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Love. Move. Rize. in 2025

ROOTED: The Running Prayer

By Karen A. Sparks

I sat alone in the empty parking lot leading to the running trail. It was cold. It was still dark, and I had a restless night. Mentally, I was in a dark place. I was here to train for my upcoming race. I didn't want to be here, but I thought that showing up would motivate me and get me out of my head. The echo of my car door closing let me know how alone I was this early morning.

I started to run.

The full moon was still up and lit the way. The trees cradled me, and their leaves gently brushed my head in certain spots as I made my way through the trail. My feet were heavy, and the ground was loud. I could feel the cold air press deep into my lungs. Then, the trees released me into the field of tall grass. After several miles, my knees screamed at me to slow down, but I chose to go faster. I felt my anger surging through my body, and the sound of my breath echoed in my ears. Suddenly, the tall grass grabbed my shins, I tripped, and my body crashed to the earth. I didn't move for a few seconds. The pain revealed itself slowly. My chin was stinging, and it felt wet. Then came a feeling of internal pain that eclipsed any physical pain I felt. I recognized it but

didn't want to acknowledge its writhing – this guttural anguish seething from my insides. It scared me, it angered me, and it enveloped me.

My soul, spirit, heart, and chest ached into the density of the space, and my body's weight combined with gravity as I lay face down. The ground and I had become one. I could taste the dirt in my mouth. It was in my nose and ears. I had the wind knocked out of me, and I couldn't scream.

My Reagan and Grant are buried in the dirt, all alone. I know the coffins are air-tight and sealed. That's what Tommy, the funeral director, promised. A flash of them lying in their coffins at the viewing rushed over me. Did my babies know what *this* dirt tasted like? They played in the dirt, climbed piles, and dug tunnels with their friends. They dug in the sand at the beach when I took them to see the ocean in Galveston. I saw them running on the beach. I heard them laugh and scream when they jumped the tiny waves. The dirt and sand met the glory of the salty ocean water. I could taste the salt in my tears as it rolled over my mouth. This *wasn't* the same dirt they tasted. This cold grit was suffocating. A flash of their headstone invaded my mind. I pressed my face into the black dirt.

"Bury me here. Take me now. Engulf me." I whispered.

I couldn't move. The pain from my fall was pounding, but the ache in my heart was worse. I felt like I did in my bed that day. I saw a flash of the pills and wine bottles. I didn't want to get up, and I didn't want to move. I could smell the smoke from the fire and hear the flames tearing through the house as it closed in on my children.

I didn't want to "rise," and I didn't want to be an inspiration to anyone. I just wanted to be Rea and Grant's mom. A groaning began to well up within; it slowly exited my insides and seeped into the earth.

Did they know how much I missed them?

The words started flowing, "God, I know you said they couldn't feel pain or sorrow in heaven, so they can't see how much I miss them. But I need them to know that I can't breathe without thinking of them. God, I need YOU to tell them that their mother loves them every second and that I can't wait to see them. I've been trusting in you through this process. Where are You? I've been doing everything I can to keep going, face this trial, and face this grief. Am I even on a path with You anymore? Are You even here? I know Reagan and Grant are with You, I have to believe in that, but I can't feel them either. All I feel is pain. All I feel is anger. All I feel is abandonment by You. It's a void. It's a never-ending void, and this emptiness consumes me. It consumes me. I know I'm

not perfect. But I CHOSE YOU. I chose to believe in You! My kids believed in You. They did nothing to deserve to be killed! NOTHING."

My voice grew heavier, "I prayed to YOU- I gave my marriage and my children to YOU. I spoke Your Word over them, over our family. I prayed that David would see that he could change, and I prayed that he would change for himself and his children. And when he chose not to change, I CHOSE YOU!"

I could feel the granules of dirt in my teeth and tongue.

My voice bellowed, "I chose to take my kids out of our Babylon! Remember that? Remember when You said to turn from my Babylon, and I told David he was our Babylon and that our marriage was over? And I told him that I CHOSE YOU. And he killed my babies. I prayed to You. I believed in You. But I don't know what to think anymore."

I took hold of the long grass, and it felt my rage.

"If this is some test or trial," I growled, "Then take it from me! Open wide this ground and swallow me whole. Let me rot inside of it. Take me from this world and let heaven absorb my soul so I can be with my children. I need You, God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit wherever You are. I need You to give me something to hold on to and show me some mercy here because I need to believe that my children did not die in vain. You better make sure that I'm strong enough so they don't die a second death. Tell me what to do with the rest of my days. Come on! Where are You? Give me something! I CAN'T DO THIS! Please. You promised you would never leave us. But I feel so alone. I feel so totally alone."

My body lay in the field.

I lifted my head, and I rolled over onto my back.

I could feel tears falling down my cheeks. Peace washed over me, and I felt God communicating with me through my surroundings. I ran my hands through the tall grass.

It seemed to say, "We look weak, but we are strong. Our roots run deep. We surround your children in the ground and protect their bodies in our home, in our warmth."

"Thank you," I whispered.

I looked up, and the sky spoke softly, "Here I am in all my star-filled glory. I welcomed your children into my world, which also belongs to you. They live beyond all of this

beauty. The earth covers and protects their bodies, and I carry their spirits with me. Look up. Let me pull you in for a moment. See how they shine beyond this realm."

I wiped my eyes and gazed above.

I whispered, "God, I recognize Your love for me. Thank You for forgiving me when I doubt. You understand my anger, my fear, my pain. I speak Your words over me. You allow me to see the love and brightness of Reagan and Grant in the signs You send to me. You surround me. I'm not alone because You are with me. You remain faithful to answer and guide me. You give me the strength to endure. You will help me finish my race, and because of You, I will see Reagan and Grant again. I thank You for rooting and grounding me in your love. And for loving my children and for loving me. Amen."

I sat up, wiped some dirt from my face and gnashed its grit in my teeth. I stood on the trail and touched the small gash on my chin.

"Not even close enough for stitches," I looked to the sky.

"Just keep swimming, right, Rea and G-Man?"

I focused on my breathing and picked up my pace.

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You can be the light -

Radical generosity awakens something profound in all of us. When someone feels lost and overwhelmed in darkness, you can be the reminder that there is a path forward even when it seems impossible. That's love—we are rooted in love, and there is immense joy in helping others find hope and purpose. God's love, mercy, grace, family, friends, and community saved me. The Great Root Movement's mission is to provide resources for hope, healing, and purpose.

We have just launched our **Love. Move. Rize. in 2025** fundraising campaign with a goal of **\$10,000**, and we need your support to achieve it.

You can be the expression of love and hope! Every dollar counts, and no amount is too small. Thanks to the generosity of TGRM partners, we have expanded our resource network, reached over 250 women, and provided multiple RIZE Scholarships for bereaved mothers, domestic abuse survivors, and others in need of help to attend restorative & therapeutic programs, therapy, and support groups. In the past few weeks alone, twelve women have reached out to us.

Additionally, TGRM has awarded over 100 high school scholarships through our Reagan and Grant Small Endowed Memorial and TGRM Scholarships.

Our fundraising campaign runs from March 5th to March 26th.

Together, we can reach our goal and increase our resources for those asking us for help. Let's continue to awaken and foster hope in the lives of others!

[Click here to give.](#)

Scan our QR Code to give.



Share our link: <https://givebutter.com/TGRMLMR25>

Thank you!

Love. Move. Rize.,

Karen A. Sparks

President, [The Great Root Movement 501\(c\)3 Nonprofit](#)

Race Director, [Love Never Ends Trail Series](#)