

John 11: 38 – 44

'Lazarus'

A Meditation from 'Light Shines: 100 Meditations for Lent' by Nick Fawcett. Number 87

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It was so weird,
so unreal.
At least that's how it felt.
And yet it happened!
I'd breathed my last, no question about that.
After those long dark days of sickness,
the pain growing
the strength failing;
after those final terrible hours,
sweat pouring down my face,
lungs gasping for air;
at last came peace,
darkness closing about me,
suddenly welcome though it had long been feared.
An end to the struggle,
the battle nearly over.
For a moment I was a child again, comforted by my mother's embrace,
a youth running wild as the wind,
a man setting out fresh on life's great adventure,
a father, taking my child into my arms.
And then rest.
The light went out,
The flame extinguished,

the game completed.
Only it wasn't,
for suddenly a voice summoned me back to the fray,
sunshine burst into the tomb,
and consciousness returned.
No wonder they gasped,
swooned,
wept for joy,
for I who had been taken from them
who had been dead,
was alive!
And yes, I thanked Jesus, of course I did,
once the confusion had cleared away,
but it took a while, I can tell you.
And even now just once in a while
I wonder if he really did me any favours,
for I know that one day I must face it all over again.
Yet it will be different then,
very different,
not just because I've been there before and know there's nothing to fear,
but because he has shown me that death is not so much the end
as the beginning.
That's why he raised me from the tomb.
Not just to restore life or defer death,
but to point to a new birth,
a resurrection that only he can bring.
He came back too, you know,
back from beyond the grave.

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Three days in his tomb,
long enough for decay to take hold,
but he appeared to Mary,
to Peter,
to the apostles,
to us all.

That's how we know that,
even though we die,
one day we shall live,
just as he lives now!

Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ,

you came to bring us life in all its fullness;

to offer hope beyond the grave.

Teach us that death is not the end, but a new beginning –

the gateway to life everlasting.

And may that confidence shape our attitude not only towards death

but towards life also.

May we live each day in the context of eternity

rather than simply of the here and now,

knowing there is nothing in heaven or earth

that will ever finally be able to separate us from your love.

Amen.