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Dear God

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Dear God

Stephanie Blyth¹

Dear God,

Why was I not born with Faith? Although I am truly honoured to hear and learn about everyone else's own concept of you, these seem like stories that I cannot connect with. The story of Creation, Christ, the Great Spirit, Mohammad, Siddhārtha as Buddha; these feel so disconnected and irrelevant to my own experience. I sense you are incomprehensible to humans. This is why stories about you do not resonate with me. I deeply enjoy them as anecdotes but see little value as any aid in our own relationship or connection, God.

I see examples of unshakeable faith in you, in many shapes and forms, and have always wondered how to attain such a thing. I hear stories of absolutely horrific tragedies, where the sufferer's faith and trust in you as their Lord or Great Spirit was not once brought in to question. People who have had to bury their children, or their culture, or both. The most resilient of people I have met tend to turn to you during their darkest hours and have found peace in the middle of agony. This must be the work of something beyond pain; even the most painful human experiences have not annihilated You for some. For me, however, I cannot seem to turn or trust in you during my finest hours, and sometimes I swear you have left me during the dark nights of my own soul to fend for myself.

I feel like I am still in the womb; I am in the dark. I cannot decipher what is real or what is to come. I am waiting to be born, God, unsure if I will be met by you or not. I know that someone of stronger faith would be anxiously anticipating their undeniable union with you upon their birth. Nonetheless, as I am held in this existential darkness, I swear I can feel you sometimes. I think I have felt you, in a sense humans refer to as Oneness, in moments everywhere and anywhere. God, this leads me to believe you are omnipresent and with me always; it is only on rare, seemingly random occasions that I actually get the sense that you are with me.

I sense your nearness when connecting with anything beyond myself in an isolated existence; nature, community, witnessing another person's innate goodness, witnessing my own innate goodness, or that rare moment of absolute stillness, not only on my yoga mat, but in my ever spiraling mind. But these moments never last, God, sometimes leaving me questioning their existence at all.

I have begged you for an introduction, and you have tried. Remember that time on the Cambodian mountain top, when I was so overcome by the beauty of the creation that I was brought to my knees, weeping with joy? And you spoke to me, gently whispering "look what you would have missed if I had been reciprocal to those times you begged me to take your life?" Looking for you in the day-to-day since has not been easy. I hope this does not sound greedy, God, but I do not want our relationship to be one of sparse, acute experiences. I do not want our relationship to have that kind of agenda.

So, God, how do I obtain a faith that permeates my existence, like the sun kissing the Earth's skin? Even when the moon has her time, we know that the sun does not stop existing;

¹ TH530A: Introduction to God and Theological Reflection, Winter 2019.

it simply takes on a gentler form in the moons reflection. This is the faith I so badly crave, God; an integral reference point for my existence that I know is eternal, even when I cannot see its light or feel its warmth. To be in the darkness of the womb, but know that the mother is a part of me, holding me and keeping me safe.

Therefore, I am still seeking, God, because I have yet to find an answer that feels unshakeable to me. And as I write this, I sense and trust that this is part of your plan for me. If I felt I had all of these answers, I would not actively seek to fill the excruciating void in me. And in this headstrong seeking, I have experienced all of the most pure and beautiful things of life; the deepest friendships I would not have otherwise pursued, the unconditional love of a dog that needed my care, going to therapy to deepen my understanding of myself, connecting with certain pieces of music, creating art, diligently studying the ancient teachings of yoga; all in seeking out connection with you. So perhaps I should be thankful that I am unsure of your existence. Is that your gift to me?

Looking forward to hearing from you more frequently (or maybe not) as I continue seeking.

All of my love,
Steph

Author's Note:

Inspiration for this letter was received through several articles and books. During my exploration of different cultural and religious anecdotes, I was drawn to the question of faith. What does this look like? Reading the book "Theology Brewed in an African Pot" by Agbonkhanmeghe E. Orobator (2008) I learned about the unrelenting faith of African cultures in the face of deep tragedies and hardships. This unshakeable faith of people who have faced much deeper struggles and pain than I have led to my questioning of where this comes from, and why I do not possess it. This unshakeable faith in a higher power seems so elusive to me. The wisest of people accept the concept of something that can never be proven or disproven by acts of faith. This puzzles me deeply. How do these intellects accept something that cannot be proven? And how do they possess such a faith? Can I ever come to possess such a thing? Both of the articles "Addressing God with Names of Earth" by Lisa E. Dahill (2016) and "The Healing Power of the Imagination" by Patricia A Burke (1999) inspired my imagination for interpreting my interactions with God through nature. Immersed in nature are the only times I have felt something "beyond" myself. Although vague, these moments are the closest I have been to experiencing God. "Indigenous Perceptions of God" by John Friesen (2010) also reflect the parallels that resonate with me through respecting and loving creations of nature as an act of faith in The Creator (Indigenous understanding of God). Indigenous worldviews make the most sense to me as I feel closest to "something greater" when in the presence of the natural world; plants, animals and open bodies of water tend to spark and move something in me that I have not been able to articulate. I have the utmost respect for the planet we live on and the creatures that reside here. I do not believe humans are superior over the natural world and it breaks my heart that we mindlessly treat it as dispensable. I share my space and care for many plants and eat a plant based diet out of respect for the Earth. You could therefore say that my diet and spending time honouring natural creation are my current epistemological acts of faith.