

EASTER SUNDAY

everything [in] between grief & hope



In the Direction of Hope

I am on my way.
Wait for me in the garden;
I will be there soon.

I'm not the fastest runner,
Lord knows that,
but these legs are moving.

I suppose I could blame my weary spirit for the
slow speed.

I could blame the grief I've shoved into my
pockets and
laid around my neck.

I could blame my own hesitation to hope,
a hesitation that clings like mud.

But I don't know that Jesus cares about my speed.

So tell God when you see them—

I am on my way.
Wait for me in the garden.
I will be there soon.

*Poem by
Rev. Sarah Speed*

EASTER SUNDAY**everything [in] between** grief & hope**Read** Luke 24:1-12**Commentary** | Rev. Jeff Chu*Grief is liminal, not terminal*

What makes an ember of hope flare up into a revivifying fire?

Sometimes it's a memory.

Then they remembered his words, Luke says of the women who had brought burial spices to Jesus' tomb. It took outside help, in the form of two angels, and it wasn't instantaneous. First there was terror, because it's not every day that otherworldly visitors come calling. But then they received a gentle word: *Remember*.

Sometimes it's a testimony.

The spark of the women's story gave Peter just enough hope to get up, run to the tomb, and seek more for himself.

Sometimes neither memory nor testimony will feel sufficient. The cold cloak of grief may still be too thick, as it was for Jesus' other friends. To them, the women's story was λήρος (leros). My Bible translates that Greek word as "an idle tale," but I think that lacks oomph. Really, it might be better rendered "nonsense" or "the mutterings of the delirious."

The other apostles' incredulity feels so relatable to me, especially in the context of our contemporary lives. In a world beset by so much sorrow, so much suffering, and so much heartbreak, a glimmer of good news can have such a hard time breaking my gloom. A glimpse of beauty, a flash of loveliness, can feel like foolishness amidst so much bad news.

This isn't to say, of course, that it's wrong to sit with grief. Our grief deserves our attention, because mourning is a bittersweet memento of love. We need not rank our griefs either. Even when it comes to the pettiest, tiniest things, we need to grieve so that we can make room for the better.

There's the key, though: our grief cannot become our everything. With memory, testimony, and time, we can recognize that grief is liminal, not terminal. And it need not crowd out other truths: that we have loved and been loved. That we are not alone. That there is still hope in the land of the living.

Reflect

On this **Easter** Sunday, what grief do you carry? Where do you find hope in the land of the living?