

Psalms of Life

By Mark

Frustrations, elations and questions set in
poetry

Written by
Mark Belchamber

About the Author

The author has been a Christian for a few decades and, despite a spectacular ability to get it wrong, has attempted to understand and get to know what a vibrant, real, significant and relevant relationship with a living, personal God actually means. These poems are some of the conversations that he has had with God that just deal with life as it happened and reflect what many others have felt in similar circumstances.

The author became a Christian on Tuesday 1st June 1976 and would like to say that he has used the years to grow and mature. Unfortunately the reality is probably that all the tantrums, lack of faith and attempts to force God's hand when things seemed to be moving a little slowly have retarded, not promoted his growth as a Christian.

If his human development mirrored his Christian development, the author would probably be considered 'backward'.

Notwithstanding this, he is absolutely steadfast in his belief that talking with God is the only way forward - be it in praise or frustration, elation or despair. God doesn't make us immune from tragedy or unfairness, ecstasy or wealth; but He does give us a way of dealing with it. Seeking God's will (and understanding that God always answers - He just says "No" or "Wait" more than we'd like!) is central to growth with God.

Enjoy the book, use the book - and never stop talking to God. He's right next to you and He loves to hear you speak.

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That having been said, if you want to use this for you personally, or to help someone else in a church/Christian environment, that would be cool!

A catalogue record for this book is not available from the British Library. They don't even know it exists.

Written in Great Britain over a looong time from about 1986
Published in New Zealand and available wherever the interweb exists

Foreword

Some of these poems honour God, some question Him, some accuse Him. I don't believe God is disturbed by that, providing you actually talk to Him.

Everyone feels. Something. It could be pain, happiness, hurt, loneliness, bliss....but *everyone* feels.

Through this selection of poems, I hope you explore your feelings. I hope you will put them into words and your heart sings as you read, or possibly aches as you cry. I hope you smile, wonder, ponder, or possibly even argue: but hopefully you will, in the quietness of your soul, understand.

Read it alone, read it out loud, read it to a friend, read it *with* a friend. Read it from cover to cover, or read it every now and then. Read it and re-read it – each time you'll discover something new.

Although written from a perspective of someone who knows God, (and who believes the ultimate answers lie in a relationship *with* God), you don't have to share the same beliefs to identify with joy... despair... hurt... tranquillity...

If you want to share a specific emotion, there is an index at the back to help you.

If you do know God I hope this helps you to be closer to Him. If you don't, I hope you find something that helps you on your journey through life.

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*Psalm*s

NOTHING

Thank You for this day,
This day in which I can sit and do nothing.
I cannot make the birds sing
Or the flowers blossom;
I cannot tell the sun to shine
Or the wind to blow;
I cannot support the insects that fly
Or sustain the grass that grows;
I cannot inject life into anything,
I cannot give the command to live –
Yours to breathe life,
Yours to deal death;
And yet not one dies
Or lives
Without Your command.
Thank You for this day in which I can do nothing.

THE UNFINISHED WORK

Father I praise You for Your power
Which outstrips the slings and arrows
That the enemy would aim at me,

Your power which promises untold riches
And guides me along Your paths.

You uphold me in times of trouble
And encourage me when things go well;
You help me when the going gets tough
But let me make my own mistakes.

Your love for me is more than that
Of any woman –
You are everything a man cannot be
And all that I possess.

No one can ever rid me of Your constant attention
Nor can steal the golden touches You give;
The enemy can never prowl through walls built on You –
They are too strong.

I admire Your ways of working
But sometimes don't understand them;
I love Your perfect will
But sometimes can't see it;
I revere Your reasoning and sense
But sometimes I wish You'd do it my way!

O Lord, Father, God, Dad,
Holy Spirit and Creator,
Beautiful Love and Giver of All Good,

I welcomed You long ago to be mine.

You are still welcome.

How can I express the ways You have helped me –
Half of them I never knew;
How do I acknowledge Your faithfulness
When my faith was never that full;
How do I thank You for being there all the time
And standing by me as one who stands guard over treasure?

I cannot say in mortal words what my spirit
Feels and knows of You.
I do not know how Your spirit can touch mine
And know it.
I will never fully realise Your self
Until we meet face to face
And hug.

What does a mortal say to one so great,
Loving, good and true
Except Daddy?
What can a man say to express his thanks,
Which he doesn't understand in the first place?
No, I will never fully realise what You have done
Until You show me in the New Earth;
But until then I try to show You my love by acting
And not talking about it;
By trusting and not worrying;
By doing what I think would please You.

It's not much but it's all I've got.
And it's Yours.

