

MOURNING HAS BROKEN

Story excerpt from

CHLORA'S LITTLE GOODY BOOK OF THE MONTH: *April*

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Photography by Rice R. Jackson, III

** indicates links in the online version, to be released soon on
www.gingergeyer.com)*

.....at the Easter Sunrise Service.....

Easter morning had gone pretty well, even if it was not as big a deal as Christmas. Chlora didn't like getting up at the crack of dawn when morning has broken like the first morning.

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But they had to go to the Easter sunrise service up on the mountain.

At least it was a come-as-you-are affair.

Chlora appropriately wore her bunny slippers and bathrobe but nobody was prepared for the sight of her big sister in gigantic hair curlers made out of orange juice cans.

Chlora had to admit the sunrise was wondrous, slipping its soft colors into the darkness and gently overtaking it.

It was like a wet-on-wet painting, the sun peeking out of the pocket of the earth, beginning a movement.

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Adaptation of Monet's Impression Sunrise, from Mourning Has Broken

They had trudged up the hill in the dark,
and sat down on a big rock overlooking a makeshift stage.
Chlora kept her eye on a mysterious dark form up front
and decided it was a mountain lion. As her eyes adjusted,
she saw that it was nothing but a park bench with a lumpy
blanket on it, probably left over from some campout.

A muted trumpet accompanied the rising sun.
Its first notes were as crackly as the break of day,
but its tone grew brighter along with the light.
Chlora knew better than to sit too close to the brass quartet of five,
as they would blow off your ears when the triumphalism started.
This was supposedly an ecumenical service,
and apparently the organizers were unaware that Jesus
told us not to toot our own horn when we pray.
And he'd said that during his Sermon on the Mount,
so you'd think that people would be aware of it
up there on the hilltop.

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* Matt. 6:2

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But, Oh Lord, what a morning, Oh Lord what a morning
when the stars begin to fall.

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The first light appeared as a faint glow
to introduce the long awaited main act.
Someone announced that

*You will hear the trumpet sound
to wake the nations underground.*

*

Chlora shivered and pulled up the collar of her fuzzy bathrobe.

Patches of scenery were illuminated here and there
as the eastern sky graduated into a blinding light.

When the joyful, joyful we adore thee commenced,
a liturgical dance troupe came out from under a rock
and reenacted the discovery of the empty tomb.

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Their headscarves fluttered around a painted backdrop
that had a big dark hole in it. The styrofoam tombstone
had been rolled back.

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The women feigned shock, dropped their bottles of Italian olive oil,
and pulled white grave-clothes out of the big hole.

It looked just like they were emptying the dryer

at the laundromat.

Then the lump on the park bench moved
and Jesus in a bad wig stood up, threw off his blanket,
scaring the heck out of those Marys. They all ran off,
just like in the original freeze-frame ending
of the Gospel of Mark, before somebody spiffed it up.

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This signaled the horns to blast away.
The brassy noise was loud enough
to fell the walls of Jericho as it echoed off the bluff.
It was probably what caused that fool
Humpty Dumpty to fall off his wall.
Chlora reconsidered the story about Joshua blowing down Jericho
and then killing every man, woman, child and even the animals.

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detail of Joshua at Jericho, carved on horn,
adapted from Ghiberti's *Golden Doors of Paradise*

There was no way that was a good story,
but those genocides seemed to be
celebrated by those who trumpeted their die-hard faith

regardless of the effect it had on others.

But this was Easter, the happiest day, so why not let Gabriel blow his horn like Louie Armstrong.

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The sleepy smoothness of the Lawrence Welk combo would not befit a morning as fine as this.

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Chlora took her fingers out of her ears once the horn blowing stopped and listened carefully to the reverberations, trying to count how many seconds the sound waves persisted until they dissipated into the breeze.

Lilies were toiling and spinning and now the breeze's job was the catch their pollen and spread their sweet scent.

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The musicians emptied their spit valves, reminding Chlora that each of us is the spitting image of God, who is surely amused by home remedies for hair curlers as well as bad skits. Miracles are miraculous, and after this one nobody would be playing the blues, and all the little cornets would grow up to be tubas.



The brass band led the motley group of worshipers back down the steep hill. Chlora looked forward to the kids parade this afternoon at the picnic, and wished they had a few horns to blow.

The downhill path was lined with dozens of white lilies to consider. No wonder they were called trumpet lilies.

