

This I Believe

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At 17, after much strain and struggle, my childhood faith shattered, and I very vocally proclaimed myself... AN ATHEIST!!! Now, being the son of evangelical missionaries, there were many in my life who engaged my newfound nihilistic zeal with the very best conservative Christian apologetics had to offer.

But armed with the might of BOTH Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins, I was unimpressed.

However, one particular attempt to win me back catches my memory. My sister, Christy, at the dinner table one evening pointed to a gorgeous sunset outside, the sky aflame with deep, warm colors, and, somewhat exacerbadly proclaimed "How can you look at that and not believe?!?"

I found that rather hilariously naïve, and told her so. It was by far the most unconvincing argument I heard all year.

I regret that.

I've since made my way spiritually home again, on much different terms; But only now am I beginning to catch a glimpse of my sister's intuitive wisdom. In many ways, I've centered my entire life around wrestling with faith and living into what I believe are the radical, and difficult implications of that faith. I've grown into a profound awareness of the world's suffering, the systems of interdependency that have me hopelessly tangled in many webs of complicitness; and its not-so-humble root in a deep woundedness, and fear.

A lot of fruit has come from that journey, but as I dive further into a wider awareness of pain, I've found, rather distressingly, that I've become more and more baffled. I'm mentally overwhelmed, often. I'm less and less articulate. My friends know very well my increasing tendency to babble for protracted periods of time without reaching anything even resembling a point. BUT, as my perception of clarity has begun to crumble and my inner-anguish increased, I've distinctly/bizarrely noticed more joy in tiny things, beautiful things. =) A fall leaf on the ground, the crisp morning air; a sunset especially. And I have so much farther to go: Imagine what will happen when I move onto people.

But seriously, imagine fully appreciating the beauty of a person. ANY person. EVERY person. That'd be something...

I relish now what I had largely ignored before, grateful BECAUSE of the compassion that's grown in me, the latin root of which means to Co-suffer.

Beauty will save the world. This I believe.