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Drops of Dew

By

Brian L. Coatney

Introduction

May you be blessed by this volume of poetry, *Drops of Dew*, which follows several other volumes of poetry:

1. the collection of poems included in my book on the Christian life, *Did You Ever Think of This?*
2. *Seeds to the Wind*, a book of poems, which is bound as well as online.
3. the online volume *Roots Where the Water Is*.

Also, you can enjoy a CD titled *Seeds to the Wind*, in which I read aloud with my friend, Sylvia Pearce, many of my favorites from the first two volumes, and she and I discuss the poems. Thanks to Sylvia and her husband Scott for producing this CD and for hosting my works online.

Thanks to my wife Tandy of thirty-nine years, a magnificent editor and artist. Thanks to my brother-in-law, Art Boldt, married to my sister Sylvia (two very important women named Sylvia in my life), for producing this present volume in PDF format for online publication.

Thanks to you the reader for reading these poems, which are artistic forms of biblical truth, for God created us not only for information but for the glorious arrangement and musical expression in language of the salvation we receive in Christ Jesus His Son.

Thanks be to God the father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the blessed Holy Spirit in the manifold Wisdom of God.

Brian and Tandy Coatney

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Shell

Some think you've gone into a shell.
Is that heaven or hell;
what mind can tell?

Some think that you fell,
others that you've crossed the dell,
yet you have nothing to sell.

All you can say is, "I heard a bell
one has to answer pell mell,
or miss the piper calling to the well."

"Look not right or left," it said; "don't yell";
all in a split second, things gel,
you take the wave at its perfect swell.

Then as Christ did foretell,
you're in line for a knell,
which at first one predictably will repel.

But not one to be a Jezebel,
each rises—rides the upward el,
supernaturally fragrant now your smell.

BC 6-27-09

Hose

Every one knows,
that only with water, a flower grows.
I have a wife of many flowers whose toes
are turned up in bed, sick, so she bestows
upon me the task of sprinkler hose,
which I turn to poetry and prose.

This is how the gentle breeze blows
upon our fortunes, always great; one glows
according to the point of view one chose;
thus, whatever good or ill God throws
upon us, the wise person sows
to leave a crop for him who mows.

I, for one, would always have a rose,
never, oh dear, a tale of woes,
but not complaining when yeses come back no's,
or murmuring of faith to say, "It froze."
Delightful it is to make new friends of foes—
of all misfortune strike good pose.

And so to my little lesson, here goes:
The rubbery tube hardly flows,
but winds unruly, about the toes,
knotting, not nicely, to open or close;
and wise I find in life are those,
not in torment trying to coil a garden hose.

BC 7-2-09

Grist

He plays a tune I cannot resist,
even if I start to clench a fist.
I stop, open my veins, desist—

receive the love. It is a mist
surrounding me, like one kissed—
a private, holy tryst.

Even where I might have missed
once, the nature, the congenial gist,
because a serpent, threatening, hissed—

the pus, the angry cyst,
opened where none had ever guessed,
occasion of Christ's Eucharistic grist.

BC 7-3-09

Drink

Refreshing is the crystal sea,
running from eternity;
we drink it til infinity,
encompassed in the mystery.

By appearance it can't be;
the water lies where one can't see.
With the scriptures we agree,
then bubble up their harmony.

Despite past sins, iniquity,
a savior died upon a tree,
rose as predicted on day three,
so now the wine and milk are free.

Filling up now quietly,
there's worship in the reverie,
no need to act then frantically;
no letter's missing, A to Z.

BC 7-5-09

Noble Bird

It doesn't try to be what it ought to be,
eagle, hawk—bird that flies free—
bird that hovers, soars with liberty,
compelling us in admiration to see
how we can duplicate its squinting mystery.

How can such an entity,
set its tone, but by Christ's decree,
that—as men, in envy, look to see
how earth below less devastatingly
can weigh us down only when we flee

upward, into light and cloud of Thee—
the masses of our minds by degree
grow smaller, only as flight into the heavenly
city's splendor answers the plea
once made for rescue from evil's enormity?

Frankly, it only works if we
relax the knuckles that bitterly
held onto shoulders wearily
not yet wings supporting us in felicity,
wings making us birds as well in reverie.

This new flight, astoundingly,
presses its demands in serenity,
from appearance to spirit reality—
despite the loud groans of matter's verity—
looking down with heaven's crown of perpetuity.

