

FORSAKEN

Crucifixion sets the bar kind of high, don't you think?
Sure - He felt abandoned in the end,
But not until He was nailed to a cross —
Deserted, falsely accused,
About to breathe His last breath.
And in the end,
He surrendered to You.

At least he had You to feel forsaken by.
You —
Omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient —
All the omnis,
Were you there?
He thought so,
Or so the story goes.

We, on the other hand,
Are left to wonder
So often
Where exactly You are.
And if You are.
And if so, who or what You are.

Early on, we were given the white-haired guy in the clouds story.
You were easy to imagine then —
Not that different than Zeb Walton —
Beloved, protective,
And always with a plan.
But then life happened,
And You began to seem
More distant, more unbelievable.
I wonder if He felt that way too
As the time grew closer,
Was he more than grieved? Was he doubtful?
Were you his lost and found Abba?

We have felt you fade in the wake of tyranny,
In genocide and denial of genocide,
In mass incarcerations and slaughter on our streets,
In our powerlessness
While the winds of evil blow across our planet,
In chemical attacks on children

And unquenchable thirst for oil.
We have lost You over fading love
And addiction,
And persistent loneliness.

We have been embarrassed by You,
When You showed up
And showed us up,
And furious with you when You failed to show up.
We stopped believing You would show up,
And took pride in that.
Forsaken doesn't even begin to describe
The pain.

We have believed in Your kingdom
Even without You,
But felt empty for it.

We have sat atop mountains waiting for You.
We have watched ourselves decompensate
Into the type of crowd
Who would shout
Crucify —
Ashamed, yet driven to belong.
Where were You then?
Surely You would have saved us from ourselves,
And the world from us,
Had You been there.

We have derided those who stake their claim on You.
We have lain in hospital beds
Scared,
Grieving lost assurances
And asking Why?
We have felt the last vestiges of You
Drain from us
While we buried too many too soon,
All the while cursing
What felt like cosmic cruelty.

Nowhere close to crucifixion perhaps —
But still forsaken.
Forsaken
Again

And again.

The only thing equal to our pain
Is our longing to feel Your presence —
Something,
Someone —
Into whose hands we might commend
Our spirits.

Cherry Johnson, *Good Friday* 2017