

Meditation of Mary Magdalene

It was over,
finished —
thirty-three years of life,
three years of ministry,
seven days of turmoil,
six hours of agony,
finally ended —
and I couldn't believe it.

Yes, I know that sounds daft, having stood there and watched him die,
having seen them drive the nails into his hands,
having watched the spear thrust in his side,
having witnessed his dying breath.

What else did I expect, you may ask?

What other outcome could there possibly have been?

And I understand all that, for I knew he was dying, of course I did.

Yet when it finally happened,

when the end came,

I was numb,

unable to take it in,

paralysed with grief.

It just didn't seem possible that this man Jesus,

whom we'd known and loved,

whom we'd trusted and followed,

who had been the very centre of our lives,

could have been taken from us,
snuffed out,
never to be seen again.

It wasn't that he hadn't prepared, us,
I you could never accuse him of that —
he'd spoken of death until we were sick and tired of hearing it.
And we honestly thought we were ready,
that we'd taken it all in,
come to terms with the inevitable,
steeled ourselves to face the worst.

But we hadn't,
not when it came to the wire.

The theory was one thing,
the reality something else.

I realised as we stood there,
the tears rolling down our faces,
our hearts torn in two,
that we'd always expected him in the final chapter to come up smiling,
put one over on those wretched Pharisees
and show them who was boss.

But of course it wasn't like that,
nothing like it at all.

It was over,
finished,
just like he'd said it would be,

and I couldn't get my head round it,
couldn't make sense of it whatever.

Yet there's one thing I've held on to since that awful moment;
one memory which has brought comfort even in the darkest of hours,
and that is those last words of his,
that cry he uttered with such dreadful yet confident finality:

'It is finished,' he shouted.

'It is finished!'

Words spoken not in sorrow,

not in anger,

nor in weary resignation,

but in a tone of sheer thanksgiving,

as though somehow even there,

especially there,

he had accomplished the very thing he came to do.