



Beauty: The Invisible Embrace

John O'Donohue

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Beauty: The Invisible Embrace

John O'Donohue

Beauty: The Invisible Embrace John O'Donohue

Beauty does not linger, it only visits.

Yet beauty's visitation affects us and invites us into its rhythm,
it calls us to feel, think, and act beautifully in the world:
to create and live a life that awakens the Beautiful.

Beauty is a gentle but urgent call to awaken. Bestselling author John O'Donohue opens our eyes, hearts, and minds to the wonder of our own relationship with beauty by exposing the infinity and mystery of its breadth. His words return us to the dignity of silence, profundity of stillness, power of thought and perception, and the eternal grace and generosity of beauty's presence. In this masterful and revelatory work, O'Donohue encourages our greater intimacy with beauty and celebrates it for what it really is: a homecoming of the human spirit. As he focuses on the classical, medieval, and Celtic traditions of art, music, literature, nature, and language, O'Donohue reveals how beauty's invisible embrace invites us toward new heights of passion and creativity even in these uncertain times of global conflict and crisis.

Beauty: The Invisible Embrace Details

Date : Published March 1st 2005 by Harper Perennial (first published 2003)

ISBN : 9780060957261

Author : John O'Donohue

Format : Paperback 261 pages

Genre : Spirituality, Nonfiction, Philosophy, Poetry, Religion

 [Download Beauty: The Invisible Embrace ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Beauty: The Invisible Embrace ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Beauty: The Invisible Embrace John O'Donohue

From Reader Review Beauty: The Invisible Embrace for online ebook

Cheri says

“The ancient rhythms of the earth have insinuated themselves into the rhythms of the human heart. The earth is not outside us; it is within: the clay from where the tree of the body grows.”

In written form, this would perhaps be the kind of book one would read now and then when the mood struck. A book to set a mood, a book to have you sit a spell and ponder, as my grandfather was wont to say.

This was the first audiobook I bought, after I read my goodreads friend Glenn’s review sometime last year. Since Glenn had mentioned that the author, himself, had narrated this, and the author’s charming Irish brogue, I had added it as my first audio.

It didn’t take me long to realize that sitting in my house listening to this did not work for me, and so I waited patiently for a long drive. I didn’t really mind, having other books to read, and sometimes I would just re-listen to the beginning of this to remind me of what loveliness lay in store for me.

So yesterday, I left early for a planned excursion to God’s Kingdom, God’s Country, to experience some of what nature must have first been intended to pass for beauty. What better audio to listen to on my quest for that beauty than to listen to a book about beauty? And, in truth, it was perfect. I enjoyed listening to every second of this.

The only negative of listening and driving is not being able to highlight passages, but I did not miss a thing at the same time. This was lovely, spiritual – but not in a speaking-from-the-pulpit way, this a heart-to-heart spiritual connection shared on many topics, ‘The Music of Beauty,’ ‘The Color of Beauty’ are two of the ten topics. Effortlessly, as though you’ve just sat down and he’s pouring you a spot of tea, he manages to transform his thoughts with a lyrical aura of beauty infusing the words as he speaks them. Delicious, swoon-worthy splendid prose, prose unveiling images with reverence for the wonder and awe of every-day beauty.

“What you encounter, recognize or discover depends to a large degree on the quality of your approach. Many of the ancient cultures practiced careful rituals of approach. An encounter of depth and spirit was preceded by careful preparation.

“When we approach with reverence, great things decide to approach us. Our real life comes to the surface and its light awakens the concealed beauty in things. When we walk on the earth with reverence, beauty will decide to trust us. The rushed heart and arrogant mind lack the gentleness and patience to enter that embrace.”

I would be remiss if I did not thank Glenn for not only pointing me to a book I love, but to the wonderful experience of listening to this. Magical. Glenn’s review: <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>)

Will Jeffries says

All of John O'Donohue's books are good. I particularly enjoyed "Anam Cara".

For more information on John O'Donohue, go to: <http://www.johnodonohue.com/>

Peace and Blessings...

Stephen Roach says

John O Donohue doesn't just write about beauty, he writes from a vantage point within beauty. His words embody the beauty which they point us toward.