THE OVERSEER

I sometimes run before I can walk
But You pick me up and dust me off;
I sometimes try to jump too far,
But You catch me and let me try again.
I often make mistakes which You watch
And then You put me straight
And let me continue.

You hold my hand when I walk along –
You wait as I lag behind to study some new found treasure;
You watch as I run ahead and look back at You
Saying “Look at me”.

And You wink a fatherly wink,
Smile and nod,
Always watching and caring.

AT THE DAY'S END

Father God

I know that when I have nothing

Then I have You.

When all the parts of my complicated world

Become dislodged and no longer seem to function as I would like,

I know that, as it all begins to fall apart -

Disintegrate -

When everything I have planned and done

Comes to nothing,

Then I have You.

As You strip away all the periphery,

Everything that I have made

Into walls of security for myself,

As You lay me bare

So that all I have is nothing...

Then I have You.

OMNIPOTENCE

I praise You Lord for You are all mighty,
Your power is all encompassing.

I watch in awe as the lion bows and lies at Your command,
As the skies open and drench the ground with rain
Or bake it with sun.

Your fantastic majesty shines through all things;
Even in my despair You hold the authority
To change situations in an instant.

You are a lamb which lies with its mother
Or the leopard which hunts its prey.
You are the strength in a stallion
And the beauty of a butterfly:

Only You can create, destroy and remake
As You please.
Only You are worthy of my praise.

FATHER

I do not know a father,
So You frighten me.
Fathers have come and gone,
They have been so non existent
That I do not want one now.
It would be better to pretend I don't
Want one
Than to risk all that pain again.

If You would just stay outside,
Where I can see You,
That will be fine.
I don't want You to hurt me –
You can be my friend,
My lover, my mother
But please, don't be
My father.

SOMETIMES YOU APPEAR SO FAR AWAY

Sometimes You appear so far away,
Yet sometimes so near.
I know within myself that You hear
Every word I say
But sometimes it seems it takes so long for You to respond.

I do not know the ways You work
And only have to trust You and know
That You are doing it for my good;
But occasionally, in my own selfish human way,
It would be nice if I could have what I asked for
And know that You'd done it purely
To say "I love You", not to test or teach.
But then this is the way of the erratic and
Selfish mind – one which does not understand
And has not grasped the true identity of who You are -
For I know You only ever were love.

I humble myself before You but at the same time
I stand tall and know:
You are proud of me.
I am sorry for the mistrust and
Doubt which I feel
But sometimes it seems as though everyone else
Is just that bit more important.
I am looking for answers but wonder
When You will show me;
I seek assurance
But am not sure when You will soothe.

My Lord and King, I honour You
By showing You my inner feelings –
For I know You can take them
And deal with them.
Take this honesty and bless
Your struggling servant.

THE COMFORTER

Even though my feet
Become bogged down with worry
And my spirit feels heavy with anguish,
I will praise You my God
For You are eternal,
You are constant.

When my head turns in despair
And my body reacts to my feelings
I know that You are Sovereign God.
I turn to You and know
That You *are*

I choose to look out, not in;
I will look to the One
Who creates, loves and gives
And I will learn to be content
With where I am in You.

FROM DAY TO DAY

All Creator God,
How I long to be in Your presence,
To feel the power of Your goodness,
To understand Your grace and mercy
And to encompass the full knowledge of Your majesty.

I, Your humble, and sometimes not so humble, servant
Struggle to see You and know You
When the only word You say to me is “Peace”;
I scramble up ledges and scrape my knees
Trying to peer over and catch a glimpse of who You are
When all You say is
“Be still”.

I strive to please You, to get nearer to You
And honour You
But I cannot live up to Your expectations.

Perhaps, as I tell You how I think and feel,
We can understand each other a little better.
As I try to hear the silent heartwords and listen to them.

In the day to day dilemmas of mortal life,
Have pity on Your servant – he’s trying!

THE IMPATIENT SUBJECT

Lord, why is it that I praise You for the results
But can't do it when the process is taking place?

Why can't I trust You all the time, instead of
Just when I see the outcome?

When will I realise that if You have everything under control
I am free to worry about only what I choose
But I need worry about nothing?

How long before I see that if You have Your perfect hand over
All I want, all I do, all that is achieved,
I can rest secure in the knowledge that You have the ultimate say?

I still don't understand what it is to give You a situation
Because I still try and help You out with it from time to time
If I ever think You're having trouble.
I wonder if You ever laugh, or even chuckle when
I try to do Your job for You?
It must seem foolish when Your creation tries to
Run its own affairs the wrong way round!
But I suppose You understand the mistrusting way
Of us humans. The way we find it hard
To know without a doubt that You want our very best
And know exactly what You're doing.

