybe this time they'll break through. I can't breathe and I can't love if I can't breathe. I can't breathe and what am I doing here under heaven? I can't breathe and birds fly high. I can't breathe and

I can no longer identify blinking lights. What is wrong with me? I can't breathe and I still want to be liked. I can't breathe and now it's time to get ready for bed? I don't know if I'm ready. I can't feel my legs. I can't breathe and my neck hurts. I can't breathe and you are so heavy. I can't breathe and my mind is shattered. My body feels disconnected.

I can't breathe and I cannot swim. Not now. Not Ever. I can't breathe and I can't walk away. I am lost. Leave me here. I'll drag myself home. Sooner or later. I can't breathe and still miss someone. I can't breathe and part of me hopes there is a paradise. I can't breathe and to probably misquote Van Gogh, I hope the sky shall always remain clear between us. You know

what I mean to say to you. I can't breathe and I want to go home. Can't breathe and please think it over. I can't breathe. I can't breathe. I can't breathe. I can't breathe. I can't breathe. I can't breathe. I can't breathe. I can't breathe. I can't breathe. I can't breathe. I can't breathe. I can't breathe. I can't breathe. I can't breathe and everything is so strange. I can't breathe and the road to hell is full of good intention, right? I can't breathe

and nothing is being done. Respond! I can't breathe and a man needs to breathe. I can't breathe and why won't you listen? I can't breathe and all the trees are going down. I can't breathe and the brown paper bag should smell warm. Warm inside. I can't breathe and so pay attention. I can't breathe and be a good sport, won't you? Wake up! We're in a bad dream. Wake me.

Bonus poems:

Meditation Between the Trees  
by Darryl Price

It's all starting to make sense. Just kidding. It's pretty messed up. But here we are. Here we go again. Look in any direction. The young people just want to be left alone to be together. There are always those who would have made other harder plans for us. They want your money or your life. They don't know you. They don't want to know anything about you. If you love your love, they could care less. If you are in pain, they wish you would just shut up about it. This is nothing new. It's been going on since things started going on. But some of us have had enough of

all of it now. The powerful  
bullying the weak, taking sure  
advantage of every freeform  
advantage in their soft lives to  
cause harm to others, with clubs or  
rubber bullets or laws or lawns.  
Doesn't matter what the weapon

is or isn't. It's always meant  
to cause severe sorrow to the  
innocent. To bring about the  
next trail of tears on a brand new  
generation again. What they  
don't know, can't seem to understand,  
is how our good reforms itself  
every time, from sad nothing to

beautiful something, every time,  
from blood to new blood. From shells on  
the beach to glistening dolphins  
jumping high and mighty right out  
of the seas to kiss the sky with  
endless mirth. Things regain a sense  
of belonging because they are  
free and wild, not because they are

put in some kind of order, and  
because they are the living proof,  
the embodiment of a strong  
ancient spirit that will never  
surrender its joy to the mad  
oppressors of any age or  
under any circumstance. They  
will shove you. They will walk over

top of you. They will weaponize  
the enslaved sun and the moon against  
your courage. But they will never  
end you. Because you are without  
end. If you cease to exist they  
cease to exist. They need you. The  
only answer that'll justify  
our response in the end is love.

There's a Word I've Heard of  
by Darryl Price

I'd like us all to meet. By the way, I think I  
actually still care, but it's so hard to tell.  
I've been told this word contains every sound ever  
made, every thought, ever wearily lived. That's a  
whole lot to take hold on. I feel there must be some  
funny little catch to carrying on like this.  
Like if you don't get the riddle thing just right it  
will eventually consume your true super

identity and leave you faceless in the crowd,  
so to speak. All that means is you'll be lonely  
in the end, which doesn't sound too great a way to  
go home to me. Nobody should have that kind of  
dark power over another person's life. And  
really, nobody should have to end up lonely.  
But, hey, I don't make the silly rules, the unfair  
rules that mess up everything. Those were hammered out

by some starry dust and split atoms a long time  
ago. And anyway at this point I'm headed

to the lonely side of town myself. Also I'm not that nice a fellow at following the laid down rules for living the good life either. If you ask me: we should get a real chance to figure that one out for ourselves I think. Mostly because I don't subscribe to anything mystical being

so very hard to take or harsh to do. But that's just because I believe we are absolutely allowed to not be perfect. We are the chosen ones caring enough to allow it to happen, that imperfection, because of that one kind word in our collective vocabulary that we agree upon. I don't want to be preshaped by others to fit their idea of what it means

to be human. So all I can tell you is, for me, that all consuming word is a lonesome road, after all. And as you can see, hear and tell, it's left me feeling quite bereft here in the present sense. I still wish its joy and happiness for you. What more can I say? My name is not in the book? I have too many questions about the sorrow. But the word has heard it all before. Go and be.