BC 7-8-09

Ocean

How about needs met without motion,
mine that is, at first, but rather in an ocean
that moves while I'm still,
where I wait quietly until
the ocean itself rubs me like lotion
on dry skin, such a potion.

We've long held the notion,
of precarious dwellers in Goshen,
hoping that in life we can get our fill,
not get enslaved by a ruler on a hill;
but I prefer my view of the ocean
mentioned above, without all the commotion.

BC 8-19-09

Time

When time goes not sweetly,
a happy bee, but a gong
that can't be ignored discreetly,
then something has gone wrong.

What once melodiously sang,
with an aura warming through,
is now a robbers' gang,
holding up what we do.

To escape time, is that tricking,
when the calendar's full, no more room,
to not hear the dangerous ticking
of time on a witch's broom?

Does a burning building have power?
Yes, but there's no need to rush;
a second can turn to an hour,
a panic turn to a hush.

BC 9-5-09

Jump

Would it be such a crime
if I dropped the crazy race,
wasn't eaten up by time
or limited by space?

Three aren't enough for me
in dimensions; I need more
beyond the things I see,
like dimension number four!

That's huge to ask; is it so?
or with every breath,
are we trapped each way we go,
by specters of our death?

Christ in eternity,
saw us chained to our sinful stump,
with his body broke the chain,
and so I made the jump.

BC 9-5-09

The Devil Tries in Vain

The devil came to me
in a dark menacing cloak,
there where I linger free
by the old, tall oak.

He snarled like he still had his way,
like he did once, but certainly not now,
for he gives himself away,
with the grunt of a muddy sow.

He once seemed the voice of God,
full of fear and condemning thrust,
beating me down like a clod,
when I didn't discern or trust.

My Father is not a pig;
He likes bacon but never guilt:
His huge, loving heart is big,
even bigger than the house He built.

So I stood my ground by the oak,
not arguing, but clearly secure,
til I saw the ugly smoke,
waft away while I stood there demure.

BC 9-9-09

Suffering

There's something about suffering one can't touch;
we quickly confess we don't like that much.
Temptation mounts to get into one's head—
figure all the angles, who's alive or dead
and why—get the mental juices flowing hard,
find the aces and kings and what to discard.
Pretty soon, blood pressure starts to cook,
hot on the pursuit, like a mystery book.
How will it end? What spy will come in from the cold?
What new hero will be born or old hero fold?
It's good to think all this, examine the telling tale;
it lets us find out if we're really for sale,
or if there really is a quiet retreat,
an accepted place, not a hot seat,
where refreshing water is always at play,
where elves of Jesus laugh and pass the day,
suffering, yes, but in a spritely mood,
intoxicated with living water and food
from the body of Christ and His ineffable mind,
where all 52 cards in order you'll find.

BC 9-18-09

9 Candles for Haley

It's September 20th, today,
9 candles for Haley by the way,
since this date 9 years ago,
her birth set all of us aglow.

She's been a little candle since,
and when we think of it, we wince
with joyful tears, knowing she's
a celebrity in our family.

Dancing, bouncing, all around,
with another birthday she's been crowned,
a princess, til midnight ticks its tock,
til the same time next year on the clock.

But for now, it's time for delicious cake,
and other merriment to make,
presents and ice cream on our chins;
when it's birthday time, everybody wins.

Andrew Jackson's back this year,
Abe too again; they're both so dear
to say, "Hey, Haley take a look;
then put us in your pocketbook."

All our birthday love,
Aunt Tandy & Uncle Brian

BC 9-20-09

White

Walk with me in white
through all of your dark night,
when in rage you would take flight,
when Satan has his bite.

Walk with me in white
whether things look dark or bright,
for both are equal in my sight
when glory shines her light.

If you turn from me and fight,
you will reel from starry height
of mountains in the night,
candles faint but full of might.

You will walk with me in white,
bathe more in my delight;
you're the angel in your plight,
whereby others find their sight.

You have walked with me in white,
do so longer now a mite;
time will soon fly out of sight:
this is my holy rite.

BC 9-28-09

Jam

You're in a hot fire—
possibly a funeral pyre,
or the devil's ugly mire;
it's hard to tell about desire.

I'd like to just retire,
sip margaritas, nothing dire,
have a chauffeur at my hire,
live like a bird looking down from a wire.

But I can't get out of the fire;
spirit's the key to what's higher,
so Jesus, I can hardly retire:
my body is fuel for Your desire.

