

## RESURRECTION IS NOT A METAPHOR



There are those for whom the resurrection is only a metaphor. I am not one of them. As The Apostles' Creed puts it, "I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting." What follows are two of my favorite pieces on the subject from two of my favorite writers.

### From Frederick Buechner:

#### *The Faces of Jesus*

New York – Simon and Schuster, 1974

For Paul the Resurrection was no metaphor; it was the power of God. And when he spoke of Jesus as raised from the dead, he meant Jesus alive and at large in the world not as some shimmering ideal of human goodness or the achieving power of hopeful thought but as the very power of life itself. If the life that was in Jesus died on the cross; if the love that was in him came to an end when his heart stopped beating; if the truth that he spoke was no more if no less timeless than the great truths of any time; if all that he had in him to give to the world was a little glimmer of light to make bearable the inexorable approach of endless night—then all was despair.

### From John Updike:

*Telephone Poles and Other Poems*  
New York - Alfred A. Knopf, 1963

Make no mistake: if He rose at all  
it was as His body;  
if the cells' dissolution did not reverse, the molecules  
reknit, the amino acids rekindle,  
the Church will fall.

It was not as the flowers,  
each soft Spring recurrent;  
it was not as His Spirit in the mouths and fuddled  
eyes of the eleven apostles;  
it was as His Flesh: ours.

The same hinged thumbs and toes,  
the same valved heart  
that — pierced — died, withered, paused, and then  
regathered out of enduring Might  
new strength to enclose.

Let us not mock God with metaphor,  
analogy, sidestepping, transcendence;  
making of the event a parable, a sign painted in the  
faded credulity of earlier ages:  
let us walk through the door.

The stone is rolled back, not papier-mâché,  
not a stone in a story,  
but the vast rock of materiality that in the slow  
grinding of time will eclipse for each of us  
the wide light of day.

And if we will have an angel at the tomb,  
make it a real angel,  
weighty with Max Planck's quanta, vivid with hair,  
opaque in the dawn light, robed in real linen  
spun on a definite loom.

Let us not seek to make it less monstrous,  
for our own convenience, our own sense of beauty,  
lest, awakened in one unthinkable hour, we are  
embarrassed by the miracle,  
and crushed by remonstrance.

Happy Easter, everyone!

Vicki