

the Peace

MORPHEUS COMES UPON ME SLOWLY, fighting his way through the many layers of propriety and armor with which I had clothed myself for the day just ending. My mind is loathe to release the remembered details of the day—its highs and lows, its exulting victories and crushing defeats. Like a skipping LP, the monotonous record of my efforts drones on, replaying, replaying.

I cannot turn it off. I feel a prisoner within myself, a slave to my own exertions. The day is done, but its demands on me persist, filling my mind with every stumble, every point of frustration, every moment at which I lost the Peace.

For I did. Many times. Many times in the day just past I forgot who I was, and the flesh-cloak in which I dwell took over, demanded obeisance and took charge. I could have put it in its place, but I did not. Instead, I listened to its reason, gave ear to its logic.

And now I lie on my bed restless and preoccupied, unable to turn it off.

I am lifted out of my uneasy slumber by the lilting symphony of birdsong. The new day is beginning with a rainbow canopy, the blue sky streaked with the delicate pastels of dawn. My spirit lifts, but I remind myself that the song is simply my winged neighbors searching for food, searching for mates, calling to their own—awaking in their way while I awake in mine. And I tell myself that the beauty of the heavens is little more than crystals of ice catching the rising sun—pretty, but utterly explicable.

Already the flesh-cloak is taking charge.

I rise and go through the motions of starting a new day. Already I am restless over what lies before me: the meetings, the responsibilities, the people, the hard work—the spiritless monotony.

The morning is damp, and I loathe the cloying

humidity. In the still air of the summer morn clothing feels like a woolen cloak on wet skin. And yesterday's trials push back into my thoughts, persistent, nagging. I set myself, resolute, determined to meet this day's demands. I can do it. I *will* do it. I am capable.

Outside there is a light fog, a wisping vapor that softens with a delicate nostalgia, a friendlier cloud, and, turning toward the west, I discover that the entire valley is enveloped in a soft-edged, almost otherworldly cloud.

He is here.

I can feel Him. There below me, in the silent valley pillowed in fog, is the cooling Peace, a silken gentleness that brings calm to my fevered spirit.

I had forgotten Him. I forgot that I no longer tread this path on my own, without support, without counsel, without perspective—without hope. I forgot, if just for a moment, that I have all that and much more in the One who painted the gentle serenity of this morn. My God never left me: like the cooling softness that envelops the valley, his arms are ever soft and supporting about me. They touch. They hold. They make strong my weakness.

Yes, I can feel Him now. He is here.

And here is where I will remain.

Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, revel in him! Make it as clear as you can to all you meet that you're on their side, working with them and not against them. Help them see that the Master is about to arrive. He could show up any minute! Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.

Philippians 4:4-7 The Message