Alison says

A much needed treatise in an age where beauty has been exploited; sexualized, commercialized, and objectified. If you are wishing to reconnect with the sacredness of beauty - your own, others', and that of the world around you - then delve into this sincere attempt to honor that which is a true gift to humanity.

Michael-David Sasson says

I really, really like O'Donohue's poetry and I could tell that the quality of thinking and philosophical exploration in this book of essays is one piece of what allows him to write the high quality poems/blessings that he has. Still, I didn't find the essays particularly compelling or useful.

There were some snippets and I'll quote some of those below but they came at too great a distance apart often -- if they had come in 75 pages rather than 250+ I would have rated the book more highly:

p8 Notions of self-improvement have become banal and wearisome.

p24 When we walk on the earth with reverence, beauty will decide to trust us.

p54 In "Crossing Unmarked Snow" by William Stafford:

"The things you do not have to say make you rich.

Saying things you do not have to say weakens your talk.

Hearing things you do not need to hear dulls your hearing.

And things you know before you hear them -- those are you--

Those are why you are in the world."

p140 It is puzzling that in the Western world we have concentrated on the divine intellect and the divine will.

[...] When we bring in the notion of the imagination, we begin to discover a whole new sense of God. The emphasis on [...] judgment [...] begins to recede. The image of God as a [...] moral accountant peering into the region's of one's intimate life falls away. [...] creativity is the supreme passion of God. When we bring in the missing dimension of imagination, the perspective changes and we get a glimpse of true beauty, the glorious passion, urgency and youthfulness of God. [...]

p141 [...] the urgent fullness of God. There was such a fullness brimming in the divine presence that had God not created, he would have imploded. God had to come to expression.

p153 Although each of us is fashioned in careful incompleteness, we were created to long for each other. The secret of our completion can only be found in the other.

p174 Freedom is not simply the absence of necessity; it is the poise of soul at one with a life which honours and engages its creative possibility.

p179 It is difficult to find the courage and vision at the points of deepest wounding to believe that new risk can take us into new life. But there is no alternative. When we remain sealed away inside the shell, we are no longer able to hear our own life.

'Beauty triumphs over the suffering inherent in life.' Nietzsche

p184 However, the freedom to choose graciousness is a freedom no-one can take from us.

p207 'When night asks

who I am I answer, "Your own," and am not lonely.' Li-Young Lee

p227 Sometimes the urgency of our hunger blinds us to the fact that we are already at the feast. To accept this can change everything: we are always home, never exiled. [...] In every moment, everywhere, we are not even inches away from the divine presence. [...]

Perhaps the secret of spiritual integrity has to do with an act of acceptance, namely, a recognition that you are always already within the divine embrace.

p229 A God without a why is a God who is lyrical and full of grace, a God who has no other intention than simply 'to be'. To learn that art of being is to become free of the burden of strategy, purpose and self-consciousness. God dwells totally in fluency of presence. [vs Heschel? Prophecy?]

Howard Franklin says

As an author who fancies that he has some facility for using language, reading *Beauty* was truly a humbling experience. In fact, other than Thomas Wolfe of *You Can't Go Home Again* fame, in my sixty-nine-year reading odyssey I have never encountered a writer with such a gift of language as John O'Donohue, and I highly recommend reading *Beauty* to experience of the author's incredible ability to depict the various aspects of beauty and describe thoughts and feelings about it alone. Add to this gift, the author's immense powers of observation and wise insights, and my opinion is that *Beauty* is one of the ten most important books that one could read.

Language...ah, yes, language. I will not attempt to use adjectives and adverbs to further describe O'Donohue's gift, but instead supply a few of his phrases which were my favorites. "Time had come to rest in the silence and stillness of Loch Corrib;" "the tired machinations of the ego are abandoned;" "the interior geometry of things;" the automatic traffic of functioning;" "addicts of the familiar;" "imagination has retained the grace of innocence;" and "the silent majesty of the ordinary." And speaking of majesty, Tom Verducci, a columnist for *Sports Illustrated* recently opined that "Defining majesty drives man to his literary boundaries." I realized how true this was when I was faced with trying to adequately communicate how gifted John O'Donohue is, and I would opine that John's boundaries were wide indeed!

