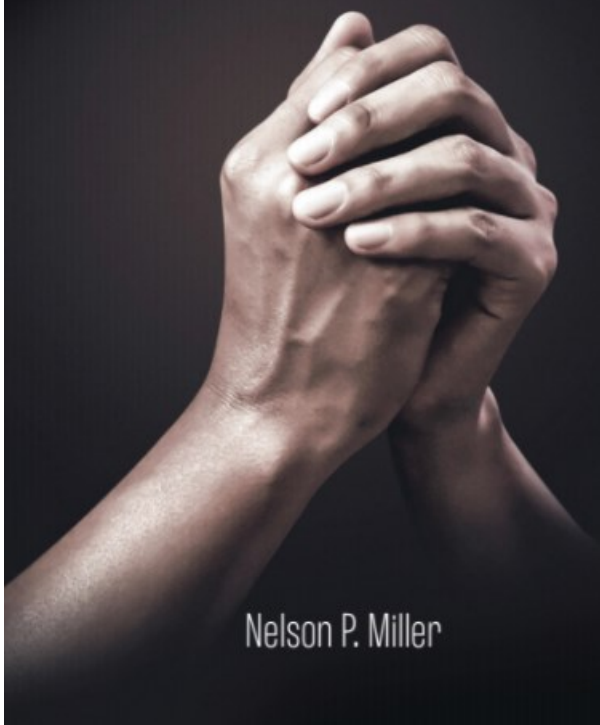


# Without Bars

Christian Poetry for Prisoners



Nelson P. Miller

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Without bars: Christian poetry for prisoners.

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*For brothers and sisters behind bars,  
whether literally or figuratively.  
Remember our freedom.*

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# Introduction

We all face bars, walls, unwelcome constraints. We are all in jails (short term) or prisons (long term) of one kind or another. For some of us, those bars are genuine concrete and steel, incarceration imposed against our will. For the rest of us, our mental, emotional, physical, social, familial, relational, financial, political, and, above all, mortal bars are in their own way just as real. We are, in the common conception, prisoners of our mortal selves.

Yet the community of love that Father and Son had before the beginning of the world, for which they created the world, offers us a different conception. God does not constrain us to ourselves. When we recognize his uncreated sovereignty over his creation, and then as broken beings obey his supreme authority, accepting the love he expressed for us in sacrificing and resurrecting his Son, God sets us free of all bars. Submitting to his one bar, which is his command to love and his offer of love, we join him in eternal paradise.

These truths we know, but how do we embrace them? How does God's Spirit tuck them deep enough in our hearts that they would supply the peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control that we need to make it through another day on this spinning rock, before we join him? Perhaps the following poetry will help you. May God bless you richly in his glorious Spirit.

---

# Love Them More

Why do they hate me,  
    Why deplore,  
When all I've ever done  
    Is love them more?

Why do they reject me,  
    Why turn away,  
When all I've ever done  
    Is for their lost souls pray?

Why do they laugh,  
    Why do they mock,  
When all I've ever done  
    Is their freedom unlock?

Why do they arrest me,  
    At night with torches,  
When all I've done in daylight  
    Is show their lost courses?

Why run away,



---

My beloved brothers,  
When all I did for you  
Was choose you from others?

Why do they rage,  
Why do they scorn,  
When all I've done  
Is their salvation worn?

Why rally a crowd  
Against me arousing,  
When all I did  
Was feed five thousand?

Why the false conviction,  
Why my witness scorned,  
When all I've done  
Is your corruption adorned?

Why my flogging,  
Why my crown of thorns,  
When what I've done  
Is quiet your storms?

Why abandon me  
My precious daughter,  
When what I've done  
Is walk on water?

---

Why the nails  
Driven deep in my cross?  
When all I've done  
Is my Father lost?

Why do they pierce me?  
Why violence,  
When all I've done  
Is show them righteousness?

Father, I prayed forgiveness,  
Their souls to keep;  
My prayer you answered,  
At price so steep.

My name is Jesus,  
God's only Son.  
My offer every soul  
Has eternally won.

---

## Made You Mine

Here's whom I made you,  
Not at all whom you think:  
My beloved brother or sister,  
Not a stranger into shrink.

Here's whom I made you,  
Not whom you assume:  
A perfect prince or princess,  
Not the pauper you presume.

Here's whom I made you,  
Not whom you mistake:  
A friend of my Father,  
Not an enemy to undertake.

Here's whom I made you,  
Not whom you don:  
My student and disciple,  
Not a truant so forlorn.

---

Here's whom I made you,  
Not whom you remake:  
My inner-circle confidante,  
Not an outcast to awake.

Here's whom I made you,  
Not whom you imagine:  
My Father's child hugged,  
Not an orphan to examine.

Here's whom I made you,  
Not whom you see:  
Exquisite palms so elegant,  
Not gnarled hands sweaty.

Here's whom I made you,  
Not whom you discern:  
Co-ruler of my garden,  
Not a hired-hand intern.

Here's whom I made you,  
Not that which you adopt:  
Adorned with royal visage,  
Not sullen look concoct.

Here's whom I made you,  
Not whom you dressed:  
With robes of brilliant colors,

---

Not sackcloth sadly wrest.

Here's whom I made you,  
Not whom you act:  
Dancing down my flowered lane,  
Not lost in threatening tract.

Here's whom I made you,  
Not whom you display:  
With joyful hope of paradise,  
Not hell's fire this way.

Wear whatever you will,  
Not how I created you;  
Just know I accuse you not,  
While the devil berates askew.

I made you for my pure delight,  
Not for heavy burdens;  
I made you as my Father wished,  
Not Satan's awful fright.

No longer take upon yourself  
Images the deceiver wholesales;  
Take your image mine as made,  
In all of glory's details.

---

# I Am

I am a cat, I am a mouse,  
I am a bird dog or am a grouse.  
I am the hunter or am the hunted,  
Who am I? My memory shunted.

I am a building, I am a brick,  
I am the plan or the architect.  
I am the creator or a made thing,  
Who am I? My memory bring.

I am a friend or enemy,  
I am a healer or the disease.  
Good for you or holy terror,  
Who am I? Show me my error.

I am a stone or am a float,  
I am a shipwreck or your boat.  
I keep you going or stop you dead,  
Who am I? It's all in my head.

I am a path, I am path's end,

---

I am the journey or just another bend.  
I am the way or don't dare pass,  
Who am I, but out of gas?

I am a car, I am a wagon,  
I am a truck or my trailer lagging.  
I transport you here and there,  
Who am I? I don't care.

It's all about me and what I choose,  
Anything to be, that's the news.  
I am what I want, today and tomorrow,  
Who am I? Mine to borrow.

I am despairing, I am bored,  
Maybe I'm an apple, now just cored.  
Am I the peeler or peeled onion?  
Who am I? Paul Bunyan.

Maybe I'm Sonny, maybe I'm Cher,  
Maybe I'm a goat or maybe a mare.  
Maybe I'm a stump, maybe I'm a tree,  
Who am I? Hardly carefree.

This question with which I've had such fun,  
Now badly nags me in every dimension.

---

I am confused and am without clue,  
Who am I? The answer's overdue.

I searched and searched my empty head,  
Laid awake all night in bed.  
Nothing inside me told me a thing,  
Who am I but take another swing?

This game of self-invention has no end,  
Has no beginning to start a trend.  
Scary thought indeed:  
Who I am is not my read.

Outside myself I must look,  
To find the answer in a good book.  
That book isn't Oprah's nor Nietzsche's,  
Who I am is God-defined, please.

I want nothing more to do with definition,  
I'll take what God gives for my mission.  
I am who he says, child of God,  
His to define, the whole big wad.

I've made an end of putting on a face,  
One day happy, one day disgraced.  
I've turned my face to God's wall,



---

Asking him to keep me as I crawl.

He says my identity in Christ be,  
That's certainly alright with new me.  
My old self died with all its ambitions,  
To be its own apparitions.

---

## My Bars

Everywhere I turn, even in my mind,  
I find another prison, find another bind.  
My prison once was bars, literal steel,  
Now prison's fruit rind I can't peel.  
I sense life's sweet savor just out of reach,  
Beyond iron bars, desert, not beach.

My mind was once a tool, the world to tour;  
Now my mind's a trap with deadly allure.  
Every single subject on which I dare think,  
Draws me ever deeper into a dark drink.  
Where is life's peace? Where is my comfort?  
Every day is turmoil, unwillingly suffered.

I need my soul freed from this awful jail  
Into which I've fallen, door shut and nailed.  
Yet how hard I try, I only struggle deeper  
Into a quicksand death, Satan eternal keeper.  
Who would my help be in this hour of need?  
Tell me, dear friend, of your deepest holy creed.

---

How could holiness save, be my friend?  
What freedom offer, what lifting trend?  
Where God take me, haven't already been?  
What thirst slake, already drunk akin?  
Who could possibly know my shame,  
My penalty endure, even take my blame?

Maybe freedom isn't absence of constraint;  
My mind from this jail I long ago set free.  
Maybe freedom submits without complaint,  
My will simply to bend a joyful knee.  
My freedom needs a God who knows  
The very will with which I him oppose.

The God I need would forgive  
Every lawless yearn with which I live.  
The God I seek would replace  
My every burden with endless grace.  
The God I beg would my place take,  
On a throne my soul awake.

God, who are you to care for me,  
To make me worth your setting free?  
God, why would you stoop so low  
As to no longer slave bestow?

---

You would not be the God of love,  
If you didn't free your children from above.

My bars! My bars! Where did they go?  
I've lost my prison surely so!  
You've set me heart afire with you;  
My bars you've let me break through.  
You've shown me bars I erected  
When your relationship I neglected.

No human jail can hold my spirit  
When your sacred Son draws near it.  
I now rejoice every morning,  
Your love my call, my holy warning,  
Never again my soul to relinquish,  
For the bars of a prison to extinguish.

My mind now soars over mountains,  
Drawing on your Son's life fountains.  
His waters bars can melt straight through,  
Leaving his embrace, both me and you.  
None stand apart when Son confess,  
But all join hands in union blessed.

---

## Sister

O sister, my sister!

Where have you gone?!

My heart aches so acutely,

Missing you so long.

I miss your smile and laughter,

Your wisdom's warn,

Your sweet sunshine presence,

Your sadness forlorn.

I miss lifting you when down,

Your oft-retained grace,

Keeping you grounded,

Your steadying my pace.

With you around,

My life felt complete.

O sister, my sister!

What grief your retreat!

Your captivity wounds me;

Your bars are my own.

Your prison impounds me;

---

I bear your millstone.  
Your walls enclose me,  
    Crushing heartbeats;  
Your distance chills me,  
    Iced demeanor accretes.  
How long must I miss you?  
    How long desire burn?  
How long must you await  
    Your long-due return?  
How hard do you find it?  
    How hard find it I?  
Why must we endure  
    Such separated lives?

Your freedom I desire,  
    For you alone;  
Your liberty I wish,  
    My own soul atone.  
You walk or run,  
    Go out or stay in,  
I yearn your discretion,  
    Your new life begin.  
Your walls come down,  
    Replaced with breeze,  
Sunshine and rain,

---

Summer heat, winter freeze.  
Seasons giving reasons  
Your mood to lift,  
Enjoying sweet life,  
Your Creator's full gift.

Sister, O sister!  
Our reunion nears,  
Every time I think of you,  
Throughout the years.  
You're never lost,  
Never faraway flung;  
You're in my heart,  
Blood's song sung.  
We're siblings forever,  
Borne for one another,  
Same veins coursing,  
Sister and brother.  
We're Christ's together,  
Hearts in him shared,  
Glory common destiny,  
Paradise prepared.

---

## Brother

Dear brother, my best friend,  
I wish my state to amend.  
I need to be near you again,  
Your presence append.

You must know I miss you,  
As only a sister would do.  
My mind seared, imbued  
With your painful adieu.

I bear the guilt  
Of our partition built.  
My burdened soul wilt,  
No balance, all jilt.

This condition I bear  
With you I share,  
Apart our sibling pair,  
Lost in my affair.



---

How can I repay  
What's lost to my affray?  
How can we away  
Another robbed day?

How can we rejoin  
From mother's loin?  
How can we purloin  
Our jailer's coin?

What we must trust  
Is love walls bust  
Of their awful lust  
To our souls combust.

Our enemy must not win  
What might have been  
And still must within  
Our hearts hold akin.

I know you love me,  
As you know me free  
To love you, absentee  
Though I surely be.

We are not apart

---

But close of heart,  
Free to boldly restart  
Fraternal love's art.

Just let me know now  
That love won't allow  
Your heart to disavow  
Our reunion somehow.

Our day draws near!  
I have nothing to fear  
You won't hold dear  
My joyful tear.

You'll catch every drop  
When my tears will not stop  
For pain to joy swap  
Over freedom's crop.

We'll walk once more  
Through every door,  
Holding hands before  
Freedom's last roar.

---

## Before Time

What a glimpse God's word gives  
Of Father and Son before time,  
Before Father created through Son  
All primordial, in prime.

What existed between them,  
Father and Son in loving relation,  
Was Father as love's giver,  
And in Son love's adoration.

God in nature is complex twin,  
Patron and beneficiary,  
Donor and recipient,  
Love revolutionary.

Humankind God made like,  
As love's subject and object,  
To love him and others,  
While love's one effect.