BC 10-3-09

Need & Supply

Need always outstrips supply;
nothing's ever enough to get by.
Paradise, golden roads, could arrive today,
yet every human soul would say,

“It won't do.” The craving still hammers.
Infinite pearl necklaces, and one stammers,
as if dreadfully poor, but like more would do,
when in truth, this is to misconstrue.

Supply starts by faith, right now, when
impossibility is recognized again.
The supply is already there, on a wing,
God's hidden treasure in everything.

The magic is in the speaking word,
even when outer is not seen or heard.
Keep speaking to the cloud, with your spirit, not your brain;
there's a rumble and wind of abundant rain.

BC 10-7-09

Burnt Toast

Those with whom we're awed the most
are those who when they burn their toast,
then almost electrocute their bones,
don't spend all day in condemning moans.

Toast burning—that's a rite you see,
folly with the fork—deep mystery;
one goes the wrong way wildly first,
before his delusions surprisingly burst.

Then, one can grovel in self-tortured mire,
unable to call the redeemed self "squire,"
or—he can look to the Cross where an unlikely fool,
in the twinkling of an eye was made totally cool.

All that burnt toast and mire,
now indict us with a laughter higher
then ever our foolish tears pitifully were;
the clown and the saint together are pure.

BC 10-7-09

Fit

If in life you find a fit,
not outward, but in faith, the truth of it
is the earthen vessel, at first thought out of place,
finds it's a piece in God's mosaic face,

This giant puzzle, baffling, is so low
to us at first, we think it a woe
that symmetry and elevation as we first thought,
are not by us or others caught.

In the mad scramble, we say, "Something's wrong;
others fit, but where do I belong?"
or—"I belong, but that other person's not a part,"
but to God, we each are His same heart.

BC 10-9-09

Wait

Always there's something for which we wait,
the unholy pressure will never abate.
Tick tock tick tock, we endure;
we sit and watch the appealing lure.

Activity would beset the mind
to escape rest, busily go blind,
hope the roar of emotion would fill
the hardest place, the place that's still.

All in a quiet night, escape;
to distractions turn and close the drape.
No, the world won't go away,
but you will, to its dismay,

into where new worlds are made,
with refreshing water and lots of shade—
and you see a new city set on a hill,
with a charter no rebel is able to kill.

There, in the green meadow, we rest,
by water brooks, despite a test,
which by appearance should change our stance—
draw us out, cancel our dance.

Yet, though 10,000 horns,
blow, or a herd of unicorns
stampede—quake the grumbling ground,
the green meadow and its water brook pound,

we turn away—lay all care
besetting us, either foul or fair,
where life is, at the tree,
the origin of Christ's liberty.

BC 10-14-09

Shot or not

Are you going to take that shot or not?
You don't know as yet by the feel of the ball,
if you're cold or hot,
so what's your call?

I don't mean to pressure you,
but the clock's running as we speak;
yet you can hold it til we're through—
be called a hero or a freak.

It's no time for you to take the ball and pass;
this is your moment, like in your dream,
when in practice, or in the playbook class,
fans on opposing sides both scream.

Will you wait for a voice, is that what you learned,
or go ahead, not wait, just take a chance?
Either way you might get burned,
and be the goat fans jeer later at the dance.

How can there be a safe both/and,
when the buzzer is about to sound,
when you can't be both on sea and land,
in the air and on the ground?

Either way, I know you'll reckon the dangerous cost,
make a decision—give it all you've got;
but in this maddening moment, when all seems lost,
just tell me: are you going to take that shot or not?

BC 11-20-09

Flying

One day I fell down and stopped trying,
not that by trying I stopped;
No—I just started flying,
once I wore myself out and dropped.

Up to that point there'd been crying,
since all of my efforts had flopped,
thinking that I had been dying,
so this myth finally had to be popped.

Like George Washington's tale of not lying,
a cherry tree's trunk I had chopped,
driving the nails in Christ's dying;
ironically, by this we are cropped.

Thus ended false zeal with pale sighing;
the once messy floor sparkles mopped.
I'm off in the clouds no denying,
where no branch of the tree's ever lopped.

BC 12-3-09

Mirror Mirror

Mirror mirror on the wall,
what have you said of Adam's fall?
In what darkness did you call,
spare me not, but tell me all.

Did he have a cloak of light,
one that swallowed up dark night?
Were his eyes stars shining bright;
did he have a crystalline sight?

He wanted it to be his own,
not Light's, and so the deed was sown,
whereby was blindness and his moan,
no song to sing but just his groan.

But the light of wisdom fair,
swathed him gently with her hair,
with mercies and Christ's tender care,
raised him from his empty stare.

