

# A Liturgy for the “Death of a Dream”

by Douglas McKelvey

## *Every Moment Holy*

O Christ, in whom the final fulfillment  
Of all hope is held secure,

I bring to you now the weathered  
fragments of my former dreams,  
the broken pieces of my expectations,  
the rent patches of hopes worn thin,  
the shards of some shattered image of  
life as I once thought it would be.

What I so wanted  
has not come to pass.  
I invested my hopes in desires  
that returned only sorrow  
and frustration. Those dreams,  
like glimmering faerie feasts,  
could not sustain me,

and in my head I know that You  
are sovereign even over this—  
over my tears, my confusion,  
and my disappointment.  
But I still feel,  
in this moment,  
as if I have been abandoned,  
as if you do not care that these hopes  
have collapsed to rubble.

And yet I know this is not so.  
You are the sovereign of my sorrow.  
You apprehend a wider sweep with  
wiser eyes  
than mine. My history bears  
the fingerprints of grace. You were  
always  
faithful, though I could not always  
trace quick evidence of your presence  
in my pain, yet did you remain at work,  
lurking in the wings, sifting all my  
splinterings for bright embers that  
might

be breathed into more eternal dreams.

I have seen so oft in retrospect, how  
You had not neglected me, but had, with  
a master's care flared my desire like  
silver in a crucible to burn away some  
lesser longing, and bring about your  
better vision.

So let me remain tender now, to how  
You would teach me. My  
disappointments  
reveal so much about my own agenda  
for my life, and the ways I quietly  
demand that it should play out; free of  
conflict, free of pain, free of want.

My dreams are all so small.

Your bigger purpose has always been  
for my greatest good, that I would  
day-to-day be fashioned into a more fit  
vessel for the indwelling of your Spirit,  
and molded into a more compassionate  
emissary of your coming Kingdom.  
And You, in love, will use all means to  
shape my heart into those perfect  
forms.

So let this disappointment do its work.

My truest hopes have never failed,  
they have merely been buried  
beneath the shoveled muck of  
disillusion, or encased in a carapace of  
self-serving desire. It is only false hopes  
that are brittle, shattering like shells of  
thin glass, to reveal the diamond  
hardness of the unshakeable eternal  
hopes within. So shake and shatter all  
that would hinder my growth, O God.

Unmask all false hopes,  
that my one true hope might shine out  
unclouded and undimmed.

So let me be tutored by this new  
disappointment.

Let me listen to its holy whisper,  
that I might release at last these lesser  
dreams. That I might embrace the  
better dreams You dream for me, and  
for your people, and for Your kingdom,  
and for Your creation.

Let me join myself to these, investing all  
hope in the one hope that will never  
come undone or betray those who place  
their trust in it. Teach me to hope, O  
Lord, always and only in You.

You are the King of my collapse.  
You answer not what I demand,  
but what I do not even know to ask.

Now take this dream, this husk,  
this chaff of my desire, and give it back  
reformed and remade according to  
Your better vision,  
or do not give it back at all.  
Here in the ruins of my wrecked  
expectation, let me make this best  
confession:

Not my dreams, O Lord,  
not my dreams,  
but Yours, be done.

Amen.



Grieving was an integral part of King David's culture. His Psalms captured his heart-of-grief well. I am learning how to grieve well. God often teaches me through the writings of others. Douglas McKelvey's book, "A Liturgy for the Death of a Dream" has guided me in integrating grief with prayer. My hope is that it will do the same for YOU.