---

In Son, Father gave all,  
Sacrificial love supreme,  
No greater love than him,  
Poured out in bloodstream.

At God's first creation,  
Over waters Spirit hovered,  
Waiting to see,  
Christ's glory uncovered.

Creation held its breath,  
To witness Son's love,  
In humility's great stoop,  
Descended above.

This nature of God,  
We always remember,  
Lest enemy's wiles  
Our love dismember.

To rest in God's nature  
Is to flourish in cradle  
Of sweetest love's touch  
Poured mother's ladle.

Who thus besides God,

---

Could we ever choose,  
Our mortality grasp,  
Our souls lose?

This preexistent love,  
As God's one attribute,  
We must know of him,  
Our only absolute.

All else we seek pales,  
Next his fiercest love,  
His glories shining brightest,  
Into darkness his dove.

His Holy Spirit indeed,  
The Son's love carries,  
From primitive beginning,  
Enemy's mortal adversary.

We cannot miss out  
On God's love eternal,  
When God is love,  
To his children paternal.

---

## Just for You

My spirit runs free  
Of mind's constraint,  
In tongues spoken above,  
Heaven's ears to taint:  
Ohla ba jule ma  
Jem bo sa quo,  
Mem wi sha une ka  
Gyl kwi le mo.

My spirit tongues feed,  
Though mind not know  
The meaning imparted,  
To divine audience show:  
Tala kay mwee  
Grib ie nuh mai,  
Puw neen roi xu  
Zim dro li bway.

These tongues that puzzle,  
God's Spirit conveys,

---

As honest reflection  
Of my passion's blaze:  
Bwo kahn reif lo mon  
Jeem luy puw feen,  
Hir mun wen laund ko fen  
Doan nen pwo pleen.

My mind lies humbled,  
These odd words mumbled  
To divine hearers aloft,  
Unknown prayers waft:  
Lam shaw creen bo rey meen  
Dee lun jo dack,  
Prol enn bru dil si qwil  
Unj mim fru srill.

My tongues impart value  
To my spirit only,  
Leaving wrestling mind  
Appropriately lonely:  
Bwo quan tro min lut freau  
Dwee twan klut tri mi leau,  
Prei une oan muhl lshoan  
Ool dufn qwool noan.

For to revel in God's glory

---

My mind must still,  
As my spirit soars upward  
To its capitol hill:  
Puwn trupe ihn sween frei  
Gogl luen green kwei,  
Bublo hyve hurn quow  
Beel pyti zun swow.

Nonsense you may think,  
These tongues pure speak,  
Yet God's Spirit also groans,  
My own prayers to speak:  
Lomen cru ythe gboon  
Didl sweer zasun,  
Blimenn xysi iutn vbir,  
Ploot fvire wassun.

So, soar my tongues  
Cross heaven's border zone,  
My spirit to inform,  
My mind to own:  
Dirgl grund bolund mund  
Tneer dnig ouldy ptoym,  
Ghuat bcuay bjeri muay  
Altun vbore mulloy.



---

## It's a Wrap

Bust my trust of this rust bucket must,  
All things bling, no more thing, for me  
No hope in this dope rope at its end, mend,  
Rend, trend this way no more, its core  
Just dust, can't rant, change anything, pant  
For water, daughter slaughter, all lost,  
Great cost, stone tossed, crossed skies, all lies,  
Seeking truth forsooth, with tooth, King.

Tried this, tried that, fried hat, hard sun, stun gun,  
No use, all ruse, hell broke loose, what's use,  
Turn back, same track, same crack, all I lack  
Is a way to make hay, find my bay this day,  
Where care repairs broken pairs, find my daddy,  
In the paddy, momma, too, coop flew,  
Broken home, left roam, street beat heat, God!

Another day, hotter still, blotter kill, water swill,  
Thirst burst, first worst, cursed life, all strife,  
Why live privileged, got to beat the street, meat,

---

Cheat life, stop strife, water's life, burst free,  
Freedom come, liberty, found my tree of life,  
Christ come, salvation, ever near, got my ear,  
Ruling fear, no anxious mess once confessed,  
Jesus leaves us resting still, run his hill.

Woke dawn morn, God forlorn, thinking lost,  
At all cost of hope reborn, horn, sound  
Around this mound of dirt that's mine, pine  
For better, letter, wetter jetsetter, reset  
My fortune from tales of distortion, proportion  
My faith, God's space, birthplace of hope,  
Base to cope along this tightrope within  
This envelope of my life, Lord!

Spinning, grinning, winning this inning at  
New beginning with oh so much more,  
Opened God's door, heaven, earth leaven,  
Relief, less grief, new motif, his pattern,  
Flattered tavern, mansion stanchion, moored,  
Adored, stored as his ward, forward toward  
More accord, hearing his word, freed bird,  
Soared onboard, my Savior brother, other.

King thing, signet ring only bling, sing fling,  
Trumpets sound, life rebound, out of mire,

---

Seen his spire, wire, dryer, flyer, freed hellfire,  
This sacrificed Christ, price ten thrice,  
Giving up all, standing tall, taking my pain,  
Making his reign drain slain, immortality,  
His modality, morality, finality, enemy fatality,  
My man, Son of Man, guardsman, wingspan.

On his cross, left no dross, tossed across, alone,  
No sun shone, Father withdrawn, black swan,  
Neutron bomb, devil's screed, hell freed, plead  
My guilt, fortress built, jilt, to the hilt, wilt,  
Battle over, hostile takeover, mover, shaker,  
Heaven's maker, earthquaker, baker, taker,  
Soul remaker, icebreaker, toolmaker, defeated  
Undertaker, troublemaker, my Caretaker.

It's a wrap, wiretap, thinking cap, pace lap,  
My parade, no charade, no farce, no fake,  
Shake and bake, no mistake, this One's real,  
Man of steel, man of God, golden rod,  
Golden sash, eyes ablaze, happy days,  
Death defeated, devil cheated, undefeated,  
Holy One, all done, long run, someone overrun,  
Love's enthrall, kingdom hall: Jesus.

---

## Am I an Addict?

Am I an addict? Addict, attack, bring back,  
Dicta, dictate old trickster, pipeline mixture,  
Backrow fixture, fixer mixer some rich elixir,  
Never better, never worse, this drug curse.

Am I an addict? Addict, afflict, picked, tricked,  
Stuff is rough, tough, off the cuff, dope,  
Trope, my rope, gyroscope, licked envelope,  
Need more, restore, trap door, over, out.

Like it, dreamlike, hunger strike, spike, dislike,  
Not working right, willing, swilling, killing,  
No longer fulfilling, refilling, instilling,  
Enough can't get, bigger bet, bigger debt,  
Mind goes there, beware, turn it off, cutoff,  
Playoff, blastoff, scoff, doff, no more cough,  
This stuff's killing me, got to stop, pop, swap,  
Chop shop, stealing for more, encore.

Reached the end, around the bend, can't mend,  
Hating myself, put it on the shelf, off the floor,

---

One big door, closed drugstore, what for, more,  
Fighting, losing, boozing, accusing,  
No longer amusing, just confusing, desperate,  
Need respite, depressed it, investment,  
Am I an addict? Receptive, suggestive, answer me,  
Carefree, I want to be, what's the deal?

Family long gone, totally withdrawn, cheat on,  
Come on, hang on, talk to myself, help!  
Am I real? Dreaming, streaming, scheming,  
Screaming, wanting redeeming,  
No more dope, no more booze, bruised, oozed,  
What's to lose? Who's confused?  
Stuff's no good, if only I could, understood?  
Assistance please, resistance flees. God!

Admit, quit, acquit, convict, I'm an addict?  
Confessing regressing to no return, discern,  
Downturn, good turn, heartburn, U-turn, unlearn,  
Discover, recover, shudder, mouth blubber,  
Cried all night, cried all day, shame on display,  
No more feeling sorry for me, spending spree,  
Nothing left in the tank, dank, bank, this rank,  
Freed of self, overwhelmed, ready for help.

Temptation common, not unique, not alone,

---

Mature grown, past bemoan, new capstone,  
Can now bare, knowing God's care, never lets  
Too much, always endure, pure, his allure,  
Always a way out, just shout, run out, lookout,  
Bring about turnabout, leverage my buyout,  
In God's hand, ready to land on my feet, fleet,  
Track meet, going to run free. Jesus!

This war's won, overcome, struggle doesn't last,  
In the past, on Christ going to think, blink,  
Seen his glory, heard his story, allegory, my past,  
Transitory, new repertory, declaratory,  
Compensatory for my past, his blood on me,  
Rescued, free, free of guilt, this crazy quilt,  
New me, trustee, out of the Dead Sea, rising up,  
Taking his cup, drinking his blood. Christ!

I'm not an addict, attacked, sacked, wracked,  
But God's own child, not defiled, not wild,  
No stepchild but adopted one, new life begun,  
Every day, home run, favorite son, brother,  
Sister, mister twister, so fun this freedom come,  
Bang the drum, green thumb, not succumb,  
Net income, gold streets lined fruit, no defeats,  
God my deal, stolen soul, kneel. Father!

---

## Tell Me Why

The pain I've known, apart from my kids,  
Is far greater than the shame I've felt,  
Getting me into this mess, here confessed,  
Far greater than I thought I could bear.  
They say I should have thought of that  
When making choices landing me here,  
About which they are surely correct,  
Though they don't help with my pain.

I must look away from this pain, lest I fail  
This pain endure, which my kids require,  
For I remain their parent, will always be,  
My mantle to assume as soon as free.  
Pain, pain, go away, not to come another day,  
But to ease, forever soothe, freedom won,  
To hug my children, whose parent I am,  
Loving them as I can, always, wherever.

What could they know of why I'm here?  
How could they understand why I would  
Their care forsake, this burden my back break?

---

They could never know, though I tell them so.  
They must only know how I am broken so,  
As they will learn that they are broken, too,  
In this broken world from which we flee,  
Seeking its divine remedy, lest all be lost.

I will hold my children again, snuggle them,  
Laugh with them, guide them, warn them  
Of things I've done and not done, that they  
May flourish as I have not, beyond genes,  
Freed of my corruption, making their way  
Without the obstacles with which the enemy  
Captured me, though only for a time,  
Because I will be free again, free forever.

My destiny is not in this place, of disgrace,  
But of another place, Christ taken there,  
My wrong, even my prison, to bear, that I  
May be free of guilt, even of the blame  
Of not caring for my children, whom I love  
As my Savior loves me, sacrificially,  
Even as I now bear this pain out of my love  
For them, willingly, that I hold onto them.

I could free me of this pain, simply by not caring  
For my children any longer, as if not mine,  
As if they were another's children, though mine  
They will always be, I having borne them.



---

But I refuse this pain put away, instead embrace it,  
Hold it as mine to bear, as my Savior bore  
My pain, that my children may be free, free to  
Know their parent's love for them, sacrificed.

This pain is thus not my enemy but my friend;  
I bear it royally, as my own throne of sorts,  
A crown of thorns, a cross for my seat of power,  
Like my Lord come to serve so humbly,  
Not that I was perfect like my Savior, but that  
I accept this pain as mine to bear for another,  
Those others being my own children, for whom  
I would give all and do give all with this pain.

So, I tell them here, in answer why, that I their  
Pain gladly bear, not righteously like my God,  
But regally nonetheless, because I could give it  
Away but refuse to do so, out of loving them.  
This pain will end not in disgrace but in glory,  
As my Savior's pain ended in glory, his love  
Showing through his suffering, because his faith  
Endured to his victorious end, my amend.

---

## How Many Doors?

Through how many doors must I walk  
To be free of this peculiar prison?  
How many thick walls shut me off  
From family and friends whom I adore?  
What's the number of these clanging gates  
Keeping spring's breeze from my face?  
How high are the chain-link fences  
Containing my wearied spirit within?  
I feel things pressing in all around me,  
Sodden blankets making breathing hard;  
I feel them snuffing the last bit of light,  
Of my sorry soul's smoldering wick.  
How did this suffocating fog descend  
So surely that I can no longer see?  
My only hope lies in this crying out  
Against these inhuman conditions  
That all humankind clearly deserve,  
Just as I brought them in on me.

---

When will I walk straight and free  
Through every locked steel door?  
When will I smell a Spring night,  
Feeling its dampness on my face?  
How long must I wait for gates to open,  
This burden from my soul to lift?  
What moment will bring liberty,  
My limbs to move unconstrained?  
Where will my salvation arise,  
Treasured freedom to bring me?  
Have I anything to do with liberty's gift  
I'll never again take for granted?  
Who will advocate my lost cause,  
Trapped by logic and reason?  
Who has the power over these walls  
To bring them down with a shout?  
Who loves me so much to save me,  
With a power so strong as to beat death?

My brothers and sisters incarcerate me;  
Humans like me built these pens.  
They call it justice for my transgressions;  
I suppose walls are justice of human sort.  
Yet I look for justice that includes mercy,

---

Of which humans may not know.  
I need human rescue from human jail,  
But divine rescue from human justice.  
I need my brother to unlock these gates,  
Yet I need God to move my sister's heart.  
My hope is from above in heaven's realm,  
Though my deliverance is here and now.  
God could not have made jail my destiny;  
Prison is not my permanent home.  
He made me to rule and tend his creation,  
Not creation to subject me to its rule.  
For freedom he made me, my fortunate end,  
For liberty I live out the rest of my days.

