

# Eve; a novel

(a summary by Pat Evert)

## • Found

We have long known there would be three in particular who would stand and represent us all. **The one to whom was given the promise of the seed, the one whose seed would crush the serpent's head, and the one to whom the seed would be forever united.** The Mother, the Daughter, the Bride. The arrival of this girl marks the beginning of the end.

A large metal container was spotted floating early this morning, hauled ashore, and opened. The Scholars have already ascertained that it drifted here from Earth in real time. We opened it up and found the remains of twelve human beings, all young females except one. At the end of the wall near the cooling unit was a welded metallic frame jutting out. A sleeping area, like a bunk or tabletop perhaps? A teenaged girl was broken inside this space. Someone had forced it shut and she had not fit. Her limbs at odd angles, her head folded down on her chest. One foot was almost severed. As she lay there frozen, John stood staring. "I found another girl!" he yelled, setting off a flurry of activity that rushed past him and into the container. "She is still alive! Barely, but alive!"



## • Beginnings

John, this young woman is an anomaly. The Healers are trying to deduce her origins, but her genetic code is giving them fits. None of us has ever seen anything like it! It's preposterous!

While she was healing, Eve would visit her in her dreams. "Come, my daughter. Come witness the Creation—the perfection that will heal your broken body and shattered soul! She had been in the Refuge recuperating for months, without knowing who she was or from where she came.

## • The Lilly and the Snake

"Lilly?" The name stunned the girl, but she knew instantly it was hers. "My name is Lilly? Oh my God, I remember. My name is Lilly Fields!" Lost, Lilly thought, was exactly how she felt. **Caught between the pain and dull ordinariness of this place and the overwhelming transcendence of her lucid visions.** "Eden is the grand delight, the deepest and the truest. There will come an age when this garden will encompass all

creation and all dimensions.” Lilly was in the garden of Eden and she saw a man. Eternal Man! Who is Everlasting God! Adonai! Then Adonai raised above His head a newborn baby. “A son is born, a son is born!” She had seen. **Lilly had no regrets at all about witnessing this birth.** Eternal Man now sang above the cacophony: “This is My heart’s delight, the crowning of all creation. I present to you My beloved son, in whom My soul delights. They shall be named Adam!”

#### • Secrets

The Angel’s voice was warm, “Adonai, this gathering of earth’s dust? Does Your breathing into dirt give it new meaning? They may Your image and likeness bear, but they are fragile, and weak . . . So why have You now revealed Yourself in an everlasting weakness? You would place our hope and life in this . . . this helpless bit of living matter? **This is the best and highest of Your creating?” “Shining One, there are mysteries hidden from even you.”** Adonai stood and rocked the baby in His arms. **They are for my everlasting Love and affection will never be diminished or** darkened. They cannot drift into unworthiness.” Had she just witnessed the birth of Adam? When she returned from her dream world John gave her a leather-bound journal for her witnessing.

#### • The Garden of God

Lilly had now been in the Refuge healing almost a year. John and those with him had ascertained that she had come from somewhere on Earth. Now while Lilly slept Eve came and took her to the garden of Eden. Adam was striking, clothed in light. “He was born naked. Adam has no need of any covering other than God’s love. There is no shame in being entirely weak and vulnerable. God and Adam. Every day near its new beginning they celebrate and laugh and take joy in each other.” “Son,” Eternal Man said to Adam, “you are the center of Our affection and the radiance of Our glory.” “And You are my joy! I love You too,” Adam said with all the enthusiasm of a child. “How could I ever not keep my face fully turned to Yours?” **“Love takes risks, dear one. You have the freedom to say no to Us, no to Love, to turn your face away.** In turning you would find within yourself a shadow. This darkening would become more real to you than I am. From then, until you re-turned your face to Mine, this empty nothingness would deceive you about everything, including who We are to you, and who you are to all creation. It does not deserve a name,” whispered Eternal Man, “but it would be called death.” Lilly wanted with every fiber of her being to run into the center of this love—yet **the whisper of unworthiness anchored her to the ground and wouldn’t let her move.**

#### • Invisibles

The Menders and Healers have worked near to exhaustion restoring her, but there is only so much they can do. Within her an assurance grew that whatever was coming it would be all right. Three worlds had collided within her: The first unknown but for flashbacks. The second filled with hallucinations in which she was Witness to Beginnings. And the last, this place of healing, the Refuge. Peace came over her like a

tidal flow, one harmony rolling over another and then another until she was embraced by song itself. In that solitary moment not one thing in her hurt. She is a Witness, appointed to a divine purpose—observing God at work, and then reporting what she has seen.

