

The Beauty of the Spirit in Our Humanity

Lavender skies above me, I drove straight to the wilds, a visit to my birthright cathedral, in the fading of the day. I don't process well in crowds or conversations. I need silence, room to think, an open road. So I drove down our back roads and into the mountains, out and west, and the sky turned indigo while I blasted music and cried and wrestled my life into a **Jesus-shape** all over again.

I dug a new grave for my **sarcasm** and wicked **anger**, my **self-defense** and my own weak **reputation**, my "rights" and my **pride**, my comebacks and retaliations, then my need to be liked and understood and appreciated and approved. I prayed through every wound, every slight, every cruelty, every name-calling, every judgement, every hurt, and I released over and over again, "They know not what they do."

And I chose to make peace all over again. I chose ferocious gentleness. I chose **kindness**. I chose **love**. Under the light, I stood on the side of the road with my head back, alone in the wilderness, and I stretched out my arms and prayed for daily courage and senseless love. I asked for grace to forgive. I wept into the rocks at my relief at the gospel and the **grace** and **mercy** and **goodness** of my Jesus.

Where else could I go, Lord? You have the words of **eternal life**.

A flock of birds exploded out of a nearby tree. I watched them dark against the purple sky as they scattered and soared out. The pine trees stood scraggly and imperfect. Worn out and bare wind-breakers, these evergreens made more beautiful by their rugged stubborn imperfections, bare spots and knots, determined. I need the sight of their upright, determined and

imperfect worship. I need the cold air at my throat, and I need **wisdom**. Disrupting and truth-telling, grace-lavishing and loving is not for the faint of heart, and I am faint in my heart often. **Jesus**, be near. Teach me to look and live in these places and in this **calling**.

I stood there, and the Spirit breathed and comforted me. I felt like the ravens might suddenly visit me with a bit of bread. It was sacred by the side of the road. It might be a small thing to so many others, but for me, it was a **turning point**. I don't really know why, but I left something by the side of the road this weekend, something that needed to be left behind. I'm traveling a bit more lightly, a bit of a limp to my gait, absolutely wounded and healed all over again in a new place.

Nourished, lightened, relieved, and yet still tender in my bruising, I drove home in the darkness. I will not be silenced. The only song I'm ever singing, here, there, everywhere, is the freedom song of the beloved redeemed. I'm part of a chorus and our voices are rising: You are loved and you are free in Christ.

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