

When Sorrow Is Overwhelming

Last night was my longest night since Steve went home. Just the longest, hardest night.

Tossing and turning, reminding myself at 12:23 and 1:37 and 2:15 that the sun *would* rise, that morning would be faithful to break through mourning, that it could not be otherwise because it is the law of nature and the law of God's mercy.

I've read a lot about people in grief who want to stay in bed indefinitely, but that's not me. The dark silence is deafening, suffocating. Not every night; just a few nights. But on those nights, the long-term reality of Steve's absence is palpable and powerful.

I keep looking for a strategy to avoid moments like this so that I can get on with this process and make some progress. Then I remember: This *is* the process and this *is* progress.

This is grief.

It is weighty and consuming and it isn't heavier than the love of God, but it's the second-heaviest thing I've experienced. I know it can't separate me from His love, but I do feel it pulling at my ankles sometimes with a strength that is surprising, wanting to drag me away with my hope. And if it were up to my muscles or intellect or emotional fortitude, grief would win without even breaking a sweat.

But God.

He is strong and stronger still. And every time I am rescued from the deep abyss, I am stronger too—not necessarily in my ability to strategize and fight, but in my ability to rest and trust.

This is a big week ahead. I have a long list of things that need to be done and decisions that need to be made, and

on Friday—the ALS Fancy Dance! It's too early to declare that it will be a great week, but I am going to go out on a limb and say I'll be stronger at the end of it than I am today. That's the ground in which I'm planting my flag on this Monday. I'll let you know how it goes.

Bo Stern is a blogger and author of *Beautiful Battliefields*, and *Ruthless*. She knows the most beautiful things can come out of the hardest times. Her Goliath came in the form of her husband's terminal illness that graduated him to heaven in July 2015. Now they fight a battle for others suffering from ALS with the help of their four children, a veritable army of friends, and our extraordinary God. Bo is a teaching pastor at Westside Church in Bend, Oregon.