*Matt. 6:28

Their fragrance announced itself in blasts;
it was like being in surround sound,
like being dipped in the dawning colors
of Monet's panoramas of water lilies
where the blues were something to behold. *
Far below the river came into view, a long strip of shimmer
making Chlora think Monet's skinny water landscape paintings
might be from a river rather than a pond.



In process shot of top of trumpet case, with Monet's "Morning"
Waterlilies, Orangerie, Paris

The river here even had swans, trumpeter swans,
as if perfectly placed to greet the morning with an excess of beauty. *
Monet's pond didn't have swans; swans would have
been like gilding the lily. Rather, his waterlilies
were a happy mass of scumbled paint, enough to make the willows
cease weeping. Morning awe had done its thing *
and the world woke up.

Below them lay an entirely different palette,
one Monet shared with Renoir once
when they had a painting duel over a field of poppies.
The sunrise worshippers hadn't seen the fiery red field
during their dark trudge up the hill
But there is was, even more beautiful
for its transience, as those papery blossoms
would readily be gone with the wind.

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This was the real Easter parade, stumbling back down from
the mountain top half blinded and half deaf
from a high-faluting religious experience,
looking ridiculous in your pajamas along with everybody else,
and knowingly returning to where reality awaits,
where you have to comb out your tangled hair,
find socks that match for church, and
learn that justice isn't just about you.



Detail, adaptation of Monet's *Morning Waterlilies*

.....later, in church, midway through the worship service....

Then some lady gave a rather surgical reading
of the scriptures for the day. As usual, there were three of them
which had nothing but everything in common.
That resurrection of bodies part was plum crazy,
why didn't people hear that? Who'd really want to be there?
Chlora envisioned that awful scene where naked bodies and skeletons
came crawling out of their graves, answering the blast of the last trumpet.
Through the years somebody had really muted that part of the story,
But she had seen a picture of it in an Italian art book and

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it was anything but domesticated, with naked angels playing their six foot long horns. It was enough to wake up the dead.

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The trumpet mute, from *Mourning Has Broken*
With adaptation of Signorelli's *Resurrection of the Flesh*, from Orvieto Cathedral



The trumpeter blasted a few notes before the gospel reading *Trumpet blast = truth of God
and everybody stood up. It was from the Gospel accordion
to John where Mary Magdalene went to the empty tomb
and found Jesus out gardening. But he'd gotten himself so dirty
he told her not to touch him. *John 20:11-18

.....at the end of the worship service...

The preacher gave the benediction *
and told everyone to come to the Sunday School Picnic.
And to bring a dish...with food in it.

Then the trumpeter did his voluntary, a Scott Joplin rag. *
He slowly made his way down the center aisle.
People tentatively looked about and then a few started to tap
their toes. Several got up and began to boogie down the aisle,
till the whole sanctuary looked like a dance line behind a Pied Piper. *
It was a delightful breach of protocol, but why not;
surprises like this were what Easter was all about.



Mourning Has Broken

Adaptations of Monet's Waterlilies: Morning, plus Monet's Impression: Sunrise. Adaptation on trumpet of Ghiberti's Joshua at the Battle of Jericho from Gates of Paradise, Florence Baptistery)

Installed, 9" x 22" x 24" (in 5 parts)

2009, glazed porcelain with gold, platinum and acrylic

In the narthex, the trumpeter put his beautiful gold horn
back into its frumpy case, covered it in purple velvet,
and he was out of there. No wonder, he'd sat
through the sermon twice already and had another gig to attend to.
Chlora wanted to ask him if he could come to their
picnic parade that afternoon, and ran after him.
She said she needed to have a discussion about music,
that their parade could really use a trumpet.
He politely declined and asked her what music she liked best
today at church.
She told him she liked the Beethoven piece better than
The Joshua Oratorio when the Berlin wall
came tumbling down. Did he know the
"Flight of the Bumblebee"?
The trumpeter replied he used to play it on the street corner
and people would throw coins in his cornet case.

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He asked Chlora if she'd ever played a horn,
and she said no, but she had a nice toy accordion
and she could make it sound like a whole hive of bees.
It was her main squeeze, that accordion,
and it did the push-pull thing better than Hans Hoffman.
He said she should try Beethoven on it.
Even if she played Beethoven badly
it didn't mean Beethoven was a bad composer.

