

***Poems  
for the  
Kingdom***

*by*

***Mona La Reux***

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Mary Mennis

Cover by Pastor Tim Hall



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## Introduction

Mona is first and foremost a religious poet and all who read her poems are struck by the depth and knowledge displayed in them. The visual images she emits are so strong that readers can readily see what she describes. She feels that the poet is akin to a prophet and able to develop with time and patience a deep insight into people and things and events. Writing since childhood, she got ideas from sermons or places visited and has written on a range of topics. The poems presented here are the Poems for the Kingdom but there are other poems about animals and the comical side to life .

Born in Canberra of immigrant parents, Mona was educated at Canberra High School, Canberra University College and Melbourne University. She taught with joy and fulfilment in many places over a forty-year period: in Canberra, Riverina, and Melbourne and was proud of her period of teaching English at St Joseph's Gregory Terrace in Brisbane.

Mona has always been strict and disciplined about the quality of good poetry in regard to rhyme and rhythm. One thing that distinguishes her poetry is the use of typology and symbolism. For example in the poem, the Mercy Tree, the tree that is destined to be used as the cross has special significance. She also brings the Old Testament into the New Testament to show the fulfilment of the prophecies.

As a Christian, she has shared with people of many faiths and backgrounds and this has enriched her poetry and hopefully makes it appeal to a wider group of people.

I myself have known Mona since 1956 when we were University students together in Canberra. We were setting out on the great adventure of life and both took up teaching as our profession. In those early days Mona was a frequent visitor to our house where my mother, Lady Rene Eccles, took her under her wing and helped find her a French tutor, who happened to be in one of the embassies. That is the sort of thing that could only happen in Canberra.

Our paths diverged after that time and we did not meet again until the 1980s when I enjoyed visiting Mona on the Sunshine Coast. Fishing, walking, talking, playing cards were our main occupations. Mona showed her great love of nature in these forays and her dogs were her companions enjoying the joie de vivre on the beaches and rivers.

She often talked of producing a book of her poems and here it is at last. I have found great satisfaction in bringing them together from the handwritten versions kept in boxes and I am sure the world at large will be glad to read them.

Many have helped in this endeavour and Mona would like to thank those who encouraged her in her poetry including Pastor Tim Hall, Frances Ward, Jess and Charlie Elliot and George Ashworth. Special thanks to those who helped with the typing of the manuscript including Joanna Hoy and Jean Petek. I would also like to thank my husband Brian for publishing this book

Mary Mennis  
August 2005.





## The Gift of God

How often, Lord, well-meaning friends have asked  
If these half-polished gems are given me,  
Inspired and written by your mighty hand.  
I falter in my answer, lost for words.  
How can I tell them? If You should ever grace  
Our blinded world with just one single poem,  
Its light would so outshine the words of men,  
As does the brightest star you've set on high,  
A solitary candle's guttering flame.

That you should briefly wrap my human soul  
In inspiration's mantle, for word or phrase  
And I should clearly hear, such wonder breeds  
That my poor heart is melted into tears.

I bless You, Lord My Father, Source of all,  
From Whom flows every good and perfect gift,  
That in the limits of my mind and heart  
May dwell rich thoughts; that in Your image  
Made creator, I may twist and shape  
A poem, and polish this small gem  
Until it gleams with almost holy fire.

## CREATION

### Spoken:

In the beginning, God.  
Of His perfection, God...  
From nothing but His glory and His purpose, God.



### Sung:

He tore the veil of night:  
O what a wondrous sight  
As all the universe was bathed in dazzling Light.

Stars and the moon and sun,  
Types of the Spirit, Father, Son,  
For signs and seasons, days and years, began to run.

Whales in the teeming sea,  
Grass and each fruiting tree,  
Kind by kind, obeyed God's Word, and came to be.

Reptile and beast and bird  
Took shape and breathed and stirred,  
As o'er the universe rang out God's lively Word.

Love's heart went on to seek,  
Till, as creation's peak,  
Of dust and spirit, Adam rose to crown God's week.

Elohim in glory stood,  
Looked on beast, stream and wood,  
And in Their image, reigning man, and found them good.

### Spoken:

In the beginning, God.  
Of His perfection, God.  
From nothing but His glory and His purpose, God.



## Tide turn

Tideturn, and all my world begins to sway,  
Coolness and food and ease are drawn away  
And on the bare, brown rocks, the weeds decay.

Around me is the angry torrent's surge  
And through it all I hear the thunder-dirge  
Of life tugged from me by the moon's strong urge.

The naked sun how can I hope to bear?  
The toil and broiling of the rushing air?  
Why should this life be wrought so frail – so fair?

Yet deep within the all-embracing sound  
And tumult, as shell upon shell is ground,  
A pool of deep serenity is found –

And with a start of wild surprise, I see  
That, like the fragile sea anemone,  
Within a cleft of rock, He's sheltered me.

## Samson

The Angel of the Lord proclaimed his coming: Little Sun.  
Then, into sacrificial flame rose glorious, shining one.  
Announced by God, to live for God, a Nazarite apart;  
Not just with unshorn hair but circumcision of the heart.

A cradle and a home God gave; the boy grew fair of form  
But with the Spirit's early stirrings came strong passion's storm.  
He chose his wife by lust of eye and earthly pleasures found;  
His sin was suffered that the Grace of God might more abound.

In olden times the Spirit found, in man no dwelling place  
But seized deliverers, prophets, kings, as vehicles of Grace;  
A roaring lion, seeking prey, faced Samson, faint of heart:  
The Spirit fell and, weaponless, he tore the beast apart.

With courage strong but folly-tinged, he dealt with Philistines  
By loosing badgers fiery-tailed, among their corn and vines;  
To and fro the vengeance went, with slaughter and with fire;  
Oppression from the Philistines had reached proportions dire.

Three thousand Judah men went forth and climbed to Etam's height  
But like the Lamb he signified he let them bind him tight.  
They passed him to the enemy; the Spirit sudden fell  
Upon the man anointed to destroy the gates of Hell.

He seized the jawbone of an ass, a sordid, futile thing  
And in the Spirit's mighty power, he flailed it, swing on swing.  
'A thousand', Joshua had said, 'will be pursued by one':  
Not Samson weak but mighty God, the battle glorious won.

The bodies fell without resisting, heap by mounting heap,  
Like asses' carcasses upon that mountain bare and steep.  
Samson, sore athirst, cried out, he fresh cool water sought:  
God gave 'the Well of him that's called' to show 'twas He had fought.

Yet Samson, who'd not learned to yield, to Gaza took his way,  
That stronghold bordering on the world, became a place to play.  
But in a deep and midnight hour, the consecrated seed  
Began to stir: he looked full on his foul defiling deed.

Post and beam, the bondage gates of Gaza on his back,  
Samson, for eight and thirty miles to Hebron set his track:  
Type of the One on Calvary Road, with post and beam, Who fell,  
Anointed like the living Christ to break the Gates of Hell.

O Christian who has missed God's highest, taken second best,  
Whose life was often galled by failure, lacked the winning zest:  
Samson failed but God's anointing never failed or fell,  
You, too, are God's anointed one: Break down the Gates of Hell.



