

# 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.

