

Rootedness.

Sarah Kretschmann

Some reflections from a summer of learning at United Hospital about where my theology takes root.

Commendation of Grief.

Today

I blessed a dead man's body
minutes after he had taken
his final breath.

To our God
who breathes
us into being

and takes our breath away

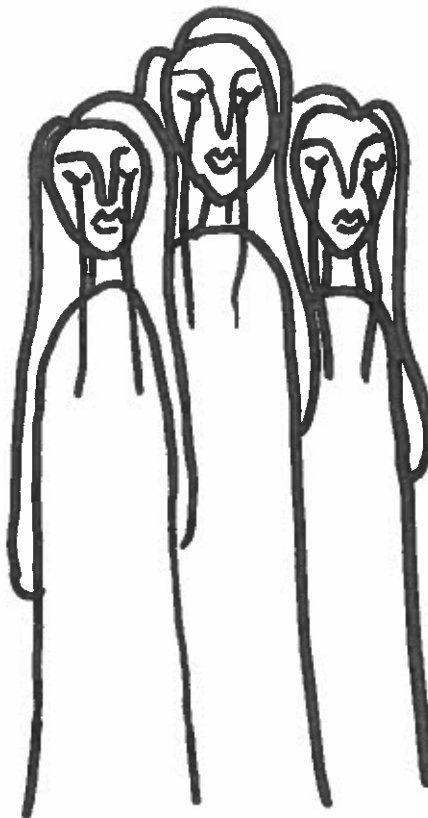
I commended his spirit
for eternal care.

Amidst heart-wrenching sobs
we prayed in our grief
in our sorrow
in celebration

of a man who is so very loved
and will be so very missed.

Maybe it is only through the deepest of sobs
that we can ever express
our love for another
with the whole of our being.

And it is amidst this ultimate sorrow
that we commend
not only a spirit
but our very grief, to God.



Gardener.

A gardener is
deeply connected
to their garden,

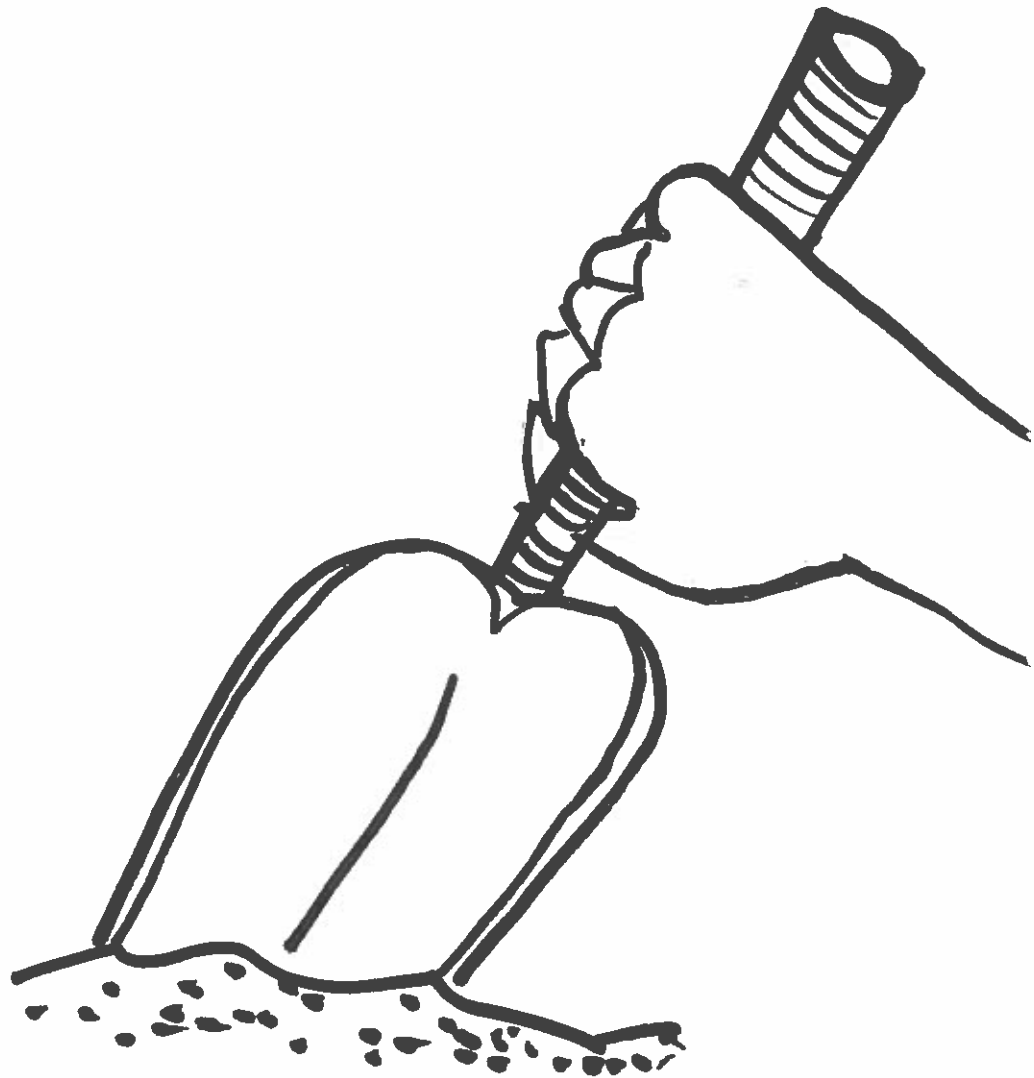
But as a gardener
there is only so much
control you have:

