

waymaker



# waymaker

FINDING THE WAY TO THE LIFE  
YOU'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF

ANN VOSKAMP



W PUBLISHING GROUP

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Published in Nashville, Tennessee, by W Publishing Group, an imprint of Thomas Nelson.

Published in association with William K. Jensen Literary Agency, 119 Bampton Court, Eugene, Oregon 97404.

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ISBN 978-0-3103-5222-8 (ITPE)

### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Voskamp, Ann, 1973- author.

Title: Waymaker : finding the way to the life you've always dreamed of / Ann Voskamp.

Description: Nashville, Tennessee : W Publishing Group, [2022] | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: LCCN 2021049412 (print) | LCCN 2021049413 (ebook) | ISBN 9780310352198 (hardcover) |

ISBN 9780310352204 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Trust in God—Christianity. | Dreams—Religious aspects—Christianity. | Christian life.

Classification: LCC BV4637 .V67 2022 (print) | LCC BV4637 (ebook) | DDC 234/.2—dc23/eng/20211029

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021049412>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021049413>

*Printed in the United States of America*

22 23 24 25 26 LSC 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*To Shiloh*  
*My heart is tied to your heart,*  
*always and forever,*  
*no matter what,*  
*because, in a thousand ways,*  
*the WayMaker split the seas and made the Way through to*  
*the wonder of you,*  
*to the miracle of Love,*  
*to the dream come true*  
*that is nothing less than the lovingkindness of His arms,*  
*and in Him, no matter the way,*  
*we are all,*  
*always,*  
*soul-safe.*  
*Trust.*



# CONTENTS



## *Part One*

1. IN THE BEGINNING .....	3
2. THE ART OF THE TURN .....	24
3. COME LET ME LOVE YOU.....	48
4. HOW TO BE KNOWN.....	66
5. THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME.....	87
6. YOUR KINGDOM COME.....	111
7. RED SEA ROAD.....	139
<i>SELAH</i> .....	162

## *Part Two*

8. INTO THE STORM.....	167
9. PILGRIMAGE.....	178
10. THE FEAR OF BEING FOUND.....	191
11. KIN .....	205
12. CLEMATIS.....	224
13. OPEN HEART SURGERY.....	242
14. THE WAYMAKER .....	258

Contents

15. SIGN..... 276

16. MOSES WAY ..... 295

17. HONEYMOON..... 325

  

*The WayFarer's SACRED Way..... 339*

*Acknowledgments ..... 345*

*Notes ..... 348*

*About the Author..... 357*





*Part One*





## chapter one

# IN THE BEGINNING



Where am I? Who am I? How did I come to be here? What is this thing called the world? How did I come into the world? Why was I not consulted? And if I am compelled to take part in it, where is the director? I want to see him.

—SØREN KIERKEGAARD



till, it's hard to confess: We were married only four short days when we cut our honeymoon three days short.

I close the bathroom door of our lime-green, shag-carpeted motel room, turn the shower tap to hot, let it thrum loudly, drown out the heart fracturing. I slide down the wall, crumple a bit on the chipped tile floor, and cry like a baby who

waymaker

wants her mama, tears mingling with steam. He's a deeply kind man. Doesn't he want to grab my hand and gather me close, more than he wants to go home, grab his work boots, and feel the curve of some tractor's steering wheel in his hands? It's not about needing to be living some dream script—I just need the script running in my head to say I'm wanted, that I won't be abandoned, that I'm somehow seen and known and safe.

If you don't know you're really wanted in the beginning, you can end up somewhere you never wanted—somewhere you never dreamed. Neither one of us knew that then. Then, he just knew he wanted to get back to the farm and get back to the rhythm of work. And now, if I'm crying-out-loud honest on a bathroom floor, I wonder if I actually wanted to find a way out too. To find my own exodus, out of me, out of this story I didn't sign up for. Where is the exodus—the way out of the things that hurt beyond words—to a promised, expansive way of life?

Water drums in the empty shower. We may think we know what we want, but what we really want is to be known. Heard. Seen. Safe. My disillusion spills soundlessly all over the floor. How do you hope to find a way out of all that's going wrong in your one and only life? Everyone's just trying to find their own way, to their own dream come true. The dream isn't ever truly about experiencing miraculous things, but about the experience of feeling miraculously known.