Costly yes, the Cross it took;
we read this in the holy book.
The Spirit took the world and shook
it in a way that it mistook.

Before the mirror beauty shows,
sin goes wild, unruly grows,
but then our savior's fire glows
and lights the image He bestows.

Mirror mirror on the wall,
mother above, Jerusalem's hall,
answer to the former fall,
in your mirror I find all.

BC 12-4-09

Who

I am a cup, and coffee I hold,
or tea, and my, what a drink each is,
or you can fill me with beverages cold
like pop with its effervescent fizz.

I am a temple compounded of clay,
not the heartiest or splendid substance around,
not likely with diamonds to hold much sway,
til the elegant diamond within is found.

I am a lowly slave; I serve,
servant to an indwelling mind,
that in enigmas can never swerve,
a master I know as severe but kind.

I am a branch; I abide on a vine,
simple enough but baffling to flesh,
but not to faith, yet that's divine,
the very point when things don't mesh.

I am a body, made holy by God,
by His resurrection's quickening jolt.
Better be careful when you touch a clod;
you might get shocked by a lightning bolt.

In Adam the first, now in Adam the last;
the dove flew on Him, then circling wide,
raptures those whose memories of the past,
give way to His holy wisdom bride.

BC 12-12-09

Peace

How can one argue with unexplained peace,
with the lamb in the meadow, and its fluffy white fleece?
One might as well argue with the honking of geese,
or in chess, with the bishops' diocese.

Tremors, convulsions, the soul feels its threats,
humbling, obtrusive, but the turmoil begets
the birth God desires, the one that He whets
by trading us peace for cancelled regrets.

Then try, it won't work, not to live serene;
the logic in lower terms isn't seen,
but out in the meadow, a strange sunny sheen
makes the lamb feel secure, though the world still be mean.

BC 12-17-09

Christmas Gift for Fools

This Christmas I plan to give myself
a tome to place upon my shelf,
a manual for fools, easy to read,
speaking plainly to what a fool might need.

First, it says a ridiculous bard
is entertaining to kings though very hard.
The fool is transparent, one to see through,
though kings say in scorn, "I'll never be like you."

It's odd, that though an embarrassment,
like one whose head has a terrible dent,
kings find him amusing and question his mind,
when life constricts them in a terrible bind.

Like a movie, a play—a song on the stage,
kings seek a diversion from life's terrible rage:
"Bring the lute, act the scene, tell me wonderful things,
for a moment your folly, relief often brings.

The fool wonders why to him life is simple,
when to kings, wisdom's merely a cream for a pimple.
But then kings aren't mangers, and fools are but naught—
just ordinary souls to whom salvation is brought.

BC 12-20-09

To Mimi on Christmas

Your very first Christmas was in 24,
85 so far, counting still towards more.
We thought we'd enshrine you in Christmas verse,
though it might not be polished since we didn't rehearse.

We wanted to drive you in Santa's sleigh,
but he told me he's using it all of today.
We looked for a bottle with a genie inside,
at Butler's Antiques, but they're out—unless he lied.

We had thought you might get 62 more years,
married to Billy, with the joys and the tears,
but to live to a hundred and forty seven,
might not be your wish, or the will of heaven.

So we're down to a simple, really mundane gift,
yet we're thinking it might still provide you a lift—
a mug with a snowman filled with candy canes,
plus chocolaty almonds; none of this took brains.

And our poem is humble, not an oracle from above,
but it's filled with our warmest Christmas love.
So here with your family, you're always our queen,
the crème de la crème of the mothers we've seen.

Merry Christmas and love from Brian & Tandy

BC 12-25-09

What Popped Out of the Crystal Sea?

What popped out of the crystal sea,
But you and me.
With so much nothing—
There's mystery.

What popped out of crystal sea
But possibility?
A word of the Father
Repeated, "Let there be."

It's great when one and three agree.
They look with wonder; they look and see.
And see the Cross
As the only way of purity.

This is multiplicity.
They will, they choose, they sire a family—
Created sons
To fall, to rise, in Christ their destiny.

What popped out of the Crystal sea
But plans for opportunity—
That sons of God
Would suffer to the end to see.

Created for infinity,
Though finite yet we be—
temples of clay—
we search until we're free.

This is multiplicity,
The crystal sea—
The sea that leads
To you and me.

BC 12-28-09

Trying Versus Faith

Why does trying succeed
when faith appears to fail,
when practitioners get results
but heavenly minds keep waiting?