#### • Visitors

Lilly was visited by three scholars who travelled for months to see her. Also Letty, a Curmudgeon and Healer, was a tiny bundle barely three feet tall, with cane and shawl. To Lilly, she looked like a teeny house sitting on slender mismatched stilts. She was an impossibility of physics. “Lilly, the Healers have discovered that your DNA contains markers from every known race on earth. It means, child, that all humanity is contained in every cell of your body. And thus, the daughter of Eve.” Sure, she was witnessing, but she didn’t want to. If she had a choice, she’d dream like a normal person. But no, Eve was taking her places she didn’t want to go. Each age and place has **two primary Witnesses: one in Word of record and the other flesh and blood**. The latter is more precisely the incarnation of the former, but you can’t have one without the other. God has need of nothing, **but God will not be God apart from us**. To live inside God’s life is to explore this mystery of participation. The scholars gave Lilly a small, ornate, and finely crafted silver key, hanging from a silver chain, and a single band, a gold ring, a Betrothal ring.

#### • Mirrored Intentions

Eve took me to see Adam—it sounds nuts just to even write that—but anyway, we ran into a talking snake that scared the crap out of me. Back at the Refuge the Magi (scholars) showed up. They told me that I’m a Witness to Beginnings. I didn’t tell them Eve already told me that. They tell me I have the power to change history! “You have been chosen because of who you are. **The right choices will arise from your knowing who you are.**” Simon, the young scholar, gave me an elaborately framed mirror in secret. This mirror reveals the truth, if you know its secret. Legend says that its power of reflection comes from the very first pond into which Adam gazed and saw his own face. When you put your right thumb on that stone and raise it to your face, this mirror will reveal the truth of who you are. “Before you do that, I must warn you. **This is not a painless process. You will see the truth, which can be very difficult and troubling.** But you’ll only fulfill your destiny if you commit wholeheartedly to believing what you see.” Shortly after the ring and the key were stolen from Lilly.

#### • Shadows of Turning

Lilly stopped and pulled away. “Mother Eve, where were you? You left me with that thing. And where is Adonai?” Eve looked puzzled. “Lilly, we were present with you the entire time. Could you not see us?” “No. I thought I was alone. I felt abandoned and completely on my own.” “Lilly, **you felt the despair of Adam’s turning; he has made the choice to believe he is alone.** “Tonight you will witness the first Great Sadness.” Adam said nothing to Adonai of his visit with the serpent, and Lilly knew why. “Would You love me . . . ,” Adam finally began after a long silence, “if there was darkness within

me?” **“My love for you will never be conditioned by anything,** not darkness or whatever may be found in you,” replied Adonai, squeezing Adam’s hand. **“I know the truth of who you are.”** “Would You turn away, if I would turn away?” “No, my son. We will never leave you nor forsake you. It has begun,” said God, “the Sadness of the Turning. This is the first Not Good,” lamented Adonai, “that Adam would choose to believe he is alone and live outside the only love that holds him day by day. We will fashion from him another power, another face-to-face, before his turning is complete.”

Am I worthy of being loved? Or do I deserve to die? Lilly scrutinized the mirror as it changed, but if anything it was even worse: a screaming accusation declaring she was worthless, nothing but damaged goods, irreparable and infected, a tease, a whore, a fake. Her mask had been removed to reveal the disease that was beneath. She felt horrified, utterly undone, and exposed. She mentally cataloged each flaw. Here was evidence of what had already been revealed. She was worthy of nothing but self-loathing. “God has chosen you to be the Witness. **It is because of who you are that you are uniquely qualified for God’s purpose.** As the Witness, you can change Beginnings. You must stop Adam from turning. **I’m not talking about who you think you are, but who you truly are.**” They needed to go to the Vault, down in the depths of the Refuge, beneath the ocean’s surface.”

#### • The Descent

It seems that even the foolishness of God builds extraordinary purpose into the ordinary. Miraculous and mysterious. Truth be told, dear one,” Anita responded, **“no human is ordinary.** Healthy love looks different from one second to the next because it’s built on respect for self and for the other. A lot of work, though, getting to know someone. I am convinced that you already know, somewhere inside you.”

