

alive!
now!

MAY/JUNE 1991

The
Wounded
Places

God heals
the brokenhearted,



Jean-Claude Lejeune

and binds
up their wounds.

alive now! MJJ '91

Psalm 147 (MSV)

MAY/JUNE 1991

alive now

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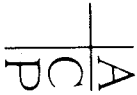
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In this issue we have writings from a wide variety of persons who tell stories of wounds and healing and surviving. Some of the wounded places in our own lives may not be apparent to other people. But the places of pain are very much with us. And we can be assured that these are sacred places—places where God's presence can redeem us from destruction.

The ignominious death of Jesus left a terrible wound in the spirits of the first followers. The appearance of the risen Christ in their midst began a healing process that found its culmination in the experiences of the first Christian Pentecost. The authentication of that healing is seen in chapter 3 of the Acts of the Apostles when Peter and John could offer healing to a crippled beggar at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple.

The first material in this issue invites us to reflect on the Pentecost experience. From there we go on to look at woundedness and healing. I believe that each of us has some gift of healing we can find and share. And we have the possibility of a relationship with the loving God who has also been wounded and whose wounds are for our healing.

 Mary Ruth Coffman, author

Opening Prayer

God above all other gods,
giver of life and new life:

Today we celebrate
the coming of your Holy Spirit
and the birth of the church.

But we seek more than memory, Holy One.
We seek the reality
of our own Pentecost
this very day.

Perhaps tongues of fire and a mighty wind
are too much to expect.
Yet we ask that your presence
flame in our hearts today
and transform our lives.

Just as you flamed in the disciples' hearts
and transformed their lives
so long ago.

Birth again your church this day
by the living fire of your Spirit.
Amen.

Lynne Hundley

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: In the beginning God created
the heavens and the earth.

People: The earth was without form and
darkness was upon the face of the deep.

Leader: The Spirit of God was moving over
the face of the waters.

People: O Spirit of God, move among us today,
and fill us with the power to be
your people. Amen.

✱ Lynne Hundley

See Genesis 1:1-2 (rsu)

Prayer Litany for Pentecost

Leader: Almighty God, we confess we have been so busy that we have ignored your presence in our lives.

People: O Lord, send your Holy Spirit to open our eyes.

Leader: We have suffered past hurts that limit our ability to receive your love.

People: O Lord, send your Holy Spirit to heal our memories.

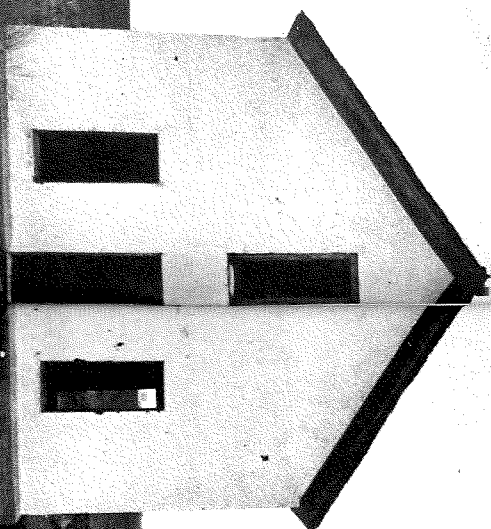
Leader: We have been afraid to follow where you lead, and we have made excuses for our lack of courage.

People: O Lord, send your Holy Spirit to soften our hearts and overcome our fears.

Leader: We have been discouraged about our world and our church.

People: O Lord, send your Holy Spirit to fill us with hope. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and make us your people. Amen.

✧ *Lynne Hundley*



Breath of God

I am roused from
remembering by wind
bending trees in half
and sweeping sorrow
from my soul.
Life is not done.
Neither am I.

✻ Lynne Hundley

BIRTHING PLACE

Strong wings
shelter us
as the Spirit
broods us from chaos.

Like a hen gathering
young under her wing,
the Spirit gathers
our scattered pieces
and counts chickens
before they're hatched.
Thank God for warm wings!

Lynne Hundley

Healing of a Wound. The healing of a wound is a complex physico-chemical process that is only partly understood. Healing may be affected by many factors in the wound and in the body generally, either adversely or beneficially. After a wound has been made, several changes occur simultaneously. Bleeding either stops spontaneously or is controlled by bandaging or other means. Dead tissue is removed by the body or by cutting it out (debridement). If the surfaces of the wound are in fairly close contact, the space is filled by blood and tissue

juices, which, in addition to other functions, effectively seal the wound. A scaffold consisting of a fine network of protein molecules called fibrin then forms, and into this grow two of the tissues essential for repair. These are connective tissue cells (fibroblasts and histiocytes) and tiny capillary blood vessels. At this stage the repair tissue, called granulation tissue, can be seen in a healing open wound as a red, velvety granular surface. As time passes, several changes take place simultaneously. The fibroblasts produce a fibrous protein called collagen, which

gives the wound strength. The histiocytes scavenge cellular debris, foreign bodies, and blood seepage. And the capillaries decrease in number and nearly disappear. The replacement of red capillaries by white collagen explains why a new scar is red at first but then becomes white after several weeks....

