

Poetry Series

Cheryl Lavender
- poems -

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Cheryl Lavender(12/18/1953)

Wife of 38 years,3 Children,1 grandson. I am an artist and a poet. I love my imac and my iPhone, but more than all of this combined, I love my Lord. He is my Rock and my soft place to fall!

A Prayer

January 02,2003

Dear Father...
Each day I relive the struggle,
My heart fails at the thought.
I wonder why...how...
How can I do it again?

And yet, I know,
Yes, I know it is for me, this struggle...
It is what I am here to do.
To live each day in the midst of the fire,
to walk through it...
Away from the fields of pillows soft
To be born each day on coals of fire,
To never know sweet peace...here

But...wait...I speak too quickly...no thought...
He is here with me...the Son of my heart.
I feel Him now...He has taken my hand and...
I do not walk alone...
I feel the music swelling inside me...
Do you not hear it?

My Father speaks to me now...
In between every heartbeat.
He gives me strength to move thru the pain...
'My child, do not fear the minutes. the hours.'
'I will carry you...hold you...cry with you...'
and I am comforted...the fear is gone.
The loneliness has faded,
And I am restored...
To live the struggle...yet again...
yet again!

Father...Dear Father...Can you hear me...
It's a new day...
and...I need you...

Cheryl Lavender

A Work Of Life...an Artist's Perspective

In some way of every day,
I raise my pencil to sketch a life,
to open my heart,
surrender to passion,
to free the spirit inside of me.

Through faded strokes,
in tones of grey,
I open the eyes and lift the smile,
moving through sinews
of muscle and mass,
the body form flows
genuine and free.

Provoked to respect,
again and again,
the essence of creation,
compelled to walk
it through anew.
My mind's perfection,
never quite achieved,
left to creative flaws,
clinging to the hope
of a better tomorrow.

And so it goes,
with every line,
with every shadow,
the soul breaks forth
and comes to life.
Somewhere underneath
the lead and the graphite,
interwoven through
the revelation of dark and light,
forever ascribed to canvas and frame,
lies the work of a life...an artist's point of view.

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Angel Romp

Fluffy white, pillowy soft,
The clouds angels joyfully romp upon.
The hand of God, the Artist's touch,
Initiates creation into finite view.

Sun of fire, Son of God,
The blazing inferno breeching the soul.
Enticed to reach, provoked to remain,
I close my eyes to comprehend His refrain.

Majestic explosion, in peacock array,
Impotent to grasp the Glory within.
The birds soar by, in effortless protrusion,
Celebrating the expanse of His Kingdom to come.

Between the clouds, encompassed by the wind,
I find my heart bound by the grace of Him.
Will I ever know? Can my life innately expose,
the magnitude, radiance and grandeur of 'The Great I Am'?

A glimpse of time, a passing glance to find,
Did I see the Glory that exhilarates my life?
In turning around, in living retrospect,
Do I miss the lessons He died to contend?

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Imperfections

June 24,2002

Moving through the imperfections of my life,
I've found a house of shadowed rooms,
of make-shift windows, washed-out rivers,
and muddy waters, run over with significance.

The disdain of my hope established under painted walls
of hard-born enamel and drop-down ceilings
have so prejudiced my existence, leaving me nothing more
than fragmented coverings and gaping holes.

Yet, somewhere amidst this dark night,
I have come to know the true measure of Grace and Light,
reviving the soul, demanding purity out of impurity,
creating life within the brittle ground.

For I am persuaded by causes above my own,
and I am brought to an unbending dimension of Hope and Love,
of Mercy never ceasing, infinite beyond its measure,
a reality where darkness must concede,
where Light constrains to enter in.

Here alone, where I carry the depth of my pain,
I am compelled to release the guilt
that draws my soul to its death,
to lay it bare on a path of blood born by my Savior.

And I cry, cry for what I have done, cry for who I have become,
cry for pain caused, for boundaries crossed,
for sin forgiven, for Love embraced,
for Hope restored, for Mercy given...yet again!

Cheryl Lavender

Long I Have Sought Thee

Long I have sought Your loving face, the nectar of Your limitless grace.
The fragrance as sweet as Your blooming countenance You give with one look my way.

How could I count Your wonderful works, as myriad as the stars in Your beveled sky?

How can I know Your love for me, for it spans the heavens to encounter me?

Long I have sought Your holy presence, the color of Your abundant integrity.
The wisdom as great as Your marvelous character You give with one touch to my hand.

How can I imagine The expanse of Your realm, as profuse as the sands in the seas?

How could You die for the sinner You see? Why would You hear my pleas?

Long I have sought Your abiding holiness, the measure of Your righteousness.
The assurance as real as Your remarkable fidelity You give with one brush of Your breath.

How can I fathom the depth of Your caring, as profuse as the rain falls from the skies?

How can You abide the abyss of my wickedness? Why would You even try?

Long I have sought the shelter of Your loving embrace, the refuge from worldly disgrace.

The place where my brokenness is healed, where my wholeness will be revealed.

How can I believe You would reach down to me, for so much of sin enters in?

I need only accept the Faith You have imparted to me.

Long I have sought Thee! Now You have found me!

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Radiant Tennessee Nights

All alone and coerced at twilight,
I fixed my gaze on the glorious menagerie
known as the Tennessee eventide.

Implication more beautiful than one can foresee
graced my soul with God's holy imagination.

His fingers brushed the clouds in feathered delight,
as His hands entwined the reds and yellows into a brilliant
pursuit of my dulled and silent mind.

How can I see all He is to me?
How can I reach beyond my sinful humanity
to partake of the consummate realm of His Tennessee creation?
Over and over we are given the sights that are
the tacit perceptions of our God, great and mighty.

