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The Glory of the Son

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THE
GLORY
OF THE
SON

Sharon Price Anderson
with foreword by
Dr. Chauncey C. Riddle

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FOREWORD

Dear Reader:

You are preparing for a very special experience in opening this book. I hope you will read to expand your horizon of ideas and feelings of appreciation for the marvelous universe in which you find yourself, both the seen but especially the unseen parts of it.

For me, reading these poems was a time of meditation, much like reading the scriptures or conference talks. I found that each poem provided precious insights and that each line had to be savored and weighed in context. So please do not attempt to speed-read this work. Instead, let it wash over you, a line at a time, even as you would savor your favorite dessert.

As I read this work, I learned that the title of each poem is an integral part of the piece and must also be relished to fully understand the poem's meaning. Know that Sharon has weighed many possibilities for each word chosen. The structure and length of each line, as well as rhymes and meters (or lack thereof) were also carefully considered and deliberately selected to enhance your experience.

The meaning of these poems is provided by both the poet and the reader. We each bring to this work our own unique mindset which shapes our interpretation. Because the poems can be read with many layers of significance, they may mean one thing to you now and something different when you read them again. Therefore, each journey through this book can be a new adventure.

Because Sharon is a woman with a deep and abiding faith, these poems have a strong religious dimension. As you progress through this volume, you will find a rich opportunity to weigh your own beliefs, values, and actions.

May you fully enjoy your journey,
Chauncey Cazier Riddle

Dr. Riddle, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Brigham Young University, graduated from Brigham Young University and then earned his MA and PhD in philosophy from Columbia University. He taught at BYU for forty years, serving as Professor of Philosophy, Chairman of the Department of Graduate Studies in Religious Instruction, Dean of the Graduate School, and Assistant Academic Vice President.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book began at a monthly Word Weavers meeting when Mary Keith Boyack, our lovely hostess, emphatically declared, “Sharon, people need to experience your poems. You need to compile a book.” Without Mary, this volume would never have become a reality. Thank you, Mary, for your loving encouragement and continued support.

Over the years, I have learned much from all my fellow Word Weaver poets and other members of the Utah State Poetry Society. Thank you for your examples of poetic excellence and for your friendship.

Many have taken time to read and respond to this collection, including Joy Bischoff, Julie Nelson, Rebecca Clarke, Chauncey Riddle, Liz Riddle, Diane Peterson, Rebecca Pinegar, Joyce Kohler, Natalie Arhets, Don Searle, Donna Max, and Jack Welch. Thank you for your technical expertise, valuable suggestions, and kind words.

My dear husband has encouraged me to develop my skills and has rejoiced when others appreciate them. Peter, our children, grandchildren, and other loved ones have increased my understanding of things which matter most. Thanks to each of you for filling my life with purpose and joy.

I am deeply grateful to our Heavenly Father for His great plan of happiness and to His Son Jesus Christ for His redeeming sacrifice. They have blessed my life abundantly and graciously answered many earnest prayers as I sought the best words to share their love and the Gospel with others.

LIST OF ART WORK AND PHOTOS

The following individuals and artists provided images for this volume. Thank you for enhancing the spirit of this work.

- Cover:** Photo detail from “Utah Valley Sunset”
by Jenna Caitlyn Veylupek
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 2. **Lamb of God:** Painting “The Son of Man” by Joseph F. Brickey
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 3. **Latter-day Legacy:** Statue “The Handcart Pioneer Monument” by Torleif Soviren Knaphus, located on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah*
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 6. **Remembering Him:** Statue “Christus” by Bertel Thorvaldsen, located in the north visitor center on Temple Square in Salt Lake City*
 7. **House of the Lord:** Photo “Salt Lake Temple at Dusk”*

* Photos by Sharon Price Anderson

Creation Prayer

Lord, thou hast provided language,
proffered principle, line upon line,
to reveal creation's mysteries.

May I arrange thought and phrase
into a world, glorious and beautiful
as Earth, newly formed
before time began.

Organized, may my words
ascend hill and mountain,
shimmer rivers and springs,
flourish in branch and flower,
gallop across grasslands,
and cause lights of heaven to appear,

that Thy children
may glory in Thy goodness,
worship Thee in green glades,
and fill the skies with songs of praise.

1

FROM THE BEGINNING



By the power of the Spirit our eyes were opened... to see and understand the things of God—Even those things which were from the beginning before the world was, which were ordained of the Father, through his Only Begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, even from the beginning. (D&C 76:12–13)

Before the World Was

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:4, 7)

Before mists of mortality veiled eons past,
we lived with the Father, loved His Son.

In heavenly councils, spirit daughters
and sons, learned God's plan
to fashion a world, organize man,
and provide a Savior, should we fall.

The Great Jehovah would rescue all
who chose to obey and walk in His way.

Before the world was, the Chosen One
gave God the glory and offered to come.
Here am I. Send me, said the I AM.

Shouting for joy, we sang together
and praised the Lamb.

In the Beginning

Igniting galaxies, the Creator
crosses the heavens,
places spinning planets
in their paths.
In might and majesty,
He forms the Earth,
divides the darkness,

fashions mountains and seas,
plants salient seeds—grasses,
flowers, shrubbery, trees.

Life flourishes in waters,
burrow, hollow, glen.
Fins flash the oceans,
hooves prance the prairies,
wings dazzle the sky.

All things living
dance the new beginning.

Image of God

*God created man in his own image . . . male and female created
he them. (Gen. 1:27)*

Michael, who stood
at Jehovah's right hand,
becomes First Man.
Ancient of Days,
builder of altars, Father
to future sons and daughters,
he will teach and bless
in righteousness.

Bone of Adam's bones,
flesh of his flesh,
Eve is Mother of all men.
A vessel vast enough to contain
joy, fear, faith, and pain
of all God's children,
she will nurture and encircle
all the gods to be.

A Morning Such as This

With child eyes I awake
in golden light of this new day.

Savoring succulence
of paradise-pure air, I drink
dawn's peaceful providence.
Song of thrush and lark frolic
on citrus-scented breeze
as I bask in fields
of Eden-fresh flowers,
stroll sunlit forests
of translucent leaves.

It must have been on a morning
such as this that Eve stood
on the precipice of time,
that pivotal moment
where we meet,
and wanting knowledge
and posterity,
plunged into a tantalizing sea—
Mortality!

Cast Out

Willing to suffer for all her unborn children,
Eve pled our cause, beseeched
Adam to forfeit the Garden's beauty
and go with her into a fallen world of pain,
affliction, knowledge, posterity, and joy.

Together, they sacrificed Eden.

When the Fig Puts Forth Its Leaves

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. (Gen. 3:7)

Naked in winter,
the tree bears summer fruit.
Shadowed among significant leaves
broad as my hand, figs ripen in season.
Surrounded in purple-brown sweetness,
seeds perpetuate the fertile sign.

When warm breezes stir,
spreading foliage of other trees,
my children and grandchildren
will find figs beneath the leaves.

Likeness of the Lamb

What sacrifice became the coat of skin
that covered Adam's nakedness?

Did an unblemished lamb bleed and die
to shield him and Eve from destruction
and bring them back, repentant and restored,
into the Father's presence?

Obedient, faithful, and clothed
in the likeness of the Lamb of God,
might we also be redeemed
from the consequence of sin?

Father Adam, Mother Eve

Adam helps form the world
and becomes First Man.
At his side, Eve is helpmeet,
Mother of All Living.
Visited by heavenly messengers,
they covenant obedience and sacrifice,
receive the Gospel, keep God's word.

To Children of the Covenant,
Adam is Everyman. Eve is Everywoman,
their promised blessings ours. We are they.

Before Elijah

*And the ravens brought [Elijah] bread and flesh in the morning
and flesh and bread in the evening. (1 Kgs. 17:6)*

We are black,
darker than the dimmest
corner of the ark,
spurned by brilliant plumes,
scorned as scavengers
among iridescent wings.
But when, before the flood,
Noah called God's creatures
by sevens and twos,
we came too.

Released as waters recede,
I bear no olive branch
but I will offspring young
whose feathers will shine
like eyes of those about to die,
and when skies dry as dust

famine Israel,

my children, winging
to the brook called Cherith,
will bring bread and meat
to feed the Tishbite and
preserve the word of God.

Not Just Blue

*[T]he bow shall be in the cloud . . . And God said unto Noah,
This is the token of the covenant. (Gen. 9:16-17)*

Water ripples new and green
as leaves on the banks of Jordan.

White and soft as doves' wings,
it winters the hills. In the kitchen
at dinner time, it steams delicious
as stew with French bread.

It is dismal as foghorns,
murky as ingratitude,
angry as floods that flash the canyons,
carefree as sprinklers and children
laughing in dandelion days of summer.

In ocean and lake it shouts
orange and scarlet,
echoing sunsets on the waves.
Freely falling into cupped,
thirsty hands, it rescues us.

Water is the color of all the promises
that rainbow the sky.

Sign of the Dove

When Earth, baptized and new,
emerged from the flood,
a dove flew above the ark.

With feathers light as
Spirit's breath, she brought
a branch of perfectness and peace.

Planted, it would become
the tree where she would rest,
waiting to bear us
heavenward on fragile wing.

Moments of Becoming

Like hourglass sands,
moments etched
with our desires
slip past the present
to shape the substance
of our becoming.

In sands of Egypt,
hopeful pharaohs
hoarded particles of time,
pyramiding them
to last forever,
but millennia brittled
the bones beneath
their shriveled skin.

From the tent of Abraham,
living seeds multiply,
innumerable as sands
bathed by breathing tides.

Silica, furnaced and refined,
becomes carefully crafted
glass through which
we can clearly see

figures of darkness,
images of godliness,
patterns of eternity.

[I]n blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and . . . in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Gen. 22:17)

She Must Have Had a Name

When fire and brimstone
rained on Sodom and Gomorrah,
Lot's wife left her past
with longing, backward glance.

Hesitation hardened her heart;
reluctance pillared her feet.

Had her halting not left her
barren as savorless salt,

she might have been remembered
by her children's children.

Ram's Horn

On Mount Moriah, the ram,
caught head and horns
in thicket's thorns,
became the substitute sacrifice
for all God's children
and symbol of the Son's
redeeming power.

Hollow the horn. Proclaim the news.
The certain sound circles the earth.
We answer with shouts of joy.
Hosanna!

What Wilt Thou Ask?

In my Abraham moment,
when I hear Thy voice
command a sacrifice
so connected to my heart
that I think I will die,
what will I lay upon the altar?

Trusting in Thy wisdom and love,
may I stretch my faith,
give back to Thee all the promises
and wait, until sanctified and pure,
my offering is returned
multiplied a million times.

The House of God

On his way to Haran,
Jacob came to Luz,
the place of an almond tree
whose flowering branches
fashioned in gold
would hold the temple light.

Resting on a holy stone,
he beheld steps reaching heaven
and angels, familiar
as Peter, James, and John,
descending and ascending.

He heard the word of the Lord,
covenants made with Abraham,
promises given Isaac, and knew
his seed, too, would spread abroad.

Then Jacob raised the stone,
anointed the pillar of His presence,
and called it Bethel, the House of God.

To Ephraim and Manasseh

Remember . . .
. . . youthful Joseph,
elect and birthright blessed,
despised by his brethren.
Jealous of the coat,
when obedient he came,
they conspired and cast him,
struggling and stripped, into the pit,

heard not the anguished pleadings
of his soul, but sold him
into Egypt as a slave.

. . . faithful Joseph,
honorable and pure, prospered
of the Lord in Potiphar's house.
He would not defile his
Master's bed, hearkened not
to temptation's persistent voice,
refused such wickedness and fled.

. . . fruitful Joseph,
wise and discreet. Knowing
dreams and the plan of God,
he gathered from the plenty corn
and wheat to save his father's house.
In dearth his brethren came
seeking bread of life, and Joseph,
forgiving, nourished them
without money, gold, or price
and preserved by great deliverance
the posterity of promise.

Again, the famine waxes sore;
many hunger for truth and right.
The waning world wants
purpose, courage, honor,
knowledge, mercy, life.
Know that you have bread
to fill the need.
Remember, oh, remember,
you are Joseph's seed!

Among the Reeds

Floating among reeds
along the bank, a man-child
cries in a basket of bulrushes
daubed with pitch.

Drawn from the river,
Moses rises, lotus-like,
emerging from morning water
in a land that listened
to Abraham, fed Joseph,
and will shelter Jesus
in the meridian of time.

Cut the slender reed
to hollow a flute,
string the lute,
sing papyrus words
of blue-flowered beginnings,
of lilies white as hope,
and the law of liberty
that will make us free.

The Burning Bush

The bush, unconsumed,
blazed with brightness
of the Tree of Life,
with holiness of flaming sword
and angels that guard the way.

The incense-sweet smoke
from the fire of God's presence

infused the prophet's cloak,
and the words He spoke
burned into his heart.

When Moses withdrew,
he knew the voice
of the great I AM
and how to fashion
golden cherubim
who would grace
the mercy seat.

Another Passover

Harkening to Moses'
prophetic voice,
Israel's elders selected
the Passover lamb,
a perfect sacrifice.

According to their families,
they marked the lintels
then closed the doors
of safety and redemption
against the final plague.

Sanctified and pure,
may we pass through
the door to everlasting life.

Leaving Egypt

Leaving flesh pots of Egypt,
we follow Thy prophet
into a wilderness
where hungry jackals
wait for us to faint
and we must trust in Thee.

Here, the fabric
of Thy faithfulness fails not.
When we thirst, living waters
burst from bone-dry rock
and we are nourished
in manna-sweet surprise.

High as the Cross

Poisonous serpents
obstruct our path,
inflict wilderness pain.
We perish from
their fiery sting.
Venom of revenge courses
through our veins.
Enmity enervates our limbs.

Behold the cure,
scaled and feathered,
like Moses's staff,
caduceus high.
Except we look, we die.

Horns of White Marble

Michelangelo, did you struggle,
heart, mind, might
to transform stone to light?
Where did you go to find power
fertile enough to fill
worlds with wonder?
When with muscle and sinew
Moses emerged, Taurus-like,
to push open the portals of heaven,
did you know that between
radiant horns, God's all-seeing eye
rested upon the head of His prophet
and he became a seer?

[W]hen Moses came down from mount Sinai . . . the skin of his face shone. (Ex. 34:29-30). "Shone" comes from the Hebrew "qaran," to shine, send out rays, display/grow horns, or be horned. Anciently, horns could signify light and divine radiance. Michelangelo's sculpture of Moses portrays him with horn like projections on his head.

Who Shall Ascend

Within the court of the tabernacle,
outside the holy place, Moses
placed the laver of water
for Aaron and sons to wash withal.

With clean hands and hearts,
we approach the altar.
Pure, spotless, and Spirit-filled,
let us prepare to meet the Lord.