Factors Affecting Healing. Local factors that affect healing include the type and location of the wound, amount of dead tissue, number and kind of bacteria, presence and type of foreign bodies, blood supply of the wounded part, and the

treatment given. A foreign body in a wound may be absorbed by the tissues, which is what happens to catgut used to close a wound; or it may be encapsulated (surrounded by scar tissue), as might happen to a small piece of glass, or extruded, as in the case of a splinter that stays in a wound for some time and then appears on the surface. General body factors that affect healing include age; the presence of certain diseases; and nutrition, especially adequate amounts of protein and vitamin C.

✳ *The Encyclopedia Americana*

Curing and healing are not
always the same thing.

It is always all right to pray
for healing. It is also all right
to pray for curing as long as
we are willing to accept that
this may not be God's will,
and as long as we are
willing to accept God's will
rather than our own. Above
the lintel of a church in
New England are carved

these words:
REMEMBER, NO IS
AN ANSWER.

✱
Madeleine L'Engle
The Irrational Season

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O Lord my God, I cried to you for help,
and you have healed me.

O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol,
restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.

You have turned my mourning into dancing;
you have taken off my sackcloth
and clothed me with joy,

so that my soul may praise you and not be silent.
O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

✱ *Psalms 30 (nrsv)*

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THE BROKEN PLACES

Our affluent culture expects that there is a way to fix almost anything that is broken—broken bodies, broken hearts, broken possessions. It is difficult for many of us to see brokenness as a part of life.

Within the tradition of the Native American Medicine Wheel, life is seen as a circle, as a whole, incorporating birth and death, the peaceful dawn and the thundering storms, wholeness and brokenness. From the northern direction of the Medicine Wheel come the storms of life. It is the storms that bring us courage and wisdom and compassion. Our lives would not be whole without the storms.

Richard Rohr says, "The place of the wound is the place of the healing. The place of the break is the place of the greatest strength." Our Christian faith affirms this—that Christ's wounds are the place where God's healing touches each of us.

Perhaps the task for us today is to begin to see the *gifts* of our broken places. To find the opportunities to believe in the mystery of Christ's death, "to put our finger in the wound of Christ, our own wounds, and the wounds of each other" (Richard Rohr, *Breathing Under Water*, audiocassette).

 Beth A. Richardson

God Resides in the Brokenness

*I do not think conversion is a matter relating primarily to emotional health. Many people, through their encounter with the Lord, have experienced healing of the emotions. But others who believe in him never fully resolve their emotional difficulties. Some of the saints remained highly neurotic people throughout their lives... Conversion... does not take us completely out of the human condition nor totally alter the cast of the personality.**

**Emilie Griffin, Turning, Doubleday & Co., 1980.*

Emilie Griffin writes boldly, telling me something that my heart already knows. A person with an authentic faith experience may never fully resolve certain emotional problems. Her boldness becomes shocking when she writes that some of the saints were highly neurotic and remained that way all of their lives. What she says, of course, is true.

When we struggle with depression or some other emotional problem that keeps us from feeling perfectly happy or content, these struggles do not mean that our faith is phony, or that God's back has been turned toward us.

I have known some wounded healers, some great Christian spirits who have suffered either from emotional or physical problems, but who nevertheless have blessed other people and the church by their leadership and their love. We don't have to be perfect to be faithful friends of Jesus.

There are many forms of brokenness that can be healed, thanks be to God! There are others, for reasons unknown to us, that apparently cannot be healed; but God resides in the brokenness as well as the healing. The God who watched in terrible, suffering silence on Good Friday knows the pain of brokenness better than we.

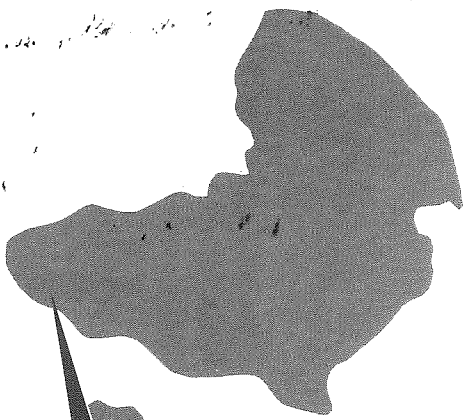
** James E. Maguire*

I built my iron box carefully, the way we were taught in school that nuclear reactors were built. I conceived lead walls around the dangerous parts, concentric circles of water channels and air ducts that would soften and contain any kind of explosion. I enclosed it all with metal casing and buried the box far away from my brain toward the small of my back, in the part of my body that seemed least alive.

The box became a vault, collecting in darkness, always collecting, pictures, words, my parents' glances, becoming loaded with weight. It sank deeper as I grew older, so packed with undigested things that finally it became impossible to ignore. I knew the iron box would some day have to be dredged up into the light, opened, its contents sorted out, but I had built such fortifications that it had become inaccessible.

I needed tricks to get near it, strategies to cut through the belt of numbness that formed each time I made a move toward it. I needed company to look inside it, other voices to confirm that those things I carried inside me were real, that I had not made them up. My parents could not help me with this; they were part of it. Psychiatrists I distrusted; they had even more names to disguise things than I had already tried. There had to be other people like me, who shared what I carried, who had their own version of my iron box. There had to be, I thought, an invisible, silent family scattered about the world.

Helen Epstein
Children of the Holocaust



WOUNDS IN TRANSVAAL

The red dust blows across the dirt road,
Hiding the shanties
The bits of board
Odd shapes.
Sheets of rusty iron
Broken and patched.
Twisted wire guarding each tiny plot.
Dustbin bags on posts
A primitive toilet.

