

## 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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