

Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

By Ken Woodley

“In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went to a deserted place, and there he prayed.”

—the Gospel of Mark

THE CORNER OF YOUR SMILE INSIDE ME

I remember being a child in Nazareth,
sitting on the flat roof of our house under a night sky
so filled with stars
that I thought the darkness would turn itself inside out.

But there is more darkness in the world than is found in the night sky
and I prayed that one day, no matter what,
the light would turn all of that other darkness inside out.

That is still my prayer, God.

But I also prayed that the light would somehow turn me inside out, too.
And then one day you did.
The light of your love turned me upside down and inside out.
It still does.
Astonishing me.
Especially when I need it most.

And so here I am in this deserted place,
under the star-pricked sky,
feeling almost like a child in school
who has precisely followed his teacher’s instructions:
Make an imaginary night sky
by poking small holes in dark construction paper
to let the flashlight shine through from behind
like midnight constellations.

Almost.

Because I am the child
who chose to tear away the dark paper
and let in all of the light, instead,
forever shining your love into the souls
of those who've gone away now
with their healing and their scars,
leaving me weary but warily exhilarated
at the luminous possibilities of it all,
brushing the hammers and the nails aside
and living the life you dreamed I would,
feeling the corner of your smile widening inside me,

and a joy deeper than rumbling laughter
reflected in the moonlight sailing on the waves below.