You see, if it doesn't happen in our time,
It has to be wrong. Doesn't it?
We think we know the ways and times that it's all supposed to happen
But forget that You think differently sometimes.

Often I find it hard to understand Your character
Of giving, giving and giving.
Oh, and love.
It is so hard to understand the fact that You
Never turn around and pull the ground from beneath our feet.

That You are always totally for us.
I suppose I've never met anyone like that before –
Totally trustworthy, totally reliable.

I'm sorry it's taking me so long to *really* trust You
But I just want to tell You that I'm willing to
Jump off a couple of cliffs if I absolutely *have* to.
I do want to prove Your faithfulness, but the truth is
I'm scared. We humans get like that.
But I suppose that's how Jesus often felt.

Part of me doesn't understand human love, let alone perfect love.
But I'm willing to learn about both if You'll be
Ever so patient and give me a little time

A LOVE UNSEEN

How can I ever understand Your love?
We do not understand the love You gave us for each other,
Let alone the love You freely give us.
I do not realise the unconditional acceptance
You have of me,
The ways You love me without restraint.

I do not see the heartache You feel for me when
I stray to one side or choose wrongly –
I do not fully understand that to give me free will
Cost You anguish, pain and sadness;
To allow me to make my choices
Cost You the burden of watching me take the results
When I got it wrong.
But in Your mercy and love
You are willing to pull me out and help me start again

I can't even begin to comprehend Your power
Or Your capabilities.
I am so restricted by human frailty and thought.
But You understand that.

So for going before me, being with me and clearing up after me,
I'd just like to say thank You.

THE CONTINUOUS HOPE

Praise and honour to You my king!
Glory and majesty belong with You always;
Sovereign God, Almighty Lord
I proclaim Your power.

You are gentle but firm,
Loving and disciplining,
Present when everything seems to go right
And just as present when all is apparently in ruins.

You are constant, able and true
In all things
Whether good or bad,
Pleasing or depressing,
When I have honoured You and when I have not.
How good it is to know that You are You.

BARREN TIMES

My body feels broken
My spirit is torn.
Silent heart tears,
Springs of sadness flowing within rent feelings.

This is how I present myself to You –
The only realisation is that You are God
And nothing will I fear.
I wonder, I question
But I always return to unfailing trust in You.
There is no one else.

Although I feel heavy and sad
I will seek You and Your will.
If this is it, so be it, but
Please be patient with my humanity.
I strive so hard to please You
In every way and I am willing
To go through hell for Your sake –
My soul responds to Your direction,
Your love.

Daddy I need You to help me in this
Time of trouble.
It is such a small thing
In the enormity of Your world
But I am relying on You totally
To bear me up.
I have no one else.

SONG OF LOVE

I will sing a love song to the One who is constant;
I will sing to the One who is worthy of my love;
I will praise You who have reason for all You do.

You never put me in a situation without an answer,
You never put me through anything without my highest good –
I learn always to trust You
To obey You, come what may.

I will sing a love song to the One who will never let me down,
Or fall,
To the One who rules forever,
Who watches, cares, always overlooks,
To Him I give my song.

THE HAVEN

Even though I cannot see Your power or understand Your works,
It does not mean that they are not there;
Even though I feel let down, alone, despondent,
It does not mean that Your love is not the same;
Even though I do not know You very well
As my father,
It does not mean that I am not Your son –
It does not nullify the love You have for me.

In hard times, in times when I do not understand,
In times when I have tried so hard to please You,
I am confused when You allow my world to fall apart.

When my dreams shatter into myriad unseen and tiny shapes
Or simply

Fade

I wonder, I ask what You are doing.

I am learning to submit, to obey,
But sometimes the lessons seem so hard – to me
Unnecessary.
I try to complete everything Your way
But still You test me.
Still You temper me
And put me through fire – which I find hard:
But I can only look to You for comfort.
I only seek my father for grace and love.
Not necessarily looking for answers, but support.

I am sorry if I have offended You with a questioning mind
And ungrateful heart.
Even though I cannot see Your reasons,
It does not mean that You do not have my highest good at heart.
I did not presume to turn or challenge You –

My human mind just cannot understand Your logic.
But that is not to say that it is not perfect.

Still I look to You, still I trust.
Test me and I will not be found wanting.

THE ROCK

Oh God who controls the sun,
Tells the rain when to pour and soak Your earth,
You who command the wind
And drives the snow –
Who can compare with Your power and might?
Who can steal from me what is rightfully Yours?
Though storms may come or sweet caresses beckon,
I stand in sheer defiance of defeat,
In confidence that I will not be overcome.
My pride wells up and I remain determined –
None will undermine or score off me.
I stay positive and firm in the knowledge
That I lean on You.

