

Slow Greening – Joyce Rupp

I remember many springtimes when I'd awaken in the morning, look out the window, and zap, there this green grass would be. Robust, vibrant grass. It seemed like it was an overnight kind of thing, brown one day and bright green the next. This greening always came in the springtimes when we had drenching rains. One year, however, we had very little rain and many more cold days than usual. Each day I looked with hope, expecting to find fresh green pushing its way through the drab wintered spears of dryness. But each day I saw, instead, the same dull color before me.

Then I looked closely, however, I could perceive little hints of new life and a slight changing in the color of the lawn. I could almost feel the earth straining, trying to draw forth new life from within it. I knew the green would come again, that it would just be a matter of time before warmth and moisture provided the right conditions for change and growth. Eventually, the green did return, but not until I had waited a long time for rain to come and drench the land.



This process of the earth's greening after a long winter reminds me of our spiritual “eastering,” the inner transformation and rebirthing that comes after we've had a long winter spell of the spirit. The dead, brown grass is there for ages in our hearts, or so it seems. No amount of hurry, or push, or desire can make the green happen any sooner.

I think of people I know who are longing for an inner greening, and are yet in the throes of a spiritual winter: a widow whose husband recently died at a much too early age; a man who is struggling with a new career in midlife and fears his ability to cope with the challenges it requires; the friend whose husband has applied for work far from home and the painful questions it leaves her about what she will do with her own career and friends; a colleague who fell into deep, clinical depression and struggles to live through each day with meager energy. Each one needs an “eastering,” a bright greening, and oh, how they long for it to come soon.

But it may be a painstakingly slow process; a tiny bit of life gradually weaving through the pain and questions. Eastering isn't always a quick step out of the tomb. Sometimes rising from the dead takes a long, slow greening time. It can't be hurried.

It is my hope for you this Easter season that you will trust the resurrection of your spirit, believe that joy and new life will come for you, even though it may not be there for you now. If you are one of the fortunate ones whose soul sings with happy alleluias this Easter, may you turn to those who are still awaiting their greening and walk hopefully with them.

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