

# Magdalene

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## Magdalene: Before

She wonders why she is drawn  
And quartered  
From every quarter  
Taken advantage of  
Looked down upon  
Mistreated so  
By every woman and  
Every passing man  
(Even those  
Especially those  
Who come to her  
Seeking the one thing  
She has left to offer)  
Why such an object of scorn?

Once in a great while  
Memories climb backwards  
Out the pit of hell on earth  
That circumstances and abuse  
Occasional bad choices  
An inflexible society

Have judged her into,  
And she remembers an age  
Of innocence and how  
One hand-carved wooden  
Music box shattered  
Her life.

As it usually happens in February  
A woman robed in rags  
The silk gown of her wedding  
Adjusting the sheets  
Preparing herself for another  
Invasion of the flesh  
Resolves again  
To rebuild it.

### Magdalene: At

Though she hoped  
She had descended already  
To the lowest depths  
She dared not hope.

But then the time came  
And the press of bodies  
Clean and unclean  
Blessed and unblessed

Saved and unsaved  
Flowed and parted  
And now at the front  
Instead of the midst  
She feared  
“What if he comes to me?  
Oh, God! What if he does not?”

She turned to flee  
Disappear into that damned  
Up flood of humanity  
With a heavy burden borne  
To drown she did not  
Deserve to waver  
Much beyond what she'd known

But now the crowd would  
Not let her pass  
As he approached  
So plain a man so simple  
So kind a man who  
Would not stoop for displaced  
Souls but did so anyway.

“Come here,” he said  
She stood down  
Cast hoping now to die

This instant  
So she could not be saved  
And yet he approached her  
Willingly with a  
Smile laughter on his lips  
“Who condemns you?” he asked.  
When she did not reply, he said,  
“Are hated souls among you?”  
And some in the crowd  
Said yes.

“God does not hate,”  
He said to the gathered crowd  
“For the Father knows all things  
God does not condemn you.  
I do not condemn you.  
Why then do you condemn you?”

And with that  
His hand upon her head  
“You are healed,” he said  
“Go and sin no more.”  
He turned and walked  
Away his disciples  
And the crowd following  
Flowing around her now  
Keeping a certain distance

As she stood transfixed  
Transfigured  
Illuminated  
Purified  
As the flood receded  
Giving her space  
Clarity  
And she, too, began  
To follow.

### Magdalene: After

“Have you heard nothing  
That He said?”  
She asked again  
With Simon and Peter  
The rock stood  
“He called you—  
Fisherman and Mason  
Laborer and Assassin—  
And thereby completed his task  
But all that will  
Be forgotten because  
You did not listen!”

Now the one Jesus loved  
And others pause to listen

Within their guilt and grief.

“Because you did not  
see him arise, shake off his  
heavy burden borne at this place  
of the skull triumphant,  
now you doubt all  
he said and did.”

Silence answered.  
“I will go to the tomb,” she said  
“While children climb trees  
And you wail in your  
Betrayal and I  
Who have been turned  
On from every quarter  
Rectified  
Will see first  
His destiny descend.”