The results of mere doing take energy
that trying finally depletes.
Faith's labor, however, turns to ease;
its manifestation holds forever.

Exhaustion will win against the formula taker,
a rope that burns the hands too badly.
The immense pain of faith makes calluses
on the soul that glory laughs at.

BC 1-16-10

Valentine #40

Are they equally fine,
a Valentine
and a glass of wine?

A glass of wine comes and goes,
warms you for a moment to your toes,
then off its pleasure goes,

whereas a Valentine stays,
warms your heart for days and days,
a lifetime even, in permanent ways,

if you married your Valentine girl—
made her your long-sought pearl—
let true devotion fully unfurl.

There, it's the priceless, endless start,
divinity-fashioned, purchased heart—
willingness, the lover's part.

They are equally fine, the glass of wine,
and a Valentine,
when cultivated from that vine.

BC 2-14-10

So

I once was
a diamond in the dark,
thinking to be light,
but missing the mark.

I was sharp,
like the teeth of a shark,
digging into flesh,
instead of the ark.

God is light,
to the blind man's bluff,
waiting til the diamond
has suffered enough.

Then the diamond
finds true desire,
its source of light,
its colors of fire,

etching fine,
on a sea of glass,
cutting its way
wherever we pass.

BC 2-16-10

Promotion

To think upon my death,
leaves me very cold—
taking one's last breath,
leaving the friendly fold.

It's such a final act,
leaving behind one's gold,
even after long life—
growing very old.

Some say there's afterlife,
energizing, bold—
to assuage the helpless view
when your estate has all been sold.

I can walk right now, not run—
coherent thoughts still hold;
in this new land there are wings,
and we simply fly, I'm told.

Money's no good there;
love and light unfold,
to such a great degree,
that they eclipse the gold.

Gardening is the thing,
not a hobby when you're old;
the germs are swallowed up,
so you never catch a cold.

Though turned to dust in pain,
there's a welcoming new fold—
this body raised some day,
free from yucky mold.

In the meantime, life's right now,
though a recent survey polled,
did not such views confirm,
that in Christ have been extolled.

But when the curtain's raised,
and truth is all unrolled;
I'll see with these own eyes,
what faith has always told.

The promotion feels not so great;
I don't like growing old,
but wisdom cheers my heart,
til the bell for me is knolled.

BC 2-19-10

Done

There's much to do and too much on my plate;
the weight and fury never do abate.
My soul is calling 911, that's great;
I'm sorry to say, but thinking has to wait.

I don't mean brain, but true and perfect still,
the unencumbered silence of one's will.
That takes time; it means I'd have to chill—
a lot of worry stop and quickly kill.

It's much more egotistical to rate,
a busy self—self conscious working late.
The self then seems of worth and finds its fate,
to think its frenzy stamps itself as great.

True reflection's like a window sill;
the window sits, but can't be used until
I look at light and chance to get my fill,
and only then evaluate the nil.

BC 2-25-10

Aphorisms

Life is worthless without pressure.
Life is empty without serving others.
Creativity tempers knowledge.
Fulfillment is in how you see it.

BC 2-25-10

Birth

When the wheels of the enemy
pin you against the waters,
and their furious spinning appears
certain capture,
or suicidal drowning of one's self,

the cloud, in its pillar of majesty,
beckons the waters of the heart,
to trouble them to speak,
saying, "Move."

Into the baptismal birth, one goes—
defying a military of total odds—
defying too, nature's ominous warning;

and in the moment of movement,
one foot in front of another,
the watery womb, the virgin place
of conception,

receives the offered faith
of the transcend-er,
making new life.

BC 3-1-10

Butterfly Fly

What mystery makes a butterfly fly,
its powdered wings in my neighborhood sky?
Delicate, lighting, then very still,
it drinks the nectar, while I drink my fill.

Eternity's moment is frozen there
before it sails off to the air.
A thousand issues come to rest
if I pass this single-question test.

BC 3-6-10

I Laughed

I laugh at all the enticing sin
because it thinks it can enter in.
It's "stronger than ever," therefore must be real,
tormenting if we walk by what we feel.

"Oh no, I shouldn't be having this thought";
surely I'm entangled—in a thicket caught.
Condemn and fight, condemn and fight;
that's the way that once seemed right.

Then comes the familiar, Spirit laugh,
the non condemning, coaching staff—
relaxation without a fight,
Spirit swallowing up the night.

Oh—the fury might not subside at first,
but the torment's gone—the fears disbursed.
It's on with another gentle day,
in mighty or molecular sway.