A ragged hen
Tipped by the wind
Scratches in the dust.
The man comes home
No job again today.
The children are hungry.
One handful of porridge each.
The children stay hungry
They do not cry.

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On the highway beyond the blue gum
trees,
Cars pass
Fast, shiny, going home
The day's work done.
Cool drink waiting in the fridge.

Friends for dinner, maybe?
Planning the weekend?
Holidays?
Relaxed and confident
Life is good.

Not a handful of porridge for their children
Not the odd chair
The broken bed
The dust blowing under a makeshift door,
Sleeping when dark falls
Candles cost!
Waking before the sun.
It's a long walk to the bus.
Life has to be lived.

✧ Elisabeth Lidbetter

HER CHILD LAY DYING

Her child lay dying.

She wouldn't give up, though she knew it was hopeless.
He lay; looking at her. Burning with fever

using red eyes to ask for help,
red eyes too tired for tears.

Everything she knew to do, she had done

—cold water bathing
—feeding liquids, not solids
—herbs from her garden.

She'd even gone against her parents
and visited the witch doctor—
though that had cost her all her furniture
and all her dishes

and all her rice
from the summer's work.
What else could she do? Her child lay dying.

Just a few miles away, there was an airport
and for less money than the cost of one rifle,
a plane could have carried to her country
all kinds of help to protect from the death of measles.

But political walls had been built, and her child lay dying.

✱
Dee Horn,

SOMETTIMES I THINK
I'M GOING TO DIE
FROM THE SADNESS.

NOT THAT ANYONE
EVER DIED FROM
CRYING FOR TWO HOURS,

BUT IT'S SURE
FEELS LIKE IT.

✱
The Courage to Heal

From *The Courage to Heal* by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis. Copyright © 1988 by the authors. Used with permission of Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.

EARTH MOTHER

There was a woman who lived in a high valley in Bolivia. She had a family, a husband and two small girls. He worked the land so they had enough to eat and to trade. She did loom work, made alpaca sweaters which she sent down for sale to a co-op in one of the lower valleys. The designs were her own. They came out of her memory somewhere, from legends her parents had told her.

This life came to an end when her husband was killed in a truck accident. Truck was used as a bus. It didn't make a curve because its brakes failed and it pitched 3,000 feet into a gorge. She had gone down with the others and carried the bodies back up to the high valley where a priest said a mass. Instead of burying him with the rest she asked her brother to help her bring the body higher, up into a break in the mountain wall where a path went over and out toward the sea far away, an offshoot of the Inca trail. She and her brother buried her husband under a pile of rocks well off the trail, but looking down the westward slope to the lower mountains, toward the cloud bank that meant the sea. She left no marker, no cross, no anything, only the stones mounded like clothes on a baby on the cold nights back home.

She returned to her place and soon saw she would have nothing to live on. Her brother knew this too and told her to give up the loom work, it brought in too little, to give up trying to farm her own food, to put in coca plants instead. He would help her sell the leaves and that would make her a good life for herself and her own. So she told the co-op there would be no more sweaters, they could come and take the loom, which they did. She herself went into the fields with the coca seedlings she got from her brother and she put them in where the vegetables had been. But then she decided to put in vegetables every other row, on the chance she might need extra food.

It was a backbreaking season for her. Several times she had to carry in water, in skin bags, to keep the plants alive. The sun was life, but it dried things. On cold mornings she would stand outside against the wall of her home with her two girls and just let the rays penetrate through her clothing, through her skin, and reach her blood, which seemed to thaw and move into her fingers and toes like some force of resurrection.

The moon was death. Toward the end of the growing season she had to walk the fields most nights to keep others from cutting out the coca leaves. She had an old gun. She could use it. She had gone into the local village one day with it in the crook of her arm and a clay pot with nothing in it on her head. She set the pot on an odd shaped stone in the middle of the street, a stone no one moved because it was thought the Incas put it there to keep an evil force below ground, the force that made the earth shake. She walked some distance from it, looked back to be sure no children were near, then she blew it apart with one shot from forty yards away.

The priest was furious at her. She told him it was just symbolic of what a force of nature had done to her, she was the empty pot, and the bullet was her husband's death, and God was the rifleman. The priest was even more angry and required her to pick up the pieces of the clay pot and put them back together with some glue as a symbol of what she could do in spite of disaster. So she did. No one but the priest was fooled. They all knew she could shoot. So she harvested what she had planted.

Then she and her brother packed the leaves for sale. And they carried them over mountain-paths to a place where the cocaine was made, taking several days back and forth to deliver it all. They had to cross wild country where there was nothing to stop the wind or the sky. On the last trip back they carried large amounts of American dollars.

Now she had to go down to the lower valley and buy pesos with those dollars to conceal her source of income, and then buy the food she would need for the coming year. She came into the square where the black market in money took place, young men and women who did the runner work for the money-people raced after every car or person they thought wanted to sell dollars for pesos. She was soon surrounded, but she understood no Spanish. Finally one knew her tongue, a young woman in jeans jacket and trousers and American jogging shoes, but with a face like her own, minus the black bowler hat all her people wore. They agreed on a dollar/peso exchange, away from the crowd, around the corner of the Franciscan church. The woman reached under her many skirts and brought out her packets of dollars. The runner pulled out huge pre-counted packets of pesos. The exchange took place.

