

Whispers in the Silence

By Sue Nordgren, Christos Graduate

The noise was deafening. Have you ever noticed when you're shouting that the only sound you can hear is your own voice? Well, I was shouting. Wailing was more like it. Calling out to God with a biblical ferocity that would make Jeremiah proud. The pain was so great. It washed over me in great waves and blurred my sense of reality. There was, after all, nothing more real than my pain. And so I wailed. Ranted, raved, spit out accusations like so many watermelon seeds at a hot July picnic. Where are you, God? Why don't you care? You said you'd always care about me, always be with me. So where are you? Why aren't you listening? Why aren't you doing something? Why are you letting me go through this, this misery, this pain, this hell? Where is your justice? Do you really think I deserve this? I have, after all, been faithful to you. Of course, I'm human so my faithfulness doesn't look quite like yours, but all in all, it's something to be proud of. And rewarded for, if I do say so myself. So why are you "rewarding" me with your absence? Your silence? Your complete and utter lack of regard for my suffering? How am I to function in my life if I have to deal with this pain? You need to do something and do it fast!

It went on like this for a long time. Years really. The pain was real and the demands were, well, demanding. Anger hardened into a small knot that helped dull the pain, but not entirely. Thankfully, the intensity could not be maintained forever. Fatigue set in eventually; exhaustion took over when despair ran out of energy.

And then . . . silence. The cessation of noise, the noise that deafened and drowned out all but its own voice. The silence allowed a whisper to be heard that invited me to relinquish the demands and the anger. It invited me to be in the silence and listen. I became aware of God's presence that had been there all along but couldn't be heard for all my noise. In the Presence I floated in stillness. My questions and pain lingered, my circumstances did not change, but there were no more accusations to fling. Instead there was trust. Trust in the face of uncertainty, even mystery; trust in God's presence. Trust became fertile ground for rest, a place where worry, fear and anger did not find a home. As I rested I saw my life with wide open eyes and was comforted in the quiet stillness of being with God. The incomprehensible confusions of life yielded to the gifts of the Whisperer: in the absence of certainty grew trust, in the presence of mystery came rest, for in the solitude of my heart I met God.