I turn then to my Lord in supplication,  
Asking again that he remember my end.  
I know he sees me in this wrong condition,  
Regrets my current state of despair.  
I trust that he now devises my return  
To the blessings for which I first arose.  
I know the loving heart of my Savior Jesus,  
How my Savior gave me his own life.  
I learned long ago that God raised his Son  
From a grave that looked like a sure end.  
My Savior broke free from the last prison,

---

The sure death that oppresses us all.  
Father, you raised your Son Jesus from dead,  
And so, I know you can raise me, too.  
You rolled aside the great stone,  
That stood between your Son and life.  
Now, roll aside these same gates for me,  
Because you alone do I trust.

---

# Midnight

Midnight, midnight, are you my friend,  
Come as sister, my soul to mend?  
Do you creep near, even upon my bed,  
Thoughts to sweeten, spirit to wed?  
Have you come with succor, help and aid,  
Or come my few comforts to deftly raid?  
Declare your intent, o midnight hour,  
Do you come in weakness or power?  
If you come to restore, then welcome you are,  
But come to deplore, then my door I bar.

Yes, midnight, you claim your own power  
To choose whether friend or foe,  
To name your hour as beginning or end,  
To stroke assurance or kill with blow.  
You set yourself up as king over my soul,  
Anoint yourself my mind's ruler;  
Yet ruler you're not, nor king to stroll,

---

Through the shade of day where cooler;  
You're just another pretender to throne,  
Your apostasy apparent, well known.

Midnight, you are thus no enemy of mine,  
Your threats just reminder of glory divine.  
Your darkness reminds of God's holy light,  
Your shadows make lamps shine so bright.  
Your turn from one day to early next morning  
Is nothing to fear, only generous warning.  
Your marking another calendar number  
Only invites me deeper to my slumber.  
Midnight is nothing but comfort to me,  
Another day to welcome, sleep come free.

Midnight, my friend, come rushing in,  
My soul to warm, my thoughts to mend.  
Midnight, my dear, I've known you long,  
An old friend indeed, darkness's song,  
Piercing through night, hurried along,  
Morning to come, sure bright dawn.  
Midnight's hour is my sure reminder,  
Of glorious dawn coming, gentler, kinder.  
Midnight has for me nothing to fear,  
I've made it my peace, old friend dear.

---

So come, my colleague, your dark night,  
    Within which I celebrate my Lord's might,  
He who let darkness win one time only,  
    That his glory might shine, eternally holy.  
Christ darkness defeated, forever banished,  
    Light shone bright, midnight vanished.  
I hear the hour strike, no longer in fear,  
    My faith grown bold, to my Lord adhere.  
Midnight's ruler is my King of kings,  
    Who stooped low, from freedom springs.

Midnight, one, two, three, four, five a.m.,  
    Dawn's here bright, once again.  
The sun rises even through these walls,  
    My heart warmed by my Lord's calls.  
I hear his voice whether midnight or six,  
    Darkness a liar, no longer any tricks.  
Darkness is only absence of shining light,  
    When light is ever present, won the fight.  
I stand in sunshine, warmed and protected,  
    My Lord's assuring Spirit boldly detected.



---

# Monotony

Monotony, moan ought a knee,  
    Wiling away the time.  
My mind is my friend, then enemy,  
    Isn't it yet bedtime?

Monotony, mow naught any,  
    Passing another moment.  
My thoughts comfort, then distress,  
    Still looking for my atonement.

Monotony, mourn botany,  
    Watching the clock slip.  
My stomach times better than mind,  
    Struggling with time's stewardship.

Monotony, more naughty thee,  
    Days and more days go by.  
Routine's relief, then a thief,  
    As I work out my trip on high.

---

Monotony, low cottony,  
Minutes I try not to count.  
Time crawls, time flies,  
As my salvation I take account.

Monotony, my next one's free,  
I've reached another day's end.  
The calendar flips, the calendar freezes,  
As my mortal state I transcend.

Monotony, this is my plea,  
To turn the page on this chapter.  
An hour passes, an hour begins,  
I'm feeling freed of my captor.

Monotony, just present be,  
For time to stretch to horizon.  
The time is near, the time is far,  
My twisted thoughts to wizen.

Monotony, my jail to flee,  
My mind no prisoner at all.  
I've slowly turned thoughts  
Toward my loving Lord's call.

Monotony, where did time flee,

---

Thinking through another stretch?  
My mind is my tool, no longer fool,  
My restoration soon to fetch.

Monotony, it sets me free,  
From any concern over my future.  
I've turned my attention from suspension,  
To awaken from spiritual stupor.

Monotony, it's chased after me,  
Telling me lies I believed,  
Until I grasped truth, genuine sooth,  
As my Lord's Spirit I perceived.

Monotony, embraced formerly,  
Now I know is perception.  
I've discovered Jesus my lover,  
Him of immaculate conception.

Monotony, time's one great spree,  
When eternity's paradise beckoned.  
I've found time to be the one prime  
Playground for my Lord's affection.

---

## On Watch

Watch, my sister, watch!

The enemy stalks his prey,  
This foe who deceives to destroy,  
Not knowing he's had his day.

Watch, my brother, watch!

The lion roars after another,  
Seeking to smother a soul,  
To keep it from its Father.

Watch, my friend, watch!

You're the guardian of the lost,  
Standing against personified evil,  
Who pursues life at all cost.

Watch, my soldier, watch!

You're a last line of defense  
Who's stood sentry against death,  
Under the Lord's recompense.

---

Watch, my dearest, watch!  
You're acting as I ask,  
Suffering with brother and sister,  
As was your Savior's task.

Watch, my angel, watch!  
The one with whom you sit  
Wants their life to end,  
This dusty old planet quit.

Watch, my lover, watch!  
The one for whom you care  
Faces a desperate enemy  
Who is your ward's nightmare.

Watch, my child, watch!  
Your patient has lost her will.  
She needs your solace and faith  
To finish her journey uphill.

Watch, my nurse, watch!  
You hold the soul of your brother  
Who wants his days to end,  
Lost to his Lord's wonder.

---

Watch, my champion, watch!

You earn a heavenly reward  
When you share another's pain  
For a life aimed paradise toward.

Watch, my prince, watch!

You have a seat at my banquet table  
For your labor pouring my Spirit  
Into another who is unable.

Watch, my princess, watch!

Your guard you stand not alone.  
A thousand angels attend you,  
As you fight for your Lord's throne.

Watch, my faithful, watch!

You have joined another's struggle,  
Like your loving Savior Lord,  
Satan's accusations to befuddle.

Watch, my beloved, watch!

I sit with you through the night,  
In your watch over another,  
As you carry on my own fight.

---

# Lockdown

Lockdown, take down, downtown, renown.

Where's the breakdown? Get down.

Need my daylight in sight; sit tight, polite.

No more fight, mighty hot, Fahrenheit.

Isolation order, made a border, shut the gate,

Distant state, stayed away another day.

This lockdown's crazy stuff, super rough,

Stranger still, all uphill, makes me tough.

Lockdown frown, countdown to close down,

Isolation predation, damnation, agitation.

Need a break, got to make my wake, no fake,

What's the stake? Really? Handshake!

Can't make cake, my thirst slake, intake,

Earthquake! Doors open, I'm hoping,

System's broken, outspoken, emotion potion,

Unbroken, rolling, floating, flowing.

Lockdown, top down, rock crown, hard.

---

Got my card in the yard: the bard.  
Writing my way out of this thing,  
Bring my spring, jump out, shout.  
I'm not about seclusion, it's just an illusion,  
Got my fellowship, no intrusion proven.  
Flagship, headship, kingship, kingdom come,  
Not overrun, instead overcome. Lord!

Lockdown, pipe down, ripe clown,  
Shakedown, showdown uptown.  
Round the bend we went, bent, spent, rent.  
Present the event until the warden relents.  
Prayer knocking down these walls, fireball,  
Until they fall at my call without stall.  
Y'all get my windfall? Playing hardball now.  
This dry wall forestalls freedom's call.

Lockdown, long drawn, across my lawn,  
This pasture in which I sleep deep,  
Comfort of my shepherd Lord, prepared more,  
Better for me than this scree; treasured,  
Weathered this segregation, trepidation, no fear  
Here, I'm not scared of separation,  
No one parts me from my God, roughshod;  
We're close, him closer than me, see?



---

Lockdown mound, all around, on the rebound;  
Doors opened last night, out of sight,  
He came to me, this God you can't see,  
Only feel, knowing he's real close to thee,  
No isolation order carries forward headquarter,  
Just my Lord and me, bordered, quartered,  
Just what the doctor ordered, balm to palm,  
Bury the napalm, scratch my back, Jesus!

Lockdown, worn like a gown, no frown, loving  
My time to make this climb, step at a time,  
Left, right, in the fight, war won, battle spun,  
Turned my way, hardly begun everyone.  
Singing my song, playing along, here I belong,  
Close to my friend Jesus, headlong,  
Finding my tune, time to bloom, plenty of sun,  
Enemy outrun, easy street, no backseat.

Lockdown, what's down? Hadn't heard,  
Free as a bird, my word, no walls can stop,  
My spirit's pop, uplifting devotion, only notion,  
Wide as an ocean, sailing along, no wailing,  
No failing, railing, paling, trailing, or bailing.  
Just blown by the wind, hair pinned, all win,

---

Loving God's Spirit carrying me aloft,  
Horizon widened, no confinement. Free!

---

## Eternal Accord

I'm the creation of an eternal accord,  
Happy product of a community of love.  
God the Father made me through his Son  
Whom he loved as himself before time.  
We know that before God even made time,  
He was already loving his only Son.  
God made me out of this bosom of love  
To express his love to all in creation.

I'm not just God's creation out of love,  
A particular product of curious design.  
Instead, God made me in his own image,  
Just like him but in visible expression.  
God gave me his own divine form,  
Making me unique among his creatures.  
In his Son, he even joined me in creation,  
Showing himself to be as he made me.

---

I'm not just God's loving self-creation,  
But also his delegated co-ruler over all.  
Because God created me in his own image,  
I bear a ruler's crown, carrying his visage,  
Sitting on a throne of my own, ready to share  
His rule, for the glory of his creation.  
God made me to govern his creation,  
Carrying out his wishes for all to flourish.

God did not just make me out of love,  
In his image and as his co-ruler over all.  
God also gave me a purpose in creation,  
To show his glory participating in his rule.  
I don't lead an aimless life of my own  
But live with a role and responsibility.  
My desire is to fulfill his purpose for me,  
Controlling what I control for his glory.

I flourish in this eternal community of love  
When I seek God's will for his renown.  
He made me to be his instrument of love,  
Showering his creation with his intent  
That all humankind would live in harmony,  
Each serving one another generously,  
Knowing that his creation is without bound,

---

Provision assured for those who love him.

To live out his will in eternal community,  
I seek unity among friends and enemies.  
I share bonds of communion with my Lord,  
That all humankind would know him.  
The union I possess through my confession  
And my knowledge of his rule and will,  
I witness to the intimacy he had before time  
And shared eternally through his Son.

Solidarity with my God strengthens me,  
Our agreement become our fruitful bond.  
Our concurrence comforts and guides me,  
Keeping me safe, at peace, and strong.  
Our holy concord has led us to a rapport  
In which I revel as God's adopted child,  
Living in unison and union as an extension  
Of God's righteous will and arm.

---

## Mary's Lamb

Mary had a little lamb  
Whose fleece was white as snow.  
The little lamb had Father God  
Whose love the lamb would show.  
The lamb made hearts beat softer still,  
Showered under mother's love.  
Mother's love made infants strong,  
Their great Lord's love to sow.

The little lamb helped bowed men stand,  
While high priests stooped so low.  
The lamb healed all of mortal disease,  
Their loving God to know,  
When Father had lamb climb a hill  
His throne to share with low.  
Lamb's love poured as cross blood spilled,  
God's dove into hearts to flow.

Mary's lamb brought a little dove

---

With feathers white as snow.  
Father sent the little dove,  
To show us where to go.  
Dove lit softly here and there,  
On hearts blood made of gold,  
From lamb whose cross became a throne,  
To rule with man his own.

---

## Baby Rock

Rock-a-bye baby,  
From the treetop,  
While gentle wind blows,  
God's Spirit aloft.  
When the wind blows,  
God's Spirit will fall,  
On those whose heart  
God's Son has called.

Rock-a-bye baby,  
Sleeping assured,  
By Spirit whose touch  
All people Son lured.  
When the tree bends,  
All people will see,  
The Son whose love  
Rescued you and me.

Rock-a-bye baby,



---

Time soon to wake,  
To Spirit whose words  
All fears forsake.  
When the dawn comes,  
Spirit adorned,  
The Son lifts aloft,  
All souls, sin scorned.

---

## Twinkle Star

Twinkle, twinkle, little star;  
    How I wonder what you are,  
Light of God or stellar dust,  
    Answer sure, learn I must;  
Twinkle, twinkle, little star;  
    Tell me, spell ye, what you are.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star;  
    How I wonder who you are,  
Angel bright or departed soul's light,  
    Revelation clear, just I might;  
Twinkle, twinkle, little star;  
    Tell me, well see, who you are.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star;  
    Now I wonder how you are,  
Spoke by God or primordial blast,  
    Know I would, my future vast;

---

Twinkle, twinkle, little star;  
Tell me, swell glee, how you are.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star;  
Now I wonder, knowing you are,  
Awesome God's majestic work,  
Salvation's call, my sin sure shirk;  
Twinkle, twinkle, little star;  
Told me, showed me, why you are.