BC 3-11-10

Top Shelf

When you look to find yourself,
go straight up to the topmost shelf.
Ephesians says that's where you are,
beyond the sky or any star,

beyond all orbits, galaxies,
exceeding fabled mysteries,
not in the gutter where you thought,
just natural flesh as you were taught.

Sure, you can work in body deeds,
live by impulse, flesh's needs,
alone, in deception of control,
or in the Spirit, know you're whole.

There, with the lightest, feather touch,
is contentment, abundance, quickening much—
with victory every time, the self,
enjoys its place on the topmost shelf.

BC 3-12-10

House

I live in an excellent house,
full of the Spirit.
It has many windows,
and rain pours in some of them
when I'm not looking,
but my friends close them.
I have many candles,
all lit. Friends blow them out
if I fall asleep.
Yes, it's good to live
in the house of the Spirit—
watchful, wakeful,
with friends, who will close a window—
blow out a candle,
which I may never know.

BC 3-29-10

The New Leaf

In the furious storm,
every leaf blew off,
but a new leaf floated down
from above a cloud,
settling itself on a twig.
The same storm stirred again,
the regular one—
the only one;
but the leaf refused to
sever from its tree.
The leaf was not from here,
but then, neither now
was the tree.

BC 4-1-10

Yourself

Why would you be anybody
but yourself,
but how would you know?

The self is built
from a thousand mirrors
made in the mind—
a composite of want to be,
picture after picture constructed,
exhilarated—hoped for
as essentially you.

The trying gives it away,
sets up the fall,
after intoxication wears off,
and law stands as angry judge
once again.

Only the single view
away from self,
upon the divine,
clears the screen—
puts the heart upon another,
loses consciousness of labored construction—
maintenance and the Department of Defense.

Where the mirrors burst,
the eye sees only God;
one mirror of miraculous light
offers nothing first—
then images unexpected:
you appear, unknown before,
not fabricated but real,

the unique derivative of the moment,
not held by human grip,
or tired fingers clutching again,
but the beauty of nothingness,
expressed timeless times,
in the momentary miracle of God:
you.

BC 4-4-10

Austin

It's spring; the buds
pressed through, and leaves
freshen the winter frames,
as first one, then another color
spreads across waiting earth.

To us this is life.
In cycles, this continues
our purposed years,
each spring with much or little joy,
as was our winter.

But Earth's spring is still
a winter too,
since some spring
we will not be here to open
with the buds—
to clip the daffodils or tulips
for the vase; instead,
others will clip flowers for us,
to adorn our memories.

Flower upon flower,
headstone upon headstone,
the earth swallows its dust—
the wintry enemy of eternity.

But when a seed dies,
winter's freezing bite
is but the sprouting through the ground
of a new flower in paradise—

where loving gardener sheds a tear of sorrow
for us, but of joy for all
in paradise at the new arrival.
That flower was needed just then
in the new world—
its loss from wintry earth
an untimely blow,
but greater glory known
both there, and by faith here.

Our fellow, Austin,
tall and radiant,
congenial and guileless,
ever hopeful and beaming,
tender in his ways to others,
has popped up there before us.

We too will pop up there
in our time.
Death, where is your sting?
Grave, where is your victory?
You have none, you imposter,
since Christ is risen.

Christ arose.
He arose then in our hearts.
Our bodies follow.

We fellowship face-to-face here.
Some depart sooner,
but though tempted to see defeat,
heaven's pleasure makes us tingle;
we can't help but feel the cheer
of Austin's laugh and smile
from there—

his gifts of organs donated
spread hope and beauty,
thankful praise, here.

The oneness of his family
is untouched, stronger really—
and sweeter bonds face-to-face await
when the gardener in paradise
has gathered every bloom.
Until then, we sing and await.

BC 4-19-10

Crosses

Across the field stood row upon row
of white crosses, each set white
against green grass, clean—soft pearl
to the eye, but not overdone—
simple, but elegant,
despite the untimely blast of evil's vicious lust
that put them there. How many tears we shed,
how unbelievable the chaos and seeming random
tirades of injustice and unholy lapses
that delivered each cross to its
fresh resting place among the quiet markers
of many memories ecstatic but painful,
in light of present affliction.
How we would change the past—
undo the elementary principles that put them there,
only to seal our own demise if we did.
For truly, deep as is the agony,
we must leave each cross where it is,
and each upon his or her lonely pale,
there to drink the water of eternity,
refreshing to others by the price paid.
No, I cannot undo these crosses in this
beautiful field, adorned with the grass so green,
with the sky so luminously blue, and zephyrs
to delight us. Nor will I run from my own,
nor even look upon it as much.
For I want to be around when, the jet black sky
full of diamonds sheds a brilliance of stars,
uncounted in number and glory—
when the saints rise again,
when each lonely and agonizing price paid
by one of Christ's own, shows forth
a world we had only dreamed of, but now
is manifestly more beautiful and eternal
than we ever thought or imagined.
And they all rose at once.
And the glory was all they thought.
And they enjoy the presence forever.