After our wedding, after our reception, after we'd driven slowly down the gravel laneway and away from the white tent in the backyard of my parents' farm—me waving to the knots of guests still mingling with their plastic cups of lemonade punch out on the lawn between the barn and the gnarled old

apple trees of my childhood summers—I'd turned to him, the man whose name I now shared. I'd smiled long and happy in the dark.

This was the beginning.

In the beginning, in our beginning, there was hope. There was a honeymoon. There was a used Ford Taurus, and there was a gym bag of his t-shirts in the trunk alongside the suitcase I'd bought for my first year of university. Now it was packed with the silk robe and lingerie my mama and I had picked out and folded up carefully for this honeymoon of dreams come true, a time once meant to be a whole month long, as long as it takes for the moon to wane and wax anew.

Sure, we were just two dirt-poor kids who didn't have the luxury of any two pennies to rub together, who couldn't even dream of running away to some rustic mountain hideaway or some posh, sun-drenched resort. Not only because we were scrounging every dime for a down payment on a place of our own, but also because some wise mentor, who sat in the back pew of Sunday chapel with his bride of a half-century, had told us that if a honeymoon was ultimately about seeing some beautiful place, it might distract from the beauty of ultimately seeing the person. So we'd made up our minds—and our frugal pockets sealed the deal. We'd just drive forty-five minutes of gravel country roads up to the lake. The same lake where, as kids, we'd known Sunday afternoon picnics of fried chicken—the same lake we'd known our whole lives. We'd sit at the water's edge and begin our life together there. We'd book some motel that was easy on the wallet, that was still near the water, and maybe if we slid open a janky window and craned our necks, we'd even hear the lake—the promise of waves, coming again

waymaker

and again all night long to kiss old wounds and wash all things clean, and we would begin to become one.

But I had absolutely no idea that every honeymoon—one with a mate, a job, a child, a dream, a hope—murmurs an earnest warning of its own. Every moon wanes. The moment the moon is finally full, it immediately begins to wane. This is the way things are; this is the rhythm of being; these are things you can never change. Like the moon, our dreams, our loves, our hopes wax and wane, ebb and flow, rise and fall. Life comes in waves, and the way to live is to find a way to ride waves.

Under the stillness of stars on the twenty-fifth of June, right there under the rising and falling and waving shape of Cassiopeia, we drive away from our farmyard reception. I'm wearing silky and pearly white, and he's wearing tuxedoed black, and we're both wearing our engraved gold bands and the shy smiles of this tender bonding—and the moon orb over our matrimonial heads and the bowed heads of the wheat fields to the west is already waning gibbous.

We marry. We honeymoon on a waning moon.

## THE PLANS OF MICE AND NEWLYWEDS

As he drives toward the waves of the Great Lakes, I pull up just the hem of my wedding dress, the scalloped embroidery grass-stained from our backyard reception. I curl my bare feet up under me, turn a bit on the front seat of that Ford Taurus, and lay my head on his leg. He runs his big Dutch farming hands through my hair slowly, whispers it, the line of a song they used to play on the radio: "I think we're alone now."

He traces the nape of my neck.

“You couldn’t be more beautiful. I couldn’t be happier.”

I guffaw as he curls my hair around his fingers. Would we be the honeymooners who sleep close in islands of lunar light, like the lunatics who believe that dreams can last and never wane?

I can feel his gentle smile in the dark. And I must have closed my eyes only for a moment, but it’s enough to drift away into dreams of bringing home babies we never bury, and our parents aging into softly worn, silver-crowned glories who hold hands on front porch rockers while they hold the tiny humans our love has made. And the whole road ahead of us endlessly reroutes in our imaginations, avoiding head-on collisions with suffering, and we find ourselves in our own kind of promised land.

My own mama, she had four children, four and under, and she held her swaddled three-week-old babe in her arms when she stood over an open grave to bury her two-year-old daughter. It’s my very first memory, just after my fourth birthday—standing beside Mama as she screamed bloody horror, watching as an oblivious service truck driver struck down our little Aimee, crushing her in our farmyard right outside the kitchen window as we washed dishes at the sink, and then blithely driving on out our lane. How can a delivery driver not feel the wholeness of your child under the tires of his truck when she holds your whole heart?

