



## Motherhood, God and Theology

### A Reflection on Endings and Beginnings

When Jesus was 12 years old he went with his parents to Jerusalem for the Passover as they did every year. I think every parent can imagine the scene – they thought he was with some other family – no doubt at this age with other teenage boys. We can relate to the panic they must have felt when they realised he wasn't with anyone, we can imagine the ensuing 3 day search in Jerusalem – we can imagine the mood when he was found, a heady mixture of jubilation and furious anger! And Jesus did what I find my children doing – drawing a line. This is me – this is you. I am becoming myself, finding out who I am.

Becoming a teenager is an ending and a beginning. My son has recently turned 13 and we are not allowed to mention the word 'teenager'. I don't know why exactly, something to do with the negative ideas we associate with being a teenager, but also I think because he sees it as something of an ending. At the same time I am seeing that line being drawn daily, 'this is me – this is you'. He is moving from the dependent child to someone more separate, more independent. It is for us both an ending and a beginning. Endings do that – they precede something – new growth. We both need to let go of the little boy to make room for what he can become.

It is eighteen years ago, almost to the day –  
A sunny day with leaves just turning,  
The touch-lines new-ruled – since I watched you play  
Your first game of football, then, like a satellite  
Wrenched from its orbit, go drifting away.

Behind a scatter of boys. I can see  
You walking away from me towards the school  
With the pathos of a half-fledged thing set free  
Into a wilderness, the gait of one  
Who finds no path where the path should be.

That hesitant figure, eddying away  
Like a winged seed loosened from its parent stem,  
Has something I never quite grasp to convey  
About nature's give-and-take – the small, the scorching  
Ordeals which fire one's irresolute clay.

I have had worse partings, but none that so  
Gnaws at my mind still. Perhaps it is roughly  
Saying what God alone could perfectly show –  
How selfhood begins with a walking away,  
And love is proved in the letting go.

Walking away, C. Day Lewis

And so I wonder

What goodbyes are we saying just now?  
What do we need to let go of?  
What aspect of selfhood is God bringing us to?

Kirsty Hook



\* from Not Love Perhaps, A. J. Tessimond

