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## I Have Seen the Lord

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# I HAVE SEEN THE LORD

BY LEE MAGNESS

A choral reading for Resurrection morning, incorporating John 20:1–18 and the experience of Mary of Magdala into-reflections on the meaning of the resurrection. Reader 1 tells the scriptural story, Reader 2 is the poetic commentator, and Reader 3 speaks for Mary.

- 1 Early  
 2 cow-milking early,  
     rooster-crowing early,  
     earlier-than-the-crack-of-dawn  
     early
- 1 on the first day of the week  
 2 first in sequence but not in significance  
     (until this one)  
     the day after Sabbath (until this one)
- 1 while it was still dark  
 2 darkest-just-before-dawn dark,  
     bleary-eyed, teary-eyed dark,  
     sky-dark, tomb-dark, soul-dark  
     dark
- 1 Mary of Magdala went to the tomb  
 2 possessed-and-purified-of-the-seven-  
     demons,  
     faithful-and-following-and-funding-  
         his-forays,  
     last at the hurry-before-Sabbath-  
         sundown tomb,  
     first at the Sabbath's-over tomb
- 1 and saw that the stone had been removed from  
     the entrance.  
 2 the heavier-than-her-stony-heart stone,  
     the bitterer-than-gall stone  
     the who-will-roll-away-the-stone?  
     stone

- 1 So she came running to Simon Peter and the  
     other disciple,  
     the one Jesus loved, and said,  
 3 They have taken the Lord out of the tomb,  
     and we don't know where they have put  
     him.
- 1 So Peter and the other disciple started for the  
     tomb.  
 Both were running, but the other disciple  
     outran Peter and reached the tomb first.  
 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen  
     lying there but did not go in.  
 Then Simon Peter, who was behind him,  
     arrived and went into the tomb.  
 He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as  
     the burial cloth that had been around Jesus'  
     head.  
 The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from  
     the linen.  
 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the  
     tomb first, also went inside.  
 He saw and believed.  
 (They still did not understand from scripture  
     that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)  
 Then the disciples went back to their homes  
 2 running, reporting, running, outrunning,  
     reaching,  
     bending over, peeking in, brushing  
         past, going in,  
     seeing, not seeing, seeing, believing,  
     believing but not understanding,  
     believing that Mary was they-have-  
         taken-the-Lord right,  
     but not understanding that he had risen  
     from the dead.
- 1 but Mary stood outside the tomb crying.  
 2 crying her soft, sob-less, tear-less tears,  
     from her cried-out, sightless eyes
- 1 As she wept, she bent over to look into the  
     tomb  
     and saw two angels in white, seated where  
         Jesus' body had been,  
     one at the head and the other at the  
         foot.  
 They asked her, Woman, why are you  
     crying?

3 They have taken away my Lord,  
and I don't know where they have put him.

2 so stunned by the unseen, so focused on  
what she cannot find,  
that she isn't even stunned to be  
seeing things, seeing now-I've-seen-it-all  
things,  
seeing angels of all things,  
carrying on with angels,  
carrying on conversations with angels,  
still all empty-tomb, empty-eye unbelieving

1 At this, she turned around and saw Jesus  
standing there,  
but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

2 seeing, they will not see—  
seeing the one she had studied and  
stared at,  
whose face and form she had  
scanned and surveyed  
in long-light and lamp-light,  
in moon-light and noon-light—  
seeing, they will not see

1 Woman, he said, why are you crying? Who is it  
you are looking for?

2 no more where? or when? or how?  
now, who?  
no more who-has-taken?  
now, who-are-you-looking-for?  
no more cross-eyed, tomb-eyed, stony-eyed,  
empty-eyed woman,  
now, Woman, who are you looking for?

1 Thinking he was the gardener, she said,  
3 Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me  
where you have put him, and I will get  
him.

2 blind to the one who had given her sight,  
blaming the one who had taken her  
blame,  
but asking no explanation,  
wanting only him.

1 Jesus said to her, Mary.  
2 the commonest of all names as if uttered for  
the first time,

the most familiar of names as if in-  
vented for the moment,  
the name which identified her,  
suddenly, strangely, the name  
by which she identified him

1 She turned to him and cried out in Aramaic,  
3 Rabboni!

1 (which means Teacher).  
2 still teaching, still reaching,  
with the name of her heart,  
with the language of her heart,  
and her she-who-has-ears-to-hear ears,  
lifting the lids of her pierced eyes,  
and loosing the lips of her pursed  
mouth

1 Jesus said, Do not hold on to me,  
for I have not yet returned to the Father.  
Go instead to my brothers and tell them,  
I am returning to my Father and your  
Father, my God and your God.

2 she had gained him once by letting him go,  
and must now again,  
as if his going to God gave him to  
her,  
his divine show-and-tell entrusted to  
her—  
to her!—go and tell

1 So Mary of Magdala went to the disciples with  
the news:  
3 I have seen the Lord!  
2 no more they-have-taken-the-Lord,  
no more we-don't-know-where-they-  
have-put-the-Lord,  
now, I have seen the Lord,  
I have heard, held, seen the  
Lord

3 I have seen the Lord!  
23 I have seen the Lord!  
123 I have seen the Lord!

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