## Ruth

When the Hebrews wished to say friendship,  
Express the heart's love in a word,  
Ruth was the name that they murmured,  
The sound that the cherished one heard.

When God was wanting to show us  
His friendship divine and, in truth,  
The love of His Father-heart for us,  
He told us the story of Ruth.

It isn't so hard to promise,  
When days are prosperous and fair  
But Ruth pledged her love in the darkness,  
To a woman in bitter despair.

She walked from her home and her kinsfolk,  
Safe ground where her young feet had trod,  
Vowed in life and in death to Naomi;  
In time and forever to God.

She surrendered her life in obedience,  
When natural vision had died  
But beloved of a kinsman-Redeemer,  
Became type of the all-yielding Bride.

From the fruit of this God-ordained union,  
Came Jesus, the Light and the Truth,  
For to perfect His plan of redemption,  
God needed the friendship of Ruth.





## **Lilies of the Field.**

Blood, scarlet and glistening, splashed upon the Galilean land.  
Lilies of the field that toil not, neither do they spin:  
In all his glory, Solomon was not arrayed as these.  
To-day the scarlet lily shines, tomorrow wilts  
But for eternity the scarlet Blood avails-

What glory gleams upon the fields?  
Look long now, drink the richness with your heart.  
Think, that from Rahab's crimson thread, life flowed;  
Thus, from the Blood, ever deliverance comes.

Blood, scarlet and glistening, splashed upon the Galilean land:  
Lilies of the field – Behold and wonder  
At flamboyant splendour cast  
By the Sower, prodigal across the land.

## The Woman at the Well

Bright the day, heavy the water-pot weary my spirit within;  
 I go alone but jests and snickers, arrows to my heart  
 Linger about the well and whisper down the searing wind,  
 Land so hot and days so long, the journey never seems to end:  
 Water to-day, water tomorrow, water forever it seems,  
 Forcing these endless journeys on my feet.

Look – a man! A Jew is there before me!  
 Men do not draw water; I wait a little, hoping he'll depart.  
 His back is to me. As I draw near he turns his head-  
 My eyes are rivetted to his: the deepest, clearest wells  
 That I have ever seen.

“Give me to drink.” My hands fumble the rope.  
 My eyes dart from face to hem of blue.  
 “Me, sir, give you a drink? But you're a Jew.  
 You know me – what I am: Samaritan and” – awareness stifles words

He is speaking “but if you knew ... Gift of God....ask .. Living Water,  
 A well of water, springing into everlasting life.”  
 A sea of words, my mind afloat in spite of me, upon his words.

Living Water? An end to the long mid-day journeys?  
 An end to the whisper and the pointed finger?  
 An end to the emptiness of seeking love and being rebuffed?  
 What can he know of such a one as me?  
 Yet as my eyes meet His I am washed,  
 Washed by the water in those wells of compassion.

On feet that dawdled to the well, homeward I speed:  
 Faster and faster, skipping across the hot, dry ground.  
 Deep within in me as a fountain, a torrent is rising.  
 “I met a man” ...”O we know that”  
 “He gave me water for you ...  
 Water that will last for ever,  
 Life that will last forever”.



## Death as Meeting-point

We did not think of death as meeting-point,  
 Fulfilment, harvest, restoration, goal.  
 We saw it only as a breaking-off,  
 The stark and shattered graveyard column's height:  
 Its broken surface 'neath a shroud of stone  
 To hide a fact we said that time would heal.



In such a mood, the Hebrew widow walked  
 Behind the bier that bore her only son  
 And with such thoughts the mourners wailed their grief,  
 Wending their way towards the village gates.  
 Darkly their garments pushed the crowd aside  
 And darker brooded death with heavy wings  
 On comfortless and empty days to come.

The Galilean hills were bathed in light,  
 Alive and glowing with the spring's bright blooms;  
 Down Little Hermon's slopes with lively tread  
 Or slower steps to match some graver thought,  
 A band of men approached the village gates.  
 Those passersby who glanced towards the group  
 Would catch in eye and hand a sense of life  
 And pause to wonder whether hopes and dreams  
 Forsaken, could somewhere, some day, be brought to pass.

Nain - a spot on earth – mud bricks and lives -  
 A thousand like it dotted hill and plain,  
 Where springs had led a primal tribe to dwell.  
 No fear of raids had called for building walls;  
 No riches here to tempt a robber's hand.  
 They had built gates; a village needed gates:  
 A place where men of honour met to talk,  
 A seat where rarely justice weighed a cause,  
 A parting-point through which the dead were borne  
 To lie in rock-hewn tombs towards the east.

These gates to day would be a meeting-point  
For swift encounter between life and death,  
Imparting to that village name significance  
To cause its memory to outlast time.  
No shout of war; no weapon of this world;  
A first/last conquest in a moment crowned.

They come: processions meeting face-to-face:  
One black-enfolded in its misery;  
The other streaming light. The men stand back  
And from their midst He steps. The passersby  
Have stopped. What man disturbs the ritual  
Of death? The bearers are confused. The man  
Speaks first in comfort to the one who mourns  
Then, fingers resting lightly on the bier,  
Commands attention. Who would dare? To touch  
A bier or body brings defilement foul.  
He's speaking to the corpse! The man is mad!  
A fool can see, and yet!  
Colour is rising in the young man's face:  
A surge of life transmitted by that touch,

His limbs are twitching as he starts to rise.  
Startled the bearers drop him clumsily;  
The comments of the growing noisy crowd  
Have waned to fearful wond'ring gasps and sighs.  
The mother, shocked and rigid stands aghast  
As dawning realisation supplants grief.  
Gently, the Prince of Life draws each to each,  
The crowd's beginning to rejoice and shout.  
But Jesus' eyes are turned to other sights  
In other realms, where fleeing through the night  
Defeated death begins to feel death's pangs.  
From this day forward death begins to be  
Fulfilment, harvest, restoration, goal,  
Eternal meeting-place with I AM LIFE.

## **Nain**

I ran the grey soil through my fingers:  
 No bone of bone or flesh of flesh;  
 It was an absence celebrated here:  
 The young man had not stayed;  
 The widow'd gone rejoicing.  
 Only the barren earth gave testimony  
 Of a Word expressed forever in this place,  
 Of a touch of Life and Grace,  
 Of all two thousand years to face  
 A resurrection - and another yet to come.



## **Mennin Gate**

What is the saddest legacy of war?  
 The cripple wheeling down the halls of time?  
 The haunted, shell-shocked refuse  
 Or the children's flowers wilting on a headstone,  
 Left in uncomprehending mime  
 Of grief and desolation?  
 Not one of these can touch the enormous pain  
 Or cause the beholder's heart to clutch  
 At sorrow, like the stones, simple and plain:  
 "A soldier of the Allies" - and the years.  
 No other word appears.

And there are those who in a distant place,  
 Wait, locked outside a signless gate:  
 Their lot, without the pain of knowing -  
 Always to watch; always to wait.