Content...ah, yes, content. After treating the reader to an Introduction, defining beauty and its vital importance to our lives and our world, O'Donohue then separates his exploration of the subject into ten chapters. Looking back on *Beauty*, I think of it as a wheel with ten spokes: *The Call Of Beauty*; *Where Does Beauty Dwell*; *The Music Of Beauty*; *The Color Of Beauty*; *The Joy Of Shapes That Dance*; *Imagination: Beauty's Entrance*; *Attraction: The Eros Of Beauty*; *The Beauty Of The Flaw*; *The White Shadow: Beauty And Death*; and *God Is Beauty*. And in only 249 magnificent pages, the author presents the reader with a wealth of knowledge and insights in the various aspects that compose the circle of beauty. Each chapter is so full of thoughts and feelings, that one reads and rereads constantly in an effort to drink it all in and hold it.

Then, as I did, the reader most like will say to his or herself, "I'm going to read and reread these chapters one at a time over the rest of my lifetime."

I conclude by again quoting Tom Verducci, who observed of another writing that "The knowledge and wisdom was so great as to invite our most ambitious attempts at commemoration." My most ambitious attempt to commemorate O'Donahue's Beauty is indeed feeble next to the genius of his work. I can only urge my fellow readers to enter its pages and experience for yourselves. It will change your life for the better! I received this absolute wonderment as a gift for my 75th birthday from my dear friend, Julienne Givot, for which I give heartfelt thanks!

Elizabeth says

A book to linger over. And I did, more mornings than not, for a year. O'Donohue sees everything from a different perspective- a more true, hidden, mystical perspective that I hope leeches into me every time I open the book.

The 'Music of Beauty' and 'Color of Beauty' were memorable but clearly were written by a poet/author peering into these areas rather than looking out from. Some of the facts about color weren't accurate so they had a misplaced mysticism that flared up my skepticism and outed O'Donohue's romanticism. So, four stars for that reason.

I am always sad to finish a book by this author. It feels like a good friend just moved away.

Jade says

This is one of those rare books that sound as though it were written by an angel, and the sort of writing that cannot be paraphrased. It left a gentle impression upon me and even more, it renewed my perception. After I read just the beginning, an ordinary task like preparing lunch felt sacred to me—I relished the shapes and colors of spinach leaves. "Beauty visited me", and through the perception O'Donohue awakened in me, I know beauty's experience is an interaction between seer and seen.

The book only improved as it progressed. I loved his reflections on us being "in God" and the chapters on death and dying, which were some of the most comforting passages on the subject I've ever read. His personal experiences with the people he knew, and the passages on Ireland shimmered with meaning and life. And not to forget, the mystical poetry sprinkled throughout his expressions strengthened his reflections. I recommend this book to dreamers, seekers, and to those happy, poetic souls who already feel found.

Geoffrey Gioja says

I recently learned that my good friend John O'Donohue had died in his sleep in January 2008 while in Paris. We had not spoken since 2006. The last time we got together was in Galway, Ireland in the Spring of 2004. I've downloaded every video and audio I could find on the Internet after spending a day in my own private Memorial Observance. What a sweet and yet critical soul! I have three transcripts and recordings of conversations that are each eight to fifteen hours long. While working at a prior consulting firm as the head of Research and Development, and later as the CEO, we brought John over to work with us on the philosophical core of our practices. These sessions were only and always spectacular, and through these I

came to know him well enough to count him among my friends.

He always had an integrity of heart, mind, spirit and action that could not be evaded or go unnoticed. His poetry is quite lovely at times and quite piercing at others. His prose is always accessible yet in no way superficial. More on his other books later.

Glenn Russell says

A beautiful book written by a beautiful man, John O'Donohue's *Beauty* is filled with such inspiring words I found it difficult, almost inappropriate, to read even a chapter straight through since many lines invite us to reread and linger with their fragrance for days. Here are several such lines coupled with my brief comments, taken from two of my favorite chapters – *The Call to Beauty* and *The Music of Beauty*:

"Indeed, the subtle touches of beauty are what enable most people to survive. Yet beauty is so quietly woven through our ordinary days that we hardly notice it. Everywhere there is tenderness, care, and kindness, there is beauty."----- During this past year I have been reading ancient Greek philosophy. Turns out, one of those Greek philosophers I especially enjoy is Epicurus, one big reason, Epicurus was famous for his kindness, caring and sensitivity, encouraging us to transform our life itself into a work of beauty.