BC 4-26-10

Elixir

It is a tonic mixed in a mysterious place,
not apparent to onlookers that it's there,
since all seems normal, even ordinary—
even not together—
with a random, unplanned feel,
where each sees the bare scripted goal,
not gilded, just bulleted in concise, clear fashion,
line after line, with time at an ease—
regimentation not enforced,
yet the elixir stirred in does its magic swish.
Voom, wal-la, not to the senses,
comes the spirit behind the plain appearance:
bubbling, sweet, piquant, now and then a chafe
or chide in wizened wit, full of hidden water.
Each feels the spark in the unassuming air
of difficult air but air not harsh,
as each sits in the nothing and ponders,
perhaps with shock and disbelief,
that the aim would stand firm without law—
waiting on the movement in possibility's sea,
and not run from the tension in between
the first wait and the final manifestation.
How the gut wants to escape to form
that's secure and outwardly imposed,
instead of girding up for a form
so outrageous in its freedom,
that its manifest image is the moment's
concrete certainty of electric, pure spirit,
known no other way than this.

BC 4-28-10

Ride of Gold

I rode across the envelope of gold,
like a broad interstate,
almost asleep
with each passing scene,
yet magically connected
to what looked impossible to attain,
though some obviously had,
unless they were a mist
that would blow away with trouble,
and the gold with it.
But here is the dilemma:
there was the gold—
for me a safe ride, or so it seemed,
on others' easy looking surfaces.
Little did I know what lay under
their gold swallowed up—
the same as what lay on the surface
with me, not refined.
At the ugliest moment, when all
was lost, their gold disappeared
to me for a moment, mine now appearing,
as I joined them in the golden envelope
for others.

BC 4-28-10

Do We Have a Nature?

The tirade of the old nature is endless,
bossy flesh, monstrous cravings,
sensual swoon, murderous thoughts;
you get the idea, and one could spend
all day and half the night in torment,
plus expert analysis to the finest detail,
not to mention the gift of condemnation,
which grows endlessly in its “I’m no good”
flip side of pride, after a season of exaltation.
Yes, that old nature is a killer for Christians
and non Christians alike, though the former
make a shrine out of it—the place where
one can find every reason to stall in defeat.
But once one ever sees that this is all a lie,
a pile of rubbish, and fabrication only
a serpent would devise, then the game’s up:
oh yes, the same war goes on always
in this dispensation, as Paul says
in Galatians. What a secret too where he
says that sin is no longer I—yes that’s Romans 7.
So if it’s not I, then it’s not I.
All the evil is the nature of one not I—
like all the good is the nature of one not I.
Where does that leave me?
Laughing all the way, as vine ripened sweetness
pours forth scent, flavor—mist watering the self—
bud, flower, sap, full power—and every
sweet and merciful certainty of faith.

BC 4-29-10

Hearing

I hear best when there's no sound,
not a single thing around,
the end of distraction found,
not of the natural ground,
around which life is usually wound.
I hear best when there is a sound,
the kingdom of God all around,
the heavenly man found,
of the supernatural ground,
and the cloud of glory about me wound.

BC 5-5-10

Where

I see things in the high zone,
where no one is ever alone,
not one second,
despite your agonizing groan.

Down in appearances, the low zone,
nothing looks right, but like the clone
that clods on in futility,
as a torn up, melancholy drone.

But up in the high zone,
despite bad body odor—unseemly groan,
icky messages from below,
like a long discarded ice cream cone,

there's a perfect whetting hone,
whose friction is heaven's one true tone,
that despite unpleasant appearances,
perfects the beautiful stone.

BC 5-20-10

Now

While the critics are wasting time
arguing over whether we are heretics,
their souls are burning,
walls cracked, coming down,
roof rotten, oily rags smoldering in closets,
foundations secretly eaten away
in basements not entered in years.

While the critics think we babble
that we're God, protect the flesh—
don't take reality in real doses—
their angels weep, and the tears
fall down around us all like
mercy seen by those who've escaped
the lies.

