



Boston Catholic Journal

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Fatal Kisses and Final Whispers: To One Contemplating Suicide

Part I

These are your questions, are they not? For they have been mine, too:

What is the purpose?

Why live?

Why go on?

Why endure more suffering ... I have reached the end ... and can see nothing more beyond this unceasing pain.

My life is without purpose; it is empty, meaningless ... and tomorrow will be the same as today.

It is over, ended, finished.

I am become something hateful, shameful; my life is a lie and I am an imposter – the act is ended!

Die I must in any event; better sooner, then, than later.

Loneliness, lost love, fear, shame, guilt ... which one has brought you here? Perhaps all of them, yes?

You think I will tell you that you have no right to feel this way, to stand here, at the edge of all things, the pain pressing at your back and the warm darkness of oblivion invitingly before you ... the end to all pain.

You think I will tell you that you lack courage, that you are ill in mind ...

You are neither the one nor the other. Your spirit is torn, rendered, bleeding, and no living thing on the face of the earth does not recoil from pain, flee further injury. Not the smallest Sparrow. Not the mightiest man. You have fled the pain as surely as your finger pulls back from the licking flame of a candle.

And now you can flee no further. This is the end. The last refuge. The only solution. You are driven to it as by the flails of some cruel and unrelenting scourge. As a hunted animal you have fled down every road until your pursuer has cornered you here, on the brink of nothingness into which you would throw yourself as to a bitter but welcome end.

Tell me this is not true. Or is it crueller still?

We have known darkness, approached the parted lips that proffered death in this last kiss, and with it, pain no more. In a stroke we would erase what we have made of our lives ... look no more upon that broad swath of destruction our sins have wrought upon others ... we would close our eyes and be no more, and all things ceasing, blot out the blight of our existence.

I know.

I also know that you have stood here before, at this same chasm, lured on by that same promise, spurred on by that same pain or one much like it. We have decided that this is life, and we will have no part in it any longer. At a point it becomes, as it were, an obscenity to us ... and a scandal to God.

Why? Why do we feel this way? Do we choose to? Does reason lead us here? Does madness? ... or do neither? Whence this deadly whisper?

In reality, the question is, "*whence this lie?*" The lie that this is the end, that you have no more to do, nothing more to give, nothing greater to be? The lie that life is the obscenity ... rather than death; that your choices are exhausted, your options closed, the game played out to the last piece? The lie that death is the answer to pain, the refuge of the wounded, a place of peace and the undoing of all that we have done?

Who has told us this? The melancholia of poets who dress out death in Elysian Fields, until the soil has sunk where the body was laid, where the corruption of flesh withers the bouquet of beautiful words as false as they are frail?

I can tell you of many who fell at the brink of this death – not into the fiction of oblivion but into the hands of God ... and found life. You, now, tell me of just *one* who hurled himself into darkness and found peace ...

I have stood there, too, and stared down ... and none returned, no voice came back, no token of release, no sigh of suffering past. The dead keep their silence, and who has entrusted himself to death and not God, speaks no more.

Do not call down to who cannot answer (or if they answer beware: they are not voices of men). Instead ask the living. The living who have broached the lips of dreamless death, and spurned the stillness of those lying lips ... upon hearing the living words of God, a breath of dawn that breaks the sleep of death.

Awaken! You walk as one in a trance, blind to what he passes, bent only on a certain end. Dazed by your suffering, rendered senseless by your pain, you walk as one wounded, seeking solace heedless of whence.

You think that where you choose now to go is better than where you are. I now ask you, *who told you so?*

"It cannot be worse than here", you say. Again I ask, "who told you so?"

"It will be an end to my suffering ... whatever it is." Again, yes, again, I ask, "*who told you so?*"

Who has returned to tell you so? There are none.

There are only dark whispers in a deadly night, dark lies in a dark and deadly land.

You think no one wants you, and you do not even want yourself.

But you *are* wanted, and valued beyond measure – for on this brink to which your pain has brought you, a battle rages round you, and you are contended for in an apocalyptic clash.

One voice will rise from the darkness, and one from the Light. One calls you to life, one calls you to death. One speaks the truth, and the other a lie.

"All doors are closed, save this", the lying darkness calls.

"*This door is open – where all others, save one, are closed*" speaks the other.

"Throw yourself into my darkness", the one cries.

"*Throw yourself into my Light*", calls out other.

"Into my grave!", the one demands.

"*Into my arms*", implores the other.

To which whisper, then, will you yield? To whose call come?

The *living* tell you: **God!**

The dead have nothing to say.

But God does:

Come out of the shadows, come hence from the lies and false dreams of that darkness. "*Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.*" (Ephesians 5.14)

And with the Light, Life. "*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.*" (Saint John 8.12)

Life beyond the pain, the suffering. Not the false promises of death and demons.

Will your pain stop? Will your suffering cease? I do not know. I know that you will have *life* and you will have *light* – that you will be drawn *out of* darkness – and not *into* it, – brought to life in the Light, not death in the darkness. Of this I am certain.

The pain? The suffering? The humiliation? The shame? What God will make of these in you is beyond your comprehension.

Know this: God ennobles everything He touches. What is base is transformed into beauty.

How do I know this?

Because God has ever worked the greatest of all miracles: He makes Saints out of sinners.

Like you and me.

The world desperately needs Saints. It needs *you*. Perhaps even me.

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Joseph Mary



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