

## Blessing for the Longest Night

All throughout these months  
as the shadows have lengthened,  
this blessing has been  
gathering itself, making ready,  
preparing for this night.

It has practiced walking in the dark,  
traveling with its eyes closed,  
feeling its way by memory, by touch  
by the pull of the moon  
even as it wanes.

So believe me when I tell you  
this blessing will reach you even if you  
have not light enough to read it;  
it will find you even though you cannot  
see it coming.

You will know the moment of its arriving  
by your release of the breath  
you have held so long;  
a loosening of the clenching in your hands,  
of the clutch around your heart;  
a thinning of the darkness  
that had drawn itself around you.

This blessing does not mean  
to take the night away  
but it knows its hidden roads,  
knows the resting spots along the path,  
knows what it means to travel  
in the company of a friend.

So when this blessing comes,  
take its hand.  
Get up.  
Set out on the road  
you cannot see.

This is the night  
when you can trust  
that any direction you go,  
you will be walking  
toward the dawn.

—Jan Richardson

From book: *The Cure for Sorrow: A Book of Blessings for Times of Grief*