

**A Movement of Very Small Proportions**  
*By, Cynthia Reynolds, Tending the Holy Graduate*

Once upon a time, years ago in my college days, I sat outside a professor's office to talk to him about a term paper grade with which I disagreed. I soon realized that professors don't *have* to show up for their posted office hours if they don't really need to. No matter, he was bound to show up eventually. Time passed and still I sat there. Abruptly a door just to my right opened up and a professor I didn't recognize stepped out into the hallway.

He stopped, looked at me and said, "What are you doing here?"

"Waiting," I replied.

There was a long silent pause. It felt like it went on forever though I'm sure it was less than a minute.

Then he said, "What is the wind doing when it is not blowing?"

Highly suggestible creature that I am, I said, "Waiting?"

He sighed deeply, locked his office door and ambled down the hallway. I sat there another ten minutes or so and in that time my reason for being there began to fade. I was now preoccupied with the question "What is the wind doing when it is not blowing?" I glanced at the retreating professor's door and saw that he was from the philosophy department. This was probably one of the questions he presented to his freshman philosophy students wondering year after year if there would be an original answer forthcoming. Whatever his reasons for posing it to me, I have been reflecting on it ever since.

Just recently I thought of it again as I prepared for the arrival of a young directee. I had had a stressful few days leading up to this time and very little quiet with God. My day at work kept the tension going and as I drove home I spoke out to God my frustration and my concern that I was not bringing my best self to this spiritual direction session. The stress and tension had robbed me of peace and any "right" thoughts I felt I needed to have to be a good SD. I knew I had brought this all on myself, letting the tension build, skipping or cutting short quiet and meditative time. I didn't really have excuses at the ready, I just poured out my sense of emptiness and inadequacy. And I waited. No great thoughts came, no words, no verses, nothing. I pulled into the garage picked up the mail and changed my clothes. I straightened the room where I meet with directees, sat down and lit a candle.

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I waited. My directee was late. Slowly, I stopped waiting for her arrival and shifted – a small movement - to waiting for God, then another small shift to just waiting. My directee did arrive eventually and later, after our session together and goodbyes, I reflected on our time. It had been good - a small breakthrough for her and in that, also good for me. More than that, I felt a deep sweet connection to the Spirit that had begun before she arrived and I didn't want to let go of it. I wanted to keep waiting. In the waiting there is something beautifully still and deeply true. The essence that permeates so much of life swirls there and in letting go of trying to grab it, just being in it, waiting not *for* it or *on* it but *in* it, there is beauty and truth. Most days we miss it. It gets swallowed up in stresses, details, mental maneuvering.

Sometimes our awareness of God's presence is wrapped up in the unexpected, spontaneous, surprise elements of an otherwise ordinary day. It catches us unaware; it takes our breath away. But sometimes it creeps up on us. Like a sound we hear from far off that we can't quite identify, so we wait, straining at first, but with a deep breath we relax. And in those moments of relaxing, we realize how much we have been holding on, resisting, figuring things out in our own head. The sound gets slightly louder and has a familiar tone. But we stop trying to identify it and our waiting becomes less an act of our will and more a movement of very small proportions.

Where is the wind when it is not blowing? Where is the Spirit when it is not moving? Waiting for us to notice? Waiting for us to get in sync? Or just waiting, in that enveloping, holding way that the wind does before it blows?

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