Moses in the Wilderness

You led Israel's congregation
in wilderness wanderings
where faith shriveled
in the wailing wind—

lands of drought, testing,
terror, serpents, scorpions,
thirst, and fear, fear lest
death bind them forever
to this evil, barren place
where sun parched lips
murmured, "Moses, Moses"
and complaining brethren
sought your life.

Alone,
you cried unto the Lord,
then with power
before the assembly
took the rod
and smote the rock.

Through desert dryness
a river flowed
from the belly
of the wounded stone,
and all drank freely,
eagerly of waters giving life
as you taught them
of the Christ.

Pomegranate Promises

Bells around the hem of Aaron's robe
ring moments of his ministry.
Between sacred, golden sounds,
broided pomegranates, flower-crowned,
garnish the garment's edge.
Sun sinks into a moonless
night, as he lays aside
the breastplate weight.

Tented between glittering galaxies
and star-lit sands, Aaron
dreams he holds the seed-filled fruit
in the palm of his hand.
He cuts and peels away
leathered skin, partaking of goodness,
garnet-red and ripe
as God's promises to Abraham.

Like Joshua

Resolutely, I study the problem,
Day after day,
I circumambulate the walled city,
impenetrable as Jericho.
I ponder its formidability,
consider my inadequacies.

Spirit-led,
I make my way around
bouldered obstacles.
Prayerfully, I practice

the most judicious path,
grow in strength and knowledge.
On the final day, I lay aside
my fears, gather confidence,
faith, and courage.
Seven times, I compass
the prize, discomfit the
enemy, assault the
fortress with a mighty shout.

Walls come tumbling down.

House of Bread

Sun scorches fields and stubble
until nothing grows but hunger.
In dust of a fainting future,
Elimelech and family flee to Moab.

Through widowed tears,
Naomi counts foreign years
on fingers of two empty hands,
one for each former son,
then learns the Lord again visits
the people of His house with bread.

Daughters-in-law divide. With
Orpah's farewell kiss on her face
and faithful Ruth by her side,
Naomi trudges back to Bethlehem.

Bethlehem—
ground of gleaning
and bringing in the grain,
of threshing, grinding, leavening.

From kneading trough
Ruth shapes loaf and life
as wife of kinsman Boaz,
redeemed to raise inheritance
for the dead, to fill belly, heart—
Obed, Jesse, David.

Through cycles of centuries
seasons pass,
gaunt, golden, grim, fat.
Again the table is spread.
Once sheep and oxen gathered
around stone manger to be fed.
Today, we worship at the altar
in the House of Living Bread.

To the Lord of the 23rd Psalm

By the rod of Thy mouth, lead me
from the valley of weariness and want
to still waters that mirror Mount Zion.

Comfort with Thy staff of righteousness.
With covenants restore my soul;
anoint with mercy and light.
Dispel shadows of evil, dark as death;
feed me in Eden-green pastures.
At altar-sacred table, o'erflow this cup.
Reveal the glories of Thy house.
Enfold me forever with Thy flock.

Meaning of the Stone

Life-giving waters issued freely
from rod-struck rock, rescuing Moses
and the congregation thirsting in Horeb.

When the people promised to obey,
Joshua set a stone beneath an oak,
by the sanctuary
as witness of their covenant.

In Mizpeh, the Lord
discomfited the Philistines,
so Samuel raised a stone called Ebenezer
saying, *The Lord hath helped us.*

We build on the Rock of our Salvation
Christ, the Stone of Israel,
is our sure foundation.

Types and Shadows

*[F]ill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the
Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.*
(I Sam. 16:1)

Samuel filled the horn
with holy oil, and
among the sons of Jesse,
sought Israel's future king.

He anointed the shepherd
on whom rested,
from that day forth,
the Spirit of the Lord.

When the father sent his son
with bread and corn
to his embattled brethren,
David arose and went
early in the morning
to the valley of Elah.
There Goliath, arrogant as evil,
determined as destruction,
defied the armies
of the living God.

Willingly, the anointed son
descended into the valley
of the shadow of death,
and in the name of Israel's God,
crushed the giant's head.

Delivered, the men arose
with a mighty shout;
with dancing and joy
the women in all the cities
sang his praise.

From Bethlehem
the beloved son
ascended to the seat
of power, justice, judgement—
that glorious throne
from which the King of Kings
will one day rule and reign.

Twelve Oxen and a Brazen Sea

With cloven hooves
planted in the foundation
of beginning,
Solomon's oxen
once bore a brazen sea
filled with waters
of another birth.

By twelves, God numbers
gates of the Holy City;
He counts Israel's sons,
apostolic witnesses, and those
whose horns of power
guard our progress.

Patient as the seasons,
united in strength
they face the quartered earth,
compassing all the sacrifices
that will spiral us heavenward
from the wrought lily brim.

Between the altar and the porch was the brazen sea for the washing of the priests. It had a brim like the flower of a lily, and it stood upon 12 oxen, three looking north, south, east and west. (Bible Dictionary, "Temple of Solomon")

Pure Gold

I have . . .

watched
children with
honey-colored curls
skip with kisses
into empty arms

tasted
amber syrup
boiled from the
maple's blood
sweetening
cloudy days

danced
on the hills of March
with desert flowers
holding in their
glowing hearts seeds
for another season

heard
rushing warbler wings
brightening shadowy
glades with joyful song

rejoiced
in clear
untarnished notes
of gleaming trumpets

embraced
resplendent truths
undimmed by
time and dust

worn
 wedding promises
 of unending lives
 as a circle of light
served
 hot buttered loaves
 dripping yellow abundance
 onto tired tables
received
 undeserved gifts
 tied with shining
 bows of grace
celebrated
 the certain flaming sunrise
 scattering the cold
and now I know
 why Ark and Mercy Seat
 were overlaid with gold!

Tithes and Tenths

The tenth becomes the key,
unlocking heaven's mysteries.
The veil of the earth is burst.
Through heaven's open windows
blessings and power pour down
to fill the earth.

*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse . . . and prove me now .
. . . if I will not . . . pour you out a blessing.* (Mal. 3.10)

Water to Swim In

*These waters issue out toward the east . . . and go into the sea . . .
. and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. (Ezek. 47:8-9)*

I follow Ezekiel
to the temple door,
wade into fluid
that washes my feet.

I measure a thousand,
prayerfully pass
through water
that purifies my knees.
Counting cubits again,
I return, traverse the river
that swirls about my waist.

Finally, I am immersed
in liquid element, risen,
deep enough to swim in,
too wide to pass over.

Build me a ship of light
to sail this cosmic sea,
transport me
to another sphere.
Land my soul
at God's right hand.

Hearts of the Children

I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers. (Mal. 4:5-6)

In the palm of one hand,
I hold the Book that begins
In the beginning. . . .

It was published in Philadelphia
in 1806, the same year
the Holy Roman Empire ended.
Two hundred years
have discolored the paper,
brittled crumbling leather.

Carefully,
as I would stroke feathers
of a fallen sparrow,
I touch pages once edged with gold,
examine fragile evidence
of an ancestor's life and faith.

I study the faded brown ink,

*Sarah – wife of Hance Hamilton
born October 20, 1800
sons – William and David*

and write the names of those who wait.

Open Now

Purify my lips with fire,
hot as Isaiah's coal, that I, too,
may testify. Open my mouth.

When offerings of oil and flour,
frankincense-fragrant,
are brought before the Lord,
may I also smell the sweet savor.

When evil, terrible as ancient Syria,
combines to destroy righteousness,
fill the mountain with horses
and chariots that I can see.

When earth quakes
and whirlwinds tumult the sky,
let me hear the still small voice
whisper again, Jesus is the Christ

*[O]ne of the seraphims . . . having a live coal in his hand
. . . laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy
lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.
(Isa. 6:6-7 see also Lev.2:1, 2 Kgs. 6:17, and 1 Kgs. 19:11-12)*

2

THE LAMB OF GOD



He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.
(Luke 1:32)

To a Holy Land

Land of prophets,
scriptures, and covenants,
where the buried past
breathes life into our
understanding,
where peace, for some,
is just a place to catch
your breath between fear
and the next war,
for others, a reality that
flows like water springing
from the hopeful ground—

Land of Bethlehem beginnings,
parables, and miracles,
Jerusalem, the Holy City
where Jesus walked
the narrow streets,
Jordan, Nazareth, Galilee,
Golgotha, Cana, Bethany,
and a garden where the
Tree of Life grows—

You call to me
from Earth's other side
to come and be holy, whole,
and my heart, longing
to be complete, listens.

How will I answer?
Will I set aside
uncertainties, concerns,

comfortable convenience
and calendared plans?
Will I sacrifice transient
treasure and pay the price
to travel from where I am?

Yes. Even if I never stand
on Israel's sacred land.

In Bethlehem

Not far from Mount Moriah
where the Father of the Faithful
built an altar of native stone,
and binding Isaac, laid him
on the fire-ready wood
of sacrifice, before he saw
the thicket-caught ram,

Mary lays her first-born son,
wrapped in swaddling bands,
on tinder-dry hay in limestone
manger of a stable-cave.

Fulfilled again are words
of Abraham—

God will provide himself a lamb.

These Shepherds

Sheep of the Judean hills give meat,
skins and wool for raiment, tents—
cover from storm, shelter from heat.
In fields of Bethlehem where David slew
lion, bear and fed his father's sheep
temple flocks now safely graze.

Those who watch have been well taught
that in the shadow of a distant Eden
firstlings offered hope. They know how
God spared birthright son of Abraham,
providing sacrificial ram for
grass-kindled flame, stone-tabled meal.

Remembering that death passed over Israel's
house because of unblemished blood,
these know the altar-end of tender ones
they nurture, name, and carry in their bosoms.
For solemn feasts they gently lead the young
into Jerusalem so sin-stained robes
may be washed white as the glory of the Lord,
and peace may be complete.

Tonight with faith they haste to find
a Savior and a certain sign—
Christ the future sacrifice—swaddled,
as the angel said, in wool-soft bands
and lying in a manger.

These are they prepared
to spread the word abroad—
This day is born the Lamb of God.

His Coming

pierces the canopy of heaven
and God's glory
on the other side shines through.
Condescending Son slips silently
down the beam to Bethlehem.

Those preferring darkness
would plug the hole,
but the dike is breached
and through the leak
a single seraph speaks.

Rising tides of gladness
press against the weakened wall.
The dam bursts suddenly.

Multitudes of angels rush through
pouring out songs of peace and praise,
flooding thirsty earth with hope and joy.

From Bramble-Bound Fields

to valleys of sorrow
and shadows of death,
from prison, pain, poverty,
illness, and decay
to darkest cavernous depths,
far as the curse was found,
trumpet the gladness, repeat the joy.
The blessings of His redemption
flow mercifully down!

Offspring of David

I am the root and the offspring of David, [and] the bright and morning star. (Rev. 22:16)

Let God's children shout for joy
and all lights of the morning sing together.
From Jacob's line a star will shine.

Above all things, He is first
in government, last in time,
before the beginning, beyond the end.
He who bends the bow of heaven
by the scepter of His majesty
condescends to know mortality.

Arrowing life into the shadow of death,
the Dayspring comes radiant as dawn.
Arise. Declare the glory of
the Bright and Morning Star!

Prophet, Priest and King

Men, wise enough to follow His star,
come bringing gifts to Bethlehem—

Myrrh for the Infant
who will grow to know mortality
and as Prophet foretell His own
first-fruit rising from the dead,

Frankincense, fragrant
enough to sweeten temple offerings
made by fire for the Great High Priest,

Gold, precious metal of scepters,
thrones, and crowns, for the King
of Heaven, who will one day come
to rule and reign over all the Earth.

Passing the Pyramids

Between Bethlehem
and Egyptian refuge,
Joseph and Mary
pass monuments,
already ancient,
rising indestructibly
from a sandy sea
like creation's
primordial mount.

On the bank of the Nile
they eat dates and
unleavened cakes,
while the Child
who caused the dry land
to appear, safely rests
in latticed shadows.

Deserts and Dromedaries

Splayed feet plod the dunes,
cross sun parched flatlands.
Enduring scarcity and heat,
dromedaries press forward without a drink,
carry us through sin-scorched deserts
that wither our souls.

On snake-slithered sands,
we long for green,
dream a distant oasis of Truth—
date palms and honey at a spring
that will quench our thirst,
wash away the dust.

In Jordan, a messenger
cries repentance, prepares the way.
Clothed in coarse camel hair,
John calls us from the wilderness.

The Kingdom Is at Hand

Miraculously born as Gabriel prophesied,
this child of promise waxes strong in spirit.
Ordained in infancy, he grows in goodness
and faith, sweet as honey.

Strong as leather, unpretentious as camel hair,
he raises a wilderness voice, cries repentance.
Baptizing, he prepares the way.

When Jesus comes from Galilee,
they fulfill righteousness, submit, obey.
John buries his kindred Lord
in Jordan's watery grave
and raises Him up straightway.

The dove-descending Spirit
will abide in this Anointed One.
The voice of God proclaims,
This is my beloved Son.

Again, in Galilee

A thousand years before the dawn
of time, the barque of God passed
through galactic seas
where waves of chaos
and winds of darkness
combined in cosmic tempest.
The glory of His presence
dispelled the storm,
organized elements.
Stars and worlds were born.

On another sea a vessel sails.
Heavy with men and nets,
it crosses to distant shore of Galilee.
The raging fury of a sudden storm
fills hull with waves of fear.
The watery abyss gapes black
as the throat of a hungry serpent
rising from the deep.
Mighty winds whip sodden sail.
Faith flounders and
sinks beneath the foam.

Awakened, the Master rises.
A familiar voice, commanding, calm,
speaks again the word of peace.
Wind and waves, rebuked, respond.
Quiet waters reach the shore as light
which pours through opened clouds
becomes the crown,
coarse cloth a royal robe,
cedar plank a throne.

Bountiful Baskets

If Israel's children,
preparing for their promised land,
had wandered four hundred
years in barren wilderness
instead of forty—
if multitudes that hungered
in the desert of Bethsaida
had numbered not just
five thousand, but a thousand
times five thousand—

I do not doubt that on the day
before the final Sabbath
a double portion of manna
would have proved again
heaven's bounty,
and plentiful fragments
would still have filled a basket
for each of Jesus' twelve.

Without Beauty

*He hath no form nor comeliness. . . . [T]here is no beauty that we
should desire him. (Isa. 53:2)*

He wore coarse
clothing of affliction,
the girdle of infirmity, and
walked hungry, thirsty roads.
Common as a carpenter
covered with uncomely dust
of toil and temptation,

He mingled with multitudes
beset by worldliness,
stricken with sickness and sin.
Some could see the light in His eyes.
Those who listened, felt His love,
sensed the wisdom of His words.
Blessed by faith-affirming miracles,
they would follow Him,
though He dressed as other men.

