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# Not Ordinary Church

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## Shadow Climber

Rev. Allyson Sawtell, 1/15/21

The play of early afternoon sunlight through  
chain link fencing on the nearby campus.

Sculpting, reflecting,  
Setting the stage

Gentle curve of the topmost peaks,  
peeking up over the crosspieces,  
soft and rounded, Appalachian range,  
not jagged Rockies.

The shadows, though. The shadows.

The shadows – though ragged – not of Rockies open and free  
but barbed wire fencing of a prison camp.

Holding in. Holding back. Holding fear.

How often do we believe the shadows?

Shadows can mislead. Keep us afraid. Keep us from what we can do. From what we need to do.

We wrap ourselves in shadows and imagine that we're safe.

Your shadows will not save you.

The sun moves on, exposing what is hidden.

What is real is the little edge of the metal peeking over the crosspiece, rough enough.

The shadows would have us believe in harsh, lethal barbed wire.

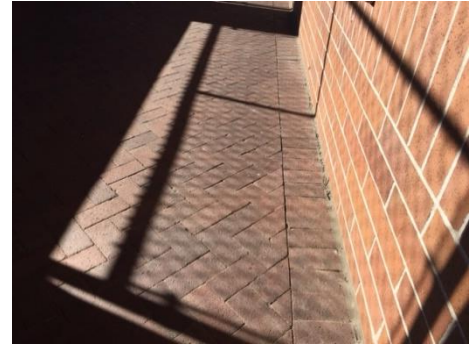
Would have us believe in that which rips, tears, separates.

We could climb the sunlit fence, still snagging the sweater or tearing the jeans, scraping an arm.

If we were to climb the shadows, their transient, enveloping untruths will rip us apart and spill  
our lives in the service of their lies.

Are we a nation of shadow climbers?

Or shall we blink into the sun, be broken open by its scorching truth,  
and, changed, climb again?



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