"Yet beauty's visitation affects us and invites us into its rhythm, it calls us to feel, think and act beautifully in the world: to create and live a life that awakens the Beautiful." ----- I have been involved in the creative arts for many years but I have come to realize our greatest creation is to become ourselves a being radiating beauty.

"Even, and perhaps especially, in the bleakest times, we can still discover and awaken beauty; these are precisely the times when we need it most. Nowhere else can we find the joy that beauty brings. Joy is not simply the fruit of circumstances; we can choose to be joyous independent of what is happening around us." ----- How true! John O'Donohue invites us to raise our own inner vibration and experience the inner joy of simply being alive, especially needed when we are facing our biggest challenges.

"If our style of looking becomes beautiful, then beauty will become visible and shine forth for us. We will be surprised to discover beauty in unexpected places where the ungraceful eye would never linger. The graced eye can glimpse beauty anywhere, for beauty does not reserve itself for special elite moments or instances; it does not wait for perfection but is present already secretly in everything. When we beautify our gaze, the grace of hidden beauty becomes our joy and our sanctuary." ----- Thank you, John. 'Beautify our gaze' - the experience of beauty is an inner transformation not a change of scenery.

"To behold beauty dignifies your life; it heals you and calls you out beyond the smallness of our own self-limitation to experience new horizons. To experience beauty is to have your life enlarged." ----- Again, thank you, John. There is a rightness and clarity when we see beauty in the world and become fuller and more attuned to not only the outside world by also to ourselves.

"Beauty is not to be captured or controlled for there is something intrinsically elusive in its nature. More like a visitation than a solid fact, beauty invests the aura of a person or infuses a landscape with an unexpected intimacy that satisfies our longing." ----- Intimate, mysterious and, on occasions blissful and ecstatic, an experience quite beyond any words.

"To the human ear, however, music echoes the deepest grandeur and the most sublime intimacy of the soul." -----I find this true to my own experience. Music hits me at a much deeper level than the other arts. It is like an internal dance with my nervous system.

"In contrast to most other forms of art, music alters your experience of time. To enter a piece of music, or to have the music enfold you, is to depart for a while from regulated time. Music creates a rhythm that beats out its own time-shape." ----- Music has a deep connection to Eros and love, expressing an energy short-circuiting reason, an energy that is transporting, absorbing, sensuous, kinetic, and involves our whole person, body and soul.

"There is a profound sense in which music opens a secret door in time and reaches in to the eternal. This is the authority and grace of music; it evokes or creates an atmosphere where presence awakens to its eternal depth."----- I never tire of reading these words over and over again.

Mary says

This book is a delicious journey. Every paragraph is full of insight and original thinking.

Henriette Weber says

I couldn't finish it - after the first 100 pages where he starts to describe the beautifulness of the colors, i simply couldn't take it anymore, so I let it go.

Andrew says

This is one of the best books I have ever read, and I have read a lot of books. John O'Donohue has this talent to put the beauty of the world into words. His book is very simple to read, broken into simple sections that can be read daily or all at once. He points out the beauty of the simplest things that most of us don't notice but have always been there. His book will jerk your emotions and show you the world in different light. THIS IS AN ABSOLUTE MUST READ.

Lauren says

O'Donohue had an ability to exquisitely explain mysterious and philosophical concepts (that I've tried to foggily contemplate) in a poetic but still accessible way. He gives well-crafted words and explanations to things I could not find words for myself. One might think this book is about visual beauty, and it is in some ways, but it is more comprehensively a book about life and the human experience. He reminds readers of the deeper layers of goodness and beauty that underlie creation and life. It was an enlightening and lovely read. I would most definitely recommend it if you are looking for some accessible, generally faith-based philosophy...or even if you aren't.

Simon says

Vintage O'Donohue. A look and listen in the depth we usually associate with O'Donohue. Relationships, nature, music, art, language, are all part of the embrace. His own language is itself a thing of beauty. The additional delight in this audio version is the celtic music opening and concluding each chapter and the text is read by John himself.
