

February: Letter From a Friend After Fifteen Years

by Matt Mason

The email from Christine was about our friend Linda,
in the hospital and not
doing well. I'll save you
the details and the feelings.
What I offer to tell
is that my four-year old daughter can't sleep tonight
because she finally noticed at church
how a man's body hangs grotesquely
off the planks of the cross. She can't sleep,
wanting to ask about Jesus
and death, how he died, what bad man did this,
was he thirsty or hungry, where are his friends, his mommy, his
daddy, am I
going to die and leave her
alone. As
you can imagine,
my answers
are less than awesome, stumbling more
the steadier they struggle to sound. I try
describing Easter
in a way that makes sense
to her, in a way that makes sense
to me. And she finds calm
in the word "Easter,"
thinking about chocolate
and, for some reason, our dog Panda. I think
of you tonight, Linda, I pray
for Easter to interrupt this long cold, I pray
to come see California again soon

and visit, my daughter chasing your kids
in a kitchen, yellow roses in a vase on the counter,
their smell crackling in the air
all that we can conjure
from the word "Easter"
bringing us back.