Another dream that was not a dream, and Eve was sitting beside her. “Keeping secrets is a dangerous endeavor. You must learn to think like a child. Children don’t keep secrets until someone convinces them that the keeping is safer than the telling. It almost never is. But **once persuaded that secrets will keep us safe, we slowly fade into our hiding places and forget who we are.** It is no wonder that the shadow-sickness grows in isolation.” “Then why didn’t—**why didn’t God protect me?**” And there it hung, the question. Eve let it hang there, suspended and ominous, **the question uttered by a billion other voices.** It rose from grave sites and empty chairs, from mosque and church, from offices, prison cells, and alleys. Tattered faith and battered hearts lay broken in its wake. It demanded justice and begged for miracles that never came.”

#### • The Vault

So what about the part where Adam named the animals? Why was that important?” God brought the beasts of sky and field to Adam to ascertain their essential nature. In naming them, **Adam established his dominion.** “True,” inserted Gerald, “but Adam

was in a desperate search for a counterpart, an 'other' to relate to him face-to-face. Someone or something to assure him that he was not alone—though he never was.” There was no counterpart in all creation for Adam, and God patiently let him prove it. His counterpart was— Within him! “Lilly, **mystery creates a space where trust can thrive**. Everything in its time, and timing is God’s playground. **Trust me, being surprised by everything is so much better than needing to control everything**. You are here because of who you are.”

#### • Six Days

THE FIRST DAY - Lilly was reliving Creation’s first explosion, and the crafting of the womb in which God would form Man. But now she knew why she was here: to witness the Ages within Beginnings. How could she wrap her mind around the mysteries of quantum strings and quarks and multiple dimensions? She couldn’t, and it didn’t matter. But what Lilly knew beyond all doubt was that the focus of communal Love was settled on one tiny, secluded, precisely constructed planet tucked inside the rim of a spiral galaxy. The moon broke off but couldn’t run away, held in place by the grasp of spinning earth’s gravitational affection.

THE SIXTH DAY - Another shout of elation thundered through the universe like a million instruments within a single room. “The appointed time is now! Come gather!” As evening ascended, the entire cosmos drew near, dancing lights and nimble beings, hastening toward the Holy Voice. Adonai announced your presence is a treasured anomaly and ambiguity, **and He is especially fond of you!** It hit Lilly like a lightning bolt that left her doubt dismantled. She had been summoned here to witness the highest point of God’s Creation. Eve was absent because she would be formed inside Man, and Lilly was here to witness their birth. From its center a single personage emerged . . . a human being. Lilly was entranced; every part of her longed to run to Him and tell Him all her secrets, to be remade, to melt into his magnificence, to find rest from her shame. Here stood trustworthiness. Smiling welcome, He lifted hands, and the prostrate rose to kneeling. Eternal Man knelt on the ground and with His hands, like a playing child, gathered a pile of reddish-brown dust. Intensely focused and brimming with unbridled delight. With a piercing shout, Adonai raised above His head a newborn baby. Lilly watched the kiss and breath of God transform a child into a living soul. And it was Very Good! When it comes to plans and purposes, God is not a Draftsman but an Artist, and **God will not be God apart from us**.

#### • The Birth of Eve

There was something deeply comforting about Eve’s presence, as if it helped to chase away Lilly’s doubt, urgency, expectations, and demands. Except for brief moments with the others, with Eve was the only time Lilly felt as if she belonged. “**I have always loved you, and you have always been worthy of my love.**”

Adam no longer sees what you are able to see. **In turning his face away, he believes he is alone. That lie has already twisted his vision.** Adonai opened up his son, and