Standing Before Carl Bloch's Painting

Christ Healing the Sick at Bethesda

In the House of Mercy,
Compassion, larger than life,
more powerful than
angel-troubled waters,
lifts the veil of illness,
impotence, strengthens
heart and legs, and
after thirty-eight infirm years,
makes them whole.

In Sabbath grace
Thou callest me
from my multitude of fears
to come from beneath
the cover of disbelief
into Thy healing light.
Heeding Thy command,
Rise, take up thy bed,
I will walk.

Blind Faith

Naysayers mock belief,
scorn our willingness to obey.
They say we've been duped.

They know nothing of the blind man
who begged beside Jericho's road,
called in faith upon the Lord
and received his sight.

We likewise plead for mercy,
rely upon His grace.
Groping our way through darkness,
we grasp God's Holy Word
and behold what cynics will not see.

Where Are the Nine?

We tread mortal roads,
face decay and death,
certain as leprosy.
Without hope,
we are banished as
outsiders,
castaways,
untouchables.

But today,
the Master passes by.
We cry out for mercy,
and are restored, cleansed.
Most rejoice their way,

return to the village,
resume their lives.
For them the tale ends.

But one in ten turns back again
to seek the Healer, glorify God.
We fall down before Him,
worship at His feet.
Our story begins.

Not of This World

Hosannas fill Jerusalem,
echoing through crowded streets
of a city wanting peace.

Anointed, the Son of David
comes in the name of the Lord.
Separated from dust
of a fallen sphere
by garments and palms of praise,
He rides the foal of an ass
along this royal path.

Blessed is He who will be lifted up
to rule and reign over a city,
a people, an earth made holy.

Hosanna in the highest.

Which Was Greater

that at the beginning of miracles, Jesus
changed water to wine and the bridegroom
at Cana set forth good wine last,

or that the blood-red wine
He gave the twelve at the final supper
would become living water for the bride?

In the Upper Room

When He broke the bread and bade them eat
in that holy place, did the Spirit teach
that their Master would soon be crucified—

In that hour, did they understand
His infinite love for every man,
that as Savior He must suffer and die—

Did Heaven reveal that Passover night
that He was the Lamb, the Sacrifice?

As they looked upon His countenance pure,
did they think of the pain He would have to endure
His suffering sore, redemption's price—

As each one drank from the common cup
did they know that He would be lifted up,
that the blood He shed would bring them life—

Did Heaven reveal that Passover night
that He was the Lamb, the Sacrifice?

Coronation in Jerusalem

Scoffing soldiers flock like vultures
to the governor's palace.
In the common hall, they strip the Man,
clothe Him in a robe, scarlet
as the blood of scourging,
crown Him with a plaited wreath of pain.
Mocking, they remove the rod
from His sceptered hand and smite Him
with the reed, strict as judgement.

Strong as sinlessness, mute
as the sacrificial lamb prepared
for Passover, He receives blows and spittle,
foul as blasphemous words that evil the air.

Hail. King!

Jeering, they bow in necessary tribute—
not knowing that they speak the truth.

Words and Water

Pilate saith, What shall I do then? (Matt. 27:22)

The crowd clamors for Barabbas
and begrudgingly you consent.
Regretting your despicable role,
you declare your innocence.
Water drips from your fingertips
into the hollow bowl.

But it takes more than words
and water to purify a soul.

Cross and Condensation

In the morning of creation,
His spirit moved upon the waters,
great rivers and small streams
flowed down.

Riding upon the clouds,
He sends showers upon
our fields, small rain
upon tender branch and bud.

In power He commands the waves,
speaks to us in storm and flood.

He fills fountains, fonts, cups
to wash our feet, cleanse our lives,
yet on the cross, He cries,
I thirst.

On Not Seeing the Passion

In Gethsemane,
the Source of Light
endured the weight of darkness,
heavy as all wickedness
the world would ever know.
Crushed in garden
of the olive press,
trembling in atoning agony,
He sweat our guilt and sorrow.

Did unseen hosts of heaven,
weeping, watch and wonder,

as he drank the bitter cup?
Were we there in spirit when
He was stripped and flogged?

Perhaps some could not abide
His anguish and turned away
because they could not bear
to hear the sound of lash on flesh,
watch hammer-driven nails
pierce His hands and feet,
and see His body lifted up
on Calvary's cruel cross.

Did those who did not look
on His infinite distress,
love Him any less?

Still Hungry

How strange that priests
who placed loaves
of His perpetual presence
on shew bread table
did not know Him
when He came.

Faithfully, they offered
fine flour and frankincense,
in the holy place
ate stale cakes, and refused
the Bread of Life.

Measuring the Cost

How many blood red drops
will it take to cover my faults?
If I counted them one by one
as they fell like precious coins
into a cup, what would be
the value of each, if collectively
they could purchase a world?

Pieta in Stone

Pierced by sword of sorrow,
shrouded in grief,
Mary holds the lifeless
body of her firstborn son—

the Prince of Peace, wounded
in violence, dishonored in death.

Heavy as Michelangelo's marble,
loss lies across her lap.
Anguish silences the lullabies,
extinguishes the hope of long ago.

Where are the angels
who hovered above the
birthing bed in Bethlehem
and heralded the joy?

While earth groans in darkness,
they wait to enter the sepulcher,
to roll away the stone.

Because of the Sacrifice

The cross of death,
bitter as gall and vinegar,
fearful as the skull,
cruel as nails,
bears sweet fruit,
becomes the Tree of Life.

This Joseph

Like a tall protecting pillar
hewn from Arimathea's height,
this honorable counselor
patiently awaits
the Kingdom of God.

Knowing Mary's piercing pain,
with compassion's strength
he takes her Son and carefully
winds spiced linen bands
around the body of the Lamb.

This generous Joseph
lays the Firstborn gently
in a stone-quiet place of rest
and seals the similitude
of the Savior's birth and death.

Sign of the Prophet Jonas

Three days Jesus' body lay
in a temporary tomb,
dark as the belly of a fish,
terrible as ocean depths where bands
of death wrapped about Jonah's head.

Staying tempests of destruction,
rising from corruption, He showed
a Nineveh-wicked world
that salvation is of the Lord.

Week's First Day

This virgin chamber
like rock-hollowed stable
is a briefly borrowed room.

The table chiseled
to lay linen-wrapped dead
today becomes a birthing bed.
Earth travails. A shudder
breaks sealed silence
of womb-dark tomb.

Like lightning, attending angels
split death's gloom to witness
this resurrection morn—
the cavern's mouth is opened.
The triumphant King is born!

Master Gardener

Jehovah, who numbered
seven days, planted
grasses, herbs, shrubs, trees,
and, eastward in Eden,
a well-watered garden
of delight, a fertile paradise,
that yielded fruit and seed,
all that was good
for life and food.

In an exiled world
of sorrow and weeds,
the Lord of the vineyard
sets watchmen to keep
the hedge, guard the walls.
He digs, prunes, and grafts,
nurturing bare despairing
branches until they flourish.
Cultivating hope and faith,
he will gather
an abundant harvest,
a feast of firstfruits.

This morning
in Jerusalem a woman
grieves at a garden tomb.
Weep not, Mary.
See flowers bloom
at the Master's feet
for He is, as you suppose,
The Gardener.

Folded Shroud

Mortality
that disguised godhood
was carefully covered
in this space
of burial and bier,
but the fabric
lies folded now.

Thieves would not
have left it thus.
In haste they'd
have let it fall
into sepulcher dust.

Early,
on this third-day morning,
the shape of all our fears
and sorrows disappeared.
Once-shrouded elements,
glorified, arose.

This cloth remains,
linen edges
pressed together.

The veil that covered
the face of God
lies folded here.

Olive Tree—*Olea Europea*

Solomon made temple
doors and posts of olive wood,
and cherubim which he covered
in gold and set in the inner house
with wings stretching
from wall to wall
and touching in the middle.

Trees with twisted trunks
bear leaves to heal the nations.
Pressed and blessed,
the perfect fruit yields
holy oil of anointing.

In the land of abundance,
the golden fluid
mixed with wheat and honey
nourishes multitudes.

Crushed beneath the stone
heavy as all sin and sorrow
the world has known,
Christ bled in the garden
of the olive press.

Come, fill your lamps,
hold up the Light.
From the Mount of Olives
bring the branches,
fashion booths for the feast,
weave crowns of victory
and wreaths of lasting peace.

Where Lilies Bloom

My soul is weighed with death and gloom;
a heavy sorrow dims my way.
Is there a place where lilies bloom?

The mournful crying of the loon
still haunts my soul and slowly plays
a dirge of grief and death and gloom.

Our loved ones, friends are gone too soon.
A dismal darkness clouds my days.
I seek a place where lilies bloom

in shrinking light of waning moon,
through night's thick blackness. When I pray,
"Lord, lift these shrouds of death and gloom,"

He shows me there's an empty tomb,
a place of peace that shines bright rays
of light and life where lilies bloom.

Hope mends my heart, binds up my wounds,
and sets the heavens all ablaze,
dispels the pall of death and gloom.
I know a place where lilies bloom.

3

LATTER-DAY LEGACY



The weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong . . . that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world; that faith also might increase in the earth; that mine everlasting covenant might be established; that the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed . . . unto the ends of the world. (D&C 1:19-23)

Fourteen is Young

Fourteen is young
to yearn for wisdom,
to study, ponder
and ask for answers
that will change a world.
But early in greening grove
of a Palmyra spring
youthful limbs
in outgrown homespun
bend among fresh ferns
unfolding on the forest floor.
A voice speaks fervently,
Father.

Evil, slithering
through confusion
of decaying leaves,
strikes suddenly,
binds the tongue,
strangles the inquiry—
Which one . . . ?
Struggling against
impending doom,
the sinking supplicant
prays more earnestly,
Father!

Eternity opens.
Descending light
dispels the gloom.
Believing eyes behold
both the Father and the Son.

Fourteen is young
to disturb the powers
of darkness, to learn
who God is, who we are,
and what we may become.

And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:20-2)

Moroni, Son of Mormon

Mormon's son, prophet, seer, wanderer
in a promised land, keeper of prophetic words
and ancient records buried
beneath the stone on Cumorah's hill—

Guardian of America, who holds keys
of the Book of Mormon, the Stick of Ephraim,
speak to us from the dust.

Reveal words that move a people
to know the Lord, build temples, consecrate all.

Trumpet the truth, Angel of Light.

[T]ake thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim . . . And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. (Ezek. 37:16-17)

Latter-day Gathering

In language of Isaiah,
Paul, Nephi, Joseph—
God speaks to His
scattered children.
They receive the word
with gladness,
rejoice in truth restored.

Israel gathers to Zion
from nations of Europe,
islands of the sea,
empires of the East,
and lands of Lehi's sons.

In vessels of courage,
wagons of faith,
handcarts of hope,
they come to raise
stalwart pillars,
square temple corners,
and build up the Kingdom
of God on Earth.

Exodus from Nauvoo

Nauvoo spire, straight as heaven's
pillar of fire, marks a sacred place
embraced by the Father of Waters.

Clothed in suns, crowned with stars,
the temple stands on stone,
white as crescent moon

waxing in the evening sky.
In limestone skin, pure as the longing
of her covenant children,
she gathers them close,
whispers blessings, seals their desires,
then watches with darkening eyes
as, facing west, they flee into
the wilderness.

*And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed
with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a
crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing
in birth, and pained to be delivered. (Rev. 12:1-2)*

Of Seeds and Bees

Jared's brother and Brother Brigham,
mighty men, fled Babel and destruction
with family, friends.

Passing through wind driven swells—
dark ocean depths and waves of prairie grass—
they sought milk and honey lands
broad enough to nourish a vast posterity
and keep a covenant people.

They carried with them hope, faith, seeds
and, to secure this fertile future, bees.

*And they did also carry with them deseret, which, by interpretation,
is a honey bee; and thus they did carry with them swarms of
bees, and all manner of that which was upon the face of the
land, seeds of every kind. (Ether 2:32)*

Montrose Miracle

9 October 1846

Across the Mississippi,
beyond the reach
of mobs deadly
as Pharaoh's host,

hundreds of Israel's poor
wait in cold rains
of an autumn without
gardens, vineyards, or walls.

Wanting necessities,
the weak and infirm,
destitute and desperate,
wish relief, huddle beneath
blankets and brush,
until Providence
wings an ancient miracle.

Flocks of quail fill the camp—
merciful meat from heaven
to assuage misery,
satisfy hunger, fortify faith,
and sustain their journey
to a promised land.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh. [A]nd ye shall know that I am the Lord your God. And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp. (Ex. 16:11-13)

And Should We Die

Loathe to leave you behind
in some shallow grave
at the side of the trail,
I wrap you in thin cloth,
hold you close, willing
warmth into your limbs,
but night is too long
and near this rocky ridge
snow extinguishes the feeble
fire, the last faint glimmer
of life in your eyes. Final
words freeze in your throat.

Witnessing your release,
wisps of smoke, spirit-fine,
rise from wet ashes.
I am cold and left behind
to carry on, but I hear you,
warm and free,
whispering words
I will someday sing again—

All is well.

Winter's Last Snow

Bright between lowering clouds
and sudden white, yellow as unseen sun,
daffodils stand brave as Saints,
certain that summer comes.

Traveling Light

Chariots of Israel,
fire hidden in wood
of handcart wheels,
churn the dust, rut the rock,
toil heat and cold.

Wet from yet another
crossing of the Platte,
they are bent to round—
Zion bound.

Those who go leave
all but seventeen pounds
of poverty, carefully weighed.
Each ounce considered,
they abandon offence,
desert regret, lessen their load,
hastening the trail
a thousand miles
where oxen pulled.

Evening river and western
sky glow gold as a pillar
of faith, their vision of hope.

Igniting a legacy, they
muscle the mountains,
courage the road.
Campfires of a hundred
days mark the way
we will follow,
traveling light.

Evening Circle

Come, Saints. Trail-worn
and travel-weary, come.
Here oxen-drawn wagons
dressed in canvas
white as prairie clouds at noon
form a circle of safety.
Under glittering gaze
of distant suns, gather 'round.
Stay the wilderness this night;
feast upon this brief reprieve.

Dance and sing,
then join the company
in speaking names
of those who suffer
as evening prayers,
like incense from Levi's altar,
rise from common fire
of this camp to assuage
sadness, dispel our cares.

Retire in peace and rest
to dream of Zion.
Thus blessed, together
we will travail tomorrow.

Let all the people of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and those who journey with them, be organized into companies, with a covenant and promise to keep all the commandments and statutes of the Lord our God And this shall be our covenant—that we will walk in all the ordinances of the Lord. (D&C 136:2, 4)

Another Rescue

They stood ready to sacrifice their all on the altar of duty and devotion. (Contributor Vol. 11, p. 323)

We hear the names
Martin and Willie,
imagine Brigham
at conference pulpit
preaching a temporal text
urgent as death.