My mother-in-law, she’d stood over two of her children’s graves, burying first her four-year-old son with different abilities, to whom she had been a 24/7 primary caregiver. Then only six years later her firstborn, her seventeen-year-old son, pulled out

waymaker

directly in front of a truck he couldn't see in the blinding blaze of a glorious Friday evening sunset, on his way to a church youth group meeting. He'd been a mere two miles from home. She buried him on a Tuesday afternoon, then came home with her six younger children to get dinner on the table before they all had to go to the barn for the six p.m. milking of the cows.

If she stated it once, my mother-in-law told me literally two hundred times: "Three things." She held up her thick fingers over the bean leaves, her plain gold wedding band wearing a pressed red ring right into her skin. I was a gangly, spectacled kid of seventeen, dating her boy, the youngest of her nine, and she and I were out in her kitchen garden, both hunched over a row of yellow string beans, heaping our wooden baskets full.

"There were only three things I was certain about when I was twenty years old: I never wanted to marry a farmer. I never wanted to leave the Netherlands. I never wanted to have a big family."

She stood up, straightened in a patch of lazing sun. Said it slow, so I wouldn't miss the summary of her life story: "And? I ended up marrying a farmer. I left my home country—my mother, my family—the day after I married. And then I had nine kids—and ended up burying two."

She was still standing.

Still standing in the beans. Still standing, softened and worn into the beauty of real, after nothing turned out the way she had dreamed for the only life she would ever have. What was she trying to tell me? Was this strong Dutch woman in an apron asking for pity? Doubtful. She may have been trying to tell me: Detours are the way dreams and destinies actually come true.

The destiny we all ultimately dream of is a destination where

we are ultimately seen, safe, soothed, and secure.<sup>1</sup> Even nightmares of loss and tragedy and grief can still become an unexpected awakening to tender dreams, if there are ways—even in the dark places—to be seen and known, safe and secure. Dreams are brave laughter that lingers long into the night, hands finding ours, warming light finding our faces—and the possibility of being known even here grows our hearts achingly large. Wherever we are always accepted and never alone, never abandoned, our deepest dreams can come true—even in the midst of nightmares. I had high hopes of waking to a dream different from both of our mothers'. No graves. No slammed doors or cold wars, no lightning-bolt diagnosis or stalking depression, no abandonment or estrangement, no cascading job loss or piling bills or empty arms. No trauma from the straight-out-of-nowhere tragedy, the unlikely addictions, the turned distractions, the knife-in-the-back betrayal, the flat-out rejection, or the entirely suffocating personal failure you can't escape because you can't escape out of your own skin. Why do we think that our life will be the one that finds a way to easier roads? Why in the world did I? It's when we expect life to be easy that it becomes hard.

Buy the lie that your life is supposed to be heaven on earth, and suffering can be a torturous hell. But life is suffering, and suffering is but the cross we bear, part of earth's topography to cross on our way to heaven. I wouldn't know it for years: Screens sell pipe dreams. Every screen is trying to sell the lie to you—from Hollywood to Netflix to Instagram—the lie that all you have to do is buy this, work out like this, wear this, style it like this, believe this, pursue this, get a career like this, find someone like this, and you, too, can find the way to a perfect life, just like this. But buy any perfectly filtered and marketing-framed

waymaker

illusion, and you end up painfully disillusioned. Regardless of what Instagram or all the glossy ads are shilling, your suffering isn't some unique anomaly; suffering is the universal experience of all humanity. Suffering doesn't mean you're cursed; suffering means you're human. The question isn't "Why is there suffering in my life?" but "Why *wouldn't* there be suffering?" Because such is life in a broken world. The question is "What way will you bear your suffering?" I didn't know it then, and I am still learning this now: Life is really hard because that is the reality of being alive. Life is hard in a thousand ways, and what comes the easiest to us is getting lost.

## DANGEROUS EXPECTATIONS

I stir as he slows the Ford Taurus to make a right turn in the dark. I catch the headlights swinging across trees.

"Where—where are we?"

