

JOHN ELDREDGE

*NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR

ALL  
THINGS  
NEW



HEAVEN, EARTH,  
AND THE RESTORATION OF  
EVERYTHING YOU LOVE

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JOHN ELDREDGE



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*To Patrick and Craig—who joined the Great  
Cloud during the writing of this book*

*I thought you were dead! But then I thought I was  
dead myself. Is everything sad going to come untrue?*

SAM GAMGEE IN *The Return of the King*

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## INTRODUCTION

# A Breathtaking Promise

**W**e could sure use some hope right now.”

I was chatting with a friend last week about the things going on in our lives and in the world, when she said this. We were talking about our loss of a dear colleague, but also about how everyone we know seems to be facing some hard thing or other. My friend is normally a very buoyant woman whatever the circumstance. There was a pause in the conversation, and then she sighed and expressed her longing for some hope.

Yes, hope would be very timely right about now.

Though we are trying to put a bold face on things, the human race is not doing well at all. Take any of our vital signs—you’ll see. The rate of antidepressant use has gone

through the ceiling in the last twenty years; antidepressants have become the third most common prescription drug.<sup>1</sup> Now, I believe in medication. But I think it says something about us when depression is the *leading* cause of disability worldwide.<sup>2</sup> Suicide rates are also skyrocketing; depending on the country, it is the first or second leading cause of death among our young people. In 2012, during the war in Afghanistan, we lost more of our soldiers to suicide than we did to combat.<sup>3</sup>

We appear to be suffering a great crisis of hope. It's taking place loudly in politics and economies; it's taking place quietly in the hearts of millions at this moment.

By hope, I don't mean wishful thinking. I'm not talking about "holding a positive thought," as one friend calls it. When I speak of hope, I mean *the confident anticipation that goodness is coming*. A rock-solid expectation, something we can build our lives on. Not the delicate and fragile hopes most people are trying to get by with.

What would you say is the great hope of your life these days?

If it is anything at all worth talking about, Christianity is supposed to be the triumphant entry of an astonishing hope breaking into human history. A hope above and beyond all former hopes. An unbreakable, unquenchable hope. But I'll be honest—far too often what gets presented as the "hope" of Christianity feels more like a bait and switch. "We understand that you will eventually lose everything you love, that you have already lost so much. Everything you love and hold dear, every precious memory and place you will lose, but

afterward you get to go to this New Place Up Above!” Like a game show, where you don’t win the car or the European vacation, but you do get some luggage and the kitchen knives.

The world doesn’t believe it. And there are good reasons why.

When you consider the pain, suffering, and heartbreak contained in one children’s hospital, one refugee camp, one abusive home or war-torn village over the course of a single day, it’s almost too much to bear. But then consider that multiplied out across the planet, over all the days in a year, then down through history. It would take a pretty wild, astonishing, and breathtaking hope to overcome the agony and trauma of this world.

How is God going to make it all right? How is he going to redeem all of the suffering and loss of this world . . . and in your own life?

Escapism isn’t going to do it, no matter what religious version you choose. What about all your hopes and dreams? What about all your special places and memories, the things most dear to your heart? Is there no hope for any of that? What we ache for is redemption; what our heart cries out for is *restoration*.

And I have some stunning, breathtaking news for you: restoration is exactly what Jesus promised. Despite what you may have been told, he didn’t focus our hopes on the great airlift to heaven. He promised “the renewal of all things,” including the earth you love, every precious part of it, and your own story (Matthew 19:28). The climax of the entire

## INTRODUCTION

Bible takes place with these words: “I am making everything new!” (Revelation 21:5). A day of Great Restoration is coming. Not annihilation—*restoration*. That is the only hope powerful enough to be for us what God calls the anchor of the soul: “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul” (Hebrews 6:19).

How you envision your future impacts your current experience more than anything else. Children starting the long school year feel very differently about waking each morning than those who know summer vacation is just a few days away. The woman recently served divorce papers feels very differently about her life than the woman who wakes the day before her wedding. How we feel about our future has enormous consequences for our hearts now. If you knew that God was going to restore your life and everything you love any day, if you believed a great and glorious goodness was coming to you—not in a vague heaven, but right here on this earth—you would have a hope to see you through anything. You would have an anchor for your soul, “an unbreakable spiritual lifeline, reaching past all appearances right to the very presence of God” (Hebrews 6:19 THE MESSAGE).