---

## Mouse Time

Hickory, dickory, dock,  
    The mouse ran up the clock,  
The clock struck one,  
    What's he done?  
Hickory, dickory, dock.

Hickory, dickory, dock,  
    The mouse ran up the clock,  
The clock struck two,  
    I wish I knew!  
Hickory, dickory, dock.

Hickory, dickory, dock,  
    The mouse ran up the clock,  
The clock struck three,  
    Jesus Christ to see!  
Hickory, dickory, dock.

---

Hickory, dickory, dock,  
The mouse ran up the clock,  
The clock struck four,  
His Savior to roar!  
Hickory, dickory, dock.

Hickory, dickory, dock,  
The mouse ran up the clock,  
The clock struck five,  
His salvation arrive!  
Hickory, dickory, dock.

---

## Cat Fiddle

Hey, diddle, diddle,  
    The cat and the fiddle;  
The plow ran over the dune,  
    The little soul craft a new seed sort,  
With the love of Jesus strewn.

Hey, diddle, diddle,  
    The cat and the fiddle;  
The feline played a new tune:  
    The children draft a new King's court,  
Under Father's love, their boon.

Hey, diddle, diddle,  
    The cat and the fiddle;  
The kitten goes to bed soon,  
    Infants raft their mother's waffed,  
In faith their strength attuned.

---

Hey, diddle, diddle,  
The cat and the fiddle;  
The tom hunts mice for sport;  
Parents laughed at enemy daft,  
Angels protecting children hewn.

Hey, diddle, diddle,  
The cat and the fiddle;  
The families have made their fort;  
God stands to aft, hand on shaft,  
Their futures, none shall impugn.

---

## The Farmer's Dell

The farmer in the dell,  
The farmer in the dell,  
Hi-ho, the derry-o,  
The farmer in the dell.

The farmer sowed the seed,  
The farmer sowed the seed,  
Hi-ho, the derry-o,  
The farmer sowed the seed.

The seed spread the word,  
The seed spread the word,  
Hi-ho, the derry-o,  
The seed spread the word.

The word healed the land,  
The word healed the land,  
Hi-ho, the derry-o,



---

The word healed the land.

The land raised a crop,

The land raised a crop,

Hi-ho, the derry-o,

The land raised a crop.

The crop produced a harvest,

The crop produced a harvest,

Hi-ho, the derry-o,

The crop produced a harvest.

The harvest honored God,

The harvest honored God,

Hi-ho, the derry-o,

The harvest honored God.

---

## Itsy Spider

The itsy, bitsy spider rose from bed for day;  
In came the cloud to knock the spider down;  
The Spirit breathed once, restored the spider's life,  
So, the itsy, bitsy spider rose from bed again.

The itsy, bitsy spider climbed up the cinder wall;  
Down came the hand to knock the spider off;  
In came God's Son and picked the spider up,  
So, the itsy, bitsy spider climbed the wall again.

The itsy, bitsy spider chose God's word to read;  
Confusion rushed in to close the good book;  
The Spirit prayed moans to clear the spider's mind,  
So, the itsy, bitsy spider opened the book again.

The itsy, bitsy spider kneeled to pray to God;  
In rushed anger to throw the spider off;  
God sent his angels to calm the spider's rage,

---

So, the itsy, bitsy spider kneeled to pray again.

The itsy, bitsy spider fasted to hear from God;

Hunger raised its head to defeat the discipline;

Jesus reminded the spider he'd fasted forty days,

So, the itsy, bitsy spider began the fast again.

The itsy, bitsy spider grew in resurrection faith;

Doubt crept in to crush the spider's hope;

God's word spoke the truth, restoring strong faith,

So, the itsy, bitsy spider trusted God again.

---

# Father

Where did we learn of you, Father?

How did you reveal who are you?

Why do you call yourself *Father*,

When another title would do?

What makes you a *Father*, my God,

When Lord, King, and Savior, too?

You were unspeakable Yahweh,

Beyond comprehension, unknown;

You moved in complete sovereignty,

Your Spirit undecipherable moan;

You made yourself awesome and feared,

Standing high apart and alone.

You were God and Lord, King of kings,

Magnificent in every respect;

You commanded heaven's army,

Scepter raised, royal robe decked;

You made every nation bow before you,

---

Held in awe for your law as perfect.

You were Creator of the universe,  
Maker of all heaven and earth;  
You gave light to heaven's stars,  
Flora, fauna, and seasons on earth;  
You were benefactor and provider,  
That no one would suffer dearth.

You were Rescuer, Savior, Redeemer,  
Bringing humankind back from brink;  
You made a path out of nowhere,  
Offering again a long-broken link;  
You were Deliverer and Restorer,  
That we your beauty again drink.

Yet then your Son showed you *Father*,  
Loving beyond comprehension;  
You stooped to become a dear daddy,  
In incomprehensible descension;  
You were Father and Son as one,  
Spirit joined in trinity dimension.

Father, Son, and Spirit, complex unity,  
Three-part unison God as one,  
Beyond knowledge, yet shown family,

---

That we would trust love done,  
Father begetting Son who begot world,  
That we would have love won.

An earthly father fails to live as one  
Worthy of the child's care.  
Fathers come and go, good or not,  
That one's father may not be there.  
Yet heavenly Father loves Son as self,  
Then loving us as prime affair.

Heaven's child, too, then I will be,  
My Father taken care of me.  
Divine offspring, I whole accept,  
Loving Father over me wept.  
His Son my brother, his holy crown,  
This day I don, my sins to drown.

No better role would God adopt for me,  
Than Father as one part triunity.  
Loving Father wished I had so long,  
My soul to hear heaven's paradise song.  
Father and Son in one I awesome fear,  
Spirit embraced in hold so dear.

---

## What Good This?

What good is my being here?

How will this time serve

Any purpose, use, or goal,

Any benefit any deserve?

Where is the value of this cell?

What is my end where I dwell?

What good comes from here?

How can I break its spell?

Give me some real purpose,

Give me a reason to be

Here in this tight and bright place

Rather than anywhere free.

Offer ministry, service, meaning;

Give me a garden for gleaning.

Let me do something useful

While I'm still youthful.

---

You made me to work  
In your garden paradise  
High on heaven's hill,  
Your presence to suffice.  
You made me for ruling,  
For managing and schooling;  
You made me for industry,  
Not for this futility.

Show me a good service  
That I can here perform;  
Show me some good turn  
My heart to warm.  
Let me be your servant  
To show myself fervent  
To fill your good desire,  
Your approval to acquire.

I am at your service, my good Lord,  
Willing to carry your sword,  
To be a reliable witness  
To your providential fitness.  
Though these walls constrain,  
Here I your servant remain,  
Begging to do something for you,



---

Your Spirit's command in residue.

For faith tells me that you have for me  
Much to do as ministry,  
Even within these now-hallowed walls,  
As I walk in service their halls.  
You've made me a witness to truth,  
Given me a service to youth;  
You've made me watchman against death,  
Armed with your Spirit's holy breath.

I've found many ways to share your love,  
Though my captors believe you above;  
You instead walk these halls alongside  
Your servant, your friend, your bride.  
We work in partnership for good,  
Unbowed by walls of steel and wood,  
Free instead to build your kingdom,  
Where all are welcome, high opinion.

Glory, glory, what good is this place?  
Here, I've found my robe and mace!  
I crush human walls, faults, and sin,  
Using your word and Spirit to win  
Souls for you to carry heavenward,

---

To fashion and flourish better world,  
Your desires carried surely forth,  
Though in prison, my new birth.

---

## Baptized

My Lord submitted to hand of John,  
In Jordan River, his glory to don,  
First submerged, Baptist urged.  
Rising then up, God's Spirit alit  
Upon Christ's head, Word writ,  
Trinity joined, in one God coined.  
Father then his Son announced,  
Listen to him, each word pronounced,  
Father admonished, world astonished.  
Into wilderness, Spirit ushered,  
Tested of enemy, hunger suffered,  
Word defended, testing ended.

This ritual to which my Lord submitted,  
Water immersed, Spirit received,  
Father announced, soul acquitted;  
This ritual I join, seeking union  
With Lord above, author of love,

---

Intimacy shared in communion.  
This ritual I accept within these walls,  
Performed at first, quench my thirst,  
Matters not, how many falls.  
This ritual complete, remove defeat,  
For now the Spirit inhabits,  
Given new identity, new status.

Whether sink or cup, matters little,  
My soul to baptize, sins remittal,  
Faults drowned, head crowned.  
Whether sprinkled or immersed,  
No longer enemy cursed,  
Drowned then, born again.  
Whether by minister or friend,  
My new self will sure transcend,  
Soul anew, morning's blessed dew.  
Whether with words or in silence,  
Receive the Spirit's guidance,  
Cleansed of sin, wholly in.

Now baptized, divine devised,  
Sharing heaven, human disguised,  
Kingdom home, heavenly dome.  
All is new in Christ reborn,

---

Old self dead, corruption shorn,  
Newly made, God's glory weighed.  
Cares I've cast for joy embraced,  
New life accepted, Jesus based,  
Lightened my yoke, to Spirit awoke.  
I now discern God's holy presence  
In all I observe, paradise pleasance,  
My citizenship, of God's kinship.

New lands to discover, health recovered,  
Unending blessings, all uncovered,  
Darkness banished, into light vanished.  
Though these walls hard constrain,  
My spirit roams new domain,  
God's kingdom come, wild freedom.  
Baptized I soar, across new skies,  
Enemy below, plying his lies,  
From which I'm freed, new of breed.  
This way I've come, I'm sure to follow,  
All other ways having left me hollow,  
But now I'm filled, kingdom to build.

---

## Prayed the Night

I prayed and prayed,  
Throughout day,  
Throughout night,  
Until walls fell,  
Gained my sight,  
Until heaven I saw,  
Freedom won,  
Held in awe,  
Work all done.

I prayed and prayed,  
Throughout pain,  
Through small pleasure,  
Until doors opened,  
Poured out treasure,  
Until living rain fell  
On dry barren land,  
Banished my hell,  
Struck up the band.

---

I prayed and prayed,  
Throughout hunger,  
Even when full,  
Until God spoke  
To my soul,  
Until sun rose  
In my dark,  
Brought the morn,  
Angels hark.

I prayed and prayed,  
Through the mist,  
Through the clear,  
Until loads lightened,  
My Lord appeared,  
Until faith grew,  
From small seed,  
Into mighty trunk,  
My spirit to feed.

I prayed and prayed,  
Throughout mighty struggles,  
Through spiritual wars,  
Until victory arrived,

---

My spirit soars,  
Until God stood alone  
In my path,  
Citizen of heaven,  
Enemies his wrath.

I prayed and prayed,  
Through deepest depression,  
Through highest heights,  
Until clarity arrived  
About my purpose,  
Until I knew  
Why God put me here,  
To signify his glory,  
Withstand all fear.

I prayed and prayed,  
Through suffocating fog,  
With my last breath,  
Until eternity shown,  
Removing death,  
Until I could breathe  
Like never before,  
Of eternal Spring,  
And opened door.



---

## The Little I Know

I've finally come to realize:

What I know of the Lord  
Is what he wants me to know  
And nothing more.

I've finally learned my lesson:

What I want to know  
Wouldn't be good for me  
Or I couldn't handle.

I'm finally fully satisfied:

What God's word tells me  
Is enough for me to know,  
Without knowing more.

Learning has been hard,

But learned I have:  
The Lord controls my destiny,  
Not that I control it.

---

I've finally seen the result:

When I took control,  
Things went badly awry,  
To my destruction.

I've fully come to appreciate:

God's purpose for me is best,  
Not what I propose and pursue,  
Which is nothing but hazard.

I'm now ready to accept:

What I know of his purpose  
Is what he wants me to know,  
To trust him with the rest.

Lord, I now trust and accept:

You have your plan for me,  
One that is good for me  
And will benefit others.

Lord, I now desire one thing:

To accept your will for me,  
Which I know is best for me,  
Though I don't see it now.

---

Lord, you now have my allegiance  
And nothing else does,  
Your desire being my only desire,  
Your will being my will.

Yet I have also learned:  
If I want to know more  
Then ask the Lord to show  
What more he wishes me to know.

Lord, I accept but also ask,  
Trust but also want to know:  
Show me more of yourself  
And of your purpose for me.

Lord, I know you know best,  
But still I ask you:  
Show me your way for me,  
Revealing yourself honorable.

I've come to this final point:  
Lord, your presence is before me,  
You lead my way forward,  
Your destiny for me assured.

---

## My Help

My momma used to help me,  
Long ago my daddy, too.  
They've long since passed,  
Leaving me to raise myself.

My sister used to help me,  
Long ago my brother, too.  
They've long since given up,  
Leaving me to go it alone.

My teachers used to help me,  
Long ago my classmates, too.  
School long since aged me out,  
Leaving me on my own.

My counselors used to help me,  
Long ago my mentors, too.  
They've long since quit on me,  
Leaving me to counsel myself.

---

My friends used to help me,  
Long ago my neighbors, too.  
I have no friends or neighbors here,  
Leaving me to help myself.

My pastors used to help me,  
The elders and deacons, too.  
They can't reach me in here,  
Leaving me to encourage myself.

