

PREFACE

They need not be Damascus raptures, our moments of soul.

—Christian Wiman

I spy with both my eyes.

A gigantic rose in the deepest of purples, daubed here and there with celadon and washed with blue-grey. A red cabbage on my cutting board.

One at a time I snap off its outer petals, then briskly bifurcate the brassica with a sharp knife. Layered treasures line its interior. Waves of garnet. Veins of opal. Sparks of amethyst. Tourmaline. I reduce these cabbage-gems to shreds and mound them in a pot. It's an ordinary stainless steel pot from Ikea, but it brims with wonder, and I with childish delight.

“William. Come and see!” My husband obliges and together we contemplate the contents of the pot. “Man,” I say. “Is that not amazing?”

Forget seeing Machu Picchu. This meal-in-the-making is my peak pleasure. Cut red cabbage calls up reverence and awe. How come? Because, Joni, I do know what I've got before it's gone. Because my ability to see this cabbage—all of it, in depth, without distortion—was in peril. Because I got lucky, and I know it.

Something happened. And then something else and then something more. Many things, seen and unseen, beginning with my left eye.