

Filling spaces with my voice just for the sake of hearing myself echo off of walls does not make me feel real. The rupture between needed to be heard and seen and understanding that being heard or seen cannot be enough is where I live, pulled tightly between a desire to feel real and a desire to be real in a way that defies the constraints of human language and human systems of thought.

This is the space where God found me.

For context: when I was 9, I wrote a poem for school that my dad had me read in front of the congregation of his church. I have no recollection of what the content of the poem was except for one line which read: "Why do I ask my questions to the sky?" I'm 15 years removed from the girl who wrote that line, but I find her familiar for the nature of her worries. I am thankful, however, that I think I can offer her a response.

I look to the sky with my questions, my insecurities, my fears, because I know there is something beyond myself and my limitations, hungry to trade my doubts not necessarily with answers, but with love.

I've learned this much in 15 years:

God knows me in ways that are more profound than what can be conjured up by human systems, in ways that are limitless beyond the reach of human language, in ways that defy the symbolic schemas of human understanding. God knows me in a way I am aching to know myself. And prayer is the ongoing conversation I have with God where everything that I know and don't are unimportant. Where all my excess of language and famine of meaning are unimportant. Where all metrics operative in a world that has decided I don't measure up are unimportant. Where what I am, as I am, even when I don't understand who that is, is always enough.

I say to 9 year-old Sarah as well as I say to all of you: Whatever questions you have that are knotty or heavy or even shapeless are not yours alone. There is a God, whether they be in the sky, or in the unknowable, or however your imaginations conceive of a place like Heaven or the soul, who *is* in wholeness, in truth, in love, in justice, in reality the answer.

God is waiting to have a conversation with you, through every question, through every doubt, for the rest of your life.