The runner left, and the woman stored her pesos in her many skirts. She returned to the corner of the church ready to go purchase food. There she nearly stepped on a girl who was seated just around the corner, her back against the wall, her legs straight out in front of her, her chin on her chest, and her arms limp at her side. She was breathing. She was about fifteen. She was absolutely filthy, hair, skin, clothes, filthy beyond belief. And she was totally gone on cocaine.

The woman paused. She saw the young skin under the dirt. The sun would never touch that skin. A man would never touch that body except to rape it, and even then the girl would not know. The air of this place, thick with the fumes of exhaust and with dust from the dryness, would help to kill her. She would be dead soon because there was no way back for the thing she had become. And the woman felt the weight of the money in her skirts growing heavier, like the weight of a pregnancy, like the weight of her dead man whom she had buried up out of the reach of death against the sky. And she saw the filthy girl as what was born of this money. Then she saw herself and her own two girls starving to death without it. They needed the death of this girl or any other if their own lives were to go on. "I will live off one death," she said to herself. "But not another."

She went to a bank and with great difficulty, through an interpreter, put her money away, so she could return and draw on it each time she needed food, with each transaction marked in a small book she could not understand. She had put in a large amount. The bank thought she would bring more next year, and they treated her honestly so others from her village would come. During the long winter season she ate the one death. She saw the filthy girl again in different places but always in the same posture, until she never saw her again and knew she was buried in a field someplace with dogs and things that corrupted and caused harm.

The following year the woman refused the seedlings from her brother and put in vegetables. She got her loom back. And now she had to work night and day, risking the seasons, risking her own health, caring for the two girls, knowing there was very little between herself and starvation. "I will now live off my own death," she said. All around her people got richer and richer and she was a fool to them, to her own brother the biggest fool of all.

One day in the village where she went to trade food, she saw a girl leaning against the Inca stone, legs out in front of her, chin on her chest, her multiple skirts up like a turkey fan, her bowler hat fallen off so the part in her hair showed like a scar. She was drugged into insensibility, like the filthy girl from the valley. But this was a girl of the village. And she was dead, not asleep. So the woman went back quickly to her home, got her gun, and returned to the dead girl. By now everyone suspected there was a death. The woman proceeded to strip the girl of her clothing, she unbound her hair, and she laid the still warm but naked body over the stone so the body was like a crescent moon being carried on the back of some animal, feet down, hair down, belly and breasts to the sun.

As people approached the woman she waved the gun and said, "You know I can use this!" And she put a shot by the priest to tell him he had no immunity. She walked around that body, and she sang a birth song they all knew, then she sang a wedding song they all knew, then she sang a dirge they all knew. Then she shouted to them, "This girl strays here until you stop what killed her! This girl is you!"

She protected that body in the heat of the sun and the cold of the night until she herself was ready to drop and decomposition began. And the woman saw she was violating the corpse in another way.

So she backed down the road and several men moved in quickly to take the corpse and clothing away. But something could not be taken away.

From then on flowers of some kind were always found on that stone. And when people died they were laid for a time on it though the priest had a fit. And some people were not rich anymore. And there was a mound of stones over the filthy girl's grave shaped like the wrappings of a baby in the cold of winter.

✱ Francis Patrick Sullivan
A Time to Sow, A Year of Parables

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• LED BY A LITTLE CHILD •

I went to Namibia in the fall of 1986 to visit parishes there and help conduct a clergy conference. One Sunday I stood outside a little tin roofed church in the war-torn north greeting people as they arrived for the service. A father approached holding the hand of a delicate-looking girl of about three who was wearing a pink dress trimmed in white lace. As I welcomed him, his daughter shrank back, watching me warily. The father nudged her forward, wanting her to meet the white priest who had come 880 km into the bush country to preach and celebrate the Eucharist.

"Walelepo—Good Morning!" I said to the child in what I hoped was a kindly voice. I squatted to be closer to her height and tried to put her at ease. But when I offered my hand, she bolted back against the security of her father's leg. Her eyes were wide with fear.

The father gently took his daughter's hand and extended it toward mine. "Sometimes she's a little afraid because you are like men who come to torture us last weeks," he said apologetically.

Much as I wanted to say something comforting, I simply had no words adequate to express my sorrow and regret at what this man and his people had endured—and would perhaps endure in the future. As I released the little girl's hand, I heard in my head the words *and a little child will lead them*. But what did this mean in my life? Where was this child leading me?

Since being in Namibia, I have been led to a deeper appreciation of the strength of the human spirit. I have come to see that some people survive even the harshest of cruelties and do not give up on life. They retain their capacity to love and even dare to hope that they will find love in return. Surely this kind of strength has to come from God who is present with us in suffering and who gives us faith enough to keep on believing that justice and kindness will prevail.



