

## SURPRISED AT SUNRISE

Surprised at sunrise were two women,  
two women making their way to the tomb of a friend,  
the tomb of a revered teacher,  
two women who came to perform an unwelcome task  
that somebody had to do,  
two women who had watched in helpless horror the  
dying agony of a man condemned by jealousy.

Since the mock trials and the gruesome visages that followed, they had had uncounted hours for the sights of that Friday to become fixed in their minds.

Theirs was the sad surprise that the long-awaited One unbelievably had been killed—which meant they had hoped in him in vain.

Numb from fitful sleep and crushed anticipations, these two women made their lonely pilgrimage in the ebbing darkness for more than a mile, wondering how they could even do what they had to do.

Puzzled by the stone rolled away from that sealed sepulcher,  
puzzled by an empty burial niche—of all things a stolen body of a dead man!

Then there came an unexpected long shadow cast by the early-morning sun,  
a shadow that turned one of the women around,  
the shadow of an unknown gardener who said, “Mary.”

Surprised by an angel and his announcement: “*He is not here; he has resurrected.*”  
Surprised by a joy proportionate to their sorrow,  
Surprised by the dawning, not of a new day, but of a new age, a new history,  
Surprised, not by renewed hope, but by a new kind of hope entirely.

Surprised are we all especially in the stark darkness of our disappointments, our despondencies, our depressions—all dispelled by the light of the One who conquered our greatest fears and ascended above them on high, who has not left us orphans in the world, but draws us ever onward, ever upward after himself in proportion to our surprise at what he has prepared for those who diligently follow him.

Today . . . we . . . here . . . relive the sunrise to keep the surprise alive.

Virgil Warren  
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