

A Response to the Houston Press Review, of my play, “Magdalene,”
published in May of 2012

Written by Sara Kumar in July of 2026

Why do you push my dreams under a stone? asked Mary,
to a soldier named Elhanan, who loved to sit by a lake,
and dream about a field in Rome.

He spoke very little, but he said to her,
Your poetry is ugly, to many, but not to me.

She had imbibed too much wine,
And she said with tears and tears and tears,
Why do you bury me with your words,
unkind soldier?
I need more light, hazel light, with cool wind,
I think, I am a beautiful poet, and I'll sleep,
in this chair.

And Jesus came with a pink feather in his hair,
and he opened a window, that evening,
and the moon was lovely,
and Elhanan wanted to sit by the fire,
and he fell asleep in a bed of cushions and soft down,
while Jesus slept nearby, and
Elhanan had a dream, that night, about Mary's family.

LAZARUS

John will be glad to see you.

JESUS

I'll be glad to see John. Where is your sister Mary?

(Lazarus sees Martha move a broom, in his dream, but she is standing next to the kitchen.)

MARTHA

There is much talk of her...associations. I assure you we don't approve of such behavior, but when we have tried to intervene, we...you see our mother and father were very pious people, they would never have imagined that Magdalene...she has a compassionate heart if you overlook her childhood that was tempestuous and not always in agreement...I mean she has a warmth about her....I...

JESUS

Martha.

MARTHA

Yes?

JESUS

Which do you hold more dearly, a pearl that you keep in your pocket and look at daily or the one you lost years ago and find unexpectedly?

MARTHA

I don't own any pearls, Rabbi.

JESUS

I do, Martha. I have seven my mother gave to me. Do you wish to see them?

MARTHA

I don't know, do I, Rabbi?

JESUS

I have them here in my pocket.

(And Mary enters with a tumble, because she has not slept well, and

laughs in a way to perform.)

MARY

I don't know no pearls. I have Kingdoms.

JESUS

No, Mary, look at these pearls here. They are what color here?

MARY

I see Kingdoms, Jesus Rabbi.

MARTHA

Do not speak so, Mary. Go to your dolls. They are ready now.

JESUS

I see Kingdoms too, Mary. Come, sit. Be well and come sit.

MARTHA

I'll fetch something cold to drink.

Lazarus, do you want cold coffee?

LAZARUS

I want warm coffee, Martha. I'll fetch it.

(And Martha goes to the kitchen, and Lazarus stays with Mary.

And Martha comes back with a cup.

And Martha comes back with another cup.)

LAZARUS

I am not anxious, sister.

(And Martha does not sit, and Jesus holds the hand of Lazarus.)

JESUS

Mary has chosen the better part.

LAZARUS

John will know also. He is often writing what I see with us.

MARTHA

I'll sit, and I don't mind sitting.

(And Mary opens a window and finds a leaf from a tree that she picks and puts in her hand and gives to Lazarus, and Martha sits in a soft chair.)

MARY

His Kingdom spans two dimensions, but we see only this one. Like the rainbow after a storm, He brings the promise of all that is to come if only we have the patience to endure. So we reach out for something that we see in our hearts but remains to be seen with our eyes. Because we are but servants with limited vision and wounded intentions. We make a mess of this world and cannot find the means to set it straight. So we wait for His arrival. And when He comes, we call him stranger and demand that he leave this Kingdom we have claimed for ourselves.

JESUS

This is so well, Mary.

Come and place your hand with Martha, and be so well.

(And Mary holds onto Jesus' cloak and says I need to stay here.

And Martha brings a cup to Mary and says drink.

And Jesus holds the cup with one finger,

and puts a pan on fire in the kitchen.

And Mary goes to the fire. And Lazarus cries, and Jesus

puts a pearl on the table in the living area, and Mary begins to wish she could see, because she is dizzy. And Jesus holds her, and puts her in a beautiful chair, with a red cushion, as he sings a lullaby, and they hear this song, and Lazarus and Martha write down something on a paper together.)

I think I am still tired, will you sing now, Rabbi?

And Jesus gave Mary the pink feather in his hair.

I don't understand beauty, said Elhanan,

who had awoken some minutes before,

and Jesus moved the cushions against a wall,

and they all sat, and ate green grapes,

and the sky outside the window was pink now,

and they slept on Jesus' shoulders.