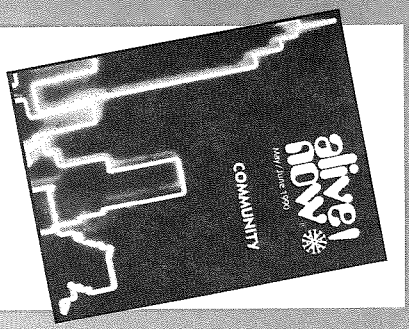
Ron DeBene
With Mary and Herb Montgomery
From the Heart

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Jeffrey High

and your wounds I will heal,



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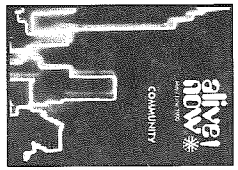
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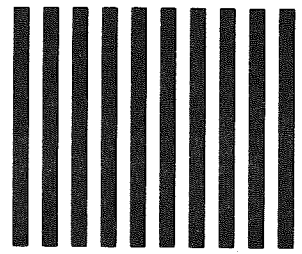
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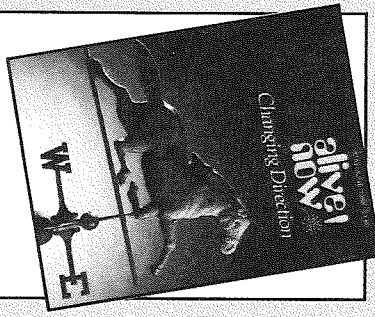
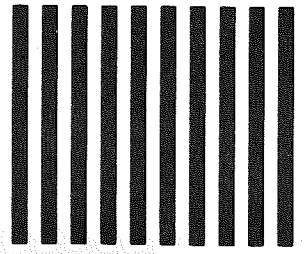
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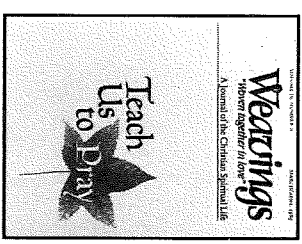
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and your wounds I will heal, says the Lord, because they have



called you an outcast.

✻ Jeremiah 30 (nrsv)



34 alive now! M/J '91

Jim West

If you enter into healing, be prepared to lose everything. Healing is a ravaging force to which nothing seems sacred or inviolate. As my original pain releases itself in healing, it rips to shreds the structures and foundations I built in weakness and ignorance. Ironically and unjustly, only I can pay the price of having lived a lie. I am experiencing the bizarre miracle of reincarnating, more lucidly than at birth, in the same lifetime.

✻ Ely Fuller
The Courage to Heal

M/J '91 alive now! 35

People came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying,

“Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.”

✧ Luke 8 (msv)

People who have wounds in childhood find that those wounds affect their spirituality. Somehow we believe the holy child is the protected child who doesn't experience anything but love and tenderness from two good, loving parents.

We believe the myth that the only way children can grow up to be wonderful people is to be nourished in the bosom of a wonderful family. But most people who have grown to deep faith have come through the hard knocks of experience. I look at lives of people like Julian of Norwich and ask, “How do you get to say ‘all manner of things shall be well?’” Julian was a survivor of three outbreaks of the plague which decimated half the population of England. And maybe she lived through unspeakable suffering as a child too.

Through my suffering, I learned that although I could not trust my father on earth, I could trust my father God, who will not rape me. A lot of theological thinking views God as an abusive parent. One of my journeys has been to totally reject the idea of God as an angry, abusive parent.

A spiritual struggle most survivors face is: “If I can't trust my father or mother or brother, how can I trust Jesus my brother—or God my father?”

Survivors tend to confuse the avoidance of the church with God's avoiding us. We feel God doesn't love us and doesn't care because God's representative, the church, doesn't love us and doesn't care.

✧ Roberta Nobleman
“Blessed Wounds”
The Other Side

CHANGE
CHANGE
CHANGE
CHANGE
CHANGE
CHANGE
CHANGE
CHANGE

This is where I yank the old roots
from my chest, like the tomatoes
we let grow until December, stalks
thick as saplings.

This is the moment when the ancient fears
race like thoroughbreds, asking for more
and more rein. And I, the driver,
for some reason they know nothing of
strain to hold them back.

Terror grips me like a virus
and I sweat, fevered,
trying to burn it out.

This fear is invisible. All you can see
is a woman going about her ordinary day,
drinking tea, taking herself to the movies,
reading in bed. If victorious
I will look exactly the same.

Yet I am hoisting a car from mud ruts
half a century deep. I am hacking
a clearing through the fallen slash
of my heart. Without laser precision,
with only the primitive knife of need, I cut
and splice the circuitry of my brain.
I change.

 Ellen Bass
The Courage to Heal

These words: You will not be overcome, were said
very insistently and strongly, for certainty and
strength against every tribulation which may come.
God did not say: You will not be troubled, you
will not be belaboured, you will not be disquieted;
but (God) said:

You will not be overcome.

God wants us to pay attention to these words, and
always to be strong in faithful trust, in well-being
and in woe, for (God) loves us and delights in us,
and so (God) wishes us to love him and delight in
him and trust greatly in him, and all will be well.

 Julian of Norwich
Showings

**BROKEN-
HEART
PROMISE**

Reclaiming our lives
stained by lies and shame.
Scrubbing, scrubbing but
shadow never quite gone,
leached into heart
too deep for easy cleaning.

Trust things beyond mending
—or blame—to one
whose own blood washed new
a hate-shadowed world.
No stain too deep
for the broken-heart God.

✧
Lynne Hundley

THROUGH

The way through
is to go through;
Despair to hope,
Sorrow to joy,
Loneliness to desire,
Death to life,
Fear to peace.

In the going
there is dying.
Who am I not
to be afraid?

Yet I know no other
passage.

And I have no
other moment
than the now.