## Blessed is the Peacemaker

Blessed is the peacemaker  
 Abigail the wise,  
 Gentle in the face of cruelty,  
 Rising from rebuff with mercy,  
 Lit with beauty, meek and godly:  
 See her gentle spirit rise.

Blessed are the persecuted  
 All the country through,  
 Nabal, stubborn, evil, angry,  
 Kept his flocks on David's bounty:  
 Rich and greedy,  
 Spurned the needy,  
 Said he never David knew.

Blessed ye when men revile you  
 But David knew no joy.  
 He armed four hundred swordsmen ready,  
 Bent on warfare vengeful, bloody:  
 Death to thousands:  
 Slaughtered husbands,  
 Had God not touched one grateful boy.

Blessed is the peacemaker  
With a listening heart:  
Urgent swift to Abigail  
The young man ran with anxious tale:  
“Walls by night; Walls in light  
Were David’s men in every part.”

Blessed as the pure in heart,  
Abigail moves sure.  
She gathers bounty plentiful,  
Her husband’s payment dutiful  
But from his sin  
She’s shielding him,  
As only can whose heart is pure.

Blessed are the merciful  
Abigail knows well:  
To shield an enemy she’ll move  
And as a handmaid serve and love:  
Mercy teaching,  
Deeply reaching  
Heart’s core in its hardened shell.

Blessed is the peacemaker,  
As Abigail brought peace,  
She received full peace’s blessing:  
At God’s and David’s hand possessing:  
Blest preserving.  
Blest in serving  
David, King, in bonds of peace.

## Judas

The Master, calling twelve, saw one  
 Who'd draw His Father's wrath;  
 He knew the prophets awesome seal.  
 And yet he longed to tame the zeal  
 Of the man from Kerioth

In cold and dark by desert roads.  
 As Jesus quietly prayed,  
 He'd see the bright and flying spark  
 That upwards scattered through the dark  
 From the fire a friend had laid-

In rocking boat on Galilee,  
 At crowded long day's end:  
 A rolled shawl pushed beneath His head  
 A snack of olives, dates and bread,  
 Were the gifts that marked a friend-.

On dusty walks to Bethany-  
 By-Jordan, willow-lined,  
 The Master'd fearfully admire  
 The reasonings like destructive fire,  
 Of His friend's enquiring mind.

He saw the double mindedness,  
 The walking civil war,  
 The greedy hold upon the purse,  
 As evil's deep satanic curse  
 Through friendship's fabric tore-.

There came a night: a bowl of bread:  
 A swift and sundering end;  
 Tears not just for the cross ahead.  
 Nor stricken flock with shepherd dead.  
 He wept to lose His friend.

Of all the sons that He would love  
 Through ages without end  
 No other loved one could replace  
 The swarthy, keen and smiling face  
 Of Judas, Jesus' friend.



## The Mercy Tree

Before God hung one star upon the sky  
 His heart's compassion hewed a mercy-tree:  
 Symbol of suffering love and promise free,  
 Throughout His Word, it proves He hears each cry.

Blind Israel, blessing Joseph's gentile sons  
 Beneath crossed hands, imparted Truth divine;  
 At Passover, beyond that blood-smeared sign.  
 In light and safety, lived God's chosen ones.

According to God's order, tribal bands,  
 On four sides of the Ark marched on their way,  
 And God looked earthward at the close of day,  
 To watch a fire-lit Cross on desert sands,

A tree made Mara's bitter waters sweet:  
 Since Calvary, no bitter pool need stay;  
 More beauteous blooms of grace shall Cross display,  
 Than flowering rod beneath the mercy-seat.

Moses, for healing, brazen serpent raised  
 And those who looked were cured of natural ills:  
 Behold the Lamb! The heart with longing fills,  
 For thousand, thousand sinners shall be graced.

Before the forest's canopy unfurled,  
 God's heart designed a Cross to save the world;  
 Before the waiting earth was bathed in dew,  
 He raised that Cross in Heaven, for me and you.



This poem can be sung  
to "Men of Harleck"



## The Cross

Behold the cross, its shame and glory;  
Listen to the wondrous story;  
Open wide your heart's door for He  
Longs to flood your life.

Lay aside ambition's longing,  
Lonely grief or wild crowd's thronging;  
Yield your fears, for see, this strong King  
Comes to still their strife.

Have you known a love's betraying?  
Felt the whips of scorn's tongue flaying?  
Listen, wounded Love is saying:  
"I have felt it all.

Don't say nought I've known is lasting;  
Come with swift abandon, casting  
Guilt and sickness, every past thing,  
I have healed them all.

I made you, for your friendship yearning;  
Yet a special love is burning.  
Until death and no returning,  
I will call your name."

,

## The Crucifixion

Sometimes there is no answer but the floor;  
No pride to stand; no ease to sit;  
No human friend to share the pain and strain-  
Sometimes there is no answer but to lie.  
Stretched, torn and racked  
As He was raised and racked, against the sky..  
The sole release, the spirits heaving groan

Sometimes the only answer's opening wide  
The heart, and letting tethered birds  
Of human sympathy and friendship fly:  
To walk that inner darkened space  
Where only ministering angels tend.

When the crucifixion of the floor is all there is;  
When sole release is pulling out the props,  
The solitary silence throbs with life  
And if, like Him, we shun to break the tree's embrace,  
We dare to stay and stay and wait for birth,  
We rise with Him in Resurrection's day.



## Easter

Before the light of the morning  
 A clarion call rings out,  
 Breaking the silent dawning;  
 'Tis the Holy Spirit's shout:  
 "Come forth, Thou Lord of Creation  
 And take for eternity,  
 The Life, the Power, the Dominion,  
 That rightly belong to Thee".



Early with spices  
 the women came  
 but only an angel  
 spoke His name-

Empty the tomb,  
 The body gone;  
 Mary stood in the  
 Garden alone.

Peter came looking:  
 The grave clothes lay,  
 Folded and wrapped  
 In the burial way.

But when Jesus rose,  
 That abandoned tomb  
 Became forever  
 A King's throne room.

For the power of death  
 Will never reign  
 Over the Sons  
 Of God again.



## The Paschal Moon

Why is the Paschal moon so bright,  
 Shedding its all-pervading light?  
 Silvery beauty seems to shine  
 With a pristine loveliness divine  
 The sun is far and glorious bright  
 But we gaze on the moon with a special delight  
 The sun is grand and a burning fire  
 Where the eye can't look or the mind aspire  
 But the battered moon's reflected glory  
 Mirrors a timeless, wondrous story.

We cannot look on God's holy face;  
 We lack the perfect unfettered grace  
 But we see, in the man that came and died,  
 The Father's glory magnified.  
 We hear His voice, his dying plea  
 My Father, my Father, glorify me  
 With Our Glory before the world began,  
 So that I can reflect it to suffering man.

Why is the Paschal moon so bright,  
 Shedding its all-pervading light?  
 Because on a distant creation morning,  
 When light was spreading through earth's first dawning,  
 God set the moon in that primal sky  
 So in distant ages we'd look, descry,  
 In the depths of the deepest barren night,  
 In the Son, the Father's reflected light.