No, we won't attack them, prove them wrong;
why should we?
They can't be convinced.
But when in their worst hell,
they scream, and a tender Jesus amazes them
with grace they sang about but didn't know,
they'll be their own editions of glory,
stopping their gnashing against evil.

The devil will continue to stand aghast
that more don't fight him, but instead praise—
see glory where they once would say,
"I will not take this anymore
but lash back"; however, the silent choir
will close its eyes, see heaven,
breathe wisdom, and exhale its goodness
into all the earth;

and then the meek will see what
stout souls have always apprehended
in their awakening—that
the earth belongs to the sons of God:
in the name of our King,
it belongs to us!

BC 5-22-10

Filled

There's the one morosely
held, day after day, in the
threads of matted sweat,
in their loneliness,

watching what the
soul sold itself to get,
fall down into the pit,
while the last fragment
of emptiness it can give,
wastes away in the doldrums.

Looking into the mirror,
sunken sockets mockingly greet —
a face to trade for light,
and in a twinkling, it's done.

There's the one resting quietly,
who has found nothing,
and nothing has found him;
therein lies the tale:
to let God go that deep
without bolting,
brings the heavenly water.

This one is no longer enamored with self,
but with the anointing,
a cup that can't be
lonely any more.

This one will not do;
he will not speak:
but in that rest,
the stillness feeds him.

The garden is inhabited now;
pleasantness drops her dew,
and much there is
for pleasantness to do.

BC 5-27-10

Play

I can always hear from God
straight up,
but often it's fun to hear Him
through you:
either is fine to do;
the nice thing about the latter way,
is that it's one of God's,
thus our, favorite ways to play.

When you don't know
the straight-up way,
you chase ministers all the time,
frustrated not to get enough,
and this is not a crime, deliberately done,
but doesn't sound the ultimate chime
of playing things either way.

The main thing is to hear;
yes, without that
one is always guessing,
seeking God's will like
a dart game with the board
way too far away,
which I would find distressing.

God doesn't make the game that hard;
serious workers do—
like I once was,
where if you make things too easy,
the game doesn't fit one's pride,
leaving one flapping around
without enough to do.
That might dangerously lead
to a look on the inside.

But when it's OK to score every time,
dart to the bull's-eye—
oh, not without tension,
and loads of suspense all along
(Please don't consider those things wrong)—
then the game is always certain and fun,
without unbelief about the outcome
when all is said and done.

Tears

The tears falling from
my eyes are many kinds:
the crystal ones, transparent
to the heart of God;
those like rain that refresh,
both in dry and wet times;
the beautifully shaped ones,
as water in a form is;
those varied in their fall,
some filling the eyes,
others running over, then down cheeks,
while others seem to fly out
into air—each falling perfectly;
the ones that pull up everything
the heart needed to purge;
those of joy;
those of grief;
those of anguish;
but all of them from the mother of tears,
from the land of abba,
from bread of life,
from the holy pneuma.
Yes, many kinds of tears land in a bottle,
both near and far—
near—the bottle in my hand;
far—the place beyond,
which is all the more like home
the more I see it.

BC 7-2-10

Leo the Seasoned Lion

When you hit age 90,
that's a rare and very fine tier,
not many other lions
ever even come near.

Perhaps you ate your veggies,
took a lot of walks,
hugged your wife a lot—
gave motivational talks.

Or maybe it was luck—
some would call it grace,
extra sprinklings of salt,
to run your earthly race.

You've seen a lot of life,
with stories yet to tell.
I hope you hit a hundred,
still feeling very well.

By Brian Coatney for Leo Wilson
on his 90th birthday.

7-30-10

Poem for Scott and Sylvia's 50th

"Give me a heaven with you," each thought,
as couples are wont to do.

"Let's merge our hearts, build a life,
as one, the decades through."

Yet love's sweet dreams don't always last;
the lily is easily crushed;
the dreariness of daily life,
the romance for many has crushed.

But adversity proved itself a friend,
in faithfulness to these two:
"Give me a heaven with you," each thought,
in whatever hells we go through."

The bitterness of life proves sweet,
during 50 ripening years;
in trials a marriage must always meet,
Christ swallows up one's tears.

Faith has triumphed, always will,
forging a Gospel team,
which these sweethearts are, a formidable pair,
that makes the devil scream.

They're in love with God, and with each other,
a love that each decade grew.
"Give me a heaven with you, my love,
Til our earthly lives are through."

BC 8-6-10

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