



Three Millimeters of the Universe, by Daniel Gottlieb

Dear Sam,

One night in the hospital, a friend came to visit me. I told her I didn't think I could go on anymore. What I was feeling went beyond despair. It was a loss of hope – of everything I valued, trusted, and loved. The pain had become simply unbearable.

My friend held my hand and said, 'Dan, what you are about is more important than who you are.'

That night, I had a dream. I dreamed that God came to me. This was not the God I believe in, the one you read about in the Bible. It was some other God, and when He spoke, he said, 'I'm going to give you a piece of the universe. Your job is to take care of it. Not make it bigger or better – just take care of it. And when I'm ready, I'll take it back, and your life will be over.'

I looked at the piece of the universe that God was showing me, and I saw that it was just three millimeters! Was that all? I could feel my ego begin to rail against this indignity. I'm a psychologist! I am an author! I have a radio show! Aren't these things important?

Of course, no matter how much I protested, it wouldn't make any difference. My allotment was still – and would always be – just three millimeters of the entire universe. That was it!

But in this dream I also saw that caring for three millimeters of the universe was an awesome responsibility. A God-given responsibility. Though I had felt I couldn't go on, finally I had to acknowledge that I would have to give back my three millimeters before I was ready. And because, at the time of the dream, I had a wound that was healing in millimeters, I knew that my job was to help heal my three millimeters of the universe.

Sam, part of the reason I'm at peace with my life is that I take care of the part of the universe I'm responsible for. I haven't made it bigger or better. I haven't changed it. But I have cared for it. Writing these letters to you is just one of many ways of tending my three millimeters.

What I wish for you, Sam, is what I wish for everybody – to get as clear a sense of what your life is about as I got in that dream. Your three millimeters is not much in terms of area. But I hope you will feel the gratitude and joy that I feel, having been given that much to tend.

Love,
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