It's one Edenic question, whispered in the dark. An echo of history's first good question: *Where are you?* And perhaps in response, all of us through history have had our own EPS—an internal Expectational Positioning System—with expectations of where we think we should be by now on the road, of where the road is supposed to go, expectations of how we'd be loved, of how long we'd all have together, of the way everything is expected to work out in the end.

Expectations can slay any relationship, especially with God. And an Expectational Positioning System has never failed to eventually position the soul in a bit of a hell of its own making—with its expectations to at least keep pace with, or better yet surpass,

someone else, anyone else. Strange, how you cannot feel content in your heart whenever it feels like someone else is ahead of you. Whenever you measure the seeming distance between where you are and where someone else is, discontent fits into your soul. Measuring sticks are self-harming. Comparison is soul-maiming. And likening your journey to anyone else's is a way to hate your own soul. I still bear tender scars.

"We're almost there." He whispers it in the dark, leaning ahead, looking for a street name. I try to find my shoes. It would take me decades to look back and see where I really was.

Life is never made unbearable by the road itself but by the way we bear the road. It's not the hard roads that slay us; what actually slays us is the expectation that this road isn't what we hoped it to be.

"I think it's right here." He slows to turn into the hotel parking lot. I exhale, reach for his hand, feel that strange gold band right there wound round his virgin ring finger. Us. Together, bound.

## HONEYMOON

I don't remember check-in. Or what the clerk at the desk thought of the fresh-faced kid in his tuxedo with the nervous megawatt grin. I do remember him opening the door to our motel room and the shade of the green shag carpet and how I steadied my knees when I stepped in.

We stand at the edge of the bed. His fingertips brush the nape of my neck again as he gathers my hair and fumbles to help me with the zipper of my dress. I am now more vulnerable than

waymaker

I have ever known. Newborns begin in vulnerability, and with every breath, we only keep growing into greater vulnerability, or we let parts of ourselves die.

He turns out the lights. Turns to try to find me in the dark under sheets.

Bare inner arch of his naked foot finds the bridge of mine, us finding our ways across the space between us, the shy entangling of a new and tender grace.

“You okay?”

What do I even say? I’m awkward, like a nervous introvert finding herself on a dance floor. I’m kinda desperate to hide. He lifts my chin to find his eyes, as if the rhythm can find and move even the most nervous. Hollywood plotlines be cursed. We aren’t living in some movie; we are living our own miraculous stories. He enfolds me close. Dreams come true on their own timelines.

We won’t rush this, force this. The only way to make real love anywhere ever is vulnerably, and trust needs time to unfurl into a fig leaf that protects. I tell myself that we have time. I’ve got absolutely no idea if that’s true, but I tell myself that we have a whole tender and waiting lifetime to navigate because you have to tell yourself stories that roar like the Lion of Judah against all the other lying beasts in the dark.

Shafts of moonlight fall across the floor, across our sheets.

All these songs and screens, shaping our expectations of what should happen next, how the waves should come, and we rise, and then fall into the depths of each other, followed by the easy afterglow of pillow talk—all are an evasive mirage. One plus one should equal one. But here we are, still two.

I’m heart-crushed, disappointed in my paralyzing fears. I

don't try to imagine his disappointment. I keep fingering the strange new gold band there on his left hand. His breath is heavy and slow with sleep, right there at the curve of my ear. Light rings the moon hanging far above the draped motel window. Will I always be the dreamer who follows shafts of moonlight, who trusts there's always a way through the dark, even though the moon wanes?

I reach for his hand around my waist, interlace my fingers through his, band touching band. Wherever we choose to connect, we disconnect from more pain.

Late the next morning, in a swaddling of sheets, a sliver of sun pries through a crack in the green tapestry drapes.

"You and I . . . It's—kinda like the garden of Eden, isn't it?" I stir. Turn.

"This?" I laugh, embarrassed—and in a split second all the inexperienced floundering of last night washes over me again, and I can feel shame's heat visibly rising up my neck like a scarlet letter of its own and I try to pull the coverlet higher.

"Hey." He grins, tugs teasingly at the sheet. "Where are you going on me here?"

"What do you mean—where—am I going?" I laugh, nervous, as he leans in closer.

"I mean—I like Eden, don't you?" His leans his forehead against mine.

"Yes," I whisper.