## EMMAUS

The day was drawing onward when they reached Emmaus town,  
 Those men whose mourning hearts were strangely light,  
 So they bade the traveller tarry, as the sun was going down,  
 And eat a meal and shelter for the night.

For they sensed a kindred spirit and they longed to listen more  
 To the Word on which their stricken hopes had fed,  
 Of how an ancient King of Peace had made Messiah known  
 In blessing and in sacrificial Bread.

He'd told them as they walked the miles, of a journey long ago,  
 When God with heavenly Manna pilgrims fed:  
 Jehovah-Jireh's full provision, in a kingdom yet to be,  
 Foreshadowed in the raining down of Bread.  
 He'd recalled the Ark most holy, served by Levi's priestly tribe,  
 Beneath the covering Cherubs' wings o'erspread  
 And, outside the veil of crimson, Light and Presence, signified  
 In candlestick and showing forth of Bread.

Through Zechariah's words he traced Messiahs' coming reign,  
 From Isaiah and David, depths of suffering dread,  
 How Micah said a King would come, for Israel and the world,  
 From Ephrata, King David's House of Bread.

The disciples' hearts were burning, but their eyes refused to see,  
 Though they mused upon the things the stranger said;  
 Till they put the meal before Him and He raised His hands to bless  
 And they knew Him – in the Breaking of the Bread.

## Passover to Pentecost

At Passover, one solemn night, in Herod's palace dread,  
 I came upon a grain of Wheat to all appearance dead;  
 No gold of harvest; no increase; no hope, nor life, nor light-  
 Only the grave across the path and seeming endless night:  
 Of wheat no head but O what Bread  
 Was stored within that granule dead.

At Passover, one moon-filled night, in deep Gethsemane,  
 I came upon a bare, brown Vine, against an olive tree;  
 Its bark was riven with the scars of mankind's sins and fears  
 Where nine and thirty stripes had fallen;  
 The dew was frozen tears:  
 Of life no sign  
 But O what Wine  
 Was stored within that wintered Vine.

At Pentecost, one morning bright, before the temple square,  
 I came upon a field of wheat, so tall and full and fair:  
 Three thousand stalks of vibrant gold, a-shining in the sun:  
 That grain of wheat had died and risen and harvest had begun:  
 Their living Head  
 For O what Bread  
 Was stored within that Granule dead.

At Pentecost, one morning bright, within an upper room,  
 I tasted of the Wine of Life that banished every gloom;  
 As Holy Spirit wind and fire were given in that hour,  
 That burgeoned Vine was now a-thrill with resurrection Power:  
 Of Life the sign  
 For O what Wine  
 Was flowing from that glorious Vine.



A decorative initial letter 'P' in a black and white, ornate, gothic style. The letter is highly stylized with intricate flourishes and scrollwork. To the right of the 'P', the word 'eace' is written in a simple, black, serif font.

Turn my restlessness, O Lord to something fair  
Over my turmoil spread a Holy Peace,  
That in the silences of love enfolded  
I may learn of Thee and find release  
From fettered worldliness. May grace pour new  
Into my soul and coming dawn  
Find here, Thy sinful child, newborn.

Touch, Lord, my lips to speak once more  
In Thine own gifts of poetry and song.  
Lift, new-create through Christ love's sacrifice  
From depths of dark, treasures which do belong  
To Thee; Thou lends't them me.  
And I have marred them by inconstancy.



## The Counsellor's Prayer

Jesus, I thank you that you understood,  
The desperate need of Mary Magdalene  
To touch and feel the warmth of human flesh;  
That, though you did not yield,  
Nor try to shield, from earth's strong downward pull;  
That, though you clearly taught  
An inward spiritual higher walk,  
You dealt in gentleness with those who craved  
For human comforting.

You long to see our hind's feet nimble on the crags  
Of Spirit, Faith and Word  
But gently yoke and goad the plodding beast  
That squelches in the clinging mud of earth.

Lord, teach me when to reach with comfort's hand,  
To know that touch that heals a wounded heart;  
But give me, too, the strength to stand apart,  
To leave unhindered by my petty comforting,  
The smoking flax that only lacks  
The Spirit's breath to fan it into fire.



## A Gift for my Rosalie

Along the grey streets of a war-marked city  
Ravaged by conquerors marching battleward and returning  
I sought a gift for my Rosalie.  
The shattered windows of looted shops gaped wide  
Legacy of the hungry, the greedy and the lost:  
There was no gift for my Rosalie.

I turned toward the bleak units offering present shelter,  
Eyes wandering walls and unplanted window boxes  
I longed for a gift for my Rosalie.

High on a balcony, an old woman blackskirted and scarved  
Appeared; then below her, wonder of wonders  
I saw the gift for my Rosalie.

Hanging from the window box in a curve of elegant beauty  
Flaunting its crimson glory in the hard sunlight.  
A single rose for my Rosalie.

I waved some money, caught her eye and pointed to the flower.  
She disappeared, returning with a knife she severed  
Her only rose for my Rosalie  
And flung it, laughingly, to my waiting hands.  
Cradling its loveliness in all that desolation,  
I held God's gift for my Rosalie.



## The Cuckoo

Winter's over, spring has come, and in the sparrow's nest  
 A blind and lurching scrap of life is rising to the test;  
 To the eye it's just a fledgling newly come alive  
 But in its heart's a different fire, a growing urgent drive.

Around it are the natural heirs the mother seeks to raise  
 But faster far the cuckoo grows and strengthens with the days.  
 This sightless bundle goes to war to drive his rivals out,  
 With rump and wing relentlessly he puts his foes to rout.

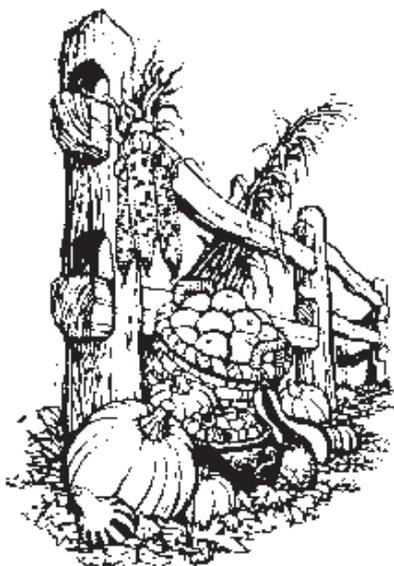
And one by one the sparrow's young are driven from the nest,  
 Till finally the cuckoo sits, of all their realm possessed.  
 To the world he's just a symbol for crazy offbeat things,  
 An annual spring phenomenon, a little jest with wings,  
 But while they've laughed and scorned him as an ugly, useless thing,  
 He's gained himself a heritage and there he reigns as king.

Deep within the Dandenongs in a nest of fern and tree  
 A foolish fledgling cuckoo from the egg is breaking free;  
 Around it are the natural heirs of darkness, greed and self,  
 Entrenched secure in ownership, in lassitude and wealth.  
 But the cuckoo's growing daily and the strong man will be bound;  
 Defeated like the nestlings that have fallen to the ground.