I’ll be frank—if everything is going wonderfully for you right now, and you have every reason to believe it’s going to stay that way, this book probably isn’t for you. But if you are wondering why your soul feels so unsettled, and what there really is to look forward to, if you are longing for a wild, astonishing hope that could be an anchor for your life, read on. You’re going to be very glad you did.





*Picture a treasure chest.*

*Not a small box that might hold jewelry on a girl's nightstand—a large treasure chest, larger than any suitcase you own, larger than any suitcase you've ever seen.*

*Picture a massive oak treasure chest, like pirates might have used, with large iron hinges and a huge clasp. The size and age and strength of this strongbox say it was made for the most valuable things.*

*Inside this chest are all of the things you wish could somehow be restored to you. Everything you have lost, everything you know you will lose.*

*What fills your treasure chest?*

CHAPTER 1

# Is There a Hope That Really Overcomes All This?

*It takes no courage to be an optimist, but it  
takes a great deal of courage to have hope.*

RABBI JONATHAN SACKS, *Celebrating Life*

The sunrise this morning was filled with such promise. I was standing at the window in the early hours, praying, watching the dawn slowly bathe the hills in a golden light. The forest was utterly still, almost timeless. Each leaf was washed with a warm yellow glow, like candlelight; it covered the whole mountainside. Something about the bright, gentle beauty illuminating an entire forest made me feel that everything is going to be okay.

It is autumn now, and normally I'm not particularly happy

about that. I don't usually like the coming of fall because I know the long winter will soon descend with more darkness than light. The world will go into gray tones for too long. But this year I'm relieved to see the leaves turning pumpkin colors, the grasses fading into brown—earth shedding her beauty as she goes into hibernation. Because I just want this year to be over.

January began with a suicide in our extended family; I was the one to receive the phone call. I had to find my middle son and tell him his wife's dear brother took his tormented life. Then the two of us had to find her and break the news that would break her heart. Those were awful days.

A reprieve from the grief seemed to come a few months later, when both my oldest son and his wife and my grieving son and daughter-in-law came over one evening to tell Stasi and me we were going to become grandparents. Not just once, but twice, at the same time—both couples were expecting. They had T-shirts made for us; the shared happiness was simply wonderful. We talked about the cousins growing up together, little cowboys running around Gramma and Poppy's house bringing joy and lightheartedness. Maybe happiness gets the final word.

Then our oldest and his beloved wife went through a horrible, brutal miscarriage. I buried my first grandson on the mountain behind our home. We stood as a family around the tiny grave while his devastated mother spoke these words: "Patrick, the day we learned we were pregnant with you was the best day of our lives. And the day we lost you was the



worst.” Watching my children grieve is the worst thing I’ve gone through as a father.

But then promise rose again a few months later, as our attention was mercifully turned to the wedding of our youngest son. I love weddings; I love the beauty, the romance, all the fairy-tale symbolism. I love wedding *receptions*. Theirs was held outdoors under the stars of a summer night, with hanging lights and laughter and dancing. It seemed to whisper again that all will be well. There is something winsome and enchanting in the best wedding parties, something that speaks to the deepest longing in our hearts. No one wanted to leave.

We were all enjoying the afterglow the next morning when my phone rang. Our dear friend Craig, whom we’ve known for almost forty years, was calling to tell us his cancer had taken a terrible turn. A month earlier he was almost in remission; now he would die within six weeks. I hung up and threw my cell phone as far as I could. This would be the second time in my life I would lose my dearest, closest friend.

And that is why I am fine with the coming of fall, and the passing of this year.

Can we just be honest? Life is brutal.

There is just enough goodness to rouse our hearts with expectation, and plenty enough sadness to cut us back down. When the cutting down exceeds the rising up, you wonder if you shouldn’t just stay down. “I wept when I was borne,” wrote the Anglican poet George Herbert, “and every day shewes why.”<sup>1</sup> Yes, life can also be beautiful. I am a lover

of all the beautiful things in life. But may I point out that the movie by that name—*Life Is Beautiful*—takes place in a Nazi concentration camp. The story is precious in the way the father loves and protects his little boy from the ghoulish realities all around. But the father is killed at the end. Many, many people die horrible deaths at the end.