The willing answer his call.
Altering the history of the West,
they supply teams and wagons,
face untempered elements
to rescue handcart Saints
suffering in unrelenting snow.

To honor pioneers who died
and those who survived
to see the valley, we leave
handheld screens and water slides,
lace up our boots, bruise our feet,
brave the heat. We cross the creek,
climb the hill, campfire our meals.

Walking in footsteps
of faith and sacrifice
changes our course,
strengthens resolve,
altars our hearts

and we are rescued.

Near a Salty Sea

Waters, Galilee-fresh, flow through shadows
of rocky mountains to a sea that supplies
a covenant of salt large enough to season the earth.

Not far from River Jordan, temple builders,
besieged by Babylon, speak of peace and holiness
in the city of solemnity, the habitation of hope.

Their Zion-songs echo off Wasatch slopes
and across Jerusalem's Kidron Valley.

Angel Guardian

Moroni kept and secured the sacred record,
gold as the certain horn he holds.

Guiding and presiding,
he knows the destiny of covenant lands.

He signals the gathering of elect
among the nations and calls us to a place
of safety where God will fight our battles
as He finishes His work.

Can you hear the trumpet?

*Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy
mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day
of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; (Joel 1:2)*

Seeking Deseret

From sun-bleached bones
of tribulation and death's dried hides,
marrow-rich honey flows—
food for prophets, queens,
and resurrected beings.
In this promised land,
coils of braided straw, tawny as lions,
speak order, industry.

Where coupled oxen pulled wagons
of refuge under clouds white as froth
overflowing buckets of milk,
behold the skep—carved upon pulpits,
emblazoned on flags, chiseled in stone.

Here bees, gathering succulent nectar
and corn-yellow pollen, make valleys
of Deseret fruitful by their presence.
Invisible paths vibrate with intelligence,
connect blossoms and trees.
Six-walled chambers, worked in wax,
fanned by whirring wings,
become royal reservoirs of rest.

See messengers fly from humming hives.
Colonizing, with sting of truth
they swarm afar gathering goodness
to fill earth with incorruptible sweetness
the color of the sun.

Skep: a bee hive made of twisted straw which resembles an inverted basket.

Beneath the Canopy of Heaven

Traveling between bondage
and the promised land,
Abraham, Lehi, and the
house of Israel dwelt in tents.

Unhindered by the weight of the world,
they left permanence of marble and mortar,
and ate sweet meat provided by the Lord.

We follow the fathers, pilgrim the path.
Camping as companies,
we circle the center, plant the pole,
set the stakes, lengthen the cords.

Through forest-fragrant boweries and
tent's thin skin, we hear the Spirit's voice,
see Heaven's light. Unencumbered,
we can move in a moment, worship as one,
ascend the mountain, behold the Son.

Prophet, Seer, and Revelator

The seer beholds eternity
as with God's pure eye
clear as unblemished stone.
He sees all things as one,
as they were, as they are
and as they will become—

yesterday, today, forever.

The Voice of Conference

Facing extremes, we stand
on the edge of seasons.

Spring soon scorches
into summer.
How will we survive
when burning
famines our security?
What cool bowery will
shelter our confidence?

Hear prophetic counsel.

We see leaves turning,
changes churning.
How will we endure?
When commotion blows
cold as winter winds,
what will keep us warm,
be our covert from the storm?

Come, let us listen together.

Triptychs and Facsimiles

In the nave of a Parisian cathedral,
stone, marble, and stained glass
surround a gilded altarpiece.
Angel-guarded, the high, hinged triptych
tells His story—Mother Mary
and star-lit stable, central cross,
and the garden where another Mary
first beheld the resurrected Lord.

Abraham's facsimiles also number three.
Unfolded wings on either side
show us beginnings and exaltations.
Between, an image,
round as God's all seeing eye,
reveals mysteries of perfection.
Reflecting the glory of Eternity,
the pupil becomes the aperture
through which light and knowledge pass.

Not Dismayed

As the battle rages,
we stand strong,
armored in fine linen,
bound about by truth,
helmeted in salvation,
shielded in faith, soft and white.

We endure for righteousness' sake,
until Evil's head is finally severed.
Laban and Goliath lie among
the dead, their wages paid.

Raising songs of peace and praise,
we bury unnecessary weapons,
disedge destructive blades,
plowshare our swords.

[T]hey shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks—nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye and let us walk in the light of the Lord. (2 Ne. 12:4-5)

Prayer for the Prophet

Sixty years and more
he served, learning, leading,
staying, graying,
preparing for the heavy,
heavenly call.

From prophesy's
spirit-summit, he sees
invisible perils fearsome
as Amelek's warriors,
and ominous consequences,
dire as defeat.
In mighty supplication,
he pleads our preservation
as the battle rages.

Sustain his voice,
unweary his arms,
strengthen his knees.
Wilt Thou steady the staff,
discomfit the enemy?
Reveal Thy will;
extend the pavilion
of thy protection.

Encircled in faith,
may Thy people stand as one
beneath the canopy
of priesthood power.

Royal Gorge

From Colorado headwaters, the Arkansas River flows to the Mississippi.

Millennia ago, as mountains rose,
the river wore away granite,
carved a chasm we cannot cross.
Cut off from our destiny
we stand on the rim,
face a barricade of fear.
Whitewater rapids rush
the ravine a thousand feet below.
Canyon walls are steep,
the gorge deep as our despair.

But bridge builders sink footings
into the bedrock of faith,
erect towers, anchor cables.
Suspending wooden planks
to span the abyss,
they dispel discouragement,
drive away dejection,
escort us safely to the other side.

Raising the Standard

Unfurling the common cloth of Israel,
the standard bearer carries colors
that ensign the way.

Trumpet-summoned,
we gather into companies that move as one—
a nation distinguished by the fabric of our faith.

Paper Flags

[And Moroni] took the pole, which had on the end thereof his rent coat, (and he called it the title of liberty). (Alma 46:13)

Will I gird on armor for feeble
flutterings of seasonal patriotism?
What defense will I raise
for stiff rectangles that recede
in the vanishing permanence
of pleasant parades?

Correct colors of paper expediency
blowing in the autumn breeze
will not bring me to my knees.
Disposable banners, that barely cling
like brittle leaves to dying branches,
will not inspire my heart.

Tomorrow, I will not remember
simulated standards that pale
and dissolve in cold, wet gutters
or flash into ash and float away,
disappearing in the hot air
of pretended passion.

But take the very covering
of wounded flesh and write on it
the price of peace.
Nail this rent coat to a staff,
tall as the tent's center pole.
Plant it firmly in the earth to
secure the title, our right to liberty.

This sufficient sacrifice
I will not forget.

Beneath this ensign that
defines the desire to be free,
I will worship, serve
and even bleed.
So wave no paper flags for me.

Author of Liberty

O God, who gave us life
and the right to choose,
and sent messengers
to earth with gospel truths,

whose suffering paid demands
of justice and purchased us
from death and sin,

who brought our fathers
to a promised land
and broke bands of bondage
to set them free,

who, offering salvation,
calls us to His fold—

May we awake with eyes to see
erosion of our liberty
and, standing strong,
be brave and bold.
Protect us daily by thy might,
bless with freedom's sacred light.

Passage to the Promised Land

Arrogant ancients
raised bricks in Babylon,
until foiled and confounded,
they scattered in confusion.

In behalf of family, friends,
Jared's brother, desiring light,
beheld the glory of the Lord.

Gathering food and flocks,
seeds and bees, the pilgrim
band followed a prophet endowed
with knowledge, wisdom, keys.

Prophet-led, we too store food and faith,
prepare for storms and judgments
and the crossing yet to come.
Vessels tight and filled with Light,
we set forth with companies of Saints,
brave fierce winds of tribulation
that drive us toward millennial lands.

Sustained by the Spirit,
secure in God's care,
we pass through terrible tempests.
Encompassed about, we rejoice,
without ceasing sing His praise.

We will safely reach the shore,
shed tears of thanks and joy
as we receive the promised blessings
and bow before the Lord.

Do Angels Have Wings

Among branches outside my window
finches fill the morning with a song
sweet as the first one Eve ever heard.

Three plump quail drink from a driveway puddle.
Elijah would not be listening this year
for the welcome rush of raven's wings.

There is cream on my table, sweet as the Spirit
the day a dove descended over the place
where John baptized Jesus.

I drizzle honey on cracked wheat cereal
while two gulls fly overhead,
cricket-eating birds that once appeared
in flocks to save the pioneer harvest.

I have never seen an angel, but I know
that some of heaven's messengers have wings.

Tabernacle Choir

In faith, bedrock-deep, the notes begin,
expanding, swelling. With pipes, strings,
trumpet, and timpani the choir sings,
syncopated, staccato, steadfast, thoughtful.

Sacred strains of praise sweep Gobi and Sahara;
ford Rhine, Amazon, Ganges; ascend Rockies,
Alps and Andes, rising high as hope.

Solemn sounds of solace cross surging seas,
enter quiet villages, teeming cities;

pulse through blanketed doorways,
marketplace, and palace.

Hear psalm, hymn, requiem, anthem—
music for all mankind.

Daybreak

The breath of morning
whispers hope through
pines of Windy Pass.
Glowing the sky,
dawn touches
Lightning Peak and
Timpanogos.

Golden rays reach
across the waking valley,
shortening shadows,
shining bright as knowledge.

Light touches
the templed pinnacle of truth,
then spills into a gash
in the mountains,
a rocky canyon
hollowed without hands.

In purity and priesthood power
the gospel stone rolls forth
through hallowed halls,
where earnest students
learn the language of salvation,
past flags of waiting nations,
to fill the earth.

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BECOMING SAINTS



Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. (Eph. 2:19-20)

Fire Building

Eagerly I strike matches against the night.
Once, twice, thrice tiny bursts of light quickly die.
I turn my back against the wind, try again.

Disappointed, bending over,
I rearrange tinder, add more kindling,
check the fuel. Then kneeling beside
what will be my fire, I strike again and again.

Finally, understanding flickers
and begins to glow, a small uncertain flame
that will spread and grow, but now
protected carefully by cupping hand,
lest a puff of doubt should blow it out.

Return

Your kindness nourished me—
branch, trunk, root.
Now come rest in my shade,
partake of my fruit.

Sunday Morning

Before the sun rises, I count blessings—
Priesthood power and private prayer.
Predawn purple and thrush's song.
Lilacs fragrant in a crystal vase.
My beloved still sleeping soundly
and our sealing in a sacred place.

Our youngest son, nineteen this day
and all his siblings, willing to be
our children.
Their sons and daughters
increasing in number and wisdom.
Agency and the Lord's atoning mercy.
A patch of ground, prepared
for tender transplants that will provide
goodness for our summer table.
A people, prophet-led and spirit-blessed.
This Sabbath day of peace and rest.

One Gloomy Day

You filled generous jars with
benevolence and potato soup,
bustled into my kitchen
at dinner time and lined them up
on the bare yellow counter—

friendship to feed my family

comfort to take to my mother
weak with age to awaken
weary appetite

kindness for
hungry grandchildren
arriving the next day

enough unexpected goodness
to last a lifetime.

Needing Healing

Father, forgive, I cry —
my self-centeredness, offensive words,
pain and grief I caused,
times I strayed, rebelled, disobeyed.

With each admission I bow more low
until the heart within me breaks.
Patient. Dark. I wait.

Then the Savior with gentle healing touch
reaches tenderly down and lifts me up.

His Easy Yoke

Enslaved by falsehoods,
we are in bondage,
burdened by foolishness
and worldly cares,
weighed down
with a yoke of iron.

But He will burst our bonds,
break the yoke of servitude to sin,
remove it from our necks.

Repentant and contrite,
willing to do His work, let us
connect in covenant
and bind ourselves to Him
whose yoke is gentle,
whose burden is light.

Potter's Clay

Green-ware fragile,
eggshell white,
I totter on the
edge of trouble.
Losing my balance,
I slip and fall,
shatter into shards on
rocks of mortality.
Pulverized
pieces scatter.

But the potter
carefully gathers
distressed remains,
dry as dust.
Mixing recovered
remnants with
water, He presses
shapes, reforms
my clay according
to divine design.
He signs His name
and finishes His
work with fire.

From the furnace,
I emerge a pure
vessel, wholly fit,
filled with beauty,
glazed with glory.

Prepared

May I be as one
of sixteen small stones
molten from the rock of the mount,
then clear and white,
on the mountain's height,
prepared to shine in darkness—

touched by Thy hand
and filled with light.

Passover in Latter-day Israel

My house is clean,
corrupting leaven
swept away,
Lamb's atoning blood
applied to posts
and lintels of my life.

Remembering bitter
bondage and sin's despair,
I stand this night
as first-born heir,
with staff in hand here
in this place, eager
to do thy will in haste.

Girded, dressed with
ready feet, I feast
on unleavened bread,
the perfect meat,
then empty the cup
with fervent prayer.

While death and
destruction around
me rage and raise
the midnight cry,
Deliver, please, I pray.
Let the destroyer
pass me by.

Eye of the Storm

Earth reels in devastation
of rumors now real.
Like fierce winds,
hurricane strong,
sounds of battle
surround us.
Fatal explosions
flash like lightning,
ripping through brutal
clouds boiling black
with arrogance and anger.
Cries of commotion
pierce our ears.

But in the center of the storm
a conduit of confidence,
sure as prophecy, opens,
and the blue, unchanging
eye of heaven, clear and calm,
looks down.

A voice whispers,
Be still and know that I am God.

Prayers in Spring

Beginning tentatively,
like first green pushing
through moist brown
earth of spring,
I start by saying Thy name.

Daily I persist,
slowly grow in faith.

Crocus-blue belief,
barely breaks the surface
of the ground, giving way
to bright commitment,
yellow as daffodils.

Consecration, tulip-red,
crowns my supplication.

Confident in Thy grace,
I commune in joyful color.

Reaching Up

I am drowning in an ocean of tears.
Between successive waves I see Thee
walking upon the water, calling my name.

Help me reach Thy outstretched hands.
Rescue from this sea of grief.

Secure my grasp. Comfort me.

Turning

Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned.

(Lam. 5:21)

As earth rolls upon her wings,
circling into light,
turn to the Lord,
magnify heaven's goodness,
become another man.
With faith's single eye,
behold future's bright expanse.

Let us turn and turn
as He shields us
in power, truth, and might.

Deflecting darkness,
we will mount the crystal sky
like red-tailed hawk,
feathers flashing copper in the sun,
spiraling to His glory.

Unaware

Had I chosen not to know you
when I considered commitment's cost,
I'd have remained
 comfortable
 narrow
 and unaware
that I suffered a terrible loss.