By word and prayer and praise that rings in the grateful cuckoo's heart,  
 The strongholds of the enemy are being torn apart.  
 Fledgling cuckoo, gaining feathers, spread your wings and rise;  
 God takes the weak and foolish things to confound the wise,  
 And while the world is chasing wealth and every futile thing,  
 You will gain the hills for God and Jesus as their King.



For a young thriving Christian  
 community working in the  
 Dandenongs.



## Brown and Gold

Brown and gold, they grew along the wall,  
 The year my mother died.  
 And all my years 'mid tropic green,  
 They'd flash through memory,  
 Catch and throw the sunlight- and their rich perfume.

A southern summer, twenty years away;  
 No garden of my own but in a special joy,  
 Accepting freedom of another's soil,  
 I purchased seed and carted earth  
 And when green seedlings crowded through,  
 With reverent hands parted and thinned the plants  
 And firmed the soil around their tender stems-

I had no hope of tarrying till the spring;  
 The blaze of colour was for others' eyes.  
 Knowing their pleasure from a thousand miles  
 Would be reward enough. But time was kind  
 And lingering I enjoyed the loveliness:  
 Hues familiar- and a deep new mauve.

Then, hands that never touched our garden wall,  
 People within whose hearts no family memories kindled at the sight,  
 Banished those windblown flowers and bending stalks,  
 In favour of square, tidy, bare stone blocks  
 And I was left to muse with shrinking heart  
 How often I have failed to ask or think  
 What some untidy, worthless thing, discarded by my busy hand,  
 Had meant to someone else.

## Lord Jesus, Make Us Whole

We come, O Saviour, through the lonely night  
And bear our wounds for healing in your Light;  
O touch our loveless, selfish hearts that we,  
Renewed, might fearless lovers be:  
Lord Jesus, make us whole.

We come, Lord Jesus, lonely deep inside.  
Your broken Body longs to be your Bride;  
O teach us how to bear each other's pain  
And grief and still to love again:  
Lord Jesus, make us whole.

With that fierce longing of Your broken heart,  
With tears for sheep that scattered feast apart,  
We come in penitence to take Love's Food,  
To see by faith, one Church renewed:  
Lord Jesus, make us whole.



## For a Friend, abroad at Christmas

I couldn't send a sunset  
Or moonlight on the sea  
The glory of a northern morn  
Or a blazing wattle-tree.

I couldn't pluck the warm fresh smell  
Of our rich Australian earth  
Or parcel up the sounds and sights  
Of the land that gave you birth.

So I wandered, at the break of day  
And chose some tiny things:  
A leaf; a flower, some white beach sand,  
A token from the wings  
Of all the rainbow lorikeets  
That wheel through tropic springs:  
The riches of your life at home,

The gifts of memory:  
To bring you Aussie Christmas  
In your land beyond the sea.





## The Nightingale

Dawn and a woodland in the northern spring:  
The train had stopped. I gazed into the night,  
Felt the warm air, saw dimly outlined trees;  
Above a hill a single shaft of light.

Deep in the darkness, birdsong rippled, rang  
O'erwhelmed my very being with beauty wild  
Its purity like fire, like water, cleansed  
And moved to tears, I listened like a child.

Till, smoothly, quietly the train resumed  
Its rhythmic swaying I had heard  
From hidden woodland depths, north of Cologne,  
The peerless song of Keats' immortal bird.

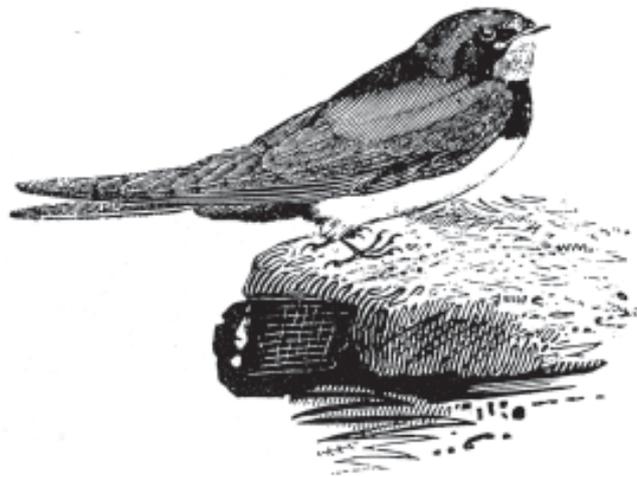
For all my life, I'll thank my God that He  
Through desert journey, mountain, lake and dale  
Arranged that I would be beside that wood  
To hear the anthem of the nightingale.

I'll thank Him too. I did not have to speed  
In air-conditioned comfort through that world  
And never hear that glorious paean of sound  
The sweet singer of night joyously hurled.

## I Hear a Voice

I hear your voice in the dawning day,  
I know you are tiny, but I've never seen you flit  
From twig to twig of the pom-pom tree.  
I imagine you bright and quick – a flash of colour,  
Dazzling the eye with your beauty.

Woken early by pain, I hear you daily  
Fill the air with sharp, sweet sound.  
Today I'll seek you out. I limp onto the lawn:  
Your calling is clearer and higher.  
I follow the shade and peer between the twigs.  
Suddenly, you are there – tiny and plain –  
As inconspicuous as a snail or a spider  
But thrilling the day with the one rich talent  
Given you to cut like laughter and tears  
Across the beauty of the dawn.

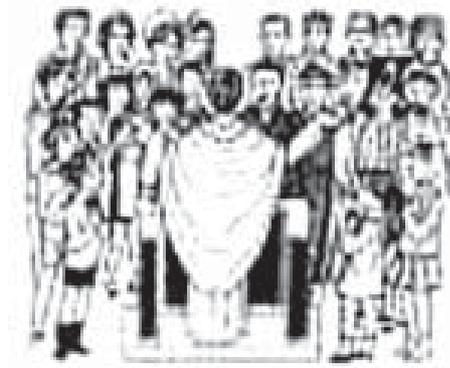


## New Birth

Crack! Split hard, brown shell  
 Crisp and thin with waiting.  
 Split and crack! What mystery  
 Is breaking into light?

For weeks I'd watched and hoped  
 And all I saw: the dry brown veil.  
 I waited.  
 Crack! Split, wider, longer;  
 Brown and struggling, through the split  
 Forth it came:  
 Delicate wings unfolded in new light;  
 Antennae reached hesitantly,  
 Toward the day.  
 And colours - O the colours of that beauty,  
 Hidden in the darkness for so long.

I went to church this morning,  
 I joined the old, the withered,  
 Sered brown faces:  
 Dry shells, browned by life;  
 But as I looked, I saw:  
 The cracks and splits,  
 The laughter lines  
 And eyes that have seen sorrow and joy.  
 The cracks widened and O what colours...  
 As we move nearer Light,  
 God calls the hidden beauty deep within.





## **Adieu Tricia**

Parting is such sorrow sweet – but why?  
Is it that a thread forever binds  
Our hearts once knit and sorrow, born of time,  
Tears at our sense of immortality?

Why sweet? In those last moments dear,  
Each to each, we speak our words most true;  
The fabric of reserve is torn aside  
And, when across an unknown future,  
Like a bird, to friend or lover,  
Homeward our hearts will fly.  
T'is to the sweetness of that last farewell.

