

HAPPY EASTER! I know it's not the Easter we want, but it's the Easter we HAVE, and I'm grateful to be HAVING another Easter. This year's pandemic has changed so many things about our lives, but we do not surrender our hope. Nor should we forget that, although we are 'sheltering in place,' the place we are sheltering isn't so bad as places to do so go! I love North Carolina! And if we are alive, have food, and are safe, we are still way better off than so many of our brothers and sisters around the world. And lest we forget that, I offer you a piece I came upon the week before Palm Sunday as I was working my way through one of my Lenten books. The book is a collection of essays by Brian Doyle, published posthumously by his wife. As soon as I read it, I thought "This is perfect for Easter – especially this year!" Perhaps you might find it helpful as I did – it lifted my spirit.

COOL THINGS

As a fan's notes for grace, a quavery chant against the dark, I sing a song of things that make us grin and bow, that just for an instant let us see sometimes the web and weave of merciful, the endless possible, the incomprehensible inexhaustible inexplicable yes,

Such as, for example, to name a few:

The way the sun crawls over the rim of the world every morning like a child's face rising beaming from a pool all fresh from the womb of the dark, and the way jays hop and damselflies do that geometric aero-amazing thing and bees inspect and birds probe and swifts chitter, and the way the young mother at the bus stop has her infant swaddled and huddled against her chest like a blinking extra heart, and the way a very large woman wears the tiniest miniskirt with a careless airy pride that makes me so happy I can hardly squeak, and the way seals peer at me owlily from the surf like rubbery grandfathers, and the way cormorants in the ocean never ever get caught by onrushing waves but disappear casually at the last possible second so you see their headlong black stories written on the wet walls of the sea like moist petroglyphs, and the way no pavement asphalt macadam concrete cement thing can ultimately defeat a tiny relentless green thing, and the way people sometimes lean eagerly face-first into the future, and the way infants finally discover to their absolute agogishment that those fists swooping by like tiny fleshy comets are theirs!, and the way when my mom gets caught unawares by a joke she barks with laughter so infectious that people grin two towns over, and the way one of my sons sleeps every night with his right leg hanging over the side of his bed like an oar no matter how many times I fold him back into the boat of the bed, and the way the refrigerator hums to itself in two different keys, and the way the new puppy noses through hayfields like a headlong exuberant hairy tractor, and the way my daughter always makes one immense final cookie the size of a door when she makes cookies, and the way one son hasn't had a haircut since Napoleon was emperor, and the way crows arrange themselves sometimes on the fence like the notes of a song I don't know yet, and the way car engines sigh for a few minutes after you turn them off, and the way your arm goes all totally nonchalant when you are driving through summer with the window down, and the way people touch each other's forearms when they are scared, and the way every once in a while someone you hardly know says something so piercingly honest that you want to just kneel down right there in the grocery store near the

pears, and the way little children fall asleep with their mouths open like fish, and the way sometimes just a sidelong glance from someone you love makes you all shaky for a second before you can get your mask back on, and the way some people when they laugh tilt their heads way back like they need more room for all the hilarity in their mouths, and the way hawks and eagles always look so annoyed, and the way people shuffle daintily on icy pavements, and the way churches smell dense with hope, and the way that men's pants bunch up at the knees when they stand after kneeling in church, and the way knees are gnarled, and the way faces curve around the mouth and eyes according to how many times you smiled over the years, and the way people fall asleep in chairs by the fire and snap awake startled and amazed, unsure, just for a second, what planet exactly they are on, which is a question we should probably all ask far more often than we do. Look, I know very well that brooding misshapen evil is everywhere, in the brightest houses and the most cheerful denials, in what we do and what we have failed to do, and I know all too well that the story of the world is entropy, things fly apart, we sicken, we fail, we grow weary, we divorce, we are hammered and hounded by loss and accidents and tragedies. But I also know, with all my hoary muddled heart, that we are carved of immense confusing holiness; that the whole point for us is grace under duress; and that you either take a flying leap at nonsensical illogical unreasonable ideas like marriage and marathons and democracy and divinity, or you huddle behind the wall. I believe that the coolest things there are cannot be measured, calibrated, calculated, gauged, weighed, or understood except sometimes by having a child patiently explain it to you, which is another thing that should happen far more often to us all. In short I believe in believing, which doesn't make sense, which gives me hope. (Mary Miller Doyle, ONE LONG RIVER OF SONG, p. 176-178, 2019) Let the Church say a big Easter AMEN!