the she was taken out of the he, one separating into two. No longer would either ever be the all, and yet Adonai promised that by Love's knowing, the two could one day choose to celebrate as one. The wide expanse of God's one nature was now expressed in two, the female and the male. **She is Love's response to Adam's choice of turning.** I perceive that in her participation God will craft redemption and reconciliation. **She is Adonai's invitation to embrace frailty and softness, to be whole and unashamed, to return fully from his turning.** "Even now he could not stop himself from bending away from God toward power and dominion. He named her 'weak and fragile'—the truth about his own being, of which he is ashamed. So he will try to separate himself from truth and choose aloneness as his strength, as if he could be like God apart from God. "The moment of the turning has never been recorded." Every evil the universe has endured, every betrayal and loss, every wrong that has been committed in the name of good or evil, all the suffering of creation—it originated in Adam's turning. Before this there was nothing that was not good. Nothing. To the contrary, everything was very good. By turning away from God, Adam cast a shadow, his own shadow. Adam has dominion and drags the serpent and creation into his own shadow. "Adam was completely surrounded by the love of God, face-to-face-to-face. **No matter where he turned, he was face-to-face with Love,** so he turned to the one place unthinkable . . ." Lilly finished his thought. "He closed his eyes and turned away from face-to-face and into himself, and when he did that, he believed he was alone!" John restated the thought for clarity. "**When you are really face-to-face, you know you're not alone.**" The realization was staggering. "So, why didn't Adam turn back? Re-turn?" "Once Adam believed that his turning was the good, darkness became his reality. **Control replaced trust, imagination took the place of word, and power the place of relationship and love.** His own darkness redefined his understanding of everything, including God. He quickly forgot that he had even turned. He is still the son of God, the epitome of creation with authority and dominion, but now asserts this as independent power. Sadly, all of us, as Adam's children, continue to live in the shadow of death, each of us determining on our own what is good and evil." **Eve was withdrawn to call him back to his humanity.** "Adam must have broken God's heart," Lilly said, thinking out loud. The others nodded. "I know what it's like to see the one you love turn away," Simon said, then left the room.

#### • **Stored Losses**

Trust requires risk. **You have to know who you really are in order to be at peace and participate in God's purposes.** This unknown terrified Lilly. She went to the container she was transported in and remembered. "My mother sold me, Anita. My mother! She sold me to her boyfriend, and then he sold me to other men. I ran away again and again, but more men found me. They sold me and they operated on me so that customers would think I was a virgin, and then they operated on me and took away the only thing that I had left. I can't ever have a baby." There is a grief that only a woman who cannot bear a child can apprehend. To make such a choice is one thing, but to have the wonder of it taken from you—that is a wound too deep to even bleed. Clinical detachment is a myth, often a cover for cowardice. **It is so much more arduous and**

**risky to be authentic and present, and immeasurably more rewarding. Healers heal themselves while healing others.** “Lilly, Adam’s turning crushed women, to be sure, but it was a disaster for men as well.”

• **Lilith**

I’ll probably never understand why the human soul has such an insatiable need to remember and revisit its tragedies. Apparently relationship has a life of its own and doesn’t have regard for history or agenda or necessity. It’s annoying. But it’s also a gift, a joy even. A conundrum, as they say. Lilly laughed so easily that it surprised her. “I can’t believe it. You’ve been trying to like me less?” John glanced at her and barely smiled. “It seemed the safer road. Lilly, **if you participate in your own healing, you open possibilities for creation to be restored as well.**”

• **The Fall**

Adam and Eve were naked except for the transparent light that was more like a glowing breeze billowing and cascading around them. “You surely will not die!” the snake declared. This thing had called God a liar? “For God knows that in the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, determining good and evil.” How could the passion to be as God be anything but good? Was this not their destiny: to determine good and evil, to be powerful and wise? Eve bit into it, chewed, and swallowed. She then held out the other half to Adam, who likewise bit and ate. What had been sweet in their mouths was bitter in their bellies. They had eaten the forbidden fruit. Instead of trusting, they had transgressed, with death the consequence of choosing. They seemed to know it too. The transparent light that had clothed them vanished and both were utterly exposed. **But it was not a terror who pursued them, it was a broken heart.** And it was not fury and outrage in the Wind, but a plaintive melody. Standing at the clearing’s edge, Elohim and Adonai called from inside the wind of Ruach, “Adam! Where are you?”

“I hid myself, because I heard the sound of You in the garden. I was naked and unprotected and afraid of Your presence, so I hid.” Eternal Man spoke, His question full of a parent’s tender love. “Who told you that you are naked?” He reached out, but Adam backed away. It was **another invitation to turn again toward Love**, but silence was Adam’s shelter. He pointed his finger at Adonai’s face. “The woman whom You put here with me, she gave me from the tree! I ate!” Man had become the judge of God, had declared God evil in action and intention. Eve understood. She had been betrayed and now was being blamed by Adam for what he had conceived in his own heart. God did not respond in kind. **Adonai spoke no denunciation or condemnation.** Instead He turned and offered His hands to Eve. “What is this you have done?” He asked without recrimination. “And furthermore,” Eternal Man avowed, “I will establish open hostility between you and the woman, between your seed and hers, and he, her offspring, will crush your head even as you bruise his heel. It is not We but you who need a sacrifice,” responded Adonai, his voice as gentle as an evening breeze. “Adam, what you have begun, I will one day finish. In anxious toil you will work the earth from