Israel Remembers

We celebrate our exodus
from bitterness of sin, our passage
through baptismal waters.

Liberated from daily labor
and worldly care, we flee Egypt
to offer Sabbath sacrifice.
Giving thanks,
we remember the Lamb,
token the Passover.

This day, freed from bondage,
we serve the Lord, rest in His love.

Hand in Hand

Hands that framed Earth
and formed, mountains, rivers, seas,
that anointed sightless eyes
and blessed, led, fed,
are stretched out still.

Hands that bestowed authority
and bled regenerating power
beckon me.

Lord, make holy my hands.
Fasten me securely to Thy goodness.
Lead me home.

Establishing Zion

Upon isles of the sea,
pearls of perseverance
gleam in patient hands.

Diamonds of devotion,
glitter in the promised land.
Service, precious as sapphires,
sweeps across vast savannahs.

Emerald excellence
extends from rivers
to mountaintops that ring
with ruby-rich melodies
of woodwinds, strings.

From ends of Earth—
San Salvador to Sydney,
Cambridge to Cape Town—
Saints sacrifice time,
talents, trades, skills,

abundance to meet each need,
treasures to build the Kingdom,
offerings to establish Zion.
Multiplied and sanctified,
they fill the common coffer
of consecration.

*For the administration of this service not only supplieth the
want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings
unto God. (2 Cor. 9:12)*

Fire! Fire!

The offense was intended, real.
I recoil in shock and pain,
as my soul's dry tinder bursts into flame.

Red-hot resentment consumes my peace.
Ugly smoke pollutes my skies,
choking charity, burning my eyes.
The angry blaze leaps hotter, higher.

*Help me, Father! Pour down water.
Save me. Quickly quench the fire.*

Things to Give Away

I put my willful independence into a box
with my casual commitment,

add measured generosity and faithless worry,
stuff in my careless reverence,
thoughtlessness, ingratitude and pride.

Struggling to close it, I lean against the sides,
press down the top,
and tape it tightly with resolve.

God receives this heavy, unsightly gift
so gladly that I cannot doubt
His goodness nor His grace.

Dear Friend

Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)

This day's for you.
Moved by your need,
I scrub away the morning gloom,
garden your hours, water, weed.

In afternoon, I gather healing herbs,
weave garlands of regard.
Together, we sort, peel,
and preserve peach-ripe ideas
sweetened with smiles.

For dinner we feed your family
potatoes, parables, and love.
When darkness comes
my lullabies slumber your children.

Finally, I lay down my
weary contentment.
Even my rest is yours.

Testifying

We speak Truth. Our words may bounce
off stony walls of apathy and ricochet
off barriers of contempt, hard as concrete,
but conviction, voiced, resonates in our bones,
moves molecules, reverberates through space
altering what was.

From the Fountain

From freely flowing fountain,
living water, pure as love,
fully fills the holy vessel.

Willingly, I enter
liquid abundance of the font,
become a momentary embryo
wholly covered by
God's goodness,
each part immersed
in this new birth
then quickened by
the Spirit's breath.

In desert of thirst,
shadow of death,
I eagerly receive
the copious cup.
Drinking deeply,
I empty it completely
and am perfectly imbued
with abounding grace
of living water flowing
freely from the fountain.

Broken Heart

How can my heart,
geode-dark, cold and hard,
be filled with love and light
except it break?

Open Hand

Charity has loosened the grip
of my tightly clenched fist.
I relinquish the cold, dry morsel
long reserved for my day of scarcity
and receive the sun's warming ray.
Like a golden token, it touches
the palm of my open hand.

Creek, River, Ocean

Tiny rivulets of chaos
converge in the rocky creek
of my discontent.
Confusion tumbles
down the canyon,
coursing into a torrent
that batters the banks
in fury and flood,
until at the canyon's mouth,
waters spread and slow,
depositing debris and mud.

Turbulence spent,
I reach broad plains
of patience, penitence,
meander clear miles,
water tranquil fields.
Finally, peace, broad and deep
flows into the boundless
ocean of His love.

Time of Gathering

Planted fields green and grow.
Seeds multiply in golden abundance.
The time of reaping comes.
God calls His people, gathers them
as sheaves into the garner.

Bound in righteousness,
secured against the storm,
they will be crowned with glory,
immortality, and eternal lives.

Praise the Lord of the Harvest.

Transformation

Adamant as stubborn rock
I have resisted Thy Word.
Take away my stony heart,
make it soft as bread
leavened by the spirit,
shaped by Thy will.

Preserve me,
steadfast and
impervious to evil,
until I become
once more as stone,
clear and imperishable,
precious as the jewels
of Thy crown.

As a Flute

*[T]he Lord has made me an instrument in his hands.
(Mosiah 23:10)*

Here am I,
encased in dark, quiet velvet.
But this is a day for music.

Lift me from soft silence
into gleaming light
where warmed by
the breath of Thy Spirit
and responsive to Thy touch,
I may make a melody
so beautiful and clear
that those who hear
will joyfully come to Thee.

And when the song is done
and I rest again in silence,
may echoing praises still
glorify the Son.

Seeking Knowledge

My heart kneels and my lips speak
simple words that, like a small cup,
hold some knowledge
but can't contain it all.

In the silences between,
I hear the sound of rushing waters,
flowing from far-off fountain,
copious enough to cover the earth.

Measuring Up

Father and mother
nod and smile.
Jared, standing tall,
wears his older brother's shirt,
a bit too large—
the one Joshua wore
when he was twelve.

Watching week to week
as he moves from row to row,
we see him grow taller, stronger
and know at length
the sleeves will fit,

and that, wearing white,
we who also stretch to
reach the stature of Another
may someday measure up.

Driving Home

I remember pears are on sale
and turn at the light.
The plumber comes at one.
Tomorrow is Taylor's orientation.
I weigh income and copays,
consider calls I must make.

God is aware of all these and
a hundred other cares—
mine, and those of family, friends,

and all the people of this city
at the foot of Mount Timpanogos,
fears of a lonely child in Alabama,
worries of a grieving woman in Pakistan.

He understands each challenge,
every joy and pain,
and how the next solar flare
will impact Jupiter.
He orders stars and planets
that astronomers have not yet seen,
and yet He knows my name.

Different Now

When cut I still bleed;
when love is lost, I grieve.
Earthquakes and floods
still trouble the world.

But, because of Thee,
hope sunrises my heart,
gratitude blooms like
roses along my path,
multiplying my joy.
Knowledge swells
like warm dough rising,
waiting to become bread
in ovens of charity.

I would serve thick
slices to those I meet.

Saints' Sabbath Prayer

Like the honeybee,
we labor in sixes,
carefully constructing
empty, hexagonal chambers.

Wilt Thou fill each void
with imperishable amber,
sweet as the Sabbath,
golden goodness
that will sustain in scarcity.

Bless Thy people
with precious stores.
Preserve and keep us
until the seventh,
millennial day.

Choosing the Better Part

I quit my Martha-tasks,
quiet the call of chores,
urgent as the floor
waiting to be swept and
potatoes needing peeling.
I lay down troubling distractions
and worldly cares, leave
the room, close the door.

Kneeling at the Master's feet,
I wait upon Lord.

Feasting on the Word

Father, the table is heavy
with writings of Nephi, Isaiah,
Jacob, Mormon, and Moroni,

Gratefully, I come,
hungering, thirsting,
needing nourishment,
for the day will be difficult,
the labor long.

So may I earnestly partake,
pondering, praying,
savoring thy word
until I am filled
with truth and light
and knowledge of the Christ.

Bless, Thou, this Feast.

Surrender

Today I surrender strategies for success,
step out of shiny shoes of pride,
and remove my cloak of imagined influence.
Vulnerable as a naked newborn, I seek shelter
in a field so green that a single fallen sparrow
disturbs the scene like a shout in a cathedral
where one can hear the candles burn.
Safe in the shadow of lilies, lamb's wool white,
I breathe Thy majesty and might.

Faster Than the Speed of Light

The light-year is a unit of length used to express astronomical distances. One light year is about 5.9 trillion miles.

Fallible and flawed,
I leave faint footprints
along my path
through a fallen world
where time is measured
in minutes, months, and years
and the nearest star is a mere
ninety-three million miles away.

At Griffith Park we drive
around and around on a road
congested with Galaxys,
Teslas, Volts, and Odysseys
until we find a parking place.

Inside the observatory,
Earth rotates beneath
the Foucault pendulum,
a coil bolts with energy,
models of sun and planets
spin the seasons and
night time photos expand
our knowledge of the universe.

A forty-foot mural composites
a tiny slice of deep space
where millions of galaxies,
billions of light years distant,
spiral the cosmos.

While astronomers expand
premises, mathematicians
multiply exponents,
and scientists expound theories,
faith and desire, in an instant,
can speed the words
of my prayer through
time and space to Kolob
and the dwelling place of God.

Kolob, signifying the first creation, nearest to the celestial, or the residence of God. (Abr. A Facsimile from the Book of Abraham No. 2—Explanation Fig.1)

Nestled in Time

and circumstance,
my unspoken words
incubate in silence,
assuming the form
of what will be.

Struggling
from limitation's shell
they inhale the light.
Hatchling-weak
they feed on desire,
increase in strength,
until, fully fledged,
faith wings
them heavenward.

Bringing Breath

For Mickey and Laura

Two thousand years ago,
when it was finished
and messengers, crossing
heaven, brought the news,
did we shed tears of sorrow or joy,
thinking of His pain, but knowing
we would live again?

Helicopter blades,
welcome as angel wings,
chop the air into mighty chunks.
Closer, louder, they end
anxious months, bringing lungs
that will give your daughter breath.

In Idaho a donor died.
You cry, wondering,
What took her life?
What color were her eyes?

Why I Sing

Songs I learned as a child
seeped deep into my soil,
filling subterranean cisterns.

Harmonies I've heard
distilled upon my branches,
flowed to my roots
and into hidden wells.

Beneath the surface,
hymns replenish aquifers,
feeding artesian springs of faith.

In my extremity, music bubbles
to the surface. Melodies emerge.
I will not perish in the wilderness,
nor wither when the east wind blows.

Gifts from Above

The cloud and fiery pillar
of God's presence,
words of wisdom,
hawks winging the sky,
and a dove bringing peace.

Knowledge, power, keys,
love of liberty,
the spirits of Adam, Eve,
and all their children
coming to earth.
Angelic messengers,
the plan of happiness,
voice of Jesus, the Word of God.

Fresh scent of redwoods,
petals of plum tree blossoms,
gentle rain and morning light,
fruit from Lehi's tree of life.

Small, great, good—sacred things.

Almost Perfect?

Of all household chores
I like folding bath towels best
and I'm rather good at it, I confess.
Without even thinking,
I quickly fold them all the same
then pile them impressively by color.

How satisfying to see their symmetry—
like tithing receipts collected
and filed under "T" or
check marks on the roll at church.

If those who cared about
my homemaking, looked only at towels,
I'd be considered perfect.

The Next Two Years

You say it doesn't matter. But it does—

to Christ who bled and died for you,
to me and others who pray for you,
to those who sigh in ignorance
and sin and who will let you in,
to them and their children's children,
to you and yours,
to those who wait, watch, hope.

It matters.

Unexpected Answer

Weary of monotony—
grinding, kneading, baking
bread-and-milk meals,
I ask deliverance
from appetite fatigue,
request a miracle,
small by heaven's standards—
applesauce, warm
and cinnamon-spiced,
or fruit surrounded in syrup
and wrapped in flaky crust
pale as manna,
with or without the cheese.
I'm not hard to please.

Expectantly, I hold my fork,
while God, knowing my need,
watches as a tiny seed
sprouts in an obscure
corner of my yard.

Resurrection Morning

Will you know me
without bruises of betrayal,
crippling fear, dusty doubts,
unnecessary stories,
sorrow or distress,

when, healed and holy,
we receive eternal glory?

Before He Comes

With other Saints,
I look for latter-day signs:
stars falling from heaven,
earthquakes, and tempests.
We see woes and wars
that fail men's hearts.

Watching for the coming
of the King of Kings,
we imagine the glory
of His countenance,
His magnificent crown,
and the beauty
of Adam-ondi-Ahman.

We labor in Zion's cause,
longing for the millennium
of His majesty and light.
But we need not wait to know
His peace, praise His name.

Enthroned in our hearts,
the King already reigns.

[B]lessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; and if they endure unto the end they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb.
(1 Ne. 13:37)

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FAMILIES BLESSED



The family is ordained of God. . . . [It] is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children. (The Family: A Proclamation to the World 1995)

The most important work of the Lord you will ever do will be in the walls of your own homes. (President Harold B. Lee)

With the Father

Truth is reason; truth eternal tells me I've a mother there.

(Hymn: O My Father by Eliza R. Snow)

Beyond the barrier of unbelief,
veiled in clouds of glory,
She counsels in perfect wisdom
and loves us with a mother-heart.
Watching, listening,
yearning for our return,
She sings
 unknown
 unnamed
 unseen.

High as the Mountain

for my husband Peter

Wise as ancient rocks
that emerged from
Bonneville's prehistoric sea,
you rise high as peaks
thrust upward in the east.

Beneficent overseer
of my seasons, you
bless my leaving,
beacon my return,
gather me home.

When storms thunder the valley,
you shelter me
in kindness and strength.

You summit sun's last rays,
launching moon and stars
to sail the silence of my night,
then tall as morning,
you mountain my sky.

Star Nurseries

God promises Abraham
posterity more than sands
of all the seas,
and the Father of Nations
asks who they will be.

The answer glows
in stars of glory,
some appearing small
as specks of golden dust
that will float in the beam
of morning as it
enters his finite tent
and shines upon the bed
where Isaac will be born.

Tonight my children sleep.
I dim the lamp, pass
through quiet, humble doors
to ponder points of light.
I search the sky for galaxies
where stars are formed,
other stellar nurseries.

Seventh Child

Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? (Gen. 18:13)

Sarah would laugh
to think that I feel old,
yet understand better than I
the longing which gives you life
and overcomes the logic
that it has been too long
and six is sufficient
for seed as dust and stars.

Is it your desire to come to earth
that makes me willing
to give you birth
and further fulfill God's promise?
What blessing will you bring?
What mission will be yours
in this Saturday of time,
you who are Sarah's increase
as well as mine?
Could I have kept completely
my mortal purpose and
consecration's covenant
without you?

Sarah knew much of altars,
aging, offspring-waiting,
missions and promises.
Now as we grow and wait,
she would teach us also faith.

Moon-Mother

Lying still, she watches the moon,
considers cycles, ponders changes.
They began at night when beams of light,
beautiful as love that filled the room,
streamed through the window.

Now she nibbles crackers
and yearns for a morning nap.
One startling new-moon night,
the first faint flutter of life
dispels fatigue, catches her breath.