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Chlora inquired about the dent in his trumpet, how did it happen
and did it affect the sound. And did he know anything about
those seven trumpets in Revelation or the one that the
Angel Gabriel would blast off on Judgment Day?

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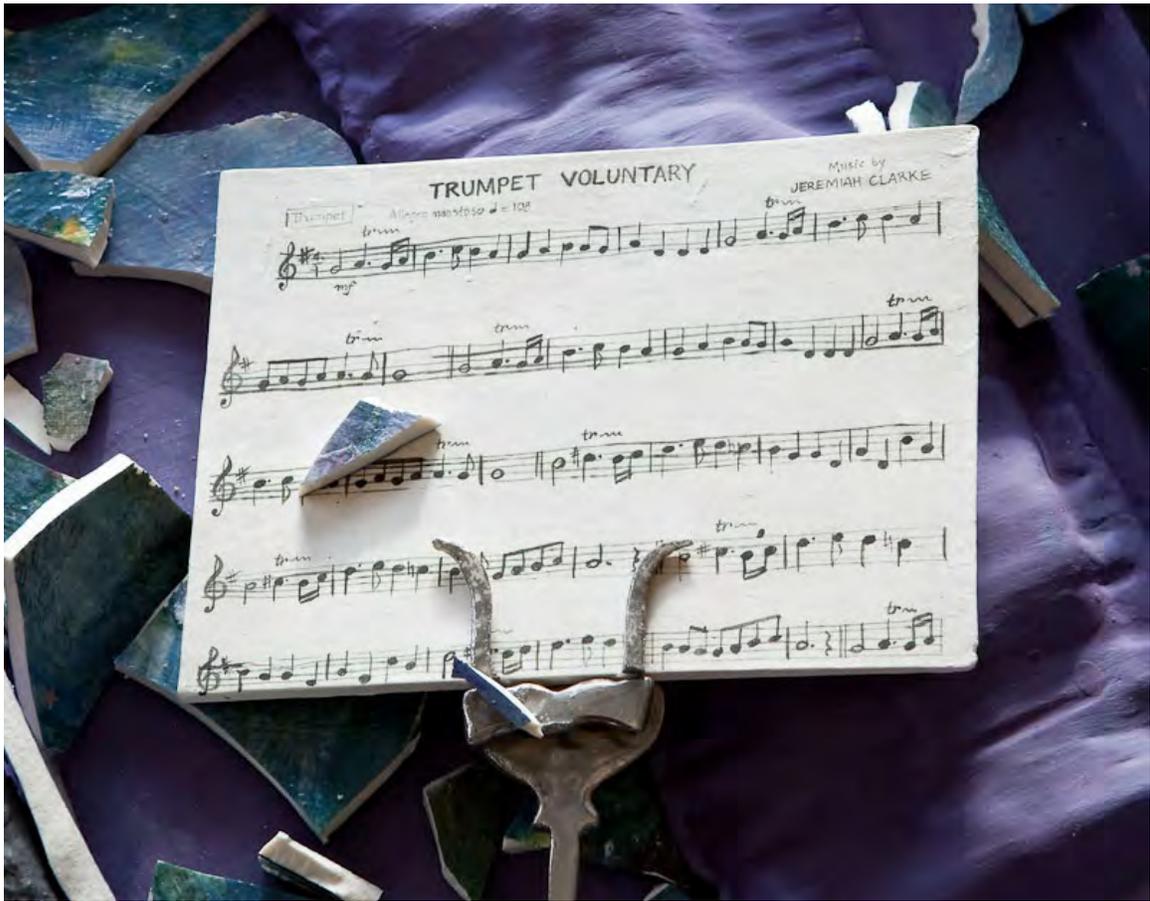
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He said uh, not really, and that his horn wasn't really a
trumpet but a cornet, and would she like to see
the spit valve?

*

She was delighted by this; who'd think all that saliva
would accumulate in there? Whenever she was thirsty
she'd just think of something juicy and her saliva glands
would produce enough to water her mouth.



The trumpeter gave her a piece of his sheet music
and told her to try it out on her accordion. Before she
could ask any more questions
her Dad caught up with her and said
they had to hurry on home to check on the dog.
He had eaten a big chocolate rabbit
this morning and threw up on the couch and by now
might be good and sick. Chlora was alarmed at this bad news
and ran to the car. Turned out the dog was fine;
it was just a little white lie.
Dad knew they'd never get out of there
if they all stopped to talk.

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