which you were taken. You will look to it as if it were your life and source. You will require it to give you all that you can only find face-to-face with Us. And you and your kind will fight over ground until the day that you re-turn.” “Better that I had never lived than to continue to exist in death, alone.” **“Not alone, my son. We will never leave you nor forsake you.** But, Adam, the darkness of your turning will hide Our face from you.” The woman had been the Love of God in flesh and bone, but he had chosen instead to be alone. This Love, betrayed and dismantled by his independent turning, ranked large among his losses. “Adam, from before your creation, We loved you. In time you will forget, but all your choices will never make it any less true. **We will love you now and always, and We will be the way to return you home.**”

#### • Regret

“You hate what he has become,” said Adonai. **“He is not what he has become. The very Good will always be deeper than the turning.** True love requires open hands. Without the power to say no, love never will be real, just illusion. **True love is not about the other’s choices, but who you know they are.** But as you see, relationship is indelibly affected by the choices of the other. Adam will never be alone. He is not that powerful. You have the freedom to trust and the freedom to turn. This is the profound and sometimes painful mystery of community and love.” John and Gerald had found an ancient blood-stone mirror. They are very rare, a dark arts favorite—mirrors that lie to you. What it really does is inject you with a poison, whatever that might be, a drug or neurotoxin or combination to make the person highly suggestible. It plays on their worst fears and self-loathings. “What if what Lilly saw in that mirror took away her hope? Or her sense of meaning?” “Or significance or love,” added Anita. “That makes sense. Without hope, even an otherwise healthy person can die. And Lilly had barely begun to heal physically, much less emotionally.”

#### • Face-to-Face

Lilly had been waiting her entire life for this. She was knowing and being known beyond understanding? There was nothing she wanted other than to be completely found inside this Eternal Man, to be heard and seen and celebrated. “Lilly, it is you I love,” came the voice like healing waters. The words themselves were living and dismantling. **“Lilly, do you trust Me?”** It was a question not about belief but about person, character, and relationship, and only asked for this solitary moment. “Lilly, you have always been worthy of being loved and I have always loved you. That has always been true, but you didn’t know. You have history and experience that tells you **trust is a mountain impossible to climb. But you can and will.**” “Will I, Adonai? Will I ever climb that mountain?” “Yes, dear one, you already are climbing, one step at a time, and not alone.”

Humans are so complicated. Most of you have such a low opinion of yourselves, you don’t begin to realize how powerful your choices and dominion are. **That mirror and its poison reflected back the lies I already believed about myself.** That I was a worthless, ugly girl, who might redeem herself by doing one good thing—save the



world by stopping Mother Eve from turning.” “I have learned over a lifetime to **trust God with everything that becomes precious to me**,” says Anita. “Nothing stays the same, dear one. **Trust is not a once-in-a-lifetime decision, but a choice made within each moment as the river runs.** We are thankful for the gifts that surround us, and then we let them go, **trusting that nothing will be lost, even if we lose it for a time.**” What looks to you like death will be for me more living. It is always sad to leave one place and time and enter another, especially when you leave something, someone who is precious. When you get to be my age, you know when a new beginning is close—it’s a premonition maybe? Letting go is also a returning.” “John, you have helped put my heart back together. Do you know that you are the first man I’ve ever trusted, ever loved?” “My honor and my privilege,” he whispered. “Lilly, **God is such a magnificent artist that no one is ever healed alone. One day you will see how much healing you’ve brought me.**”