We need more than a silver-lining outlook on life. Much, much more. We need an unbreakable, unquenchable hope.

As I stood at the window for my morning vigil, the amber light of dawn was turning every fall color an even richer hue. It looked like something from a painting—transcendent, mythic. And for a moment it all felt brimming with promise. You’ve probably felt that promise too, as you stood in some favorite spot, watching the beauty of the rolling waves, marveling over spring flowers in the desert, walking the streets of Paris at night, sitting in your garden with a cup of coffee. Something keeps whispering to us through the beauty we love.

“Many things begin with seeing in this world of ours,” wrote British artist Lilius Trotter. “There lies before us a beautiful, possible life.”<sup>2</sup>

I savor those moments; they are among my most treasured memories. But whatever it is that speaks such promise, it seems to slip through our fingers every time we reach for it. I know that simply wanting this year to be over isn’t the answer because who really knows what next year will bring? “Each day has enough trouble of its own,” said the most compassionate man ever.<sup>3</sup>

## WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FORWARD TO?

I keep checking my phone for e-mail and texts.

I do it all through the day; every alert gets my attention. I've been doing it for some time now. And the funny thing is, I'm not the kind of person who likes technology; I don't want to feel tied to my phone by an emotional umbilical cord. So what is this compulsion? What am I looking for? It's as though I'm looking for something.

And I'm not alone. People check their devices something like 110 times a day—one-third of their waking hours.<sup>4</sup> What is this obsession? I know we get a dopamine buzz when we receive a text, but something else is going on here.<sup>5</sup> After months and months of this obsession, I think I'm beginning to understand—the thing I keep looking for is good news. I am hoping for, looking for, longing for good news. We need to know that good is coming to us. We need to feel confident that a bright future is going to be given us and never taken away—not by anyone or anything.

I mentioned the global rise of depression and suicide; similar increases are happening with anxiety and various addictions.<sup>6</sup> Our search for happiness is getting desperate. Have you noticed all the hatred and rage? If you spend any time on social media you have. Perhaps you saw the fallout after the Cincinnati Zoo incident; it was hard not to. In May 2016, a three-year-old boy fell through the rails into the enclosure of a male gorilla at the zoo; the gorilla grabbed the boy and violently threw him around. The dangerous-animal response

team shot the gorilla and saved the boy's life. A social media Chernobyl followed—vicious, venomous backlash against the zoo and the boy's parents. Hundreds of thousands of people called for the boy's parents to be prosecuted. I understand strong emotion, but we are talking full-blown *hatred* here. And it doesn't take much to provoke it.

Shortly after the zoo tragedy, the remake of the film *Ghostbusters* was released, with an all-female cast. I don't even begin to understand the poisonous response. Leslie Jones, an African American actress starring in the film, was bombarded online with "a stream of pornography, racist speech and hateful memes." She was compared to the gorilla shot at the zoo; she received photos with human semen on her face.<sup>7</sup> Over a *movie*?

Something is happening to the human heart. You need to understand what it is if you would make sense of any of this.

Human beings are by nature ravenous creatures; a famished craving haunts every one of us. We were created for utter happiness, joy, and life. But ever since we lost Eden, we have never known a day of total fullness; we are never filled in any lasting way. People are like cut flowers—we appear to be well, but we are severed from the vine. We are desperate, lustful creatures. We look to a marriage (or the hope of marriage), a child, our work, food, sex, alcohol, adventure, the next dinner out, the new car—anything to touch the ache inside us. We are *ravenous* beings.

And we have been untethered. Every institution that once

provided psychological and moral stability is crumbling—families, communities, church allegiances. We don't trust anyone or anything anymore; not our universities nor financial institutions, not religious hierarchies, and certainly not our political leaders. The breakdown adds a kind of unchecked desperation to our ravenous hunger.