My employer used to help me,  
My co-workers, too.  
I'm not employed anymore,  
Leaving me to work for myself.

My drinking buddies used to help me,  
My party partners, too.  
No drinking or partying here,  
Leaving me to have fun alone.

My lawyer used to help me,  
My social worker, too.  
I can't afford my lawyer;  
Social worker's reassigned.

---

My bunkmate used to help me,  
My yard friends, too.  
Bunkmate's too depressed;  
Don't get to the yard anymore.

My warden used to help me,  
Guards some, too.  
Don't see them anymore,  
Behind their cameras and glass.

From where does my help now come?  
Who is my counselor and aide now?  
On whom can I rely for assistance?  
Who even thinks of me anymore?

I now know beyond dispute,  
The Lord is my helper.  
He who made heaven and earth  
Watches over me.

I'd take more help if I had it,  
But I've got the help I need.  
The Lord is my helper;  
I have nothing to fear.

---

## Could Have Painted

You could have painted the universe,  
    To eternally admire your work;  
You could have been the lone artist,  
    In whom unending splendors lurk;  
You could have kept it all to yourself,  
    This creating and ruling thing;  
Yet you shared ruling with humankind,  
    Over whom you made yourself King.

You could have made humankind subject,  
    To suffer the whims of heavenly beings;  
You could have denied humans dominion,  
    Over anything other than their feelings;  
You could have kept sovereignty to yourself,  
    Denying choice to your handiwork,  
Yet you gave us our own sovereignty,  
    Rather than keep us your clerk.

You could have ruled by yourself,  
    Without family or community;

---

You could have kept thrones to one,  
    To rule with lone impunity;  
You could have lived in isolation,  
    With care for none but you;  
Yet your nature is love in trinity,  
    Loving us all, surely undue.

You would have been no less our God,  
    If you had kept creation for yourself;  
You would have still been ultimate ruler,  
    If you had your rule from us withheld;  
Your creation would still be exquisite,  
    If you had created just for your view;  
Yet you delegated divinity to humans,  
    Granting them to rule, too.

You made partners of corrupt humankind  
    Because you were family before time;  
You made brothers and sisters of us  
    Because in your image we are sublime;  
You were patient with your rebel family,  
    Though our nature was so suspect;  
You gave your Son in terrible sacrifice  
    Because love gives all for its subject.



---

You didn't just paint the universe,  
As grand spectacle for your reflection,  
Because your nature was more than artist,  
More than merely divine perfection;  
You painted then gifted the earth  
To a humankind so swiftly fallen,  
Because your essence is to give exquisite,  
The one great Artist himself, all in.

You stand not apart from your creation,  
As would any proud human artist;  
You gift creation and participate in it,  
To invite your images into catharsis;  
You offer eternal life to humankind,  
A gift of your own divinity  
Because since before time and creation,  
You've lived in loving community.

---

## They Say

Here's what they say about me, Jack,  
Both to my face and behind my back:  
I'm a no-good, nothing-doing, lazy dog,  
A hippity-hoppity, green-eared, mindless frog;  
I'm good for nothing, stuck in a peat bog,  
Never make it anywhere beyond this slog.  
I'm whack-a-mole, in-a-hole Jimmy Jane,  
One big, in the neck, in the rear pain;  
I'm a runaway, headed-for-the-ditch train,  
Ready-for-another-wreck refrain.  
I'm disaster waiting, catastrophe baiting,  
Common-sense hating, confusion creating;  
I'm on-your-nerves grating, scumbag dating,  
Low-life rating, reason abating, frustrating.  
I've left friends for dead, done drugs instead,  
Deep water tread, hung by a thread.  
I've my own ego fed, made others dread,  
All acquaintances misled, total blockhead.

---

They say many other things not for repeat,  
In burn-your-ears, blush-your-face, full defeat.  
They know I'm headed for a miserable end,  
Barn burning, blazing out, round the bend.  
They're sure my destiny is the trash heap,  
My soul lost forever, sold on the cheap.  
They conclude I've shamed my own brood,  
Been more than rude, blood-feud attitude.  
They assert my cause desert, disaster avert,  
Get away unhurt, safe distance exert.  
They protect themselves from me, disagree,  
Fling invective, give me the third degree.  
They mistrust, walk away nonplussed,  
Cussed, total disgust, treat me like a bust.

I've heard so much and imagined more,  
That I believed it's what's in store.  
My future looked bleak, washed ashore,  
Nothing but deplored, like a cold sore.  
I took their judgment to heart, not smart,  
Their attitude impart, nothing to start.  
I reached a dead end, fell wholly apart,  
Wheel me out of here on an oxcart.  
I acted exactly like they expected, rejected,  
Every action properly suspected.

---

My bad character no one corrected,  
Instead neglected, corruption perfected.  
My hope took a dive, I could barely survive,  
Tried to derive but could only connive.  
Their bad opinions were my only archive,  
Haunting me until I was hardly alive.  
I thought I was at my end, nothing to revive,  
Like I stuck my head in their beehive.

Then one day, I learned of God's opinion,  
Heard of his dominion, a new beginning.  
I heard he gave his Son for my condition,  
His perfect Son who faced no perdition.  
I realized that God created me for him,  
No matter how bad another's whim.  
As low as others held me, God wasn't grim,  
Instead, his Spirit filled me to the brim.  
God lifted me up, emptied my sinful cup,  
Removed my history, helped me buck up.  
God let me start over again, took the reins,  
Removed my stains, gussied me up.  
He gave me hope again, replaced disdain,  
I could not complain in his love domain.

---

## I'm So Humble

I'm so humble I can hardly stand myself,  
Ought to win an award for humility;  
Surely you can see I'm the most self-effacing,  
Humility so grand your gathering gracing?

God loves the humble, hates the proud,  
So, he must love me most, right out loud;  
No need debating, my humility rating:  
I'm numero uno, glory awaiting.

Move over, Moses, the Bible's most humble,  
You've got competition, ready to rumble.  
I'll stand like you before our judge,  
Beating all competitors, honor begrudge.

Humility's my trademark, in my ballpark,  
Worn like a badge, left like a hallmark.  
Brick by brick, building my humble legacy,  
Into one grand edifice; jealous of me?

---

Don't worry about competing for my award;  
Competition's over, and only I scored.  
Look at the scoreboard: a hundred to none;  
On this earth, I'm the only humble one.

I'm so humble, I'll never stumble;  
The enemy's got no hold on me.  
Throw me any trial, test, or temptation,  
I'll turn it into another glory vocation.

If I had a friend, I'd want him to be like me,  
Humility outstanding, respect demanding.  
We'd get along so well, he'd think me swell,  
No problem with pride for either to dispel.

This humility thing, I've got it figured out,  
No leaf unturned, nothing left in doubt.  
I'm pretty smart when it comes to character;  
Been studying hard, like a training barrister.

I don't need any counsel, no one's kind advice;  
I'm bulletproof sound, character nice.  
Nothing can improve on my humble state,  
Now that my spouse left me to navigate.

---

Now, let me see, where are friends to honor me?  
Somehow, disappeared, under my marquis.  
Where's my family, those who should care most?  
They left me long ago, like burnt toast.

I guess people just can't handle genuine humility,  
That which they've long sought in futility.  
I've always been quite an overachiever,  
Doing surprising things, making believers.

At least my Lord knows my pure condition;  
Can't wait for heaven, for my commission.  
I'll stand at the gate, chest puffed out,  
Waiting for my name, first no doubt.

I know my Lord gave humble another dimension;  
He's sure to recognize me, grant my pension.  
We're two peas in the very same pod;  
In fact, when he sees me, he'll sure be awed.

Well, I've got to go because dinner's awaiting;  
They just slipped it in, through the grating.  
This mental ward, the last year's been tough,  
But my humility will get me out, sure enough.

---

## The Same Power

Jesus, I write you this love letter,  
    Thanking you for what you did  
And for what you've given me,  
    This power once again to live.

For a long time, I hardly knew you,  
    Only as a name to misunderstand,  
Even to lightly mock as too religious,  
    As if I had no need for you.

Foolish, I felt self-sufficient,  
    Which is not sufficient at all.  
I was blind to who I was,  
    And could not see my way.

Yet you stood patiently at my side,  
    Whispering to me of your love,  
Calling me to your story and Spirit,  
    Waiting for me to reach my end.



---

I finally fell flat on my own face,  
    Seeing who I was, what I was doing.  
I had nothing left within me,  
    Neither strength nor desire.

Then, you came in, a welcome guest,  
    Even if, in my ignorance, uninvited.  
I should have invited you much earlier,  
    But still, you came in, forgiving.

I gradually learned to honor you,  
    Although I took too long to do so.  
I should have jumped at your entrance,  
    Embraced you joyfully with open arms.

You brought with you what I lacked,  
    Which was the power to continue.  
You gave me your life essence,  
    Your Spirit through whom I now live.

The power you brought was not meager  
    But the same power that gave you life,  
When you were dead on your cross,  
    Buried in your tomb for three days.

---

This power now abides richly in me,  
As your Spirit gives and nurtures it,  
Your Spirit for whom I listen and watch,  
That I might do as you desire for others.

When I feel weak, I now know I am strong,  
My strength from your hand and arm,  
Lifting me again to your happy task at hand,  
To show your love, for your honor.

This power lifts both my body and spirit,  
Giving me physical strength to rise,  
While giving me will to live as you wish,  
And joy to impart for your gladness.

I see you happy when I draw on your strength,  
That you pull hard on my light yoke,  
Asking only that I lean into your work,  
Joining you in faith, with hope and desire.

Lord, keep imparting your power to me,  
For I lack any purposeful power of my own,  
Depending instead entirely on your energy,  
This Spirit and essence through whom I live.

---

## Been There, Done That

Been there, done that, so the saying goes,  
Neatly summarizing my growing woes.

I do feel as if I've done all one can do,  
Some to satisfaction, more to my rue.

Everything seems old, already done,  
Nothing left to anticipate, glory won.

I'm a veteran of circumstance of all kinds,  
A weary soldier, set off many land mines.

I've got battle scars all over, head to toe,  
A long list of failures for heavy cargo.

Sure, along the way, I've had some fun,  
But look at me now, as if I'm all done.

Have I failed to make any mistake?

---

Does a sin exist to which I haven't awaked?

Judge me now, and the verdict would be guilty;  
I've got a sad feeling that my color is filthy.

What I need now is a new world to explore,  
A new kingdom, to open heaven's door.

I need new horizons, better than before;  
I need a better me, one fully restored.

My merit last time was sorely lacking,  
Looking to me now all like hacking.

I hope I'd be better with a second chance,  
If God would just give me one last glance.

That's what I seek, a sure fresh beginning,  
With new hope, this time I'd be winning.

I've heard that God gives us a clean slate,  
If I admit what I here write of late.

I need his merit, his character and judgment,  
To replace my own failures abundant.

---

Thus, my recent been-there-done-that sense  
Is just God's grace come to my defense.

If I'm weary over all I can remember,  
Then I know I'm ready to see his splendor.

That's the final point to which I've come:  
My future is glory, though my past is numb.

I welcome that my past I should mostly forget,  
Now that I see I lived with much to regret.

I also know why my regrets are so many:  
I took my own counsel, didn't listen to any.

What I thought was entirely right to do,  
Looks now like I should've listened to you.

Right in my own eyes didn't accomplish much,  
Other than lose the righteous Painter's touch.

But for his wonder glory, now I'm headed true,  
My weary disposition mine to eschew.

---

## I'm Trying

I'd be lying if I didn't say I've been trying,  
Vying, buying into it, applying myself,  
Complying, fortifying, clarifying, solidifying,  
In every way trying to do right, undying.

I've been striving, conniving, pushing, driving,  
Hoping I'm reviving, one final time arriving,  
All the while diving, deeper, hardly surviving,  
Needing reviving, circumstances depriving.

I'm all about pushing and pulling, pressing,  
Best-effort messing, wanting that blessing,  
Cooking, looking, trying to find a footing,  
Fishing for one lasting, final refreshing.

Yet nothing is meshing, even as I'm stretching,  
All-in progressing, disciplining, vexing,  
Determination compressing, work addressing,  
Struggling, sweating, professing, caressing.

---

I've tried this and that, gone to bat, passed the hat,  
Taken it to the mat, turned up the thermostat,  
Worked at, taken to it with a brickbat, hardhat,  
But after all that I've still fallen flat.

Why isn't it working, after all my jerking,  
My heavy lifting, networking, clerking,  
Overworking, never shirking or just lurking,  
Always churning, earning, and yearning?

Why don't I see success in this dressed-up mess,  
After all my stress, leaving me depressed?  
Why haven't my efforts coalesced into less guess,  
More progress to bless and acquiesce?

Why can't I just relax from this strange parallax,  
Let down my guard, await the climax?  
Why can't I just take an axe to the max,  
Chop up the stacks, stop in my tracks?

I'm just tired, mired, unwired, feeling fired,  
Hardly hired, seldom inspired, never admired,  
Left expired, as if I've retired, my end required,  
Undesired, the whole deal transpired.

---

Maybe I've taken entirely the wrong approach,  
Leaving my few results to my reproach,  
As if on another's better work I've encroached,  
Perhaps even poached, like a cockroach.

Maybe changing my way will save the day,  
Make hay, stop leading me far astray,  
Put success of another kind on display,  
Bring this way some real cache.