Will you open your eyes and encompass His origination?
Or will you look without seeing or know without
perceiving the merciful hand of One so gracious and true?

He is there! Initiate with vigilance your unresponsive
and silent heart! Look beyond what you see to the One
who sees you! He is in the beautiful Tennessee nights.

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Seeds

In the planting of His purpose
there comes a seed of Holy Truth
when given to His children
kindles His providential harvest.

And in the nurture of the progeny,
underneath the well-tilled ground
is born a rightly cast vision
of the saint and yet, the child.

So, as often we are purposed,
in a place with naught to see,
our soul is left to wonder
what becomes of the solitary seed.

But in God's determined portrait
underneath the warming sun,
the seed becomes the flower
girdled in the mercy of the Son.

Content to be in this place,
the holy calling of His grace,
though pallid be the framework,
He has embraced us into this.

Though we may not know the moment,
we are assured of what will come,
when the seed of Truth is planted
and given over to His love.

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Souls In Conflict

Souls in conflict, battles rage on,
Peace out of reach, crisis never gone.
How do I live this life for Him?
What must I do to flee this sin?

Jesus, where, O where are You?
My soul seeks to find the glue.
The bonds are ever straining,
Striving for Hope sustaining.

Your presence, I reach out to,
Knowing is all I can do.
Help my heart not to falter,
Lord, put my knees to the altar.

Jesus, my strength and my fortress,
When my weakness causes distress.
Jesus, my life and my comfort,
When my will has lost its' cynical retort.

When conflict has overtaken,
And all I've done seems mistaken,
Remember the Words' God has given.
They are the promises I live in.

Cheryl Lavender

The Book Of Antiquities

At first glance, one would most certainly pass it by,
For it looked as though it has no merit.
The binding is tattered and torn,
worn and weathered, decayed from abuse.

Its pages have been yellowed and stained,
Bearing the soiled prints of dull fingers
having carelessly caressed the pages through the years.,
doubtlessly seeking the answers for endless questions unresolved.

As it is, just as it appears to be, the shell seems to bear no worth,
But deep within the pages peering through the faded writings
Lie the depths of a life given, a life not worthy to be,
But given still, freely given for a greater purpose not its own.

As one begins to read, it seems as if what was clear begins to fade
Almost as if this book was being re-written.
Something took hold of my soul and I could not put it down,
For I began to realize that this was the revelation of my life,
The complete and perfect working
of God in my life, from sunrise to sunset,
And I knew, instinctively knew,
I had to continue through this transformation.

Each page became a mystery awakened, hope renewed,
Grace established for the days of trials yet to come,
And though it often appeared that the writing would dim
And my faith would falter, in a moment, in an instant
The writing would darken and I knew
that Jesus had reached down and carried me.

Someday I will know the end of this book.
It will bear only the purest of bindings,
and know only the most brilliant leather.
Its pages will be whiter than white, no tears, no fingerprints or smudges.
There will be no questions unresolved,
for all the answers will have born their fruit in Christ alone!
Though it is yet to be finished,
I await the day with anticipation,

When all will be revealed in this Book of Antiquities.

Cheryl Lavender

The Sin He Bore

It was heavy, this cross I was effecting. So very, very heavy! As I walked the road to Calvary the weight became too great and I crumbled beneath its' significance. It was not the sheer immensity of the Tree that caused my legs to buckle, although I was weary in the carrying. It was the sin that weighed me down. It was the sin I would bear for My people.

A man was ordered to take my place and carry the Cross to Calvary. I felt his heart and My compassion rose to meet him. He set the Cross down and the soldiers laid me upon It. The pain from the Crown of Thorns was running round My head and I knew I must steel myself for what was yet to come.

The soldiers began to drive in the nails. With every strike I wanted to scream out, for this frail human body was never meant to withstand the unrelenting mind of a man given over to his sin. I did not cry out to the people, but I did cry out to My Father. I knew He would sustain Me. He was My Father.

Finally it was over. The soldiers initiated a sequence of events that had long since been ordained by Almighty God. I was raised off the ground and placed into My appointed avocation. What the Father had decreed would now come to pass. So many thoughts and prayers were erupting through my mind, but the pain was far too great. I was so very thirsty, I could barely construct the words I was destined to say. A soldier heard Me and gave Me vinegar to drink. 'Father, sustain Me! I am Your Son! ' 'Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani? My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me? '

The time was drawing near. Soon My Father would turn His back on Me. He had no other choice. He could not look upon the sin I had taken on. All around Me the people mocked. 'King of the Jews' they had called Me. They could not, they would not understand. 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.'

I knew the moment when it came. I would now suffer the separation I had long since prepared for. With a loud voice I cried, 'Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.' And then I breathed My last.

Joseph of Aramethea had taken Him down from the Cross and laid Him in a tomb. With reverent attention His children wrapped His body in linen cloth and the tomb was then sealed. For three days it seemed as if every thing was lost for what worth was there to life with the Hand of God removed. For the first time since God had effected creation, complete darkness had come to rule the earth.

On the first day of the week two angels were found in the tomb. The stone had been rolled back and Christ no longer was within its' boundaries. Mary was weeping for she feared His body had been stolen. She need only have turned and she would have seen the Risen Christ. Still she wept for she did not know it was Him. Jesus called out to her, 'Mary', and then she knew, her teacher had risen from the dead, just as He had promised.

His hands and feet endure the nail prints of the sin He bore. His head embodies the scars where thorns had pierced His brow. His side carried the implement of our persecution at the hands of unrelenting human cruelty and, more than this, the outpouring of His precious Spirit bore our punishment that we would know the miracle of being whiter than white, while we are yet covered with His rich red blood.□

Open Your eyes and see the Risen Christ. He lives for you.

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