

Estragon: Let's go. / Vladimir: We can't. / Estragon: Why not? / Vladimir: We're waiting for Godot . . . / Estragon: And if he doesn't come? / Vladimir: We'll come back to-morrow. / Estragon: And then the day after to-morrow? / Vladimir: Possibly.

Estragon and Vladimir are middle-aged men who in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* seem to have spent their lives by a rural roadside waiting for this character Godot to arrive. Now we human beings have ever tried to make sense of who we are and what this world is all about. To that end we have produced stories, philosophical systems, scientific theories to explain it all. For many, such explanations may satisfy, but not Beckett. Beckett wonders whether all our myths and theories are games we play to deceive ourselves. From Beckett's point of view - we don't know where we came from nor what value a life can have that must end in death. And yet we still keep waiting for Godot; we retain within us this perpetual expectation for some meaningful answer - which expectation compels even Beckett to keep writing despite his skepticism

Throughout the play Vladimir and Estragon waver between hope and despair and otherwise behave the way we all do during this interval between birth and death. They eat, argue, get involved in long discussions about discrepancies in the Bible. When a passing blind man collapses in front of them, they discuss endlessly what they should do about it (the way Congress endlessly discusses whether people should be guaranteed health care). Vladimir concludes by saying, *Let us do something, while we have the chance. It is not every day that we are needed . . .* Mutual compassion and assistance are at least a wholesome way to pass the time!

But then there is this boy who twice arrives from off stage to keep their hopes alive. He always comes with a message from Godot, never very elaborate but simply: *Mr. Godot told me to tell you he won't come this evening but surely tomorrow.* And so as the sun sets for the billionth time, they and the human race wait. They may want really to go, to leave this planetary stage they're on, to say to hell with this crazy waiting game called life. Indeed, the play's dialogue ends with Vladimir saying, *Well? Shall we go?* to which Estragon says, *Yes, let's go.* But as the final curtain falls, the stage directions say: *They do not move .* Expectation remains a perpetual human characteristic.

To paraphrase the late George Steiner we live out a Saturday that follows a Good Friday which has taught us about *injustice, of the interminable suffering, of the waste . . . of history and the everyday fabric of our personal lives. We know . . . of the pain, the failure of love, of the solitude which are our history and private fate. We also know about Sunday . . . an intimation . . . of resurrection, of a justice and a love that have conquered death . . . We look to resolutions, be they therapeutic or political, social or messianic. The lineaments of that Sunday carry the name of hope . . . But ours is a long day's journey of Saturday. Between suffering, aloneness, unutterable waste on the one hand and the dream of liberation on the other.* During which Saturday Godot does sacramentally arrive by way of every liturgy we attend and every insight we acquire. And so we do move after all.

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