

Gethsemane

I want to tell the story. But—
there is no approaching this,
strange crux
of everything.

Come at it sideways.
Come at it from the edge.

Picture, then,
a hardscrabble patch of land.
Rocks. An olive tree. Sparse,
straggling desert grass. The rocks

have been waiting. The wind
has been waiting. The living souls nearby
sleep through the whole thing.
(This is important. I have slept
through many things.)

And then—
What

can be known? There has never been
any moment more private
nor more public.

So.

What I know: the screaming windy cliff
of unavoidable onus, the weight
of what must be done.

For me, it was the abyss
of being about to give birth. The way
the self shrinks
to a pinpoint in a vacuum, the way
one becomes lost, faceless,

the way
the thought that there is another soul depending on you
can pull you inside out and through
to a new place.

But of course
even in that, my most impossible moment,
he was already there,
having been there before me.

Oh, how is a human
to comprehend godly heartbreak?
Might as well teach a point on a line
about temples and spires,
about stars. It's a matter of dimension:
impossible geometry.

What we know:
he went to a place.
He knew that ahead of him
was a pain yet unknown in the world,
extra-dimensional. That
seeing it, he, who had maybe
never known fear before this,
asked to be excused,
but not really.

We know:
the contemplation of that pain
was so terrible it required the ministrations
of an angel before it could be approached.

We know:
at point zero
he was left alone
in a way no human can comprehend.

We know:
he came out on the other side
gentle, generous,
quieter.

Forever after,
he would say very little about it.
Only: *shrink*.
Only: *nevertheless*.

—Darlene Young