

I've been wondering a bit, lately, about why we like the sunset so much. Watching the sun *set* is a *thing* isn't it? Something we love to do. No doubt about it.

But why? Is it the romance? the pretty colours? The kaleidoscopic gradations of shade inexorably gathering. The feeling of completion, that the day is done and we're kind of off the hook until tomorrow? I'm kind of a night owl by nature so my energy gathers toward the end of the day and for me there's nothing quite like the *savouring* of a perfect day that you can do while you watch the sunset.

It's especially natural to watch the sunset *here* I think. We're at the western edge of everything. Everything about our geography calls our gaze westward. A lot of our history does too, although not all of it and not for everyone. We're increasingly diverse about which direction we've arrived from.

At sunset we look west into hugeness, into ocean. None of us can *do* anything about sunset. To watch the sunset is in a way a beautiful act of *surrender* - to cosmic being, to life in a *solar* system. It's a life with giants, upon whom we utterly depend. We're not only at the edge of a continent, the edge of an ocean,

we're also at the edge of *space* in that moment, watching a star recede, 150 million kilometers away, 8 minutes ago.

There's a *physicality* to why we look west in that moment, that hypnotic, mesmeric quality that light has for us. It's *physical*. Our eyes *need* to follow it. Our bodies *want* to go where our eyes are drawn. And here at the western edge that's westward, to the ocean's edge, our eyes and our bodies *pulled* there by the receding light.

I read recently about research that is showing that we *hear* what our eyes look at. Our eyes help our ears pick out and focus on certain sounds from the cacophony around us based on what we're looking at. Vision dominates. We often have to *shut our eyes* if we want to focus on hearing, and even then some of us still 'hear' in pictures.

To enjoy a sunset is to know that things are good. That's the message we're hearing from the Sun. It means we know our way, that we have shelter and food, that we're expecting rest and comfort. It means we're not worried about the dark, about the night. I've never been lost in the North Shore mountains for example, as happens far too often. I'd feel differently about the sunset if I were though, I'm sure of that. The disappearing light

would signal a major predicament. The loss of warmth. The inability to know what was happening around me. The things I would imagine about what I could hear but couldn't see.

And maybe that cold place is a doorway for us, an entry point into Easter, into the shift of perspective we need in order to see with Easter vision.

There are events in our lives, I think for everyone at some point, that *force* us to see the dark, whether or not we want to. Being literally lost in mountains might be one of them. But there are other kinds of lostness that feel just as dark, and just as cold. I'm sure each of us can think of times we felt it personally, or we saw that someone we loved was in it, or we just even *feared* we might be go there. I could give examples I suppose, but I don't think I need to. If we've grown up at all we've been there for sure, to our own special north, our own special mountain of lostness. By now we know that *that* was Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday, and the deep deep dark of Holy Saturday.

[Some of us may be there now. That seems important to say. If that is you, if you feel that way, I reach out to you. I know you feel alone, but we're here too.

If that's not you, if you're in the Hallelujah place this Easter morning then, ya, you hang in there too. I'm going to totally Hallelujah with you too! I'm not trying bring anyone down lol. Just trying be as real as I can be, after what we've all been through]

I recall that I was in that place once, in my own special north, my own special mountain, unable to find the west. I couldn't navigate. I couldn't see. Certainties I had depended on were suddenly not where I thought they'd be, not where I left them last. I was disoriented or, to say it more precisely, I was *disoccidented*, if that's a word. I had no west. I could hear that something was happening but I couldn't tell what it was, I could only imagine what it *could* be. For a while, I did what the disciples did after the arrest of Jesus and the Crucifixion: I kind of waited around for things to go back into place. I thought the sunset might still soothe and comfort me, but alas, it didn't. I found myself needing to *get up*, in the dark, and go *out*, like the Mary's did on the first day of the week, and look *east*.

It's such a *small* thing. I got up, in the dark, and went out, and looked east. I *could* have done it any time, like any one of us. I just didn't *know* to do it, until one day it was unexpectedly dark, really really dark, and I had to. So I did it. I got *up*, and went out,

walking in darkness that was pitch dark, and I waited. And it came from the *East*: the sunrise.

When I saw it rise, it came from a place I had just never looked before. If you haven't seen it, get up in the dark and go see it! Like the Mary's did! But you'll have to get up in the dark. If you get up and it's light then you've missed it. Get up in the dark!

It made everything *look* different, like Easter does. It came after a long night of waiting, like Easter does. It was outside my control, like Easter is - *way* outside my control. It came without me asking it to, like Easter does. It took away the night, like Easter does. It changed the direction of my looking, like Easter does. It brought in a new day, like Easter does. The sun rose on it, like He does on Easter, and Easter was *east* like the sun rise!