Then the world stands in the way of our famished craving; it constantly thwarts us. People don't treat us as we long to be treated; we can't find the happiness we need. Our boss is harsh, so we sabotage him. Our spouse withholds sex, so we indulge online. The ravening won't be stopped. But boy, oh boy—when somebody gets in the way of our desperate hunger, they feel the fury of our rage. We are ready to kill. People shoot each other over traffic incidents. Parents abuse a baby who keeps them up at night. We vengefully crucify one another in social media.

This is our current condition—ravenous, psychologically untethered, increasingly desperate, ready to harm anything that gets in our way. And there appears to be nothing to stop the slide into chaos. “The falcon cannot hear the falconer,” warned the poet W. B. Yeats in “The Second Coming”:

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

Whatever else is at play here, we have clearly lost hope. We have no confident expectation that goodness is coming to us. When my friend said, “We could sure use some hope

right now,” she may have prophesied the final word over the human race.

## LOOKING FOR A STRONGER HOPE

Scripture names hope as one of the Three Great Forces of human existence:

Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love.

(1 CORINTHIANS 13:13 NLT)

By saying they last forever, God names these three as immortal powers. A life without faith has no meaning; a life without love isn't worth living; a life without hope is a dark cavern from which you cannot escape. These things aren't simply “virtues.” Faith, hope, and love are mighty *forces* meant to carry your life forward, upward; they are your wings and the strength to use them.

I believe hope plays the critical role. You'll find it pretty hard to love when you've lost hope; hopelessness collapses into *who cares?* And what does it matter that we have faith if we have no hope? Faith is just a rigid doctrine with nothing to look forward to. Hope is the wind in your sails, the spring in your step. Hope is so essential to your being that Scripture calls it “an anchor for the soul” (Hebrews 6:19).

In an untethered world, we need a hope that can anchor us.

Those who are fighting cancer—or any physical affliction—will tell you that hope is essential if you would overcome. Abandon hope, and your body seems to give up the fight. Anyone who has walked the painful road of divorce knows that hope is the lifeline of a marriage; give up on hope and there is no reason to put in the hard work of staying together. People who lose hope are less likely to survive plane crashes and other survival scenarios. Hope is a determining factor in overcoming poverty. Hope literally heals the structures of your brain.<sup>8</sup>

But to really grasp hope's beauty and power, you only need to think of what it is like to lose all hope whatsoever. I shudder; my moments of hopelessness are the darkest memories of my life. When we lose hope we wander too close to the shadowlands of hell, whose occupants "every hope resign," according to Dante.<sup>9</sup> Hope is the sunlight of the soul; without it, our inner world walks about in shadows. But like a sunrise in the heart, hope sheds light over our view of everything else, casting all things in a new light. It wasn't merely sunlight bathing the mountain this morning—it was *hope*.

Faith is something that looks backward—we remember the ways God has come through for his people, and for us, and our belief is strengthened that he will come through again. Love is exercised in the present moment; we love in the "now." Hope is unique; hope looks forward, anticipating the good that is coming. Hope reaches into the future to take hold of something we do not yet have, may not yet even see.

Strong hope seizes the future that is not yet; it is the *confident expectation of goodness coming to us*.

It might be helpful to pause and ask yourself, *How is my hope these days? Where is my hope these days?*

## THE ANSWER TO THE RIDDLE OF THE PROMISE

Optimism is not going to cut it. Trying to look on the bright side isn't going to sustain us through days like we are living in. Given how critical hope is to our lives, the most urgent question has to be, "Where is the hope that can overcome all the heartache of this world?"

"We all feel the riddle of the earth," wrote G. K. Chesterton. "The mystery of life is the plainest part of it. The clouds and curtains of darkness, the confounding vapours, these are the daily weather of this world."<sup>10</sup> Thank you, Gilbert; I love it when someone says perfectly what we've always known to be true but never named for ourselves. I think the mystery boils down to this:

Some sort of promise seems to be woven into the tapestry of life. It comes to us through golden moments, through beauty that takes our breath away, through precious memories and the hope even a birthday or vacation can awaken. It comes especially through the earth itself.

That promise fits perfectly with the deepest longing of our hearts—the longing for life to come together as we somehow know it was always meant to. The whispers of this



promise touch a wild hope deep within our hearts, a hope we hardly dare to name.