The way through
is to go through.

✧
Jim Frisbie

Jesus asked, "Who touched me?"
When all denied it,
Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and press in on you."
But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; for I noticed that power had gone out from me."
When the woman saw that she could not remain

hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before him, she declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed.
He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

✧ Luke 8 (NIV)

*Speak to me, O Christ,
when I prefer not to hear.
Do not stop knocking
when I close my door.
Release me from the self-will
I have woven around my heart.
I need your counsel
constantly.*

✧ Sudha Khismukti



DAVIDA ANGELICA ROARED

Once there was a lioness whose name was Davida Angelica. Everybody called her Angel. Angel didn't roar very often. In fact, she had only roared once in her life.

It was when she was just a little cub. She was playing in the grass with her brothers and sisters, and a hunter's arrow pierced her shoulder. Angel roared in surprise and her mother chased the hunter away.

Angel's mother tried to pull the arrow out, but the shaft broke off and the arrow point stayed in Angel's shoulder. It hurt when she walked, but in time the wound healed at the surface and Angel forgot all about what happened. Everyone else forgot too.

The only reminder Angel had of the wounding was the pain in her shoulder. But after a while, she hardly noticed it. And when she did feel the pain, she thought that all lions felt that way.

Angel grew up to be one of the favorite lions in the forest. She was gentle and kind. By the time she was a young lioness on her first hunt, she had forgotten all about the wounding. But even when she made her first kill, she did not roar like the other lions.

One day, as Angel was hunting food for her own cubs, she noticed a pain in her shoulder. She thought to herself, "What is that feeling? Have I felt it before?"

Soon the pain began to grow. Angel's shoulder hurt when she jumped out of trees or carried her cubs or ran fast to catch a deer. After several months, Angel's shoulder hurt all the time. She began to limp and her hunting suffered because she could not run fast enough. Finally, she could not move at all.

The wise ones came from far and near to gather around her. They brought food for her cubs, healing herbs, and stories of the great hunters. They surrounded her with warmth and breathed strong breaths with her. Their growls swirled around her and under her, and wrapped her like a mantle of fire.

That night as the moon rose, Angel herself began to growl. At first it was a low growl, and when she raised her head, the pain stabbed through her. Then she growled a low

roar. And a bigger roar. And then the growls of the wise ones lifted her to her feet and she began to ROAR.

Davidá Angelica roared and roared and roared. All the lowly animals shivered in their beds. Davidá Angelica roared and roared and roared and the fur on her shoulder began to split. Davidá Angelica roared and roared and roared and the skin under the fur popped open and yellow liquid poured out of her shoulder. The liquid gathered in a pool on the ground, and in the middle of the pool was an arrow point. Davidá Angelica roared and roared and roared and roared. And then she was quiet.

The wise ones looked at the arrow point, growled, and nodded, for now they remembered and understood. And then the oldest one said, "Davidá Angelica, from this day forward, you will be called Davidá. You have lived through a wounding. You have survived great pain with great courage. You will be called Davidá the Courageous. Davidá with the Roar that Heals?"

Then the wise ones roared. And Davidá roared with them. And they all roared long into the night.

✧ Beth A. Richardson



When I tell people that my wounding was a blessing, it sounds crazy. I mean, who wants to be a survivor of anything? Auschwitz or incest? I'd much rather not have gone through it. But given that this is the way life is, and given that I have so many sisters and brothers out there who are also survivors, these wounds can become blessing.

We must grieve for the child that never was. I weep for that in myself and for all others. But Jesus says to us: "Why are you crying?" There is a time to love and rejoice.

Jesus is not on the cross any more. He tells Mary Magdalene that she can dry her tears. If she keeps crying, she can't do the work that she is supposed to do, which is to go tell the disciples that Jesus is risen.

✧ Roberta Nobleman
"Blessed Wounds"
The Other Side

Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Bethesda, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed.

One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years.

When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me."

Jesus said to him, "Stand up, take your mat and walk." At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

✧ John 5 (NRSV)

When we are able to bear

some small share of the sufferings of the world, whether in pain of mind, body or soul, let us thank God for that too... "An injury to one is an injury to all" is another way of saying what St. Paul said almost two thousand years ago.

"We are all members of one another, and when the health of one member suffers, the health of the whole body is lowered." And the converse is true. We can indeed hold each other up in prayer. Excuse this preaching. I am preaching to myself too.

✧ Dorothy Day
The Dorothy Day Book

*Certainly when [I] lie in jail
thinking of these things, thinking
of war and peace, and the prob-
lems of human freedom... and
the apathy of great masses of peo-
ple who believe that nothing can
be done, I am all the more con-
firmed in my faith in the little
way of St. Therese. We do the
minute things that come to hand,
we pray our prayers, and beg also
for an increase of faith—and God
will do the rest.*

✧ Dorothy Day
The Dorothy Day Book

THE YOUNG HEALER

Last month I met a young woman from Australia. She was in her mid-thirties. Bright and articulate. Her name was Ann. She was a physician who had been working in the west African country of Gambia. She told me that every morning when she went to her little medical clinic she was confronted with ten or twelve women who had given birth during the night. The clinic has only eight beds. She said that necessity often demanded that new mothers be placed "two to a bed." When the clinic became full, new mothers were compelled to rest on the floor. New mothers could remain at the clinic for only eight hours after delivery.