Weeks become months.
Energy waxes and wanes;
discomfort heavies her step.
Her belly swells to full-moon round.

Labor begins when silver-lined clouds
obscure the stars. Before the moon slips
behind the mountain, her child is born.

While others sleep, she rules the night—
nurses the tiny infant
rocks a feverish son
comforts a frightened daughter
listens for late footsteps at the door
prays for wisdom
counts the miracles.

If We Could Walk Together

In nineteenth century solemnity
you stare at me,
Great-grandmother Sarah,
from between fading velvet covers
of Grandfather's photo album
where portraits of the past speak
words of prominence like
Brother Brigham mingled with
names only our family knows—
Howcroft, Kezia, Mundell.

Unsmiling, you wear
silk-and-lace elegance and memories
of family-leaving, ocean-crossing,
prairie-walking, and valleys
of the mountains two years before
locomotives, black as English coal,
spewed smoke into the blue skies
of the West along tracks that
would join at Promontory Point.

But today, if we could walk together,
your eyes would twinkle.
Yes, you would speak of vessel *Emerald Isle*,
leaving Liverpool at thirteen,
setbacks, hardtack and spoiled water,
of weary feet, and buffalo chips, hardships;
but remembering wild storm-tossed ride—
how you would hide from worried
older sister— you would laugh.

I would ask you to tell me of years
of waiting, cotton weaving, saving,

and coming of your mother
with youngest brother John,
without brother Jacob whose life
ended when he was twelve,
in a dark coal mine in Lancaster.
Later we would rejoice, recalling
the day that father and brother Nephi
finally arrived in Zion.

As we spoke of married years,
our husbands, Herbert and Peter,
and babies—your five, my nine—
and of Relief Society service,
you would notice how much
your eyes look like mine.
Then we would sing
Oh, What Songs of the Heart
and we would both know the words!

Eve's Daughters

Mothers of the living, sisters
sitting in congenial circles,
tat tiny strands of DNA,
quilt covers for mankind,
knit hearts together.
Whispering love's secrets,
they rock their babies.
Grandmas and aunts take turns.
Daughters learn who they are.

Artist's Workshop

I watched the artists as they gathered
each with his work, the thing
which mattered most, for each one thought,
“Through this my greatness will be wrought.

My precious creation here I hold
and time will see my fame unfold.”
So each held closely to his heart
the great potential of his art—

artist his painting, composer his score,
writer his script, held these and more,
for each felt certain he held the key
to his future immortality.

Dream of glory, time, faith, pain
each gave the work to bear his name.
Bright with hope I, too, smiled
for in my arms I cradled my child.

In Strong Arms

Hush, little one,
dressed in innocence,
encircled in safety.
Listen to the love
that blesses you.
Be still in strong arms
while one with
priesthood power,
pronouncing your name,

places this new stone
in the foundation of your faith.
Then when dangers lurk
along your way,
trembling your soul,
stumbling your steps,
recall this day.
Believe that circles
of unseen angels,
summoned by your name,
will bear you up.

As the Master

While poets, priests, philanthropists,
sought the perfect way,
Mother fed her thousands
five at a meal, three meals a day,

calmed tempests raging
in our troubled hearts,
in pain and illness
performed the healing art,

opened our eyes so we could see
life's beauty and our possibilities.
She loved, encouraged, helped us walk,
guided by the truths she taught.

Selflessly she gave us life
and years of willing sacrifice.
Now we remember and understand
the Master's words—*Be as I am.*

Rocking Chair Child

Come, Child! Come and sit
here in my lap while you still fit,
before you trade the thrill of bicycles,
carousels, and childhood things
for cars, planes, wheels, and wings
which will carry you away so swiftly
that I will be caught in the web
of wondering what happened
to seasons which today stretch
endlessly to that far-off place where
mountains just swallowed the sun.

Together let's line the nest of my arms
with soft feathered whispers
that will tickle our ears,
with white downy dreams
that tonight will keep us warm and,
clinging to memory, will shield
you against icy storms that
someday would dizzy your direction,
heavy your wings, ungentle your heart.

Today was the party you thought
would never come. Wasn't it fun!
After weeks of marking bold X's
on square days, finally there were
enough of them to break through
birthday wrapping into this
frosting-covered day filled with
family, balloons, and friendly surprises
where, singing, we counted
flaming candles of passing years.

Tomorrow we will eat the Jell-O we made.
Science could tell us how dissolving
pale sugary granules with bubbling water
makes bright red syrup through which
we can see the bottom of the bowl,
how mixing in solid cubes of cold
can make clear slippery jewels
that sweeten our lips like giggles.
But I still think it a miracle.

For now we'll explore
rich, colored gifts of earth and sky,
follow narrow footpaths of words
across pages bound with wonder
where waterfalls of wisdom
cascade over the rocks of time
and canyons echo alleluias.
We will discover the secret place
where God hears his children
and reveals who we are.

Here you will learn, Child,
that you are the gift,
my anxiously awaited party,
the delicious dessert through which
I see a rose-colored world,
my cherished book of wisdom.

*Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to
come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of
God. (Luke 18:16)*

Completing the Circle

As a child, I circled the kitchen table
each night, setting it for supper—
five plates, five glasses, napkins,
forks, knives, spoons. Salt and pepper too.
Daddy sat at the head,
Mother closest to the stove,
Kent, Kristie and me on the sides,
with space for more.

One Thanksgiving, my mother's
parents came all the way to Colorado
to celebrate the week. Thelma, born in 1896,
the day after Utah became a state,
helped prepare the turkey.

While we waited, Gustaf told us how,
when he was a boy in Sweden,
he skied the snowy slopes to school
on hand-carved wood. Then as a young man
he came to America and later directed
a choir with others from his native land.

Grandmother entertained us
by singing *The Girl that I Marry*,
and I imagined her wearing satins with lace,
flamboyant at the front of the theater
when she sang love songs for flickering movies,
before they had sound.

We talked about running races and jumping rope.
My sister, recovering from an ingrown toenail,

said she thought no toes would be better
than sore ones. Grandmother disagreed,
“Without toes you would walk like this,”
and she hobbled across the linoleum floor.
We laughed and Kristie changed her mind.

As the sun slipped behind Pikes Peak,
we sat down with arms and elbows touching,
and bowed our heads in gratitude.

Today, anticipating a future reunion
and another family feast, I open a book
to show my grandchildren pictures of their
long-ago family—ancestors whose names
they will know when we gather around
the goodness of another bountiful table.

Asking a Miracle

If Alma could pray an angel
into the life of a wayward
son who would come to know
and serve the Lord
and as a mighty prophet
preach His word,

might not my petition
call down from heaven courage
and assurance bright enough
to certain your steps
and miracle your life?

Without Shoes

Children, rising to greet the sun,
weave paths of wonder
across the dew-drenched morning.
Wet green blades bend
beneath innocent feet.

Beyond sunflowers and fences
in fields of unbounded joy,
shrinking puddles serve bowls of mud.
Delicious as chocolate pudding,
it oozes between wiggling toes.

Secure in exuberance, friends
splash shallows of the stream
into sparkling-sweet sprays of delight.

In puffs of dust, powdered sugar soft,
gingerbread brown,
they leave footprints of trust
on warm, unpaved roads
of the August afternoon.

Breezes whisper vespers
as they turn their steps
toward home under clouds
pink as pillows that will cradle
their cotton candy dreams.

Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

(Matt 18: 4-5)

Young Among the Hollyhocks

The year Great-grandmother
was the girl among
the hollyhocks,
her father stacked hay
in fields with a pitch fork.
Midmorning, her mother
took him cool water in a bucket
and fresh bread.

The dolls she made from
pale pink flowers
floated in the irrigation
ditch, spinning slowly
as summer. Later, left
in grass along the bank,
ruffled skirts withered
in the afternoon,
shriveling like wrinkled
images of the aging woman
my mother told me about.

This Sunday in June,
tall, green stalks
bloom along my fence,
while my daughters,
young in petaled dresses,
twirl across the grass
in pastel dances.

Good Friday

Authorized, I pass through the curtain,
enter the inner chamber to keep this vigil
and wait with you, my youngest daughter,
as you labor the hours.

Wrapped in reverence,
the father, midwife, and I speak
hushed words then settle into silence.

Contractions swell on a rising tide
and then subside. The only sounds—
a few unmedicated moans escaping your lips;
your husband's soft reminder,
"Relax," as he touches your back,
and the constant monitor
recording heart beats in rapid blips.

In this solemn place of sacrifice,
you become a queen on the Throne of Life.
I sit at your feet, message them warm,
as waves of distress narrow the distance
to your infant's first breath.

Nausea, new position, thirst, ice chips, pain.
Seconds and minutes measure progress,
circle the afternoon.

Summoned, unseen angels
rescue from despair, dispel doubts,
escort you to transition.
Contractions fracture your focus.
As one ends, the next begins.
Again. Again.

Breathe deep. Cry out. Bear down.
Pay the price in blood and tears.
The baby crowns.
You finish with the final press.
Delivered from darkness to light,
your child inhales life.
Exquisite joy. Victory complete.

A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.
(John 16:21)

Around This Table

Like the smell of dinner almost ready,
laughter has filled this room
and talk of school, wrestling matches,
football games, and dances.
Solemn questions, eager plans,
and mismatched chairs
have surrounded this table

where our children cut out paper hearts,
discovered Candy Land,
and solved mysteries one clue at a time
where adding, subtracting, reading,
writing, multiplying, dividing,
they studied and prepared.

Stacks of dishes once filled the sink, but tonight
we clear the table and wash two plates,
together in the quiet, evening air.

Connected

Leaving Utah's desert
mountains and irrigated valleys,
I travel to the land of Palmetto trees
to meet you, most recent grandson.

Where green grows naturally from clay
red as sandstone arches near Moab,
I hold you close, brush my cheek
against your newness,
delicate as milkweed down.

I buy peaches where smiling strangers
say *Yes, Ma'am* and *Thank ya*,
and drink from the tap that will one day
spill cool water into your cup
when you are tired of playing.

Your family is rooted here
like the crape myrtle
whose many trunks grow as one
to blossom the humid air.
Here you will hear
of approaching hurricanes,
wait for skies to clear
after pouring rain,
and your mother will teach you
to spell Carolina.

You will not remember
when I came or how,
when you were two days old,
you connected me to the South.

From the Garden

Blossoms fragrance
my beginning.
Dressed in white,
soft as lamb's skin,
new as the name
Father calls me,
I learn to speak,
swim rivers and lakes,
run to the top of the hill
to watch the rising sun.

At midday, veiled in white,
I carry roses and daisies,
fresh as the name you give me,
pure as love we
will give our babies.

With daughters, sons,
we plant gardens,
water, weed, weep, sing,
toiling the years
in shades of green until

I rest in white, and flowers
pink as sunset, sweet
as the memory of Eden,
petal my passage to forever.

Homing

Awkwardly,
I try to mend your wounded wing.
Offering brief protection,
I speak of destination and direction,
feed you corn and other grain,
my mix of wisdom and advice.

Soon, I must remove binding bandages.
Trusting you will seek the distant loft,
I toss you heavenward, release you
to headwinds, hawks, fog and God.
You disappear into the clouds,
fly far beyond my voice.

May instinct and a faithful heart
guide you home.

Dad's Handkerchief

When our children were young—
five and three and one,
we drove a thousand miles
to visit Mom and Dad.

We stayed seven delicious days,
fully savored, flavored
with a magical mix
of mountains, memories, fun.

Then we stuffed sleeping bags,
tent, noise, and spicy anticipation

of adventures yet to come
into the station wagon
until there wasn't room enough
for even one more sandwich
and no place for sadness.

Fully satisfied, we clambered
into the car and blowing sugar kisses,
started slowly down the drive
as Dad, Mother at his side,
drew from his pocket a final sweet,
a large handkerchief, marshmallow-white.

In melodramatic misery he
wiped streams of imaginary tears
from his eyes and wrung them to the earth.
He waved, wiped, wrung again.
Relishing the treat, we laughed
farewells full of mirth.
Dad, with obvious delight,
continued until we were out of sight.

Now our children with children
come from distant states
for ice cream days topped with
hot fudge moments and cherry fun.
When it's time to go,
we help fill minivans with blankets,
pillows, snacks, and hugs.

As we smile and wave goodbye,
I clutch a tissue in my hand
and remember my father a generation ago.
I think some of Dad's tears were real.

Yearning to Know You

I seek your name, wonder
where you walked and
what you thought,
learn that you left a land
of cobblestones, castles,
and cathedrals, and
crossed the Atlantic
to reach a world called New.

Earnestly I study probates,
pedigrees, indexes, histories,
gathering fragments of your past.
Finally, I find your name.

I speak each familiar syllable,
hear your mother calling you from
the cottage of your childhood,
see you holding William's
hand and the minister
pronouncing you husband and wife.

I will hear your name where waters
fill the font, in sacred ordinance rooms,
and at a holy altar.

I will say it softly. And in heaven
when we meet, I will say your name again.

6

REMEMBERING HIM



And now, my beloved brethren, seeing that our merciful God has given us so great knowledge concerning these things, let us remember him, and lay aside our sins, and not hang down our heads, for we are not cast off. (2 Ne. 20:10)

Is There Room?

My inn is crowded
with earthly cares,
filled with the din
of transgressions,
buzzing with busyness.

Selfishness, it seems,
has taken up
permanent residence
in the basement
and every chair is taken
by some relative
of pride clamoring to be fed.

A deliberate knock
at the door of my awareness
penetrates the chaos
like a thin shaft of light
piercing the stormy sky.
I open and a figure standing
in the glow of a
two-thousand-year-old star
asks room.

Is there not something
I could change,
a corner I could rearrange
to make place
for a stable-born babe?

Will I welcome him in?

The World Is Taxed

All the world is taxed,
troubled.
Burdened, broken,
we bear the weight
of pride, sin, greed,
and onerous decrees
issued by Caesars
in arrogant robes.
Love waxes cold.
We walk weary roads.
And Bethlehem
is two thousand years away.

Still, we long
to hear angel songs,
wish to see the star—
some sign that
the record is real
and we are not forgotten.

Listening, we hear
Emily is ill. We fix dinner,
hum a lullaby, rock her baby.
Looking, we notice Don
next door shoveling snow.
We put on our coats,
get our shovels.

Following the One
who lay in a manger,
we learn the story is true:
Love knows no bounds.

The Power of His Name

Creator and Prince of Peace—
He orders dominions
devoid of chaos and
calms our troubled hearts.

Father and Savior—
He gives us life and rescues
us from death and sin.

Anointed One, Beloved Son—
Following Him, we become
heirs to eternal glory.

Opener of the Way—
He swings wide the door of mercy
and the portal of everlasting life.

King of Heaven, Great High Priest—
We worship Him and turn the key.
His name unlocks God's mysteries.