Of pests,
of storms,
of draught,
of cold.

Sometimes as gardener
you have to let nature
move and breathe
in her own way,
her own time.

What a gardener has
to look forward to, though,
is the wonder and joy
of watching those you tend
grow and flourish

In their incredible resiliency
into the rarest of beauty,
unique to only them.



Hardening off.

If we are not grounded
in our stories
how easy can it be

For the first storm of the season
to tear us from what we believed to be
our very rootedness.

In the greenhouses
of our lives,
it is easy to settle in
to what is comfortable,
what is certain

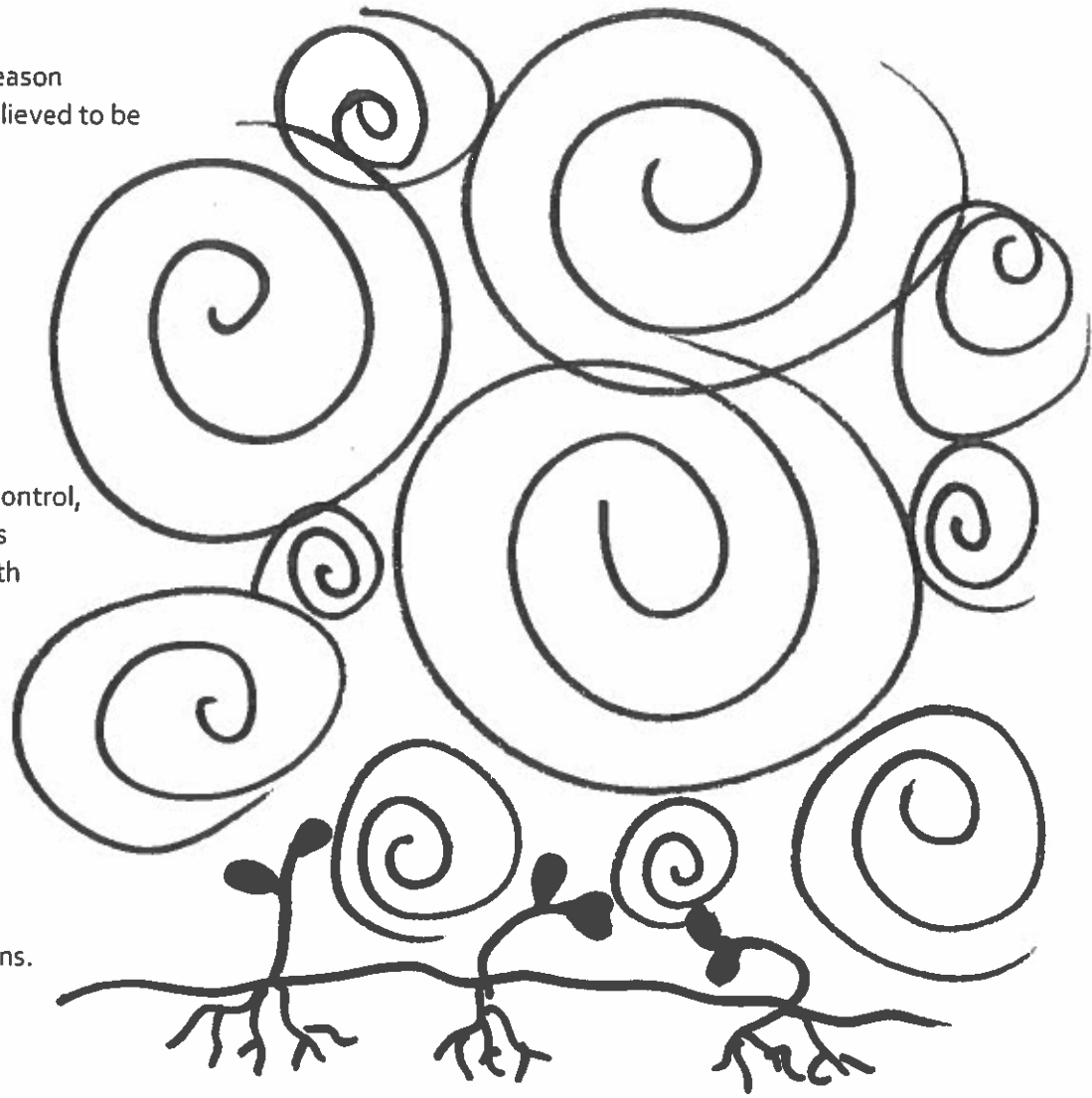
But in these greenhouses
with our personal climate control,
we miss out on the richness
of the soil of the whole earth
bursting with life.