That young physician told me that each day after leaving the maternity ward she would treat two hundred children who had malaria. In that remote area, this was the only medical facility. Ann was the only physician. Her staff consisted of a few nurses. Her lab contained only a microscope. She had only one drug to treat all of the various stages of malaria.

Ann had grown up in a working-class Catholic family. She cannot remember being poor, but her mother tells her that her father frequently had to work two jobs to provide for the family. Ann's parents provided her with one year of college and told her that she must provide for any additional education on her own. After completing medical school, she made a decision to be a person of heal-

ing and hope. A person of joy and peace. She said "No" to the commercialism of her chosen profession and "Yes" to something more. Dr. Ann took the vows of poverty, celibacy, and obedience. She joined the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, a French order of thirty thousand members.

I asked that young physician, "Why?" Why had she given up the prestige, the privilege, the money, and the power of a "regular physician" among the ordinary people? Why had she become a nun after she was already a physician?

Sister Ann smiled and said, "After medical school, I began to look at all the sadness, pain, and suffering in the world. Once I started contemplating all of the brokenness that needed healing, I knew that if I was ever going to be adequate to do my share of the healing work, then I would first of all need to be a whole person myself. I needed a strength from beyond myself. I also knew that I would need the support of a caring, loving community of faith."

I interrupted her. "Now you're speaking like a nun." Dr. Ann smiled and said, "My order believes that we can best teach by doing." She said, "You know, Pastor Lahman, in my little clinic I see very few cases of hypertension. In North America I see so much stress. Everyone is so busy. There is so much brokenness and pain. I became a physician in order to be a healer. I became a nun that I might be a person of peace."

Sister Ann stopped quickly, was quiet for a moment, and then

quietly said, "But tell me, Pastor Lahman. Tell me why *you* choose to be a man of peace. Tell me about the *source* of your joy, and the source of wholeness in *your life*."

Having listened to Sister Ann's story, I couldn't think of anything in or about my work that would qualify as being stressful. After a while the doctor broke the silence and asked, "Tell me, *then*, about the source of your joy, the source of your wholeness?"

"Oh, about all of that I am a little embarrassed to try and put it into words," I said. "About peace and wholeness, I am only a beginning pilgrim. Each day I struggle to find a little bit of spiritual sustenance. And at night time, I thank God for God's kindness." Said the doctor who had become a nun, "Me, too."

✧ James Richard Lahman

Once, when Jesus was in one of the cities, there was a man covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean."

Then Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, "I do choose. Be made clean."

Immediately the leprosy left him. And he ordered him to tell no one. "Go," he said, "and show yourself to the priest, and, as Moses commanded, make an offering for your cleansing, for a testimony to them."

But now more than ever the word about Jesus spread abroad; many crowds would gather to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray.

✧ Luke 5 (nsv)

Midnight Invocation

Only the darkness is whole. All else seems
chipped, hollow, tarnished, ragged, spilled, or
teetering on the brink. Even the silver mirror
of sleep lies shattered.

But you, Lord, having knelt in dark, sharp-
edged places, *you know*. So I've gathered
them up, Lord, these fragments of words,
tears, love, need, pain—more than twelve
baskets full. You take them. Once again, reach
your hand into humanity and bless the broken.

✱ Barbara Seaman

She lived life out of a wheelchair.
Barely hearing. Almost blind.

At worship today

Christ's Supper was offered to her,
but she thought the plate of broken bread was the
offering plate.

Bewildered, she said a bit too loud,
"I don't have anything to give."
Poor woman, they all thought.

Not so.

Through any disorientation, we have everything
in the Christ who gives his life for us.
Through our deafness, he hears for us.
Through our blindness, he sees for us.
Through our trembling hands, he will take the bread
and cup for us.

We hear Christ's words:

Let not your heart be troubled.
I will hold it.
I will feed you.
I will drink the cup for you.
I will fill you.
I will be your world.

Oh, to be so poor:

Robert W. Guffey, Jr.

Christ Comes Running

Christ comes running,
eyes bright with joy,
and shatters the ice inside me
with laughter and a hug.

"But I'm not worthy"
does not cut it with such a deity.
Who am I to dampen his party
with my fumbling for humble words?

Holy parties don't happen
on my command—
only on my account—
when this lavish Lord
sees an inch of growth in me.

* Jim Frisbie

Turn to the light
To the light that heals
That heals even as it burns.

Turn away from self
From the thoughts that accuse,
Confuse,
From the struggle to understand
To understand the reasons for our sins.

Leave the reasons
Turn away from them.
Give the turmoils to one who is ever present
To one who will take them from you
To one who will forgive
Who will show you the way to peace.

If you will only follow,
If you will but listen,
If you will but turn.

* Elisabeth Libbeter

*John tells us that
though Jesus defeated death,
he still has his scars
after the resurrection.*

Let me remember this, too.

Amen.

Robert W. Guffey, Jr.



When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you..."

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

John 20 (nrsv)

OUT OF THE STOREROOM OF OUR EXPERIENCES

People come to ministers with difficult and wide-ranging problems. Frequently we confront the fact that much of life is beyond our control. Even though I understood this in my head, it didn't really affect my whole being until I came face-to-face with the illness of my daughter.

