Graven

We all have burial sites. I remember the first pet I buried. A hamster named Boy. (Girl ran away.) I recall the first dream that died, and the ones I tried to keep alive way beyond their due dates. There was the cemetery along the way earmarked with dates of expired relationships, where epitaphs on headstones read words like, 'Gone but not forgotten' or 'Memories Never Die' or 'Roses are red, violets are blue. I'm not sure how I will live without you'. The back plot of land in that burial ground held fading memories of relationships I held most dear, the ones that never should have passed, and were memorialized in a resting place in my mind marked 'Gone Too Soon', tucked away on a lane I haven't been able to visit in years.

There is the cemetery where memoirs written in my head now blow like grasses in the wind. Or the one frosted over on frozen ground where recollections are hidden just below the surface, trapped in layers of icy stares. Rounding the bend is another burial site where all the things I wish would have been dot the tundra as they crawled there to shrivel and die.

But none are as most frequently visited as the empty tomb where the stone was rolled away. I go there often to graze the surface with my fingers where all the things I held on to for far too long were lain. Every time something rare or an elusive piece of me became afflicted, it would get laid to rest in that tomb of unknown destiny, where hopes were lost and dreams died, and the opening got sealed tight after each affliction. Until one day when a Savior arrived, and He rolled away the stone, when He told all the dead things to breathe again, to come to life, to walk out, to be loosed, to be set free. I have never been the same.

I think Lazarus was probably never the same either. No one talks about Lazarus from his viewpoint, but I imagine if he were asked, he would tell you and me it was life-changing when he was called out of the tomb. I wonder if perhaps he reached eternity and became a little unhappy when he was brought back to this life. I mean after all; he'd have to die again. I wonder if the peace and serenity he encountered on the other side of life were so comforting, it was more painful to have those stripped from him than the grave clothes. Perhaps that's why he left them on. I also conceive, leaving the dead skin behind, walking out into new life, into the light, was he wondering why so many were mourning the dead instead of praising the living? It had to be breathtaking, realizing the One Who called life out of a dead, dark and dank place was the very One Who allowed Him to go there in the first place. Wasn't this the One Who his sisters had trusted to heal him? Whom they had begged to come, and cried when He did not? And now, just as the days should have rotted away his skin and left hollows in his head, the very One Who could have saved Him, calls death out of him, and again breathes breath into his lungs. I wonder if Lazarus too looked back—to what he knew, where dreams slinked inside to die—and then peered ahead—to the unknown, where hope is sure to dance—and chose the new, because the former things of this life have passed away (Rev. 21:4).

Isaiah 43:19 '"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."' (ESV)