Soil of difference,
soil of discomfort,
soil of humility,
soil of the unknown.

It is in times of challenge
of new experience
that the hardening off begins.

It is amidst the throws
of these first storms
that roots expand
and dig deeper.

Preparing us to flower
and bear fruit
for all the world.



Invasive.

"Jesus is champion of weeds and women, composting mold and out of control harvest – himself taking refuge in the wild and prophetically pillorying the patriarchal and tamed." (James Perkinson)

Sometimes
caring for the spirit
can feel invasive
or presumptuous.

Not unlike the mustard seed
likened to the Kingdom
but forbidden from Jewish gardens
by rabbis because of their rapid spreading.

Maybe that is exactly
what we need to be
as spiritual practitioners

a hearty, wildly spreading crop

bringing sometimes undesirable
depths of self-discovery,
reflection
and grounding

Into a world
in need of newness and life.



Letting go.

There is something
so tragically beautiful
about a world
of inherent fleetingness

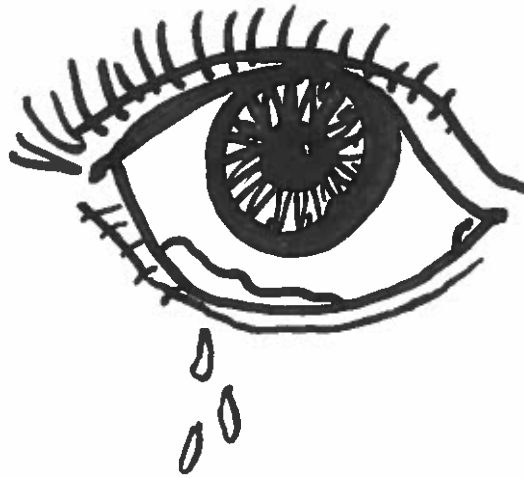
A world of illness
A world of finite beings
A world of death

We all finish our time
on this earth
with un-ended sentences

To be completed
in the next life to come
or maybe to just endlessly
float through time,
a fleeting memory

Maybe it is the sorrow
of un-endedness that
would make a dying woman
bat open her tired eyes to weep,
eyes that have not seen
in this world for years

Or maybe it is the relief of
ultimate completeness
to come that pours out in tears
knowing that all fleeting creatures
eventually must
let go.



Miracles.

The workings of God
may not look like the miracles
we imagine

With dramatic healings
or changes in circumstance

Does that mean they are not miracles?