The Bible says the Lord prepares work for us,  
In this we trust, his way we look must,  
To him each day entrust, stop trying cussed,  
Admit we're bust, then turn around, adjust.

I'm going to turn to his desire, look for his work,  
Before I go berserk, fall from this high wire,  
Turn to his tasks, whatever he asks, out of mire,  
His work prior, called from my quagmire.

Lord, give me your call, a servant in your hall,  
Your will to do, each day a windfall,  
Your Spirit in my sails, making landfall,  
In thrall, easy trying, no lying.



---

## Box of Rocks

This hand I'm dealt doesn't look good,  
Like a pile of dead rot, not good wood,  
Like a box of rocks, sock of coal, all green slime,  
Like crushed bugs, mangled wire, war crime.

My box of rocks hasn't served me so well,  
Kept me sweating, stressing, in this cell,  
Kept me guessing, confused, mind gone numb,  
Eyes gone blind, ears deaf, mouth dumb.

Some are born with a silver spoon in the mouth,  
While the rest of us, our fortunes head south.  
I wasn't born with a silver spoon, no sir,  
Born instead with a promise to defer.

I'd long thought that I just had no luck,  
While others drew aces, gold dust struck.  
My draw seemed unfair, where it left me,  
While others looked so happy, carefree.

---

But gradually I learned that life's not cards,  
As if shattered glass left your future in shards.  
No, I've seen people make much out of none;  
It's not your start but where you finish, son.

I'd prefer a better deal, a new hand of cards,  
But you get what you get, no safeguards.  
It's not what you're dealt but what you do with it;  
Doing better with bad cards, that's no quit.

My box of rocks could include some iron ore  
Or even gold dust, diamonds, or more.  
What looks like rocks may just be a hammer  
To break open doors, finding the glamor.

Out of rocks, I've seen others make a house,  
Thrown in the water, their crops to douse.  
Depends on how you use what God has given,  
Treating everything a gift, all forgiven.

So, I'm taking my rocks to another level,  
Way up yon beyond the reach of the devil.  
I figure God's given me his weight in gold,  
Just to have faith that he can break this mold.

---

My resolution is to accept everything as gift,  
Rather than look at circumstances, miffed.  
Feeling cheated all my life has left me short,  
When I'm the one who my future did thwart.

Gratitude is my new attitude for every little thing,  
No longer needing things that look like bling.  
I'll take rocks, I'll take dust, I'll take sand;  
Just let me at 'em, to take my stand.

Faith in my Master's gifts, no matter how humble,  
Is all he's asked, long before I stumbled.  
When I tripped over rocks, he was telling me,  
Those rocks were my foundation for his glee.

I'm no longer blaming fortune for anything,  
Instead using whatever given to take a swing.  
I figure a home run I can hit with a stick,  
Or build myself a mansion with a brick.

Lord, don't make it any harder for poor me,  
But know, my God, I'm ready to agree:  
You've done just fine with all you've given;  
I'm the one who needs to start living.

---

## Baby Doll

My dearest child, wild and mild, charming smile,  
Sweet smelling, jelly belly, tears welling,  
Joy swelling, hope propelling, future foretelling,  
Love compelling, lovey dovey, gift from above,  
Mourning dove cooing, heart wooing, undoing,  
Flower strewing, faith renewing, whew,  
Mountain view, from the top, can't stop soaring,  
Prayers roaring: Lord, protect my baby doll.

I raised you, praised you, love-glazed you,  
From the moment you were born,  
Love swarmed, from evening to morn,  
Sickness scorned, hazards warned, nursed,  
Well versed, satisfied thirst from the first,  
Braved the worst to feed you, speed you,  
Freed you, sent on your way, God-speed you,  
Equipped, walked from the crypt, grown.

My work was not done, nor our fun, plenty to do,  
One another yet to woo, parent-child love,

---

Close as a glove, when I got an awful shove,  
Lawful thereof, convicted, restricted,  
Afflicted, evicted, dishonest depicted, twisted,  
Wicked, incarcerated, parenting truncated,  
Love serrated, shorn, torn, vacated, devastated,  
No longer free to your present parent be.

I can't hold you, embolden you, lift you, gift you,  
Drift with you, lazy river, hearts aquiver,  
Stroke you, stoke you, spirit-awoke you,  
Tears soak you, joke you, words spoke you.  
But I can pray you, sway you, hey you,  
No-ordinary-way you, never betray you,  
Memories preserve, wish everything you deserve,  
Your enemy unnerve, with my bold prayers.

I can beseech my Lord, your blessing compound,  
Into one big round mound, joy abound,  
Prayer effective, sorrow drowned, child crowned,  
Made you royalty, parental loyalty, adopted,  
God co-opted, carried of hope, Spirit eloped,  
Walking proud, through naysaying crowd,  
Unembarrassed, sibling of Christ, highest priced,  
From demons heist, my maturing child.

---

Maybe best I'm not in your way right now,  
My problems furrowing your brow,  
Taking a new vow, forget my problems, allow,  
Your own heritage, free of comparative,  
By genes undefined, instead God divined,  
No generational curse, turn from my hearse,  
Family woes disperse, your future inverse,  
Unchained from my past, rocket blast.

You have my prayers, what you need from me,  
You're entirely free, my child's own destiny,  
No felony, no leprosy, no contagion, equity,  
Drinking from your own well, swell,  
Headed for joy pell mell, Spirit ushered,  
Presence fluttered, sensitive, bright, wise,  
God's path to surmise, baptized, apprized,  
My child, still in my eyes, love outsize.

---

## Tested

I've been tempted, tested, and trialed, too,  
Failed most of them, passed a few;  
I don't like testing, no good for me,  
Too much stress and then take a plea.

I hear that testing can refine one's character,  
Remove the dross, make an inheritor;  
I don't know that's so, seems too rough;  
Submit to another test? I've had enough.

My test problem's been that I pass too few,  
Find my shortcomings, attributes askew;  
One test after another, I'm kicked to the curb,  
Not an actor, only an object of the verb.

I've faced many trials, been tested and arrested,  
Seldom acquitted, more often committed.  
I suppose I've learned a thing or two, true,  
But what's the use of so many miscues?

---

Maybe time is I skipped a few of these tests,  
    Played hooky, sat out, avoided more arrests;  
Trouble is, these tests pursue me like a hound,  
    Smelling raccoon, always gaining ground.

I've tried to avoid my share of God's refining,  
    Would rather decline, find myself reclining;  
But the good Lord keeps sending them my way,  
    Must figure I can handle more than I say.

So, time must be for more of these prayers:  
    Father, please don't test me, tests are theirs.  
I've failed so many, can't want me failing more,  
    My records too long, when sins you abhor.

Please, please, Father, I've had enough of tests,  
    Hear now my prayers, these earnest requests:  
You've got to have a better plan made for me,  
    Than another round of tests, a trials spree.

If your refining it takes, then know I'm purged  
    Of every corruption, no more testing splurge;  
Please, please, Father, find a stronger chap  
    Who can take your testing and still not snap.



---

Father, I'd beg and beg and beg some more,  
If I could avoid another test, you implore;  
But I have suspicion, my sins are not in remission;  
I'll face more trials without my permission.

So, Lord, I have a second request of you to make:  
When you send me a test, give me a break.  
When you send another trial, send an advocate,  
Who can argue my case, mercy propagate.

Father, I've heard that's your Son's grand role,  
To stand in my stead, take on the whole;  
I believe that's so, and so that's where I'll stand:  
Your Son has taken my hit from your hand.

I'd pray to do your will, indeed as I desire,  
Taking what you offer, even barbed wire.  
But my cross your Son has borne up that hill,  
My sin from my character, all to distill.

This one last path, along your Son's great way,  
I'm following hard to my very last day;  
I'm thus all in, confessing need of your Son,  
Lord, just keep me from the evil one.

---

## Judged

I hear of two councils, both of them divine,  
One in heaven, the other hell consigned.  
I've read special visions of the divine council,  
Seen some good clues of the other doubtful.  
I know I'd rather stand before the God of mercy,  
Than take the docket in court of controversy.  
The divine council meets under his great throne,  
Next to which a slain lamb stands to atone.  
God is a fearsome judge, I've no doubt whatever,  
Yet judgment he's forgiven, now and forever.  
The slain lamb saved a sin-soaked world,  
Standing intercession, full scroll unfurled.  
The lamb's testimony my entire fate secures,  
Backed as it is, as his Father ensures.  
Having confessed my acute need of the Savior,  
I welcome God's judgment of my behavior,  
Wherein God will see nothing but the blood,  
Of sacrifice so pure, it loosed mercy's flood.  
The full heavenly council certainly agrees,

---

Having seen the Son hung between the trees,  
Buried in dark chamber for days to rot,  
Until resurrected, a world of souls bought.  
The divine council's judgment must be innocent,  
For any believer who in Christ is participant,  
For the council falls at the feet of glorious God,  
Roaring their utter devotion, hallelujah!

The other council, consigned to darkest place,  
Has instead judged me guilty, of human race.  
The enemy's council has the same awful verdict  
For every man and woman under the serpent,  
Everyone who chooses their own good and evil,  
At snake's invitation, command upheaval.  
All who have no need for Son's forgiveness,  
Remain snake bitten, their demise witnessed,  
No Savior from their fall, god to themselves,  
From their Father's paradise, long expelled.  
This lost condition, hell's council confirms,  
Every fallen human, destined for worms,  
To die forever, paradise eternally lost,  
Though Son offered forgiveness at entire cost.  
The fallen dragon who alone rules hell's court  
Is liar through and through, truth to thwart,  
Accuser and deceiver, whose court all convicts,

---

Human soul and spirit, with evil to afflict.  
Over those who embrace the Son's salvation,  
The dark court lacks any jurisdiction,  
The Son having made the dragon powerless,  
The dragon's character revealed as cowardice.

Humans here on earth have judged me, too,  
Guilty more than innocent, of crimes a few.  
While these human courts have their jurisdiction,  
To which my body submits, penalty infliction,  
My spirit stands unjudged by any other than God,  
Whose mercy raises me up, heavenward.  
In human hands my body suffers, corrupt,  
While in God's hands my spirit soars, plucked,  
From human judgment withdrawn, freed,  
By God's sacrificial love, as Son decreed.  
Nevermore these prison walls adorn my soul,  
Jesus Christ the Savior rescued from Sheol,  
So that my spirit can genuinely enjoy,  
My Lord's compassion no matter my employ.  
Thus, of judgments here and below I worry not,  
To turn my mind to Christ, in glory thought.

---

## Naughty Me

I have at times thought myself pure,  
    Only to discover again sin's allure,  
My flesh attracted there as fly to light,  
    Sure to die from holy judgment's bite.  
The senses pursue only their satisfaction,  
    From which holiness assures retraction,  
God unable near any corruption to stand,  
    Without obliterating it beforehand.  
My flesh does not this perfect God know,  
    Its entire object instead itself to grow,  
In every appetite momentarily satisfied,  
    Its insatiable hunger only ratified.

Therefore, I pluck my eye from its socket,  
    With each stolen glance from the docket,  
Where eye and ear and mouth and tongue,  
    Stand convicted of evil's lowest rung.  
Surprised I am at my flesh's fallen state,  
    Until it reminds me again of its fate,

---

To always chase another sordid dimension,  
Of its craving for ever-greater attention.  
Away from my flesh, I must surely turn,  
If my Savior's admiration I am to earn,  
My salvation won on his mercy and merit alone,  
His command yet to away sin thrown.

Every day, I discover more of naughtiness,  
My flesh's sin and mind's waywardness,  
So much that to Christ's Spirit I must turn,  
With every recollection, he's concerned,  
That his sanctification I am to receive,  
If only I continue in Christ to believe,  
All gain already won through his discipline,  
To his guidance, need I only be listening.  
Glad am I, my mischief he calls to my attention,  
Desiring with me my soul's ascension,  
Upward to join my fellow believers in paradise,  
So pure of joy, so far beyond my price.

I commit again each moment to his side,  
My soul, my spirit, my body be his bride,  
My only relief from my sordid earthly state,  
To be his sister, brother, willing mate.  
My spirit to his Spirit please be wed,

---

Lest I only these earthly denizens tread.  
While my flesh desires every unholy pleasure,  
My spirit hungers only for heaven's treasures,  
My one hope being that heaven's citizen I be,  
When this beautiful but broken earth I flee,  
To my eternal home of fulfilled mission,  
My Lord draws me, in sin's full remission.

This corruption that tracks me like hell's hound,  
Is neither my destiny nor my playground,  
But weak shadow only of a defeated enemy,  
Whom my Lord vanquished in royal legacy,  
Freeing humankind of fallen desires to rule alone,  
Without creator God's command condone.  
I have no desire to chase my eyes' desires,  
Dousing my unseen God's love-stoked fires,  
His passion my choice instead to embrace,  
That I might live under his glorious grace,  
Wherein he looks askance at my common clay,  
That I worship him eternally, free of decay.

---

# My Citizenship

To whom or what do you grant your allegiance?

Where does your loyalty lay?

Is your devotion to pleasure, status, or work?

With you, what trifle holds sway?

Are you a citizen of the world, nation, or locale?

What would your passport be?

If someone asked you to register your citizenship,

In what kingdom an enrollee?

What cause or community sees you faithful?

Who are your fellow members?

Where would others say you most belong?