First Sunday

Seeking the Spirit,
I remember
the Master's forty-day fast
and forfeit two meals.
I token His thirst on the Cross,
Testify of His love.

Transcending Time and Space

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. (Matt. 25:40)

If past, present, and future
appear continually
before Thy face
and all things
before Thine eyes,
is there a way
to lessen the anguish
of that awful night?

Two thousand years
from Gethsemane,
can prayers we offer,
sins we forsake,
give some comfort,
spare Thee pain?

If we bind one wound,
proffer peace,
and minister to Thy
wandering sheep,
might we diminish
the agony, hasten release?

Can our present love
and kindness transcend
time and space
to assuage Thy suffering,
give some relief?

Measuring our Lives

Tracking days, weeks, and years,
the world listens to ticking clocks,
watches the rising sun,
and hangs another calendar on the wall.

But it is a simple morsel of bread
and a sip of water
that marks my new beginning.

Bread of Light

The Son of God
lived for glory of the Father,
learned obedience,
received grace for grace
until He comprehended all things.

Bread became the token
of the One devoid of darkness.
Partaking the emblems,
may my eye also become single,
that like Him
I may be filled with light.

*If your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled
with light . . . and that body which is filled with light
comprehendeth all things. (D&C 88:67)*

Giving Blood

Reclining here in
sterile comfort,
I squeeze the foam block
that fits neatly in the palm
of my hand and watch the
bag at the end of the red
tube begin to bulge.
In a few minutes,
I'll be offered juice
and cookies. Tomorrow
I won't even notice
the tiny bruise on my arm.

But here, I remember
my mother and consider
her bed of pain and sacrifice
the day I was born.

I think about those whose
life fluid flowed for freedom
onto muddy battlefields,
the wounded who still limp
when the weather is damp
and their buddies
who ate their last rationed
meal in cold trenches.

I picture a garden and hill
where, in atoning agony,
Another's blood was
also spilled for me.

Every Good Thing

Because of Him—

Violins vibrate rhythms
of Slavonic dances.

Mittens, warm as friendship,
cozy snowy mornings.

Perfect plums ripen in the August sun.

Parents cherish their children
and families multiply joy.

He gives us every good thing—

The scent of cedar and redwoods
in rain-washed forests,

iridescent flight of hummingbirds,

wise words written on well-worn pages,

courage of a bold, broad sky,

the assurance of an empty tomb

and, so we'll remember,

this bread and water.

Glad Tidings From on High

I.

Upon the mountain Nephi

desires, believes, sees.

Angel-escort reveals visions gold as joy—

white tree, Jerusalem, Nazareth

where the virgin fair conceives,

Holy Child, Son of God,

fountain, tree and iron rod,

baptism, and the Holy Ghost
descending as a dove.
By the power of His love,
the Master heals multitudes
and then is lifted up.

Look. Behold the Lamb.

II
Benjamin, watchman,
mounts the tower, declares
angelic words of gladness.
In a not far distant time
the Lord will come
as Mary's son
to suffer hunger,
anguish, pain, burial
of myrrh and sepulcher,
then rise again.

With reverence say His holy name.

III.
Samuel, angel-sent, cries repentance,
from towering walls,
proclaims glad tidings of salvation.

Messiah comes five years hence
with anointing sweet as frankincense.
A star will shine through
night of light at His birth.

Rejoice and wonder at the signs.

Finding the Son of God

Hear heaven's music, the voice of angels
 echoing across Judean plains and down
 the centuries. They sing good tidings—
 the joy of His birth, and peace on earth.

Behold stars and celestial signs,
 the radiance of His countenance,
 light leading to the Tree of Life.

Taste the sweetness of salvation.
 Partake of His goodness;
 forsake the world, feast upon the Word.

Inhale hope, fresh as the fragrance of Eden,
 pure as springs of living water.
 Receive the Spirit's breath.

Feel His redeeming power! Follow the One
 once cradled in a manger.
 Know His perfect love.

Only This Cup

Melting snow supplies aquifers
that flow beneath desert sands
where women with goatskin vessels
draw cool waters from ancient wells.

Prairie windmills pump fluid that will fill
troughs for thirsty livestock
and washbasins for threshing crews.

In Venezuela, clouds of vapor,
white as angels' robes, billow about
falls that plunge three thousand feet
to swell the Orinoco
as it winds to the Atlantic.

But this small cup contains
the covenant key—water,
blessed and sanctified—
and the constant, promised Spirit
that can make us free.

Beloved Lord, Anointed One

Beloved Lord, Anointed One,
the Father's First Born, Promised Son
bore grief and pain for all our sins
that we might dwell with God again.

Once Manna was His gift from heav'n,
then Jesus came to save all men.
Remember now His sacrifice.
Our Master is the Bread of Life.

To show His love and lift us up,
He humbly drank the bitter cup.
Repent and come. His word is sure,
the cup He offers sweet and pure.

These emblems now enlarge our faith.
Partaking, we receive His grace.
We covenant in gratitude,
with comfort, hope, and love renewed.

Final Harvest

[G]ather clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. (Rev. 14:18)

November looms
over a valley
where all is gathered in
but grapes clustered
among crisp, brown leaves,
willing fruit that yields
to my touch.

The bountiful harvest
drops plump and ripe,
into the wide circle
of my bowl, ringing
against the shiny metal.

I wash, crush, steam
purple vintage.
Careful
not to stain my shirt,
I fill new bottles,
tighten lids.

Remembering
One who trod
the winepress alone,
I preserve dark fluid
for a future feast.

Sentenced

In world's dark dungeon,
shackles of sin clank against
cold, damp stones of reality.
Limitations of the past
chain me to the floor.
Condemned to die,
I receive thin rations—
sips of water, bits of broken bread.

Partaking, I am filled, mercifully
instilled with life and likeness
of Him who satisfied justice.

Offering at the Altar

I bring no unblemished firstlings
that prefigured the sacrifice
of God's Son, no first fruits,
no doves, not even fine flour.

Instead, I surrender my will—
forfeit forgetfulness,
renounce indolence,
give away ungodliness.
I relinquish procrastination,
excuses, distraction, doubt;
replace complacency
with exactness, enmity with love.
and narrow the distance
to His presence.

Message from the Manger

They are they who are kings and priests, who have received of his glory. (D&C 76:56)

I know the story
of shepherds,
star and stable,
His mother
and the Holy Babe,
born to reign
as King of Kings.

But I do not recollect
the day of Jesus's birth.

Neither do I recall
my own beginnings,
nor my earliest
mortal moments,
the miracle of how
I came to Earth
to know hunger,
illness, joy, and pain.

But since we each
begin like Him,
small and helpless,
and cry when we
first inhale
temporal breath,
might we also
become like Him—
queens and priestesses,
priests and kings?

December Night

Into the world's December night
raise the evergreen tree of lights.
With sweet, child delights trim the tree.
Top the arrow straight height with a star
and beneath protecting boughs
prepare a place of giving. Count the days
and call the family to the feast.
Hear. Here is the Tree of Life,
with fruit, pure and white, which fits
in cupping hand. Receive the gift!
Joyfully, with thanksgiving bow
and remembering the Way
lift innocent eyes to the starry heights.
You will see Polaris shining
in the darkness of this winter night.

Quiet as Starlight

sweeter
than sugar plums,
warm as Christmas
memories,
welcome as a candle
in the window
guiding us home,
soft as lamb's wool,
still as peace,
the Spirit speaks.

Circling Christmas

May Christmas joys echo
across January snows
and faith, courageous
as the Star of Bethlehem,
brighten February nights.

May small miracles
melt March into spring,
April angels point the way
to God's glory,
and His tender mercies
keep you in May.

Let kindness gentle your June.
May July be jubilant in liberty,
and August abundant in peace.

Give unto the least
your September service.
Offer friendship, freely
as October trees release
their leaves, and number
among November
blessings the imminent
coming of God's Son.
Decembling the year,
close the circle.

Then come, more devoted than
before, to worship at the manger.

7

HOUSE OF THE LORD



And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

*And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his path.
(Isa. 2:2-3)*

Mountain of the Lord's House

If God stretched forth His hand
to touch the earth,
the mountain's snowy summit
would gleam like golden trumpets.

If He walked upon His footstool,
the pinnacles of this place
would resound with the lightning
of His presence.

Solid granite would split apart
like a broken heart and fountains would
flow down through alpine meadows
to water desert flowers.

If here He spoke to man
the wind of His voice
like soaring eagle wings would
encircle His people with power.
Together they would proclaim,

This is His House!

*And that all people who shall enter upon the threshold of the
Lord's house may feel thy power, and feel constrained to
acknowledge that thou hast sanctified it, and that it is thy house,
a place of thy holiness. (D&C 109:13)*

Holiness to the Lord

Holy is God's name,
His plan, His Son, this house.
May I separate my life,
bid Babylon farewell,
consecrate all.

Wilt Thou sanctify our way,
rescue us from the Fall,
and receive the offerings
we bring to Thee.

Beautiful Upon the Mountains

I would put off my shoes
to walk on sacred ground.
Solemnly shod in godliness,
I would publish peace in high places
and proclaim, *He reigns!*

But mud fills depressions
along the road where
weary travelers trudge
through a fallen world.
The east wind blows
desolation across my path.

Wipe away the mud, I pray.
Wash off the dust,
that I may walk in beauty
upon the Mountain.

Oil of Anointing

Pressed from olives, oil fills the holy horn,
flows head to feet, haloing the faithful
in gleaming skins of health, strength,
power, and protection.

Amber fluid, fuel of lamps,
coats future kings in vestments of light,
ignites eternal promises of crowns,
dominions, posterity and endless joy.

Robes of Righteousness

We are wrapped in the likeness
of His purity and power,
bound with broidered bands
that bear record of our ancestry—
green of garden, trees,
and silver-white of royalty.

Bearing His Gospel,
we minister to families of mankind..

Knowing His atoning mercy
and offering all, may we prayerfully
touch the hem of His intercessory grace,
as He brings us to that perfect place
of royal robes, heavenly thrones, and
crowns of light where we are encircled
in everlasting life.

Shout Hosanna

Once heaven's tears were spent,
Father Noah released the dove.
Three times she flew
from lifted hands,
the rhythm of her rushing wings
circling higher, wider,
above abating waters
and wooden safety of the ark.

Hosanna!

Ascending, bending she touched
four corners of the emerging world
with feathers soft as peace.

Hosanna!

Above this dedicated place
sealed against destructive
floods, we wave
feather-light handkerchiefs
that will wipe away our tears.
Flying white against the sky
they circle overhead
while multitudes of praising
tongues shout as one.

Hosanna!

Through This Door

He calls me by name and I hear His voice.
He leads to still waters,
feeds His flock in green pastures.
Comforted by His word,
sheltered from deception, danger, death,
I follow in paths of righteousness.

He is the Door of the Sheep.
Enter here into the safety of the fold.

Awaiting the Resurrection

I walked cart-rutted roads,
carried water from the village well
and gathered heather on the hill,
bore babes in pain,
and rocked them by candlelight.

These many years, my mortal remains
have rested in shadows
of the parish church, while I've grown
in knowledge, grace, and faith.

Today, you say my name,
breathe in my behalf,
receive long awaited promises
and covenants of godliness.

Thus prepared, body and spirit,
I will rise in glory from the grave
on resurrection morning.

Facing East

Humble as dirt floors,
patient as monuments
worn by wind and time,
quiet hogans receive
the morning light
as it shines through
opened doors.

Other houses, templed
in the mountain tops,
also await the rising of the Son.

Joining Earth and Heaven

We recall the prophecy
and how mocking priests,
railing, and wagging their heads,
scorned the Sufferer,
how He died upon the cross
and three days later
was raised to life.

Worshiping at this altar,
we remember
the temple-body of the Christ.

Between earth and heaven,
ransomed at the intersection
of time and place, we are lifted up.

Valley of the Kings

West, where
temple and desert meet,
we pass through
steep stone walls
that cast shadows
of a dying day
across the valley.

Entering holy chambers,
we pilgrim the past.
Where muraled images
reveal secrets of eternity,
we speak familiar names
of future kings and queens.
Sealing them in sacred circles
more enduring
than pharaoh's cartouche,
we turn hearts that,
one day weighed,
will balance perfectly
the scales of truth.

Born Again

In the house of the Lord
God's children begin again.
Water-cleansed and
anointed with light,
Holy Spirit bright,
each receives precious gifts,
royal as amethyst.
Named anew, they become

birthright heirs.
Clothed in the likeness
of the Father, they learn
the way of truth,
walk in newness of life.

Behold in Sons and Daughters
the countenance of the King!

Covering the Altar

Thousands of carefully crafted
stitches, fine and white,
delicate as baby's breath,
filigree the pattern of the cloth
where we are connected.

Interlocking loops,
more numerous than all
the names I have written
on my pedigree, extend from
the center, reach each corner.

Kneeling at the altar,
I consider the divine design.

Gathered and Grafted

[T]hey shall be grafted in, being a natural branch of the olive tree, into the true olive tree. (1 Ne. 15:16)

Gathered with ancestors who, seeking the Savior,
crossed the sea, we press forward faithfully
to receive the fruit and become one with Thee.
Graft us, we pray, into the Tree.

Prelude: Preparing to Begin

I pass through gates and doors
that define the sacred space,
 slow my step,
 quiet the chaos,
 still the stress.

Willing to put off the natural man,
I cubicle the day's commotion
and start to change.

I take off my dusty shoes,
remove apparel of the world.
Deliberately, I fold
pretense and distraction,
place them on the narrow shelf.

I hang my bold dress
on the temporary hook
and put on unspotted white.

Respite from the Storm

Outside these walls,
wolf-wild winds howl across the snow.
Dissident words and opinions
clash like angry swords.
Worries, annoying as gnats, multiply,
and cares simple as supper unfixed
unsettle us.

Within, we walk in beauty,
worship in holiness, seek His face.
Here we savor high-branch fruit
of the Savior's grace, feast upon His love.

The brief respite resets our resolve.
Renewed, empowered, restored,
we set forth trusting in the Lord.

*And we ask thee, Holy Father, that thy servants may go forth
from this house armed with thy power, and that thy name may
be upon them, and thy glory be round about them, and thine
angels have charge over them. (D&C 109:22)*

Glory of the Son

Shining bright as truth,
the sun disperses clouds of darkness,
illuminates the way.
Dispelling barren blackness,
it bathes the world in light
and brings forth life—
precious fruit, pomegranates, figs,
fish, birds and beasts,
and all good things that live and
move and have a being.

The radiance increases sevenfold,
dispensing power and knowledge
of kingdoms, thrones and exaltation,
revealing who we may become when,
as the Son, we rise in resurrected glory.

House of Order

He calls us from chaos
of corruption, fear,
discouragement and sin,
imploring us to follow Him.