Anne is a lively, inquisitive young woman who, for every answer you give her has three more questions. She loves to go to camp, to sing, and to play guitar. A lover of sports, she particularly enjoys playing tennis and basketball and is an avid rock climber. At age fifteen, she developed a condition that rendered her left leg paralyzed and for the past two years has been in and out of a wheelchair. During this time I have learned what it means to be one of the wounded, one of the un-able.

I was brought up to think, and always believed, that I could fix things. Around home I am a handyman, able to repair everything from a torn screen to a dripping faucet. During my years of counseling and consulting I have become known for my ability to analyze situations and suggest solutions. But with Anne's condition, I came up against something I could not fix and for which I had no answers.

Caught up in a problem we didn't really understand, Eleanor, Anne, and I went from one specialist to another in the hope of finding a cause that might lead to a cure. Appointments had to be scheduled at inconvenient times and medical decisions made when we felt unqualified to make them. Several times we were relieved to find out that Anne's problem was not a disease that was suspected. But that left us knowing only what it was not; no one could tell us what it was. We had a feeling of powerlessness, and a sense that we were no longer in control of our lives.

Even though we tried to stay open to the present, the fear of an uncertain future loomed like a storm on the horizon. Weeks passed. Then months. Dealing with the wheelchair was frustrating and inconvenient for all of us. At home, the bathroom

could no longer have a door. Walls got scrapped. If I wanted to hug Anne, I had to bend awkwardly to be at her level and invariably we bumped glasses. Whenever we went anywhere, the wheelchair had to be hauled up and down the fifteen stairs to our house. Once when we pulled into a handicap parking spot and discovered that the ramp was directly in front of the car, we wondered what fool planned a lot that way. In a very short time, we became aware of just how much of life is inaccessible to the handicapped.

Nothing in our lives was as clear as it had once been. Unable to fix the situation, I became increasingly aware of the uncertainty of life. Through all the anxiety and confusion, Eleanor, Anne, and I struggled to be aware of God's presence. We found strength by sharing our feelings with one another and praying together. Although we appreciated the interest and concern shown to us, people's questions sometimes pushed us more and more to try to explain the unexplainable.

The uncertainty about Anne's condition continues. Although she at times makes progress, she also has episodes that appear to be setbacks. For me, the experience has given new meaning to that line from Matthew's Gospel where it says, "We bring out of our storeroom things both old and new."

Now when I share with others, there are new things that I bring from my storeroom of experience. I am better able to identify with the pain and disappointment of others. I know firsthand what it's like to be off balance while trying to embrace the moment and the present situation. My experience has taught me that life goes on and to miss any of it is a mistake. In times of anguish as well as in times of joy, I have known God's presence. What I have come to understand is that I am not called to fix life; I am simply called to live it.

✻
Ron DeBene
With Mary and Herb Montgomery
From the Heart

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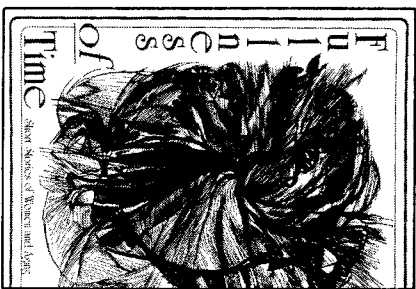
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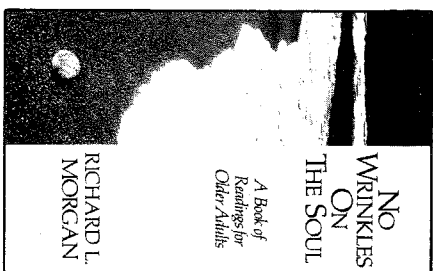
Richard L. Morgan

"Yes, we grow older, but age is a state of the mind. Our inner nature is being renewed each day. As long as we keep our hopes and dreams alive, and stay involved in life, our spirits will be renewed. There should be no wrinkles on the soul."

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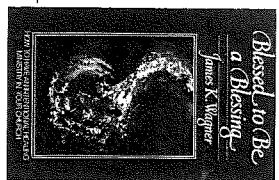
At bedtime, in a cold, strange room, I read Evening Prayer. Read the first Psalm for the evening of the fourth day:

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Exquisitely painful timing. The psalmist's words, Jesus' words. I feel anguished. I feel that I have been kicked in the stomach and the wind knocked out of me. My spirit hurts. I am grateful that Jesus cried out those words, because it means that I need never fear to cry them out myself. I need never fear, nor feel any sense of guilt, during the inevitable moments of forsakenness. They come to us all. They are part of the soul's growth.



Madeleine Engle
Two-Part Invention

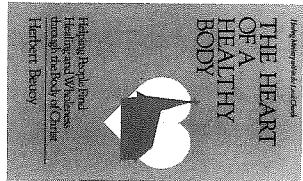


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Heal Me, Hands of Jesus

1. Heal me, hands of Je - sus, and search out all my pain; re -
 2. Cleanse me, blood of Je - sus, take bit - ter - ness a - way; let
 3. Know me, mind of Je - sus, and show me all my sin; dis -
 4. Fill me, joy of Je - sus; anx - i - e - ty shall cease, and

store my hope, re - move my fear, and bring me peace a - gain.
 me for - give as one for - given and bring me peace to - day.
 pel the mem - o - ries of guilt and bring me peace with - in.
 heav - en's se - ren - i - ty be mine, for Je - sus brings me peace!

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