

TRUTH THAT RICOCHETS

I went to a lecture once –
An interfaith conversation with
interfaith leaders.
Whispers bounced off the
church's tile floors
As people shuffled into place,
Carrying hope alongside
assumptions –
Mixed into pockets like loose change.

About halfway through the evening,
A young woman in a blue hijab
began speaking.
She was the youngest person on
the panel,
Seated far to the left. You might
almost miss her
If you weren't paying attention;
But not here, not when she speaks.

In quiet determination she told us of
fear and persecution.
She told us of hatred and racial slurs,
Thrown at her people from car
windows like bombs.
It was a truth I did not know,
And that truth ricocheted like sunlight
through the cathedral windows,
Touching almost everyone that day.

Then a man in the back, who could
have been me –
Who *has been me* –
Approached the microphone and said,
“Your people are persecuted. You
live in fear. You are battered
by hate.
If that is true, then why am I just
now hearing about it?
Why is your story not on the news?
Why have you not spoken up
about it?”

And the air was still, partly because
we held our breath in anticipation.
And partly because the Spirit slows
her dance when we stand at the
edge of truth.
The women in the blue hijab leaned
into the microphone
And whispered with a quiet strength
that can only come from years
of practice:
“We are screaming”

If there is one truth in my life
That unfolds again and again,
It is the need to listen.

For again and again, I will try,
with good intentions,
To act and walk with love.
But again and again, I will
make mistakes
Again and again, I will say the
the wrong thing.
Again and again, they will call
me Peter,
And again and again, they will
be right.

So again and again,
I will pray for a truth that ricochets,
For ears that will listen,
And for space to hold truth.

If people are screaming,
And to be clear –
People *are* screaming –
I do not want to miss it.

Poem by Rev.Sarah Are
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