He leads us along
step by sequential step.
Line upon line,
we learn the pattern
of His perfection
and order our lives
one ordinance,
one covenant at a time.

Spirit-sanctified, we grow
in godliness, prepare
to enter His presence.

On This Day

Bring sky-reflected water to quench
my thirst and mix with sunlit laughter.
Blend joy that shines gold
with dreams wide as heaven.
Layer love and devotion,
daffodil yellow with cornflower blue,
and let the light shine through,
green as fresh leaves.
Thus joined we will grow,
weaving crowning wreaths of endless lives.

Within These Walls

Recall the altar Adam built
in a lone and dreary world,
the prayers and firstlings
offered there.

Think of Abraham ascending
the mount with his beloved son,
binding Isaac, raising the knife
before the angel stayed his hand.

Remember Gethsemane
and Golgotha, the atoning
agony of God's Son,
His infinite, redeeming love,

and Joseph restoring truth,
receiving keys, sealing
the testimony with his blood.

Consider Saints in Deseret
who quarried, cut, and raised
first temple stones

and those desiring to enter
the House of the Lord who
pay tithes, one cedi, two pesos,
ten euros at a time,
to erect and maintain temples
where we worship—holy places
made sacred by each sacrifice.

About Forty

I can hold my breath
for forty seconds.
Forty minutes can fill
the emptiness of fasting.

It is the number
of days and nights
heaven rained the flood
that cleansed the earth.

After forty weeks
within the womb,
a newborn
draws first breath.

It took forty years
to ready Israel for Canaan,
their promised
milk-and-honey land.

Near a salty sea,
pioneers and their children
labored forty years
to finish and furnish
the House of God.

I wonder where we will be
forty thousand years from now.

Precious Stones

The breastplate Aaron wore
covered Urim-and-Thummim secrets
and held signets set in gold,
precious stones for Israel's house,
jewels the color of creation—
diamond stars, opalescent moons,
topaz suns, and storm-cleared skies
of sapphire, emerald forests,
hummingbird's ruby throat,
and all earth's wonders.

One day, the Lord, esteeming
His children sanctified and pure,
will fashion diadems with gems
more precious than all the crowns,
scepters, orbs, and swords
of worldly kings.

Where jeweled temple windows,
beautiful as His promises,
prism light into sacred halls,
across celestial walls,
He seals his peculiar treasure.

Enter In

Offering to remove scarlet stains, He calls us
to enter the covenant, come in from the cold.
He would wrap us in warmth
of His atoning mercy, in wool white as snow.

Small and Simple Things

A pen on the counter
where we write names of those
who struggle, suffer, wander,
loved ones needing prayers.

A vase with calla lilies,
wedding-veil white,
pure as robes of righteousness.

A drop of oil,
gold as someday-crowns
of kings and queens.

A tissue waiting
to wipe away sudden tears.

A single word
that actuates the covenant.

YES.

By His Power

If He can cause Aaron's barren rod
to bear fruit, sinew the dry bones
Ezekiel saw so they can speak and stand,
and fill empty marriage vessels
at Cana with fluid the color of life,
then He can give me posterity,
health, flesh, and breath
to last through all eternity.

Petitioning the Father

In kindness and goodwill,
come to the altar
to call upon the Father.

Circle the covenant,
together sign the promises.
Grateful for His grace,
join faith to faith;
in the name of the Son,
raise your voice as one.

Remember the afflicted, ill,
and those who mourn.
Beseech the Lord
in their behalf.
Pray for prophets,
parents, youth,
for the honest in heart,
and those who
bring them truth.

In humility and pure desire,
feel the Spirit's holy fire.
Call down heaven's blessings.
The sweet incense
of your words ascends
to the throne of God.

He hears.

His Dwelling Place

How far is Kolob, that holy place
so near the majesty of God?

Measure the distance you imagine
in years of light.
Multiply miles from Earth to Sun
and number your days a million times.

Then within these walls,
feel His breath on your cheek
as He says your name
and listen to the Word
only a contrite heart can hear.

*And the Lord said unto me: These are the governing ones; and
the name of the great one is Kolob, because it is near unto me, for
I am the Lord thy God. (Abr. 3:3)*

Renewing the Covenant

Crowned with holiness,
adorned with jewels of joy,
Abraham's children come
to the bridal chamber.

Dressed in righteousness,
these will be one.

A son receives the beloved
who will bear his name.

Beneath the veil of purity,
with a sacred kiss,
they seal the union
of never-ending increase.

Faithful as Isaac, he carries
his bride across the threshold
of promise into realms of light.

House of Jacob, sing and dance.
Today a new family,
another kingdom,
is established in Israel!

The Glory of His Presence

World-weary and wanting,
wasted and wandering,
God's children hear the voice
of hope and peace.
With perfect mildness,
He calls us from the wilderness.
Behold the palace of His presence
shining with the glory
of thrones, kingdoms,
powers, and dominions.

Believe. Begin. Become
His sons and daughters,
joint-heirs with Christ.

White

unblemished as the anniversary
 pearls Grandpa gave Grandma
 the spring I was born
beautiful as the swan whose
 feather I found on the lakeshore
 of my eighth summer
lustrous as the September circle
 of the rising moon
significant as snow that, melting,
 will fill the reservoir
pristine as blank pages on which
 we will write our story
glorious as the Tree of Life
 Today, we wear white.

In Your Name

Descending
below all things,
bleeding sorrow
from every pore,
He was fully
bathed in grief
that we might be
cleansed, rescued
from death and hell.

I descend marble
temple steps, enter
baptismal waters.

Completely immersed,
bearing His name
and yours,
I hold my breath.

Emerging, rising,
may you inhale
everlasting life;
together may we
dwell in heaven.

Patrons Blessed

I receive ordinances
in your behalf.
My brow is washed
with pure water.
Oil flows onto the crown
of my head and my ears
hear sacred words.
Once more, authorized hands
confirm ordinances,
seal promises, bestow tokens.

Wearing protecting power,
again I put on priestly robes
and bind them with a bow.
For you, I receive laws,
make covenants, say Yes.
Encircled in His love,
I enter into His rest.
As proxy, I am blessed.

Come Unto Him

[All you that are desirous to follow the voice of the good shepherd, come ye out from the wicked, and be ye separate. (Alma 5:57)

The Savior calls us from death and sin.

Forsake the darkness,
receive His power, believe His word.
Follow Him to our Father's home.
Feel the warmth of His embrace.
Enter His presence. Behold His face.

Where does the Master dwell?
Come and see.

Mirrored Room

Reverently enter the sacred space,
a holy place of crystal light
where chandeliered prisms
celebrate the present. Here
the end of what was becomes
the beginning of what will be
and frames of mirrored glass
open windows through
which we see all our
yesterdays and tomorrows
to the edge of time and beyond.

Kneeling at the crosspiece of
eternity, joined as one,
“We are” becomes “I am.”

Love of God

In the center of a garden is a tree,
like Moses' burning bush,
encircled in fire but not consumed.
Proclaiming abundance
of sweet, shining fruit,
resplendent branches lift
shimmering ensign-leaves.

Flaming tongues call out,
"Come, partake. Come to Christ.
Here is everlasting life."

*[T]he tree... is the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in
the hearts of the children of men; wherefore, it is the most
desirable above all things. (1 Nephi 11:21-22)*

At Heaven's Gates

Scaling the mountain,
we move a sound at a time.
Ascending an octave
by half steps and whole,
we reach the note where we began.

Again we climb higher, clearer;
at heaven's gates strike
celestial chords of glory.
Endlessly, the tones resound
as we commence another round.

Where the Tree Grows

I

Plodding through the desert,
we seek springs of living water.
Green against the desolation,
palms beckon. Come.
Lay down your burdens.
Here is rest.

II

Jerusalem shouts with joy.
Multitudes wave branches
as the Savior enters the thirsty city.
He will deliver us from dust.

III

Affirming dedicatory prayers,
we raise white, jubilant squares,
like leaves of the Tree of Life.
He is here!

Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna.

Looking Into Glass

I stand between mirrors that reflect my image,
the likeness of my ancestry and progeny,
those who came before, those who follow,
birth upon birth—generations of eternal lives.

Cherubim Guardians

Like cherubim, wings touching,
hovering over the ark,
we clasp hands across the altar,
become guardians of the way
of the Tree of Life.

When our offspring, born
in the covenant, emerge
from womb-sacred space,
we will nurture each and
teach them how to fly.

Weaving the Covenant

Square the frame, thread the loom.
Draw straight and bowstring-taut the cords.

With harness and heddle
pattern the covenant cloth.
Throw color-threaded shuttle,
straight as an arrow, swift as pure thought
to fill the sovereign space.
Enlarge fabric of stake-stretched tent.
Increase the temple-tall poles.

With reed press tight rich patterns of light.
Extend and bind borders with gold.

Prepare royal robes, spread canopied veil.
Dress Earth to embrace the Lord!

Altars and Offerings

Birthing beds of pain
that bring forth beginnings
of an endless posterity.

The stone manger where
Mary laid her infant Son,
Redeemer of the World.

Burial biers and coffins
from which the dead rise
in resurrected glory.

A table of sacrifice
that holds sacramental
emblems of His love.

This holy temple where
covenant-consecrated
we offer all.

Symbols and Signs

What if I wore the
very coat of skins given to Eve
or felt the pain of nails in my hands?
What if the sacramental cloth
covered the body of the Savior
or the Lord himself spoke to me
through parted veil?
What if tomorrow at sunrise,
the Son appeared in the East?

That Perfect Day

One day, light will pour
through opened iris curtain
and I will see eye to omniscient eye.
Together with other watchmen,
I will lift my voice and sing,
The Lord hath gathered all things in one.

Identity imprinted in my hands,
I will raise the record of who I am
and grasp the hand
that spanned the heavens.

I will see as I am seen,
know as I am known,
and my name will be the same.
Distinct and full of grace,
encircled in safe embrace,
I will speak with God face to face.

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APPENDIX

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints understand that our life here on earth is just one short part of God's great eternal plan of happiness. This plan was presented in a pre-mortal existence where we each lived with our Heavenly Father as His spirit children. This world was created so that those of us who accepted the Father's plan, when it was presented, could come to earth to receive mortal bodies and gain experience. Those who followed Satan and rejected the plan there were cast out. Now they entice and tempt mankind to choose evil.

Because we cannot remember our previous existence, we can now learn to walk by faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As we follow Him and keep His commandments, we are blessed with peace and joy, and with the knowledge that after this life we may return to God's presence.

In Gethsemane and on the cross, our Savior Jesus Christ paid the penalties for broken laws. He mercifully satisfied the demands of justice for those who accept Him and overcame death for all. While resurrection is a gift to all from a loving Father in Heaven and His Son, those who have faith in Christ, and who repent and keep his commandments, will receive even greater blessings.

The faithful and obedient can become joint heirs with Christ and receive all that the Father has. Temple ordinances make it possible for us to be reunited with those we love and to continue sacred family relationships in the heavenly realms.

Those who do not learn of Jesus Christ and His Gospel in this life can be taught hereafter. They can then choose whether or not to accept baptism and other ordinances which are performed in their behalf in holy temples.

These doctrines were understood anciently and were taught in the early Christian church, but they were eventually lost as the prophets and apostles were martyred in the years following the death and resurrection of the Savior. Isaiah prophesied that dismal time when he said, “For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people.” (Isa. 62:2)

But Isaiah also said, “The Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.” Acts 2:21 speaks of the restitution of all things which will take place before Jesus Christ comes again to rule and reign as King of Kings. That restoration of truth began with revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ, and with the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

I have written about some key events of the Restoration in my book titled, *Praising the Prophet—Joseph Smith and the Restoration in History and Verse*. Additional details are available in a four volume series entitled SAINTS. This series is published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is available in print and is free online at <https://history.lds.org/saints>.

Although many of my works have appeared in the Ensign and other Church publications, I am not an official spokesperson for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I do, however, strive to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ and treasure my association with those who also love the Lord and desire to build up His kingdom on earth by serving Him and others.

—Sharon Price Anderson

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sharon Price Anderson was born in California and lived in Washington, Alabama, New York, Colorado and Germany before attending Brigham Young University where she met her future husband, Peter.



After they were married, they spent a year on the Omaha Indian Reservation in Nebraska and then lived in Moorpark, Ventura County, California. Sharon graduated Magna Cum Laude from BYU in 1970. At that time, the first three of their nine children were three years, two years, and one month old. Surprisingly, their ninth child was born in 1994, just two and a half months after their tenth grand-child. So far they have thirty-six grandchildren and nineteen great grands.

The Andersons lived in the Mojave Desert in California from 1969 to 1995 and then moved back to Utah Valley where, as *Time Lines Etc.*, Sharon began writing and illustrating history curriculum materials for home-schooled children and other students of all ages.

Recognizing that our religious liberty and other freedoms are in jeopardy, Sharon and Peter have been actively engaged in politics on city, county, state, and national levels. In 2017, Sharon helped organize a Utah coalition called *Stand Strong for the Constitution*.

Besides receiving numerous state and national awards, Sharon's poems have appeared in the *Ensign*, *the Friend*, *the New Era*, *BYU Studies*, *9–11: Poems for September 11th*, *Poetry Panorama*, as well as in the 2005 and 2015 editions of

Utah Sings (published every ten years by the Utah State Poetry Society). Sharon has read her poetry at BYU women's conferences, and her work has been featured at cultural arts recognition events of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She has given many presentations based on her book, *Praising the Prophet—Joseph Smith and the Restoration in History and Verse*, and has inspired audiences with programs featuring her poetic insights on Christmas, temples, and the Life and Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Her callings have included ward and stake Primary president, early morning seminary teacher, Relief Society counselor and teacher, teacher improvement coordinator, and temple preparation instructor. She and her husband served together as missionaries at the Family History Training Center in Orem, Utah and are currently serving as ordinance workers in the Provo, Utah Temple.

A PARTING MESSAGE

from Joyce Kohler

If as Keats declared, “truth is beauty, beauty truth,” we have a wealth of both in this volume. In these poems, maybe you tasted the “purple-brown sweetness” of the figs, and saw the raven’s feathers “shine like the eyes of those about to die.” Did you hear the “bells around the hem of Aaron’s robe” and feel the straw running through your fingers as it is braided into a bee skep? Perhaps you smelled the matches’ acrid odor, the flame, and the smoke of Fire Building.

For me, the people in these poems become more real—John the Baptist as “unpretentious as camel hair,” and Pilate taking the easy way out as the water drips from his fingertips “into a hollow bowl.”

Although you may have been eager for more and more and wanted to gobble up these words, I hope your reading has been process of meditation over time. I expect these poems will continue to enhance my understanding of the Gospel, enlarge my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and increase my desire to further His purposes. May they continue to bless your life as well.