Who doesn't expect their own return to Eden? If each life begins out of what is meant to be an act of intimacy, don't we all expect to find a way to remain—to live—in an enfolding of intimacy? Whatever way we think we want, oneness—the kind that destroys aloneness—is always the dream. Because humanity

waymaker

is ultimately created out of intimacy, humanity's destiny is ultimately intimacy.

We are all created out of intimacy, for intimacy.

Whatever road we expect to be on, the way we want most to find—is a way to be wanted and not left alone.

Who—who doesn't have expectations of consummation? We all fill our heads with dreams of a life of fulfillment. Honestly, my naive Expectational Positioning System had these honeymoon expectations of tracing faces with gentle fingertips, eyelids brushed with lips, vulnerability cupped with tender caresses—the consummate heavenly bliss. And here I am, waking up—in a kind of disorienting wilderness. He has bad breath, I have bed-head, and we both are trying to swallow down a sickening sense of failure. And it's already happening to us, just like it happened to my Dutch mother-in-law who had never wanted to leave the thatched roofs and whirling windmills of Voorthuizen, Holland. Yet there she found herself, the day after her wedding, waking up on a ship headed straight across the ocean to a foreign land, nauseatingly green from the rock of the waves.

Despite the piece of paper you sign on your wedding day, you end up turning around and saying, “I didn't sign up for this.”

Moons wane faster than you ever dreamed.

You can book a ticket for the promised land—and wake up in the badlands of some wilderness. Is there a way to make badlands into promised lands?

I turn and try to memorize his eyes. Kind. Still kind. We aren't here to live up to each other's expectations. We are here to live with each other, be for each other. (Who could have known how hard finding a way to do that could be?) He kisses my forehead, like he's reading my mind.

EXODUS

When he tells me on Wednesday evening of our unconsummated honeymoon that he wants to go home, I don't care how many evenings he took me down to the water's edge to a little hole-in-the-wall restaurant, the Lakeside Cafe, for secluded candlelight dinners—prime rib, medium rare, and chicken, cordon bleu. I don't care that I laughed and said I wanted to lick my plate, then he'd laughed, leaned over, and kissed my lips tasting like the warmth of wine. I don't care that we'd run down to the beach at sunset, run right into the ebbing, rose-gilded waves, and he had caught me up in the surround of his arms, and I felt beautiful. All I care about is the fact that my brand-new husband wants to exit our honeymoon three days early and I'm embarrassed—ashamed—and wildly desperate for some kind of exodus of my own.

Get out of this bathroom, get out of this cheap motel room, just any way to get out of here. I turn off the shower. Wash my face, wash away all the vulnerability of tears. I don't want him to know. We don't know each other like Adam knew Eve, and I, as sure as heaven and a month of Sundays, don't want him to know that I feel scorched with rejection. I reach for a towel to quickly dry my face then quietly open the bathroom door. He's packing his bag, folding his beach towel. He looks up, smiles gently, completely oblivious to how exiting a honeymoon paradise early may leave a tender, twisted scar.

“Hey, I'm just gonna grab some air for a minute. Headache.” Why mention that my head isn't throbbing nearly as badly as my heart's fracturing?

I reach the door before he can say anything, reach the beach

waymaker

before he can follow, reach the water's edge and the water crashing cold across toes, water from somewhere else in the world, full of stories that found a way to keep going. Somehow.

"Where are we going here? How in the world did we get here already?" I'm choking it back, walking too quickly through a fringe of ragged waves. If he wants a way out of our honeymoon to get back to work, can I try to find my way out too? If we can't even get a taste of the milk and honey in the honeymoon phase, what do the rest of the blasted phases of our moon look like together? The waves keep crashing against my legs.

"Where *are* you?" Where is the One who promised if we did it His way, everything would turn out all right?

"Where *are* you?" (Genesis 3:9). It's God's first recorded question in all of history, the shortest question of the entire Hebrew Bible, and it hasn't stopped echoing across the topography of time. Only three words: *Where are you?* The most life-changing questions always are the shortest. In Hebrew it's actually only one word: *ayekah*. That one word God is speaking into this moment, even right now: "*Where are you? Where are you? Where are you?*" Where are you going with your life? Where is your soul on the way? Where you are—is this truly where you want to be?