#### • The Three

Eve swallowed as the tears filled her eyes. “Since the Beginning I was promised that there would always be three, but did not think that in my lifetime I would meet the other two.” “Why?” Lilly blurted out her question. “Why did you turn and walk out of Eden’s rest? Why didn’t you stay inside the care of God?” “I couldn’t trust,” she said. “Lilly, **I couldn’t trust that Adonai would meet all my longings, that all my desires would find fulfillment apart from Adam. I couldn’t trust that God would create a way to bring about Their promise.** I began to believe that it was up to me to make it happen. Adam turned to the place from which he was drawn—the ground—and looked to it and the works of his hands for meaning, identity, security, and love. I behaved much the same. I turned to the place from which I was drawn. I looked to Adam.” Eve lowered her voice and glanced at the gathered women. “My daughters compete and war one against another for men and family, as if these could produce what we had hoped and now are demanding.” The weight of this truth crushed Lilly. So much of the devastation on the earth came back to this: we turned away from God. I began thinking about the promise God had made me, that I would have a seed that would crush the serpent’s head. **I didn’t want to trust, I wanted answers.** Lilly, I have learned that God has more respect for me than I do for myself, that God submits to the choices I make, that my ability to say no and turn my face away is essential for Love to be Love. Adonai has never hidden His face from me, nor has He kept from me the consequences of my choosing. That is why many of my sons and my daughters curse the face and name of God. But God refuses to be like what we have become and take power and dominion. He has the audacity to consent and even submit to all our choosing. Then He joins us in the darkness we create because of all our turning. **I was trying to fill the void I created by my own turning, to counter the fear that all my longings would go unmet.** Instead of trusting God to do what I considered impossible, I believed that leaving Eden and joining Adam would accomplish the promise. I didn’t need a serpent to deceive me; I lied to myself and then believed it. I believed that leaving Eden was an act of godliness, a participation in God’s purpose. Lilly, I told you there were three.”

“Three what?” Lilly shook her head. **“Three women who would frame human history.** The one to whom the promise of the seed was given—that would be me. The one through whom the promise was delivered. And that would be . . .” For the first time Lilly noticed another spirit being standing near Letty. They were similar in form, though their vibrating shades and hues differed. “Who are you?” Lilly asked, pulling back. “I am Mary, the mother of the promised seed, the second Adam, Jesus.” “So who is the third?” Eve and Mary spoke in unison. “You!” Lilly blinked. “Me?” “You! Lilly, you are the Bride, the one to whom the promised seed will forever be united.” “No one would want me. I’m too broken.” “My son wants you,” stated Mary. “And to show His love and relentless affection, He has sent along a gift. Leticia?” From within her shifting robes of light, Letty produced the ring Gerald had given Lilly. Lilly laughed out loud. “Lilly, in you dwell we all. You embody both our breaking and our healing,” said Eve, as she and Mary surrounded the girl. “You are the one!” admitted Eve. “I didn’t trust, but Mary did. See? When I got caught between the promise and impossibility, I chose to turn away. Mary kept her face toward Elohim, and by trust participated. God did the impossible, and the promise was soon born.” “Wait,” declared Mary. “For the appointed time. And while you **wait, your work each day is to trust Him in whatever lies before you.** When time is full, my Son will come for you and take you to the grandest wedding celebration, the one creation is longing for.” “Do you accept this invitation?” asked Eve. “To daily trust and wait?” Lilly closed her eyes. “Today, I trust Them.”

#### • **Beginnings of the End**

Lilly saw what Letty held out to her, and she laughed. Anita’s silver key. Letty shrugged. “I knew more than the givers did about why it would be needed. To fear is to be human. But remember, you are loved.” For a minute Lilly stood staring at the door, knowing that if she went through it, nothing would be the same. But then, nothing was the same anyway. **What she once thought was true about herself and others had been turned on its head;** what she once tried to control had been surrendered to Adonai. Certainty had been revealed an imposter and control empty imagination. What did she have to lose? if the work was simply to trust Adonai one day at a time, she could do that. At least for today. Lilly inserted the key into the lock and turned it. Then she opened the door.

The space was warm and inviting, a living room with chairs and a sofa, a desk, and cabinets full of books. Lilly recognized it. She had been here many times before. It was a safe place, where healing was encouraged as far as Lilly would allow it. If I’m going to **do the work of getting well,** I probably need to figure out how to be one person. “Lilly, we have received a request from your biological mother. It took a lot of time to find her. She is in a halfway house, in recovery from addiction. She has requested permission to see you. When you are willing.” Evelyn picked up a pad of paper. “So, Lilly, are you ready to do the hard work? **It won’t be easy, but it will be worth it.**” “I’m ready.

• **Author's Letter**

Many readers asked, “But why does the cover feature an apple when you have Eve and Adam eating a fig in the book?” The fig symbolizes brokenness in the scriptural stories. When you eat a fig, you can’t avoid eating the seed. When you do, the fruit—the symbolic “brokenness”—becomes part of you. That strikes me as profoundly true. This is an invitation to live in face-to-face union with the Divine and a declaration that **each of us is a unique work of art, not to be constrained by cultural law or limitation. May it break our assumptions— and our hearts—open in a way that allows something profound to happen** within each of us as individuals and together in community.