Does it ever come true?

That's the mystery; that is the riddle. So let's start right here. Perhaps we can pick up the trail from here.

Now, this may sound a little odd for a man to admit, but I feel a sort of compassion for Imelda's shoe fetish.

For those of you who missed the scandal back in the '80s, Imelda Marcos was married to Ferdinand, former president of the Philippines. They were ousted from power in '86 and fled the country, leaving behind a fascinating treasure: designer shoes. Thousands and thousands of them. Like so many fellow dictators, the Marcoses lived an extravagant lifestyle—bankrolled by the state, of course—while their people went about barefoot in the streets. Thus the ousting. Imelda was rumored to have a thing for shoes, but truth again proved stranger than fiction. Her personal collection contained from 1,060 to 7,500 pairs.<sup>11</sup>

Think of it—acres and acres of gorgeous, dazzling shoes from the best salons in the world. If you wore then tossed a new pair every single day for ten years, you still couldn't wear them all.

What compels a person to obsessively hoard beauty they can never hope to see, let alone use in any meaningful way?

The media crucified Imelda, but I found the discovery fascinating. Fetishes are illuminating; they are a sort of peephole into the wild mystery of the human heart. We can hide our weirdness under a social disguise, we can maintain

a good show, but our fetishes and fantasies blow our cover. The addict's ravenous hunger is there for all the world to see. Honestly—I felt a kind of empathy for Imelda, though I wouldn't go public with it till now. I think she was looking for the Ruby Slippers; she was looking for Somewhere Over the Rainbow. (This isn't so strange: after all, one shoe changed Cinderella's life.)

Imelda Marcos was looking for the kingdom of God.

I'll let you in on a little secret: your heart is made for the kingdom of God. This might be the most important thing anyone will ever tell you about yourself: your heart only thrives in one habitat, and that safe place is called the kingdom of God. Stay with me now.

## THE RENEWAL OF ALL THINGS

Jesus Christ gave his life to give each of us a hope above and beyond all former hopes. Every action and teaching of his brilliant life were very intentionally directed at unveiling this hope to us. Late in the gospel of Matthew he described it with breathtaking clarity:

“Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne . . . everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.” (19:28–29)

At the renewal of all things?! God's intention for us is *the renewal of all things*? This is what the Son of God said; that is how he plainly described it. I can hardly speak. *Really?*

The Greek word used here for “renewal” is *palingenesia*, which is derived from two root words: *paling*, meaning “again,” and *genesia*, meaning “beginning,” which of course harkens back to Genesis. Genesis again. Eden restored. Could it possibly be? Sometimes comparing the work of various translators gets us even closer to the meaning of a passage; let's look at two more:

Jesus replied, “Yes, you have followed me. In the re-creation of the world, when the Son of Man will rule gloriously, you who have followed me will also rule, starting with the twelve tribes of Israel. And not only you, but anyone who sacrifices home, family, fields—whatever—because of me will get it all back a hundred times over, not to mention the considerable bonus of eternal life.” (THE MESSAGE)

Jesus replied, “I assure you that when the world is made new and the Son of Man sits upon his glorious throne, you who have been my followers will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or property, for my sake, will receive a hundred times as much in return and will inherit eternal life.” (NLT)

The re-creation of the world. When the world is made new. A promise so breathtaking, so shocking and heartbreakingly beautiful I'm stunned that so many have missed it. Oh yes, we've heard quite a bit about "heaven." But Jesus is clearly not talking about heaven here—he is talking about the re-creation of *all things*, including the earth we love.

If you back up from this point, you can make better sense of the "gospel" of Jesus. First off, the message he proclaimed was the gospel of a coming *kingdom*:

"The time promised by God has come at last!" he announced.  
"The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!" (Mark 1:14–15 NLT)

Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. (Matthew 4:23 NLT)

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom. (Matthew 9:35)

"So don't be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom." (Luke 12:32 NLT)

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14)

Jesus announced the coming kingdom of God. He then demonstrated what that promise means—the crippled walk, blind see, deaf hear, the dead are raised to life. His miracles are illustrations for his message, and unforgettable demonstrations they are. No one who saw them could miss the point—the kingdom of God means a Great Restoration. He then announced the renewal of all things right before the Romans seized him, and as if to make sure everyone got the point, he walked out of the grave scot-free three days later—the most dramatic illustration of restoration you could ask for.