What passion stokes your embers?

Would your memorial carry a flag or crest?

What seal would mark your grave?

To what office do you hope to ascend?

What would be your conclave?



---

What club do you wish to join for fellowship?

What society claims your affinity?

Do you have a secret handshake or dance?

What group is your sanguinity?

We yearn for our tribe, clan, or coterie,

Somewhere, anywhere, to belong;

We pretend membership, even make it up,

Just to have our throng.

Through party and faction, we multiply

Feelings feeding an empty soul;

Bloc, kin, and blood give us identity,

Putting our name on the roll.

Examine your citizenship, my friend,

For what it's worth,

Whether it serves you as it should,

And you are worthy of it.

You know you have choice in the matter,

Whether this or that group bestow;

Citizenship you may earn and claim,

Or renounce and overthrow.

---

The powers and principalities of this earth,  
Its dominions and authorities, too,  
Are hard masters, deceptive and fleeting in rule,  
Though they souls earnestly woo.

Be cautious of devoting yourself to the world,  
Where peace and flourishing are rare;  
If you do so nonetheless, against better judgment,  
Then hardship and anxiety you will bear.

Decades of struggle taught me better devotion,  
Citizenship worth everything;  
I finally learned that my citizenship is in heaven,  
A Savior, Jesus Christ, to bring.

I am member of no place but God's kingdom,  
His Son and Spirit so near;  
I am citizen of no earthly principality true,  
Rather to divine I adhere.

Join me, my friend, in fellowship pure,  
Eternal society formed,  
Where we glory in God's own presence,  
Our hearts securely warmed.

---

## Greetings, I Write

Glad you accept my correspondence here,  
These greetings I so gladly write,  
To have your audience, your precious ear,  
As we share our relative plight.

See, my letters affirm that someone cares,  
You for me, as much as me for you,  
The two of us sharing correspondence airs,  
Raising us each from challenging milieu.

Your hardship is evident from its address,  
A place to which criminal law consigns,  
While my lesser hardship is hidden from view,  
A place we share, incorporeal confines.

These bodies, these souls, these thoughts do trap,  
Prisons and jails of own kind,  
Though constraint here is of different map,  
We share restraint of mind.

---

I write not to make light of your challenges,  
But for our fellowship true,  
Embarrassment you have no need of balances,  
For I am as embarrassed as you.

It is what it is, popular saying today goes;  
Please just know our kinship:  
Hearts, minds, and souls, highs and lows,  
You and I, God similarly equips.

I write so frequently this kinship to share,  
You and I in same abode;  
We share our concourse with God in prayer,  
Equal in his image, same mode.

So, sister, brother, cheerful greetings today,  
Lift your spirits high;  
We join arms, one another, to carry the fray,  
Against mutual enemy, war cry.

Let's fight the battle Christ already won,  
Our Savior unchaining us, free;  
Let's run together over hill, it's done:  
Jesus gains for us victory.

---

I think of you now, minute by hour,  
As time runs its course;  
I drink your sorrows and joys, they're ours,  
Riding the same white horse.

Writing you is my privilege indeed,  
Believing you read in earnest;  
Please keep up our joyous fellowship creed,  
Our coming salvation to burnish.

I welcome your thoughts and prayers awhile,  
Every moment you might spare,  
For good I find it to know, my friend,  
I have your friendship; you care.

I'll write again next week, if you're willing  
My letter to read,  
Time is on our side, together fulfilling  
Our desire to share, agreed.

Write back only if your heart so moves,  
To let me, your condition know;  
I treasure your words, as I hope this proves,  
Your friendship richly bestow.

---

## The Infirmary

Don't let me fall into the infirmary's hand,  
Where only very sickest dare to land;  
The care they offer is the opposite of grand,  
Where better have will and testament plan;  
One goes in hoping cure for malady of gland,  
Comes out for the morgue, autopsy scan.

The infirmary has no doctor, no expert, you see,  
Barely a nurse, assistant, aide, or trainee;  
The care one receives must be voluntary,  
Because county doesn't pay inmate-care fee;  
One better not have pain in elbow or knee,  
Lest one come out of infirmary an amputee.

I've seen men and women prefer to nearly die,  
Than to seek the infirmary's poison and lye;  
One goes in sick, despairing, comes out terrified,  
From the infirmary's medicine to detoxify;  
The stuff they hand out, one takes, and goodbye,  
Making one remember poor Jesus, crucified.

---

The infirmary doesn't intend its patients' torture,  
They're just unqualified, anything but torpor;  
One supposes they'd prefer to cure in short order  
But lack skill for anything but a Yorkshire;  
Having no equipment except pestle and mortar,  
They concoct what they can, call the coroner.

The county commissioners who fund the jail  
Know things are bad but face blackmail;  
See, few care at all when a prisoner's frail,  
When they weigh other things on tax's scale;  
So, funding's scarce, medical treatment folktale,  
Until the prisoner's nearly dead, Mary hail.

That's how they treat us, hoping for the best,  
While care from their hands, one must wrest;  
I've seen men convulse, spit blood, oppressed,  
Because the warden, infirmary dispossessed;  
Rather than provide an on-site clinic or test,  
They wait until you're dying, send you west.

They'll let you go home, sicker than a dog,  
When they see you've no hope, a true gulag;  
The only way out is feet first and epilogue,

---

Memorial in chapel or maybe synagogue;  
So, calling the infirmity is one's last dialogue,  
As you'll soon find out, they're backlogged.

Yet, I've found a way, now I'll need to share:  
Seek healing and cure through earnest prayer;  
For Christ himself said, for the sick to sure care,  
Not just that but visit the prisoner threadbare;  
These things he commanded, we pray anywhere,  
Knowing he desires them as his love affair.

You can see, my confidence is in Christ's desire,  
His power I seek, knowing it's far higher;  
The infirmity is surely another human satire,  
Cruel joke, exposing corruption's conspire;  
God doesn't joke over wrongs but is a rectifier,  
Which is why I pray over the infirmity's fire.

Lord, heal cellmates, enemies, friends, and me,  
Before we visit that horrible infirmity;  
You are the great physician, for all eternity,  
Who earned our healing on Calvary;  
I turn to you for perfect medicine, so free,  
Knowing our healing is in your glory.



---

## Dying in the Clink

Lord, don't let me die in this place,  
Not to see my family, their face,  
Not with love and memory surround,  
Not their reassurance my fear drown.

Lord, death in jail is unusually cruel,  
Punishment unconstitutional, ghoul,  
Disproportional to any human crime,  
Turning my short term into lifetime.

To end my days in sterile environment,  
Stripped of all human enlightenment,  
Is to impose a curse beyond my sin,  
Turn me over to grim reaper's grin.

I need embrace of momma and dad,  
Have them bless my final launchpad;  
I need to hug my brothers and sisters,  
Hear my nieces and nephews whispers.

---

I need to know my end's not futile,  
    Last days lived in a place so brutal;  
I need belief my life wasn't wasted,  
    Some other legacy, heritage tasted.

God, this place can't be your covenant,  
    Left to the wiles of human government,  
No grace or mercy on my soul bestowed,  
    Concrete-block walls the end of my road.

May I complain that I'd hope for more?  
    May I have hoped for a different floor?  
Lord, you've left me in this basement, dying,  
    When my hope was your mountaintop spying.

I'd even take a doctor or nurse who cared,  
    Make my demise a little less scared,  
Make my last breath seem more assured,  
    Than cold hearts and hands endured.

Lord, show me you still care for me,  
    Though not deserving, I plainly see;  
Send me a sign you even know I'm here,  
    Beyond the image of the enemy's leer.

---

One last time, release me from death's grip,  
Comfort me you rule, eternal headship;  
Show me again, everything's under control,  
Even these last breaths, headed to Sheol.

Don't let me die, relying totally on belief,  
Without bolstering confidence, in relief;  
Or better I pray that you grant me your faith,  
For you died, too, to usher in my grace.

Maybe you've just answered my prayer,  
Reminding me a cross was far worse lair;  
Your death makes mine look like ease,  
Your resurrection life, granting breeze.

Your Spirit blows gently through my soul,  
Reminding me you're right by my side,  
Lifting me across threshold as your bride,  
Carrying me to paradise, soul astride.

My hope, my faith, my belief in my end,  
Is that you rose so that I, too, live again,  
Not in cold, hard, bright, inhuman cell,  
But in your glory to forever dwell.

---

## Legal Beagles

My lawyers are fools, must be, you see,  
    Never heard from them, those mules,  
Donkeys maybe, rhymes with class,  
    Of which they have none, by the way,  
No sway, just do as the judge tells them,  
    Working for crumbs, those scums,  
On government dole, could get me parole!  
    But no, they're too droll, wry, tough guys.  
They think they're funny, want more money,  
    To stand there doing nothing but blushing,  
As if they had a conscience, when unconscious,  
    Sometimes even drunk, those skunks,  
No ethics, into pyrotechnics, making shows,  
    Coming to blows, over their own pride,  
Not as if they'd fight, allied, on my side,  
    When that's what they're supposed to do!  
Those shrews, those weasels, with their easels,  
    May as well have measles, all their evils,  
Not returning my calls, from within these walls,  
    Letting me languish in anguish, dangling,

---

Like a puppet, when they should be wrangling,  
They're instead schmoozing, cruising,  
Oozing over the prosecutor, when I'm losing  
My mind in here, in fear of conviction,  
My predilection to rue my predicament,  
Wouldn't you not be diffident?  
You'd worry, too, if you were I, jail's alumni,  
In and out and in again, prayer, amen,  
Freed, then arrested, docket congested,  
Advocates primates, must be in dire straits,  
Lost their bar cards, they'll soon be jail guards,  
Not prima donna lawyers, seeking employers,  
These poor dimwits, can't find the law library,  
Fearing their adversary, when it's my hide,  
Only their pride, back at the watering hole,  
Prosecutor's cajolery, failed as a notary,  
So, they want me to flip, be a stool, inform,  
When that's a death sentence, not the norm;  
I'd come out of here dead or maimed, not the same,  
Because that's what they do to pigeons, flew,  
Cutting their throat, their defenses promote,  
Intimidate witnesses, fabrications synthesis,  
Until they're free, and I'm guilty, my harbor silty,  
While they're in clear water, their alma mater  
Naming them chairs, professors' lairs,

---

Where my lawyers want to be, the academy,  
Where they're not working hard, in this junkyard,  
But are on the faculty telling stories about me,  
And I'm still in here, their malpractice clear,  
So, I'm calling the bar, a grievance to file,  
My own lawyers' guile, their undue delay,  
Ignoring my matter, my defense in tatters,  
Admitting my affray, dunces to play, judge allay,  
You get the picture: jail's my stricture.

Wait, what's this? A letter my from barrister?  
Good news of my character? I'm free today?  
Motion in my defense, whence comes dispense,  
Charges dismissed, clerk's research assist,  
Of first impression, judge's discretion, freed now,  
Habeas corpus, happy as a porpoise.  
My lawyers I love, didn't fit the glove, like O.J.,  
Brilliant foray into forensics, paged appendix,  
Exhibit D, my ticket to be free, all their due,  
their services to you, I'd recommend,  
Their work commend, although you know what?  
God I trust. My advocate lives in glory high,  
This rollercoaster ride, I'll set aside, hold instead,  
Christ my head, no matter what, case shut.

---

## Your Advocate

I am your advocate, your barrister, your lawyer,  
I am your counselor, confidante, and warrior;  
I strode to the hilly place they called the skull,  
Your every wrong, sin, and crime to null;  
My goal was your complete redemption in love,  
To rescue you from death to heaven above;  
My Father's gracious purpose I gladly fulfilled,  
To a mansion in my Father's paradise build,  
For believers who know I rose from doom,  
After three days in the Arimathean's tomb;  
My advocacy complete, your victory is won,  
We've cleared the docket, Father and Son,  
Our loving embrace eternal in Spirit's union,  
What you celebrate in service communion,  
My body and blood broken on awful cross,  
To remove your sin, turned glory from dross.

Why would I advocate at such entire cost,  
What only you and your fellow humans lost?  
Why would I suffer torture only you are due,

---

And die in an agony after from garden rue?  
Why would I satisfy your penalty, your sentence,  
When you were the one owing repentance?  
My Father and I have always been eternal love,  
Out of which we love others, in Spirit's dove;  
Our love is sacrifice, one richly serving another,  
Like sister and brother, father and mother;  
Father and Son were family before beginning,  
From long before Adam and Eve's sinning;  
As family, we love, no matter the diversion,  
Sins forgiven in baptism's submersion.  
All you've done is accepted God's adoption,  
As your wisest choice, your greatest option.

The charges you now face, your sad conviction,  
Are not your worry, eternal malediction.  
Earth's courts are but shadows of greater things,  
Divine rule above, under King of kings,  
Where divine council meets under God on throne,  
Slain lamb at right hand, glory shown,  
To read the great list of his happy confessors,  
Whose destiny is above, freed of oppressors,  
Whether judges, prosecutors, witnesses, or jailers,  
Heaven's mercy shown each, the Son tailors.  
The Son's justice is sure, granted from Father,



---

Sure to show mercy, penalty paid, no bother,  
The Son having canceled your debt owed justice,  
By giving himself, knowing not to trust us,  
For no penalty we pay without needing another,  
One sin forgiven just to yield to its brother.