No, I am not where I expected to be, not where I imagined I'd be, none of this is the way I thought it would be. Is that my Expectational Positioning System's alarm wildly going off?

When an all-knowing God asks a question—"Where *are* you?"—isn't He only asking so *you* will begin to know the answer? The God who knows how to choreograph the sun and moon and stars across the skies, who moves these waves, who knows where Adam hid, who knows where the head's at, where the soul

aches, where the heart's fractured. God isn't asking for Adam's or anyone's coordinates—He's asking me to seek out and coordinate my own heart with His. The disappointments and disillusion, the dreams and desperate hopes, these are already known to an all-knowing God. He asks you where you are in your life because He wants you to name the place, see the place, acknowledge it, sit with it—even *befriend* it.

Befriend here? All I want to do is scream it across waves: I want a way out of here!

*Ayekah* means God understands everything going on inside and doesn't want a soul to hide. Not to hide from the feelings, not to hide from the hoping, not to hide from the dreaming, not to hide from the grieving. Like Adam and Eve, the temptation is to flee. To cover who I am and how this feels because I'd rather wander lost than sit with the fear of fully feeling, the fear of being transparent and known, only to experience the flooding shame of rejection and abandonment.

But here's what no one tells you: When you hide who you are, what you ultimately are hiding from is yourself. This is a haunting, exhausting kind of lost. And if evil can keep you distracted from taking the time to ask your soul where you really are, he can take you every day further from the life you envisioned.

When we find the courage to be transparent, we find ourselves found. Only when you ask where you are every day can you find your way. The God who asks where you are, He's large enough to hold you—however, wherever, you are.

*Where in the world am I really?*

Search me, O God, and know my heart!

Try me and know my thoughts!

waymaker

And see if there be any grievous way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting!  
(Psalm 139:23–24 ESV)

Do I really want to locate where I am in this story? I know, I know: Refuse reflective questions, and you refuse the self-reflection that has the power to change your very reflection. But all I want to do is ask God where He is in all of this. Do I want to say where I am to I AM? “God speaks to Adam and halts him in his flight. Come out of your hiding place . . . out of your self-torment . . . Confess who you are, do not lose yourself in religious despair, be yourself. Adam, where are you?” beckoned theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer.<sup>2</sup>

This is the age of Adams—we evade the arms of God. Stay alone and you stay lost.

But when aloneness ends, lostness ends, and we have a God who names Himself the One who is with us.

The setting sun is painting the waves shades of blush, and how can life ache so much?

It’s striking that He used the word *ayekah* when He could have used the more common, generic word for “where” in Hebrew, *eifoh*, which simply means to locate.<sup>3</sup> *Eifoh* is the word Saul used when seeking David, when Naomi asked about Ruth’s whereabouts, when Joseph was trying to track down his brothers. *Ayekah*, on the other hand, expresses a heart motivation beyond mere location, and *ayekah* conveys expectations: “Where have you gone? Where are you if you are not here with me?”

When Adam and Eve turned away from intimacy with God, God cried *ayekah* because He was asking more than simply, “Where are you?” He was asking, “Where are you in relation to

Me? Where have you gone that's taken you further away from Me? Where are you when the expectation is that you and I would always be together?"

God cries because there is distance between Him and His lover, and God's first known question of history asks you to orient to the topography of intimacy, to locate yourself in the Landscape of Love.

God knows what it's like for there to be trouble in paradise, for paradise to go all wrong, for the perfect way to fall away, for there to be distance. For all the times nothing is turning out the way I've dreamed, and I've howled at God, "Where are you?" He's howled His own very first question of all time with that one word, *ayekah*, that howls:

*Where are you when it was once all about you and Me—and now it's all about you and that damned lying snake? Woe is Me; where have you gone? I just want you here with Me.*

For the Lord your God is looking for you, means to be "always with you. / He celebrates and sings because of you" (Zephaniah 3:17 CEV).

The triune God isn't disappointed in you, isn't rebuking you, isn't rejecting you, but the triune God delights in you, smiles over you, seeks to be with you, revives you with His kiss of grace and can't stop singing love songs because of you. God knows that it always takes three to make the realest love out of anything, never only two. In the space between two people, only God can make a love that transcends the disappointments. The way that God wants the most is the way that keeps us close to Him. Right from the beginning, God has ached over any space and distance

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between us. When we were looking for a way out, God's woe over any distance between us drove Him to make a way to us. To be with us.