## A Birthday gift for Gwen

Like the Moabite maiden, alone in the field,  
I've tasted the parting and pain;  
With Abraham hid 'neath the pall of the night,  
Defended the sacrifice slain  
And awaited the lamp that would covenant seal,  
Setting your loved one apart,  
For my way has been walled by the palms of your Hands  
And I've fed from the love of your Heart.

You've taught me like Hanna to gentleness give  
When others could not understand;  
Like Deborah, to draw on the wisdom of God,  
Be a rallying-point in the land,  
Aware of the pattern of mercy and love,  
Entwined in my life from the start,  
For my way has been walled by the palms of your Hands  
And I've fed from the love of your Heart.

Because you have fathered, saved, comforted me,  
I can reach to those suffering loss.  
I don't need to prove that I've something to give:  
For I'm simply the fruit of the Cross.  
Lord I ask that my life I may lovingly live  
And take in your Kingdom my part:  
That my way will be walled by the palms of your Hands  
And I'll feed from the love of your heart.



## A Villanelle

Yield to the loveliness of fair Corio Bay,  
See in the morning light the lapping wave,  
Steep your tired spirit in the soothing sway.

Though some may long for tropic coral cay  
Or beauty of a snow-capped mountain crave,  
Yield to the loveliness of fair Corio Bay.

Come in the dawning of a golden day,  
Walk where seaweeds and sands the tideline pave,  
Steep your tired spirit in the soothing sway.

Though some of roaring seas would sing their lay'  
Here gentler waters southern beaches lave:  
Yield to the loveliness of fair Corio Bay.

Come in the night, where moon-wrapped wavelets play;  
Leave to a heartsick world its torments grave;  
Steep your tired spirit in the soothing sway.

Fair work of God with rhythm in your clay,  
Don't wither in a pulseless city cave:  
Yield to the loveliness of fair Corio Bay;  
Steep your tired spirit in the soothing sway.

## **Farewell to Dahmongah, a loved pied à terre**

Dahmongah, flying Phalanger,  
Your frolic in the night,  
Gliding down through secret places,  
Dipping like a kite.

No man's hand can hold your beauty,  
But for moments you are ours  
As we watch you running freely,  
In the forests depths and towers.

Dahmongah, named for silvery gliders,  
We keep your mem'ries rich and dear  
But release you with our blessing:  
With a smile and with a tear.



## **Ruby Wedding of Charlie and Jess**

See the ruby, treasured lovely,  
For a drop of precious Blood,  
From the Body of the Saviour,  
Poured in His redeeming flood.

Ruby, wrought in richest colour,  
Given to a stone of earth,  
Colour always seen as symbol  
Of highest love; of deepest worth.

Yet far beyond this glowing glory  
Of flashing jewels' rich designs  
Supreme above all earthly splendour  
Wisdom, skilful, godly shines.

Forty years were preparation  
As Israel through the desert trod,  
Forty years' sustaining manna,  
Given by the hand of God.

This ruby feast is but a gateway  
To promised lands for Charles and Jess  
Where God will grant His greatest treasure –  
With wisdom above rubies bless.



## For Jess

When God the Father made the Heavens,  
And set the angels for His own,  
One, He filled with light and music,  
Made him guardian of His throne

This Lucifer was filled with envy,  
Vied with God for worship, might:  
Turned those pipes and songs to evil,  
Twisted melody's delight.

Jess, God has given you the charism  
To redeem that Heavenly song,  
Music He has set within you,  
Welling with devotion strong.

Psalms and hymns and sounds of glory;  
Let the gift be now unfurled,  
Telling out redemptive story  
To a hurt and hungry world.



## Epitaph

The marble of the bas-relief gleamed white  
Where figure flush with rounded figure swelled;  
There, in the National Gallery's 'perfect light'  
Professional and appraising eyes beheld  
But there was one among the thronging crowd  
Saw marble blush with sandstone's warmer hue:  
The brooding form of motherhood, head bowed  
Over orphans, clear to my mem'ry grew.  
I saw again the cemetery and trees;  
I heard the sighing grief of wind and wave;  
Far from the Gallery's sheltering care and ease,  
Rises the artist's tribute o'er the grave;  
Where Raynor's gift no fitter setting found,  
Then mounted on that loved and hallowed ground.



In memory of sculptor, Raynor Hoff.

**For Hans my sculptor friend,  
who could make a tree live twice**

Weep man when you lop a tree  
Sigh for beauty lost,  
Take one last look at soaring splendour:  
Count and count the cost.

See upon the moon-showered landscape  
Silvered limbs embossed,  
And in the hard-flung light of day:  
Count and count the cost.

Hear again the screaming crash  
Of branches tempest-tossed,  
See the scars and weathering:  
Count and count the cost

Was it gum-tree, spilling sunlight?  
Beech-tree, gnarled and mossed?  
Symmetry of stately pine-tree?  
Count and count the cost.

Look upon the supple strength  
Where days and years have trod  
And then, with brittle manmade tools,  
Cut down the work of God.



## Consolation

My cousin Mary was married last year  
But I only heard today.  
We had never been close when we were girls  
And now I lived far away.  
I'd like to have seen her walk the aisle  
Ivory frock and dark curled hair,  
I'd like to have heard her make her vow.  
But I simply wasn't there.

Tricia's baby has been baptized  
In my gift of a frock of lace,  
Friends we've been since our teenage years  
But I lived in another place.  
I'd like to have seen the pride of John  
To be able the joy to share  
But I had gone to the Varsity;  
I simply couldn't be there.

They buried my friend, the sculptor, Hans,  
But I only heard today;  
His sons bore the coffin on shoulders strong,  
A thousand miles away  
I'd like to have heard them singing him home  
With "Morning has broken"....so fair  
To have seen that great oak laid to his rest  
But I simply wasn't there.

I've heard that my dear friends, Clyde and Pin  
Were hurt in a crash of cars.  
They lie in a far-off hospital,  
With breaks and bruises and scars.  
I long to go to them, hold their hands,  
Speak love to them, comfort and share,  
But it's eight hundred miles to Albury  
And I cannot raise the fare.

Yet, I know in another life and place  
When scars and sorrow are o'er  
Where time and distance and death are fled  
And absence, forevermore:  
That God, who loves us more than we know,  
And teaches us how to care  
Will comfort our hearts for all the times.  
We simply couldn't be there.



## Don't Pass Me By

Don't pass me by my friends,  
Please do not pass me by  
My eyes are not so clear now,  
I cannot drive at night,  
But I long to share the meeting  
And sit within the Light,

Don't pass me by my friends,  
Please do not pass me by  
My body isn't strong now,  
But the gift's still on my life:  
The poetry and music  
Have blossomed in the strife.

Don't pass me by, my friends  
Please do not pass me by,  
For Bartimaeus Jesus stopped,  
Just a beggar by the way.  
Had Jesus failed to pause for him,  
He'd ne'er have seen the day.

Don't pass me by, my friends,  
Please do not pass me by,  
I cannot entertain now,  
Or even dance or walk  
But I still love friends and company,  
To share ideas and talk.

