

The Women Watch

At the beginning, we stood below with the soldiers and the other men mingling there. The strong smell of male anger, hatred, fear coupled with the looks, the taunts, and too-familiar pats, drove us away from the foot of the cross onto the hillside.

We stood grouped closely together for a while, but as the day dragged on, we sat. Slumped against the stones warm from the sun, we welcomed their solidness, their promise that they had been here in the beginning and, though splintered, would be here at the end. The rough bark of the tree gave its strength to hands rubbed down its trunk in random patterns of a search for comfort. Though it uttered no dirge, the bird, sitting in its nest, gave the promise of renewal.

The women felt the need for the comfort of another's hand, another's embrace, another's heartbeat. Mother Mary turned away from the scene for a brief moment searching rest in the arms of another. A single woman, maybe Susanna, was heard softly murmuring words of comfort, perhaps from the psalms, perhaps from a service, perhaps a chant. Soon others softly joined her. Did the sound become louder? Would it be heard from the cross?

Further despair would reach into the small cluster of women. Suddenly, they heard a rustling sound and felt further embraces from behind. The ancestors gathered, joining the women on the hill. Anna stood behind Mother Mary and gently pressed Mary's head with her right hand. She placed her left hand around her shoulder. Strength from the ancestors passed on through the vibrating breeze of reassuring words. Mary Magdalene's mother joined the group. Susanna's mother joined the group. Joanna's mother joined the group. Salome's mother joined the group. Mothers of the other women joined the group. Then the Great Grandmothers, the Great-Great-Greats. The whole hillside filled with watching women, watching the mystery of the Divine Pattern unfold.

The watching held the energy of all time, every time, and this time.