

Clothed with joy right down to her feet

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Sometimes the news of the world can take the hope of Easter right out of you. Sometimes it's hard to believe in the resurrection.

And yet, this is how it happens: a woman, 38 years old, is diagnosed with breast cancer and has to have a total mastectomy. Two years later the cancer comes back, and her doctor schedules her for another mastectomy.

She used to be a 44-D. Now, for the first time in 25 years, she can look down and see her feet. She hasn't been able to do that since she was 16 years old, and now she sees her stupid feet all the time. Every time she sees them, she weeps.

Since the surgery, she's been determined not to let her husband see the scars, the evidence of what was removed. For two years she's gone to bed with a little camisole on, and underneath that camisole is a bra stuffed with soft cotton.

But early one spring morning, on the first day of the week, something inspires her to turn on all the lights, to take off not only her camisole but also her bra with the cotton stuffing. With all of her armor on the floor, she stands naked in front of her partner.

After two years, she stands, wounded and resurrected all at the same time.

Her partner wraps his arms around her and whispers in her ear, "You're beautiful, just beautiful." Wiping the tears from her face, she whispers back, "Don't hold onto me!" Then, looking down at her feet, she clarifies: "Don't hold onto me! Now that I can see my feet all the time, I can see how much I need a new pair of shoes!"

The two of them laugh and cry and believe once again in the psalmist's song: "You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing. You have taken away my clothes of mourning and you have clothed me with joy," right down to my feet.