We have been looking for the Renewal all our lives. It has been calling to us through every precious memory and every moment of beauty and goodness. It is the promise whispered in every sunrise. Every flower. Every wonderful day of vacation; every pregnancy; the recovery of your health. It calls to us even through our fetishes and fantasies, as C. S. Lewis observed:

Even in your hobbies, has there not always been some secret attraction which the others are curiously ignorant of—something, not to be identified with, but always on the verge of breaking through, the smell of cut wood in the workshop or the clap-clap of water against the boat's side? Are not all lifelong friendships born at the moment when at last you meet another human being who has some inkling (but faint and uncertain even in the best) of that something which you were born desiring, and which, beneath the flux of other desires and in all the momentary

silences between the louder passions, night and day, year by year, from childhood to old age, you are looking for, watching for, listening for? You have never had it. All the things that have ever deeply possessed your soul have been but hints of it—tantalizing glimpses, promises never quite fulfilled, echoes that died away just as they caught your ear. But if it should really become manifest—if there ever came an echo that did not die away but swelled into the sound itself—you would know it. Beyond all possibility of doubt you would say “Here at last is the thing I was made for.”<sup>12</sup>

The thing you are made for is the renewal of all things. God has given you a heart for his kingdom—not the wispy vagaries of a cloudy heaven, but the sharp reality of the world made new. This is one of the most important things you can know about yourself. Did you know this about yourself? When was the last time you told yourself, as you looked in the mirror in the morning, *Good morning; you have a heart for the kingdom*. This explains so much; it will be such an enormous help to you. It explains your anger and all of your addictions. It explains your cry for justice, and it also explains the growing hopelessness, resignation, cynicism, and defeat.

If we will listen with kindness and compassion to our own souls, we will hear the echoes of a hope so precious we can barely put words to it, a wild hope we can hardly bear to embrace. God put it there. He also breathed the corresponding promise into the earth; it is the whisper that keeps

coming to us in moments of golden goodness. But of course. “God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart” (Ecclesiastes 3:11 NLT). The secret to your unhappiness and the answer to the agony of the earth are one and the same—we are longing for the kingdom of God. We are aching for the restoration of all things.

That is the only hope strong enough, brilliant enough, glorious enough to overcome the heartache of this world.

One morning you will wake, and sunlight will be coming in through the curtains. You will hear the sound of birds singing in the garden; delicious scents of summer will waft in on the breeze. As you open your eyes you will realize how young and whole your body feels. No tormenting thoughts will rush in to assault you; you will realize that your soul feels young and whole too. As you sit up to look around the bedroom filled with light, you will hear the sounds of laughter and running water outside and you will know—it is going to be a wonderful day. Only this hope can serve as the anchor for our souls:

We who have run for our very lives to God have every reason to grab the promised hope with both hands and never let go. It’s an unbreakable spiritual lifeline. (Hebrews 6:19 THE MESSAGE)

So let us chase it now with all of our being.



*I had a dream about the kingdom of God earlier this year, though at the time I didn't know what was being shown to me.*

*The setting was nighttime; I was standing on a grassy slope under the stars. It must have been summer because the turf under my feet was lush and thick; the air was warm and sweet. I could see water before me—dark, smooth, glassy water, calm as a lake or tropical bay after sunset. Moonlight was reflecting on the water like you'd expect on a summer night, but so were lanterns, shimmering their warm and happy glow.*

*Across the water I could hear the sounds of a dinner party not far away. Glasses were clinking, silverware on fine china, but the most alluring of the sounds was the laughter and conversation. It was a lavish yet intimate celebration, filled with joy—like what we long for in the best wedding receptions, or perhaps in a gathering of intimate allies at the estate of a wealthy friend.*

*The beauty of the scene was quietly enchanting, but what pierced me was the ease of the happiness before me—as if it were the most natural thing in the world, not the fragile happiness we know in our experience.*

*I was filled with longing when I woke.*