Don't pass me by my friends,  
Please do not pass me by  
Or you will be the poorer,  
And what could have lived, will die.



## The Empty Bed

Beautiful - and defiled;  
 The age when Mary gave her answer to the Lord.  
 Fair beyond the telling  
 But worms of sin are eating at her flesh-  
 We never think it happens to our own  
 But the bed is empty and the daughter gone.

Burden the hearts of your people, Lord,  
 For the runaway children of ten thousand homes.  
 Before it is too late, Lord,  
 Teach us to hold in strong and gentle arms  
 The young and aching hearts that yearn for love.

Where did we go wrong?' is no response.  
 'We gave her education,' - and she longed for warmth and touch  
 'We gave her pretty dresses,' - cold threads to show her friends  
 'The house was paid for before we had a child.'  
 And afterwards her mother kept her job.  
 "Marilynne, do this; Marilynne, do that;  
 We only want the best for you, you know.  
 Marilynne, you're useless. You never get it right!  
 Now Josephine knows always what to do."

"We do not understand. We gave her all.  
 Why would she run away into the night?  
 What can this boy she's gone with give to her?"  
 Just love, just comfort, just appreciation,  
 Just the dignity of being a person in her right.

Lord, touch the hearts of those of us who know  
 Your depth of love for all the Marilynnes.  
 Let your compassion fill our lives,  
 That reaching out, we feel their need for love.  
 And share their aching search until they find.  
 The Love that gives, accepts and satisfies -  
 The Love that answers every human cry.





## Yorkshire

I stood within the vaulted chapter house  
Beneath a roof that seemed to float on air;  
I heard the Roman soldiers' steady march  
Resounding down the centuries and there  
As history wrapped me round on ancient walls,  
Cheekily I spied on gardens in the Close.  
Those great walls of Eboracum rebuffed  
The transience of modern life.  
With ghosts of chariots on cobbled ways  
I passed through Warmgate and through Bootham Bar.  
What miniscule figures once peeped  
Warily from narrow lancet windows  
On enemies below?  
Always the sense of a mighty past enfolded me  
As I strained to touch my mother's heritage.  
But not in the great minster's glory;  
Not as I walked upon the ancient walls,  
Did I find the heart of Yorkshire.  
Beyond the city, gentle in Kilburn village  
I heard: "In quiet places industry".  
I saw carved mice on chairs and stalls  
Heard how, on finest craftsmanship,  
They'd made their way to far-off lands –  
And knew the secret of the towers of York.

## The Kilburn Mouse

Gnawing at a chair – I saw him—  
Running on a table's ledge –  
The Kilburn mouse in all his pride,  
The heart of industry in quiet places.

Well he may be proud  
For far across the world  
He's seen on Kilburn craftsmanship.  
Truly a church mouse,  
He sits in choir stalls.

And you may find him on a bishop's throne.  
Listen! Now you may even hear his squeak  
In a quiet Yorkshire workshop  
Filled with industry.





## A Little Man

A little man, but with a presence,  
Quietly waiting in the restaurant queue:  
Straight and dignified, a man who bore  
Thousands of years of desert heritage.  
Pointed beard, dark eyes, his hands  
Reached for the comfort of his cloak  
Of red and gold but found instead  
Only the alien tweed of a western suit.

Seated at a table with plastic flowers  
He waited for his meal, a lone figure  
Lost in the clatter and chatter  
But found in a world of memories.

With fingers used to horses' reins  
He picked up bread to break and eat,  
The age-old meal in every desert wadi.  
Then with a nervous glance at other diners,  
Returned it to the china plate.  
He took the knife and with cold metal,  
Cut precisely the butchered slice,  
And thousands of years of culture  
Began to drip like water from the wounded bread.

## Desert Blossom

I cast the anger from my life today,  
The Prince of Glory's power was my strength  
To throw that wild defiling spirit from his throne.  
I felt resistance growing faint  
And that hiatus when the evil hold  
Is loosened from the citadel  
And Satan's armies flee.

The land lies empty, yet unseeded.  
To that abandoned kingdom now  
I call the Spirit with His fertile touch  
And panier filled with seed,  
To walk the deep recesses of my heart  
And cast the procreative grain upon its land,  
That He who owns these vast estates may smile  
To see the desert blossom as the rose.



## **A Thank you.**

Built by your faithfulness into new Faith  
Having your vision of wholeness complete  
I found your Faith steadfast, a rock in the desert  
Your hands were God's hands; your feet were his feet.

Despair in the valley was turned into hope  
As you held up the Hope of the ages to me,  
You supported my hands when the burden was heavy;  
You showed me a future I could not yet see.

You loved me through darkness and into the Light,  
Loved in my anger, my doubt and my fear.  
Loved through the unknown and suffering to Peace.  
Loved with the Love can never despair.

Faith, Hope and Love, were your gifts and your comfort,  
The banners you flew o'er my illness and strife;  
You gave me the patience and strength for enduring,  
Gave me, in Jesus, the rest of my life.



To Alan and Nada Arnold and the Apostolic Church at the  
Grafton Rd who walked with me when I had cancer in 1974.

## Peter Cooper

Peter, the Rock has gone home;  
No longer his bones burn with fire  
But in hearts that he touched, that fire  
Is alive and burns higher and higher.  
The ceaseless activity's still and the great voice is silent,  
But he plundered the treasures of Hell and the Kingdom of Satan,

God's was the song that richly he sang with his powerful voice,  
God's was the word that he spoke, the way of his choice.  
Momently eyes with the laughter of mischief would light;  
Just as swiftly he'd sense the pain of a suffering ones' plight  
Among the dark people he'd selflessly loved and he'd blessed,  
The gypsy, the singer, in Zimbabwe has been laid to rest –  
But I hear a voice, Mary, coming through this present night:  
"God will provide, Luv; It'll be all right Luv,  
It'll be all right.





## The Evangelist

Down the long rows I toiled  
 Under hot sun;  
 Gashes of chocolate earth lay open to receive  
 The tiny roots.  
 Earthy lips closed about silken stems  
 How quickly heat was squeezing life from leaves  
 Thinned to frail mesh of green across the clods.  
 So delicate.

I should have sheltered waiting plants in shade  
 How frailly spread  
 Such carelessness, meant very few would live.  
 I weighed my work and found it wanting:  
 So little stood to mark my hours of toil.  
 Disconsolate, I turned to walk away  
 Regret of failure heavy on my heart.

Four days had passed – I happened by the plot  
 Rows of green plants were latticed on the soil  
 I'd judged my work too soon and hastily  
 I'd failed to reckon with the laws of growth  
 And faithful watering by other hands.

At once I saw the parable made clear;  
 Exhorted and encouraged I went on.  
 If I plant faithfully the seedlings frail  
 My work is done. I have no right  
 Seedlings as ripened fruit, to judge and try;  
 I must not count as nought the quickening shoots  
 That wait for sun and rain and other hands  
 To spur them into life.

## Missionaries

Harvesters, the Lord is calling, sow and tend and reap;  
First and fully, in our own hearts, let the plough run deep.  
May the seed be rooted strongly; soil be rich and tilled;  
Then with crop our lives are yielding, let our hands be filled:  
Bread to feed the lone and hungry; seed for every place;  
Wisdom when the grain is ready: how to reap with grace.

