

John 11: 43a, 44

'Lazarus'

*A Meditation from 'Light Shines: 100 Meditations for Lent' by Nick Fawcett. Number 88
(Kevin Mayhew Publications 2011)*

He called me out of the tomb,
his words somehow reaching into the darkness
and restoring life.

One moment, oblivion –
and the next I was up on my feet,
shuffling out of the tomb.

One moment, trussed up like a chicken,
mummified before my time,
and the next scratching my head in bewilderment,
baffled by the look on their faces.

They thought me a ghost,
gazing in astonishment and reaching out in disbelief.

I'd been dead,
and was alive again,

really alive –

*not just existing as I'd done previously,
but enthused with a joy such as I'd never known before,
set free not just from my grave clothes
but from everything that had held me captive,
denying and destroying life.*

*I'll die eventually of course,
just like anyone else,
but he summoned me from the grave,
defeating the power of death,*

*and I know now that, in the fullness of time,
he's able to do the same again and more besides,
not just for me
but for all.*

Prayer:

Eternal God,

thank you for the hope you give us –

a hope that will not disappoint.

Thank you for the knowledge that

though this life must come to an end –

its conclusion bringing with it the trauma of bereavement,

the anguish of losing loved ones,

the bleak awareness of our own mortality –

we are able, finally, to face death

not with despair, fear or resignation,

but in quiet confidence

assured that it is a stepping stone to new beginnings,

the start of a fresh chapter,

a pathway into your kingdom and the joy of everlasting life,

lived with you and all your people for evermore.

Amen.