

“Spring’s Not My Thing”

Easter Reflection by David Livingstone

April 17, 2022

Spring never felt like it was *mine* when I was growing up. Maybe that sounds a little strange to you. And maybe it *is* a little strange, but I’ll try my best to explain.

I was in kindergarten when I pledged an internal disaffiliation to Springtime. I was at that age where I was figuring out what about me was similar to my classmates and what was different. And for a kindergartener, there are few things that hold quite the same level of importance as one’s own birthday. My birthday is on December 30th, and as a kindergartener, I understood this to mean that I was definitively a “Winter” person.

This might explain why I felt an alignment with Winter over the other seasons, but there was one thing in particular about Spring especially that made me feel like, maybe just a little bit, that it was barred to me. That it wasn’t *for* me.

And that one thing was Easter.

I grew up in a non-Christian household and, unlike Christmas, which for whatever reason did not feel out of bounds to me growing up, Easter was always a holiday that was capital C Christian.

Easter was still a day for pastel paints, egg hunts, eating chocolate animals, and, of course, for putting marshmallow Peeps in the microwave to watch them explode, but there was always a small discomfort as I engaged in these activities.

Behind the paints and eggs and chocolates and exploding marshmallow ducks, there was this shadow of a story. A story about a man who died 2,000 years ago and, impossibly, came back to life.

As I child, I had no idea what to do with that. I had no idea what *that* had to do with all of these other fun rabbit and egg-based activities. All I knew is that this wasn’t really a holiday for me. It was for the other kids.

And that’s how it was for many years. It wasn’t until much later that something shifted.

Some years back, my wife Rennie and I were walking in Brandywine Park in Wilmington, Delaware. We were looking at the fleshy pink and white petals of the magnolia trees just beginning to unfurl themselves from their fuzzy pods, and I

realized that I was witnessing resurrection.

Everywhere I looked, there were bright green buds, shoots, and strands emerging from the trees and the bushes and the dirt, awakening from the silent cold of the winter.

It was Spring, and I was standing smack dab in the center of a miracle.

A tree growing new petals sounds so quiet, so mundane. It doesn’t sound like a miracle at all. A miracle so common, one might pass by that tree a hundred times and never see it as such.

But it is one. It is the Miracle of Resurrection. The shadow of a story of a man who died and returned 2,000 years ago and the unerring persistence of life, blooming anew every spring after the thaw. Both are Easter. Two sides. One coin.

In the words of Martin Luther himself: “God has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone but in every leaf of springtime.”

A miracle is simply a moment where something irrupts into our world. A person, a place, a thing, where Love, Justice, Peace, or Goodness bursts into being. Sometimes miracles flash and burn bright like a lighthouse on the horizon. Other times they glimmer at the edge of our vision like a piece of mica on a rock during a hike. Or, perhaps, like a single new petal blossoming from a tree.

This Easter, I am celebrating life. This Easter, I am celebrating healing. This Easter I am celebrating the truth that the world around us is miraculous. And full of goodness.

Amen.