

The homecoming

There are no questions about where I have been, as he flings chubby toddler arms around my neck.

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He stands at the top of the stairs, bare feet dancing in dinosaur pajamas. His bright eyes meet my own as I climb. His face beams with delight, blue stars flashing with brimming joy.

MAMA!

He shrieks with joy. *MAMA! You are HERE!*

He tips his head backward, golden curls bouncing with glee. He laughs with bliss, bursts of chortles from deep within his being.

You are HOME!

He turns back to me, wide-eyed and grinning.

You came HOME!

He spins in delirious circles of disbelief as we laugh, all of us grinning and watching, his sitter standing ready to leave, his father kneeling next to him, and his mother climbing stair after stair toward him as he squeals, unable to contain his eruption of love.

He dances like a drum major, knees high, arms pumping through the air. He is electric and reborn. He is enthusiasm personified: *God-in-us*, seized by Spirit, overflowing with loving, inhabited presence of indwelling Divine. In him there is no space for anything save joy. Everything he feels is the fullness of this moment: the present moment, the only moment, the embrace of perfect reunion.

He throws himself into my arms, and I breathe in the sunlight of his hair.

Every quivering cell within me reaches out toward him. This, I know, is what the moment of final homecoming will feel like, too: the recognition of the One who is Love, the head-thrown-back delight that this is real, the soul's dancing toes and peals of laughter that good God, this is Everything! Here, now, me, You, within, without end, beyond, Amen.

You came back!

He keeps saying, pulling back from our hug to marvel at my face with his eager smile. He pats the sides of my cheeks with his pudgy hands, as if I am soft clay, as if he is creating me anew.

You came back!

“Yes, my love, of course I”—but he tackles me so hard I cannot finish so I laugh and we laugh and he flings chubby toddler arms around my neck and settles squirming into my lap to be surrounded by the here of me. We are together again.

There are no questions about where I have been, why I left him, what happened while I was gone, or what we will do tomorrow. There is only here and now and him and me. I see through his sparkling eyes that this is all a heart desires: the enoughness of love in the present tense.

Here is joy. It exists in the everywhere of now.

Jesus said, *Behold, it is among you.*

If heaven is anything, it must be light years exploding more than this, fantastical leaping beyond the mind's stretched limits of imagining.

But this—the foretaste, the fullness, the flinging of one's whole self into love, the freedom of surrender into joy's pulsing present moment—homecoming must begin like this.

The laughing and the dancing and the pure delight of joy.

You came back!

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