

My name is Lazarus, Lazarus of Bethany.

You may have noticed, I'm not a man of many words.

What with living with my two sisters, I don't often get a word in edgeways.

I think I have emigrated into my own little world of thoughts and daydreams.

But today, I've got to speak out; I've got to tell you.

The other day I thought I'd had it.

I felt a bit odd after breakfast, so I decided to go up onto the roof terrace and lie in my hammock for a bit.

That's the last thing I remember for sure: lying there, in my hammock, in the sun.

I closed my eyes – but the sun seemed to be getting brighter and brighter.

I was bathed in light and warmth and I was floating.

It was wonderful.

I felt at peace like I'd never felt before. Everything seemed to be falling into place. It felt like it was going on for ever – eternity.

And then I woke up – like with a jolt.

Had someone called my name? Or was it just a dream?

It was pitch black – not a star in the sky.

Then it dawned on me that I was no longer on the rooftop. And I couldn't move. I was all tied up – or that's what it felt like.

When my eyes got used to the dark I thought I was in a cave.

A thought crossed my mind – I had died and they had buried me. I was lying in my grave, all bandaged up.

But I was thinking all this – so was I dead or not?

And then I heard the commotion outside, women wailing, men shouting ...

They thought I had died and buried me alive.

I started to panic, I wriggled to loosen my bandages.

I needed to get out of here – I wasn't dead!

I was alive, buried alive!

And you know – Mary and Martha – FOR ONCE have been sitting there LISTENING.

LISTENING TO ME, Lazarus, Lazarus of Bethany.

That's a first for them, too!!!

And then I heard them, Martha and Jesus, having a discussion about the resurrection ...

And then Mary, wailing and begging Jesus to bring me back to life ...

And then I heard the voice of Jesus himself, calling me out of the grave.

I struggled, but I managed to get up and stepped out of the grave ...

And everybody – including myself – was absolutely amazed.

I'm still not sure exactly what happened.

Did I die? Really die?

I must have done, because they gave me a proper funeral and Martha said to Jesus there was already a smell.

But then for me, it felt all so easy, so beautiful, so peaceful.

Like 'nothing to worry about'.

It felt it was all part of life, just without the hassle, the worry, the anxiety, the fear ...

I suddenly saw everything in a different light –

And I remembered what he had said to Martha, when he'd come to stay with us before:

"Martha, you're anxious and troubled about many things – but only one thing is necessary."

And also: "You don't have to wait for the end. I am – here and now – the Resurrection and Life."

If you believe him, then you can really live, here and now.

You know, when he called "Lazarus come out!" he didn't only mean the grave.

He meant the world I had emigrated to.

My own cloud-cuckoo-land.

The cocoon I had spun around my own existence, my thoughts, my beliefs, my theology...

He gave me wings like a butterfly

And called me to fly, to speak, to be heard ...

I don't think I've ever said so much in one go!