

From Miriam of Nazareth

I believe in coloring outside the lines . . .

This may sound odd to some because I am supposed to be so perfect,
but the very first story you read of me shows me conspiring with God.
God crosses a threshold to become God-among-us, God-with-us, God one-of-us.
“With God, all things are possible.”
This brave new life blessed our lives, had a face we could see,
arms to embrace us, a voice to tell stories.
In my tradition, this had been dreamed of for so long.

I have heard the saying, “When you are ready, the teacher will come.”
Some said, “Messiah!”
This teacher says all will be one,
layers will dissolve into each other,
the lowly will be raised up,
apple carts are waiting to be upset,
there are baskets of bread for all,
distances are meant to be crossed.
Peace will surround us, for mercy is bubbling forth to make everything new.

God upsets the jars of paint, creating amazing shades of being,
erasing the lines we draw to shut people in, to shut people out—
woman and man, old and new, different races, poor and rich,
straight and gay, human and divine, joyous and sad, sinner and saint.
I wonder how these lines keep us from singing our own special song.

I believe in singing. . .

I guess Jesus picked up some of this from me. I watched him,
so many times. . .
He draws lines in the sand, and people change.
But Jesus knows the wind will blow away his lines, smoothing out what has been. . . .
God draws with invisible lines.

The rich young man wants to know just where the line is, and if he has reached it.
Then he will be someone. . .
He stands in line to have the chance to ask.
Jesus says, “Follow me.”
Our attempts to draw lines shows a poverty of trust in ourselves, in others, in God’s grace,
an attempt to define what is yours and what is mine,
trying to measure, to see what is “enough.”
There is never enough for some, and always enough for others.
But God who is limitless cannot be boxed in.
God will do great things, in me, in you.

I believe in abundance. . .

I never learned to write. I saw traders writing on wax tablets,
and I knew scribes and others could write.
But even as they put something down in “black and white,”
the scroll begins to yellow and deteriorate, the ink begins to fade.
Only God can write in stone,
And even then Jesus adds to what has been written.

I crossed the line of respectability (again) at Cana,
walking across the room to speak to Jesus,
speaking to the servants as if I had any authority, giving him all authority.
I crossed the line of safety when I stood at the Cross, as the story is written.
I believe in steadfast love. . .

That woman who touches the hem of his garment
in a moment of tremendous hope and vulnerability
erases a line of thought which echoes,
“You are not worthy. You are unclean. For so long. . .”
Jesus senses this deep in his being, and it brings him joy.
I believe in joy. . .

Jesus speaks with a Samaritan woman.
She says this is not permitted, but he says, “If you only knew the gift of God. . .”
This outcast, who had stood outside, slinking to the well alone at noon,
runs to tell everyone this tremendous impertinence, this newness in her.
I believe in newness. . .

So many times. . .
Jesus moved across a line when he ransacked the Temple,
when he said, “Let the children come to me,”
when he proclaimed, “This is my body.”
He claimed his humanity
and the not knowing what lines God would draw throughout his life,
all the stories we read and hear and live today.

Little children draw their own lines, all over what has been drawn for them.
Outside, over, around, and through what had been before, with delight.
They are making something new, as Jesus did,
and he says, “Theirs is the kingdom of God.”
Join in!

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