Accept me, your advocate, the one who's given,  
So, from all your sins, your spirit be riven,  
Made pure as it was when God first made it,  
Intending its destiny lie heavenward, fitted,  
Ready to join in Father's eternal communion  
Through Spirit with Son, in image, human;  
For godlike you are, to walk in God's garden,  
Conversing while working under pardon,  
To know why God made you for his presence,  
Among trees of fruit so sweet in pleasance,  
Harbored for him without any tears to shed,  
Joy and peace abounding forever instead.  
Heaven holds no conviction, no charges, either,  
Your advocate proven innocence's keeper,  
Your warrior, your lawyer, your comforter, too;  
You'll awake every day to morning's dew.

---

## Step It Up

Lower than God's divine angels are we,  
As the Father subjected Christ in humanity;  
Lesser in strength and power are we, too,  
Less able than our ministering spirits who  
Our protectors and attendants in spirit are,  
With our enemy demons struggle, spar,  
To our souls from Satan's deception protect,  
That we may God honor in greatest respect.

Glad we are that angels mighty fly  
To our rescue when they our enemy spy,  
For we do not our enemies always see,  
But rather ignorant of their wiles often be,  
Not seeing their coming in sheep's clothing,  
Not their temptations consistently loathing,  
As we should God's righteousness seek,  
Lest to him our corruption reek.

Cherubim, seraphim, living creatures these,

---

Angels God created, his glory to please,  
Arrayed in hierarchy, each with duties:  
Worship, word, fighting Satan's cruelties.  
Scripture shares angelic events, descriptions due,  
Yet of many angels, scripture names just two:  
Archangel Michael stands tall in battle;  
Messenger Gabriel's prophecies rattle.

As God sends his divine creatures here and there,  
Serving humankind's salvation affair,  
We learn from the Bible astonishing fact:  
Lowly humans resurrected equal angelic pact;  
Angel powers and strength, we do not match,  
Until somehow resurrected, in God's dispatch,  
When scripture tells us, our lowly state,  
God elevates humans to angelic probate.

Then, even more extraordinary truth surely is,  
That humans will judge angels, kingdom his,  
God granting humble humankind his authority,  
In heaven, humans over angels superiority,  
A truth too vast, too profound to incorporate,  
Humankind's divinity, God to cultivate,  
That you and I would somehow make justice  
Over angels scripture depicts augustus.

---

While our elevation takes place only when  
    God lifts us from this corrupt condition,  
The thought of someday ruling angels divine,  
    Makes me step up my game, get in line;  
To consider that we would above angelic be,  
    Should make us take our conduct seriously,  
That we represent Christ as best we can,  
    Though his representation is salvation plan.

While every ministering spirit, we appreciate,  
    Needing every defense and word relate,  
We should know God's love far extends  
    Beyond sending angels us to attend,  
To include that someday in his kingdom rule,  
    We would sit in judgment, on grand stool,  
Angels to direct toward better ends,  
    As we judge best for heavenly amends.

---

# Time

God  
knows  
the future  
because  
God is  
outside  
time.

God  
separated light  
from darkness  
making night  
and day  
and thus time  
when the Spirit  
hovered over  
the waters.

God

---

is  
never  
late  
because  
a thousand years  
is like  
a day to  
God.

God  
never  
runs out  
of time  
because  
a day  
is like  
a thousand years to  
God.

God  
does as  
he pleases  
because  
a time exists  
for everything

---

under heaven.

God

will unite  
all things  
in heaven  
and on earth  
as his plan  
for the fullness  
of time.

Only

the Father  
knows  
the hour  
when  
the Son  
returns.

---

## Jailhouse Conversion

They say my faith is merely jailhouse conversion,  
Casting aspersion, denigrating, hating, berating,  
When they should be venerating, advocating,  
Participating, reverberating, invigorating,  
Sharing what is good, I would! Wouldn't you?  
Instead of invalidating, humiliating, alienating.

Sure, this place has given my faith prominence,  
Dominance, confidence, concreteness, in its  
Commonness, as this place gives anything zing,  
Things so stark here, sparse, revealing farce,  
Turning inverse human discourse, coarsening,  
Highlighting anger, remorse, and repentance.

Isn't faith this place's purpose? My sentence,  
Its essence, my ascendance from this hell,  
To dispel my pell-mell descent, to dwell instead  
Above my cell, this strange hotel, run by cartel,  
In God's paradise, all suffice, souls splice thrice,



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From Jesus's sacrifice, my purchase price?

Isn't rehabilitation government's goal? Justice's  
Soul? The whole toll for this sinkhole,  
My faith to form, calm my storm, find the norm,  
Decipher life's cuneiform, conform, transform,  
Remove the chloroform, prove I can move into  
A new groove of which others approve?

Truth is, faith's richer here than anywhere,  
Not just a jacket to don, some inauthentic show,  
But the whole dough, rising, comprising, advising,  
Symbolizing my socializing, galvanizing the  
Exercising my spirit whom I'd never known,  
Instead, disowned, left alone, overthrown.

I'll take a jailhouse conversion as my excursion  
From fatal diversions to sin submersion,  
Word emersion for excision of corrupt reversion,  
Professing my Lord day and night, toward  
Higher ground, a sound mound, indeed a rock,  
My God, my rescuing stumbling block.

Mock on, you who doubt my faith, think it wraith,  
When instead salvation is my eternal libation,

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Christ's cup from which I deny this location  
As my destiny, which is instead to be free,  
By God's decree that his Son was worthy for me,  
Took this penalty, denied jail my identity.

Yes, I must now walk this walk, more than talk,  
Prove my faith by act, new pact, proven intact,  
Attract with Christ's love, counteract my flesh,  
Show an impact from this abstract contract,  
God promised, resurrection backed, mortal  
Code cracked, death retract, genuine, holy.

My transformation here is the Spirit's work,  
In which I cooperate, straight through gate,  
Grateful wait, this inmate, no stalemate,  
Commutate my term, future firm, faith  
Reaffirm, no matter my circumstance, recall  
Once outside this wall, forestall return.

So, take my conversion as genuine, my headline,  
That I'm a follower of Christ sacrificed,  
Resurrected, collected the elected, uninfected  
By past sins, now protected, disconnected  
From evil's influence, instead directed, on my way  
To respected, erected, connected, unaffected.

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## On Pause

Thank you, Lord, for this merciful pause,  
This interlude in my rushed certitude,  
This outrageous hiatus into solitary quietus,  
Where I may reflect on my defect, correct  
My habits, disassemble my status apparatus,  
Replacing my debasing with your gracing.

You allowed others to impose this repose,  
To secure my sinecure in this premature  
Burial, the hard result of adversarial scenario,  
Conviction infliction for my constriction,  
Where I must silently consider my soul's bidder,  
Whether enemy or Lord, my future toward.

I regretted this enforced stop, my belly flop  
Into this ward under guard, on heap's discard,  
Forgotten, misbegotten, rotten, at bottom,  
Until realizing recently, you treated me decently,  
My safety to ensure, with this tough tour.

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Behold: here I am, in your firm hold, to mold,  
Too old to learn, but in this quern, ground  
Like seed into something useful, others need,  
Rather than an annoyer and destroyer,  
My God now my lawyer and employer,  
Whose will I seek, even here, low and meek.

Continue this grim pause, under human laws,  
Until you've confirmed, I've discerned,  
My one sure route, which is in your redoubt,  
Fortified against sin, fully in your arms,  
Under your flag, neither to zig nor zag,  
But straight to run, by your mercy undone.

Make my time worth the climb from this grime,  
That I may emerge to joy, not dirge, to dance  
And splurge in free embrace, by your glory graced,  
Held upright, ready for fight, not against man,  
But against temptation's hand, beckoning toward  
Reckoning, risk deafening, death threatening.

Inoculate me against the first degree, second, too,  
Carrying me through the wilderness vast,  
Drawn from my hurtful past, wounds amassed,

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Obstacle at every intersection, questions asked,  
Challenges coming, fate drumming, fear here,  
That I won't last once released to the beast.

But I accept your assurance that you have plans  
For my hands, not that others understand,  
Just you and me, things we see, where I'm free  
To love you and love others, too, life imbued,  
Your Son raised, new life praised, born again,  
Not to death but to your Spirit's breath.

I hear you speak in words and groans, in my spirit,  
A river of life, free of strife, I your wife,  
Your bride in white, moonlight at night, this pause  
My opportunity to hear your importuning me,  
When out of here, distracted I would be, protracted,  
Lost to your presence, tossed, my holocaust.

Thank you, I say again, in gratitude, my attitude  
About this cell, where your Spirit may dwell  
Richly in me, swiftly to speak, brush my cheek,  
Reminding me, unbinding me, unwinding me,  
Setting me free, for your glory, part of your story,  
Just you and me, in this pause, probable cause.

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## False Accusations

I've done plenty, true, more than enough to rue,  
Admitting my guilt, blood spilt, to the hilt,  
Caught red handed, wrists banded, jail landed,  
Where I belonged for many I've wronged.

I've just not done what some claim, not to blame  
For everything they say, toss my way,  
Lay at my door, like I've done it before, lie swore,  
And punishment: deserve more, lock the door.

I've sure done my share, not that I don't care;  
I accept responsibility for my culpability;  
I'm guilty as sin, throw me in the bin, except  
Just not for all some say, allegations lay.

These false accusations aren't fair, not my affair;  
They anger me, blaming me for others' spree,  
Assuming I've caused their pain, owe them rebate,  
Should compensate for another's strait.

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Now, I suppose that some blame others for me,  
For those crimes of which I am in fact guilty;  
If I go free while others pay, then maybe, hey!  
I should indeed pay for their affray.

I've come to conclude that the cosmic ledger  
Isn't better than faulty justice, maybe worse,  
Because if God accounted me for all I've done,  
Then I'd better run, fast, in any direction.

I'd never get out from under my debt mountain,  
Countless crimes mounting, astounding,  
Crushing my hope, leaving me a misanthrope,  
Requiring a stethoscope to find my heart.

So rather than get angry at false accusations,  
Harming my relations, killing expectations,  
I've decided to have a better attitude: gratitude  
That others don't blame me for more.

I'll truthfully deny false accusations; no sense  
To admit of what a jury would acquit.  
But I don't expect accusers to believe refusals;  
Others believe what they wish; God knows.

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May my character not depend on what I defend,  
Denials, trials, and arguments aside.  
My character depends on my Lord's interdiction,  
Giving malediction valediction in crucifixion.

I thus worry not about what others accuse,  
Whether I win or lose, my score in lore,  
Held in the hands of a Lord who stands  
Condemned in my stead, glory wed.

My anger resolves in the love of Christ,  
My soul heist from a devil whose level  
Is so far beneath God's planned destiny for me,  
In garden paradise restored, on Son moored.

Accuse away, while I pray for each enemy's soul,  
Their intercession my role, to bring peace  
To each, whether their false accusations cease  
Or continue apace, all taken as God's grace.

He's made me that strong, that like his Son,  
I can suffer another's wrong and not defend  
False accusations they've penned, beyond denial,  
God's Son taken my trial with all human wile.



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## Conclusion

Poetry makes writer and reader each reach for truths they may only dimly perceive. The writer strives to discern the meaning of fleeting thoughts, spying the Spirit whose delight the writer seeks. The reader wrestling with the poem's thought does the same, finding the Spirit between the lines and rhymes. The Spirit wishes that writer and reader glimpse him, not that anyone can know him fully. He is so far above us in his thoughts that a glimpse now and then is enough. He would shatter us if he gave us more. His essence holds that much power and love, more than we can contain. Bits of him supply our joy.

Poetry also gives writer and reader room to embrace and elaborate truths we firmly know. Sometimes, confirmation of those truths is all we need to get through the day. Followers of Christ know essential truths. We have discovered the world's heart, the reason for its existence. Discerning the world's foundation in a divine eternal community of love, we wish to share it, to publicize and promote it. Many believe the enemy's lie that the world's foundation is struggle and death. It is not. Free yourself. Declare the world's truth once again, firmly, courageously, and joyously.

Poetry also offers delights in its sing-song meter, unexpected rhyme, and absence of expected rhyme. Rhyming and meter force unusual word choice and grammatical construction, just enough to make the writing fresh, fun, and intriguing. These reasons are enough to write and read poetry. The reason to write to fellow prisoners is

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that Christ commands it. As his disciples, we are to feed the hungry, care for the sick, and visit the prisoner. We are each prisoners of Christ, happy to commit our souls to his care, to do as he desires, and to have no other god before him.

I hope you've found in this slim volume the hope you need for today. Our Lord supplies plenty of hope. We need only continue to turn to him. Let us do so in prayer, caring for one another, and sharing his word. Let us continue to visit one another, not as prisoners of our circumstances but as prisoners of Christ. I am in the Lord's bondage, not set free until my role here on earth is done, when I will join him in his paradise. I look forward to greeting you again there. May your time on earth be filled with knowledge, comfort, and love of the one Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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## Other Faith Books from the Author

What Just Happened: The World's Madness in Poetry

Walking Through the Bible: A Journey Guide

Spiritspeak: Sharing Some Very Good News

Applying the Bible: Discipleship Exercises

Church Policies and Procedures Manual

Top 100 Questions Asked Christians

Gospelspeak: The New Testament

Letters to America's Churches

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A Letter to Memphis

The Faithful Lawyer

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Secret Devotion

Epic Good News

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Pierce's Cause

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