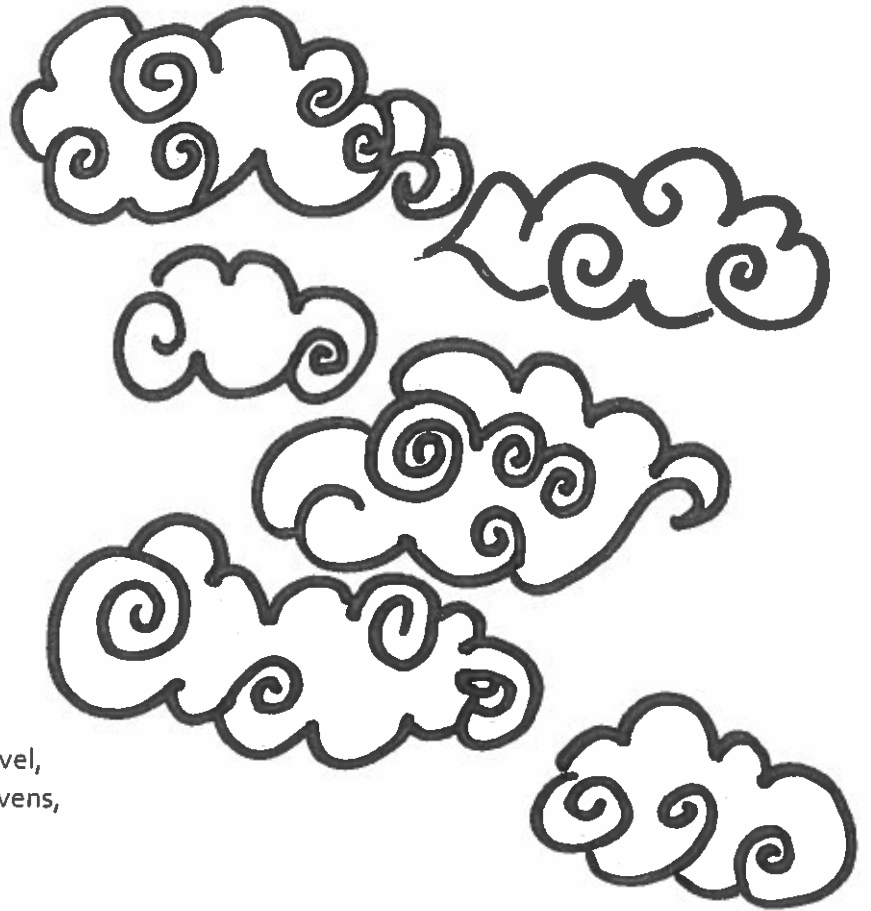
Or just that God's vision
for the world is so beyond
our limited human understanding?

I have come to believe
God is performing wild miracles
every day of our existence,
we just have to notice them.

We worship a God
who gives orders to the morning,
who cuts a path for thunderstorms to travel,
who gives birth to the frost from the heavens,
who has the wisdom to count the clouds.

Every living being
and its place in this world
is a miracle, really.

Sometimes I wonder if love
in the midst of pain
grief and suffering
is the greatest of all possible miracles.



Raw.

Today I sat with a man
in the rawest
truest
moments of heart break.

The heartbreak
that comes with loving another mortal being
from our very core.

But he never stopped holding her hand.

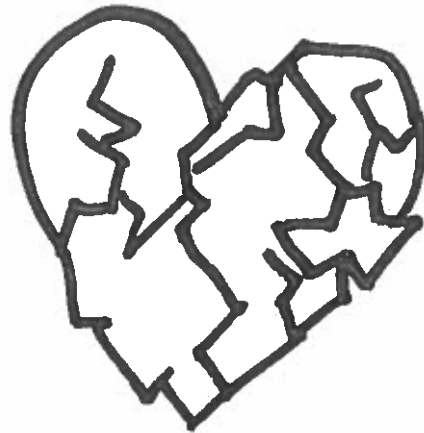
Sometimes life is just so unfair.
Our time with those we love
can be far too short.
And living can hurt too much

But her never stopped holding her hand.

Maybe that is what makes
the pain of love
so raw and jagged.

To love truly,
we need our hearts
to break open
and crack apart
as we make room
to expand

And let others in to hold our hand.



Waves.

"Don't explain it to me, feel it with me."

Maybe those times
our eyes well up with tears
at the pain of another

It is really just the waves
of their pain
washing over us

Tossing us around in watery currents
that overflow the limits of our souls

And pour out the eyes
that have seen too much hurt
for the human heart to handle alone.

Those salty streams
pour down our cheeks

The tributaries leading the way
to fight like hell for the surface

Where we meet those other water warriors
gasping for air
who greet us in chorus,
"Welcome to the pain."

Pain beyond explanation
pain that can only be felt.

It is within these watery depths
we are confronted with the rawness
of humanity

As deep calls to deep
soul to soul
spirit to spirit