The cross points to the Way with open arms.\* Because our fall was detachment from God, our restoration is found only in attachment to God. If our first sin was to turn from God, detach the fruit from the tree, and savor it, then our return to

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wholeness is to turn, attach to God, and savor Him. Though our fall broke our attachment to God, He makes a way to us, slips His arms around us, and whispers all will be well now because He is Immanuel, God with us. Our story can only know restoration if our attachment

to God is restored. The very symbol of the faith, the intersection of the cross, expresses how God purposes us for connection. God has always been a WayMaker, making more than merely a way *through*. The WayMaker is *making a way to you*.

What if the only thing that will heal our hearts is to let Him fuse His broken heart with ours?

## REROUTING

Far off on the horizon to the west, I can see how a sailboat rides right into the sun and seems to ignite, and maybe after everything

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\* The first followers of Jesus were known as followers of "the Way" (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; and 24:14, 22).

burns away, this is all that's left: Well-being is a function of controlling your sail well.

You can't control the way the wind blows. You can't control the way the currents run. You can't control the way of waves. There is tender mystery in God's ways. Lovers fail to love. People disappoint. Plans implode. Bodies struggle. Expectations go awry. Pain is all-encompassing and none of us are immune.

You can't control the way of waves—but you can control the way of your sail.

You can turn the sail to fill with the wind of the Spirit, you can move forward in the current of His love, you can reroute through waves.

Turn your sail toward the Spirit, and it turns out you can get out of the boat and walk on waves right back to Him.

Unlike Adam, when Abraham heard God calling for him, Abraham answered: *Hineni*. “Here. I am here” (Genesis 22:1, my paraphrase). *I am here, my WayMaker, whatever Your way.*

How in this ever-hurting world did David keep putting one step in front of the other after being betrayed by his son Absalom? How did Martha find a way forward after Lazarus and all her hopes were bound in grave clothes and laid in the cooling dark? How did Moses find any real way forward after messing up at Meribah? How did Hagar find her way through when death stalked, dreams shattered, and she felt abandoned by all sense of hope? All the universe is echoing with His *ayekah*—and all we have to do is keep whispering the shortest one-word answer: *hineni*, here. Not in the sense of a roll call *here*, but in the sense of *I am all here*. Spoken only eight times in all of Scripture, and every time, a transformative turning point.

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*I am here, hineni, all here, turn me right around, turn me toward You.*

*I am here, my WayMaker, whatever Your way.*

*Hineni, this is my location.*

*Hineni, I am fully paying attention.*

Life is about location, location, location—attention, attention, attention.

*God, this locating, this attending, this whispering your honest hineni can hurt.*

But no matter how brutally hard it is, unless we keep locating our soul—we'll keep losing our way. Be brutally honest and say your *hineni* out loud because there is no other way to be found. And who can afford to lose their way? Any old way will do if you don't care where you're headed. But where are you really, and where is your head, if any old way will do?

Any old way will *not* do with your only life. *This is your only life. You have to brave the waves.* When there seems to be no way, reroute through waves. *It's never about the storm—it's always about your sail.* When there seems to be no way, I can reroute my EPS, my Expectational Positioning System: If I am upset that he hasn't responded the way I'd hoped, I can reroute and look for the ways he's trying to connect. True, he didn't gather me up and hold me long in the morning before getting out of bed. But also true, he did make the bed and get me a steaming cup of tea. When there seems to be no way, I can reroute and gently explain the ways I need to be heard and held, seen and made safe. When there seems to be no way, I could reroute and thank him for the ways of love I've felt. True, dreams didn't happen. Hope hit a roadblock. Plans didn't come through. And also true, reroute, reroute, reroute. There are real ways to simultaneously decrease your pain

*In the Beginning*

and increase the number of ways you have to navigate through the pain, and there is a real way through. Actively, bravely trust. Reroute all this thinking about this disappointment—toward a different possibility. Every day, you can make it your way of life to find one way to reroute. You can make it your way of life to see.

What is in the way is actually making another way.

*Ayekah?*

*Hineni.*

I am here, my WayMaker, whatever Your way.

Rerouting.