Listen to the end-time promise, let it stir your heart:  
'Ploughmen then will overtake and share the reapers' part.'  
Let the heart's imagination catch this word and run:  
See the waving, swelling wheat, where planting's just begun:  
As each grain is dropping, shooting, look, the ear fills!  
Sow, and let the spirit quicken, everywhere He wills.



## The Promised Land

Can men cross Jordan in the harvest-flood?  
 Look at the water's high-banked wall!  
 See dry-shod, Presence-bearing priests step forth  
 And to the Promised Land, walk on God's word.

But what is this? Jehovah's strong command:  
 From every tribe send back a man,  
 Bid each take up a great memorial stone  
 From Jordan's bed, and set it on the land.

When on these giant stones their children gaze,  
 Question the meaning of these signs,  
 Let parents tell in testimony's word:  
 Divine events determine all our days.

On Jordan's bank stands my memorial stone,  
 The witness of God's power and love,  
 Reminder to myself and all who look  
 Of that great work of Grace that He has done.



"We need to know God's dealings in our past lives, to spur us for the future and enable us to inject redemptive power into the world around us." – Pastor Blair Dickie, 20 October 1985.



## **A Droplet of Dew - or of Blood?**

A droplet of dew - or of blood?  
Mingled lives of mother and child;  
Semitic features reflect,  
As a mirror, the mother's face.  
A teardrop of pure water:  
Rhythm of tides of earth;  
A droplet of pulsing blood:  
Perfect rhythm of mother and child;  
Perfect rhythm of Father and Son:  
A heartbeat that drums man's end:  
His Father's Gift to the world.

This poem was inspired by a bronze tear drop sculpture of Mary holding the baby Jesus.



## **I go a-fishing**

"I go a-fishing," Peter said  
 Pools of perplexity, his deep, dark eyes  
 Looked upon his friends.  
 Gone was the boisterous mirth,  
 The hasty eager speech,  
 The wild unquestioning trust  
 That plunged him in a raging sea.

I go a-fishing: I must settle down  
 To duties of the world and fill my mind  
 That wanders onto high and holy hopes  
 That might have been.

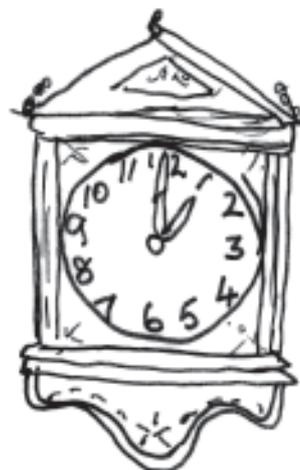
I go a-fishing, yet I know  
 That every wave of restless Galilee  
 Will fill the aching void  
 With Him I've served and loved.

I go a-fishing, I was a pastor once  
 I fished for souls  
 And saw the children's eyes grow wide with truth  
 And stood as shield against the threatening dark  
 That would have stained their linen robes  
 I saw young lives embark upon  
 The steep and royal path that once I walked.  
 I served the poor and sick and balm of Gilead  
 I poured upon their wounds  
 But there was trouble with a building fund  
 And strife and faction fights and guilt  
 I go a-fishing - there are younger men  
 To bear the burden and redeem the time.

I go a- fishing. Once I taught the Sunday school  
The women gathered in my house for prayer  
Near to the shepherd and the flock was my delight.  
But mother's old and work's demanding  
It's hard to get to Church and be involved  
They have their needs and care and I have mine  
We only seem to make skin contact at most  
To go a-fishing one needs diversion from the drudgery

I go-a fishing but one hope remains  
That He who by the Galilean Sea  
To Peter's boat seeking his friend came down  
And breathed life-give resurrection power  
Will come like that to me - and I will not go a-fishing.





## A Prayer.

Unto all things there's a season: time to live and time to die;  
 Time to sow; to reap the harvest; time to laugh and time to cry.  
 All the plant-seeds, at Creation, mist-wrapped, - God stored, row by row  
 Till the moment He was ready, then he shouted: "Let them grow!"

Noah in the Ark was floating, week by week and day by day.  
 Longing for fresh air and sunlight; till God's Word he had to stay.  
 Walls of Jericho still standing seemed to mock the marching feet:  
 Seven days, then seven circuits: Praise amid the desert heat!  
 Gideon saw himself as young, and least of all his family,  
 Unprepared to judge his brethren; God commanded, Come with me.

Abram's Sarah, old and withered, laughed that God should call her name  
 But in season, brought forth laughter, Isaac for God's glory came.  
 Lives and nations have their seasons: times to move and times to wait.  
 Yoke us closely to you Jesus, step by step to share your fate  
 That we may flow as flows God's spirit, not too early not too late.

## **A Bouquet - for Frances**

I did not sow an ordered garden,  
Amid the city's settled days  
But plucked and pulled along life's hedgerows,  
By errant paths and wandering ways.  
Yet flowers, gathered as we journeyed,  
Were shared and exchanged when we met:  
Leaves and petals long since fallen  
But their fragrance lingers yet:  
The welcome of your hands outstretched,  
A bed whereon to lay my head:  
Violets to a sun-drenched traveler;  
Roses whence the soul is fed.  
We passed long hours in walking, talking,  
Breathing moments of delight,  
With rippling laughter running, twining  
Jasmine tendrils in the night.

Now as sealing dust is covering  
Many a dear remembered face,  
Our bouquet of loving mem'ries,  
Still will hold an honoured place.





## The Feast of Tabernacles

Captive and ghettoed in the strangers' lands;  
 Two thousand years without a sign of love.  
 How could we sing where all the world despised us?  
 Weeping we hung our harps in Babylon's cold wastes:  
 Captive we were chained in besetting darkness;  
 Captive, in a desert land, where no streams ran.  
 Even in Egypt, light shone in the houses  
 But menora burned in secret where the hearts  
 Were closed against the chosen of the Lord,  
 Refreshment from the desert rock gushed forth  
 But no libation poured in barren lands.

Look, a remnant comes, heartlands of promise;  
 Look, they light menora and the shadows start to flee;  
 See, they offer water, a first stream in the desert;  
 They hold out hands of blessing and our spirits stir with joy,  
 For those barren hearts are blossoming in love.  
 Surely these are first fruits, speaking of the harvest;  
 Surely these are first fruits of a bounty faith can see.  
 Heave us as a sheaf, Lord; wave us to your glory:  
 Lord of Hosts, rejoice to see the grain.  
 Let new song rise: this land is not the strangers';  
 Let songs of Zion float on soil of love.  
 Take down the harps that so long hung in silence;  
 Pour out the water; let the light stream forth:  
 Come: take a foothold in this promised land of love.

## Hold Life Gently

Hold life gently, as you would a crystal vase;  
Turn its myriad lights with wondering hand;  
Lest, like a flower you've grasped with hasty reach,  
You loose your fingers to behold  
Blood seeping from a dozen wounds,  
Or the stain of the crushed petals that might have lived.