REALISATION

Father, I come to You in total humility.
I have learnt that without You I am nothing;
I deserve nothing, nor have I earned it
But what You choose to give me
I will receive.

At times I have been so presumptuous,
Demanding,
But that was out of despair and confusion.
I need You more now than I ever have,
Or so I think.
I've always needed You the same,
But in certain situations the reality of it
Hits me.
Always I have been unable to go on my own,
Always have I needed You
But I have only learned that by having
Everything taken away.
My walls have fallen,
My dreams are in fragments –
Still there – but unrealisable.
I am bare.
I have tried to piece it all together
But only have You to help me:
On my own I can't succeed.
I praise You that I know we can only succeed
As a team.
I may not like some of the training
But I need You to help me win.

Totally helpless I rely on You completely
For everything.
And in all situations
I need You to guide me.

SEARCHING

Where I am now, in this present place,
I look for You.
In netherworlds or in security,
I hunt Your demands, grasp for Your wishes.
Constantly I have asked, requested, sought, demanded,
Tried to go Your way,
Follow Your paths –
Seek Your answers.
I have chosen with You in mind,
Walked in the hope that You would be proud of me;
I yearn to please You, even return
Talents You have given me.

Great and mighty God,
Father who unravels the carpet sky,
Gives the stars their light
(Commands one to fall)
And ruler of *all* things,
What do I have
Except Your love, fatherhood, grace and care?
Impart these to my heart
For my mind is not enough to see or understand them.

SONG OF DESPAIR

Oh great and mighty King,
Sovereign and ruler over all,
I come to You with a sad heart
And unable to see You fully.
I cannot communicate, speak or praise You
Because my eyes have become clouded,
My spirit disenchanted.

I do not mean to insult or doubt You
And I am truly sorry if it appears that way,
But life to me seems full of despair,
Hopelessness – You are far, far away.
I call to You but You don't answer;
I cry but You seem distant.
I ask for answers and none come
And when I talk to You it seems as if
I entertain the empty space.
My fighting cannot continue, my struggle is in vain,
I *have* to rely on Your grace
(Which I presume upon even now as I ask of You)
For nothing else can help me.

How many lessons must I learn,
How often do I have to turn, how much must I endure
Before You say "Enough"?
I have tried to learn, tried to honour You,
But now it all grows dim and You fade away.
I want You to prove You're still in here with me,
I need to know that You haven't lost interest
Or that You've just forgotten.
How I long to see Your power move, to watch Your command obeyed,
How I ache to trust You absolutely, without fail and totally.

But now I have matters which need Your reality in them -
Reality which I see and understand, which relates to me
Personally

They are so small in the eyes of the world

But at the moment they are my stumbling blocks.

I need You to be my strength, my help, my security

And at the moment I have difficulty seeing You as these.

Please hear my desperate cry.

AN IMPERFECT PRAYER

Oh Wise One,
How great is Your name!
What power You hold, such glory and might.
How I am privileged to belong as a son to the King of Kings!
You deserve all praise; all honour and reverence
Belong in Your presence.
I lift my voice to You,
Offer my thanks to You,
Give what I have to bless You.

You are a mighty king,
A loving God,
One who cares for all his people,
A ruler who will not despise, oppress or withhold.
You are One who is perfect, awesome
One who reflects the light of a million suns.
I cannot give You the praise You deserve,
It is impossible for me to honour You as befits You,
But even in my doubts, fears and questions,
I will try to worship You.
Even if it is only by being honest
And telling You how I think and feel.

SMALL QUESTIONS

Lord God,
I am full of trepidation.
I am worried about what might be,
Partly because I do not know You well enough
And partly because of my human nature.

Some things are very important to me –
To You they are small, but to me they are
Important.
I need to see that You see them as this –
You are so big and powerful
That my needs might easily become too small for the moment.
You have taken me into despair, sorrow
And choice;
I have stood bare before You.
You have refined me by fire:
You have told me so.

And now this.
It may be too much, it may not,
But I need You so much.
I am nothing without You,
I can do nothing without You
Except survive.
This is important to me;
I honestly pray “Your will be done”
But sometimes I wish Your will was mine too.
Please bear with me in this situation –
I have discovered that I rely totally on You for everything.
I am relying on You now.

THE RETURN

We've been apart too long.
I've turned – and blamed You for it,
I've closed my eyes
And wondered why You're not there.
You understand why –
All the questions,
Fears,
Hurt,
Disappointment.
But that hasn't helped.
If I turn, as I intend to,
Will You meet me half way?
I know it's my fault,
But I need You to be waiting with open arms
So that I can run towards You and know that I am safe. I might do it again,
But that's another time,
Another situation.
For now, will You have me back
And help me find my daddy
So that we can get it right again?

JUST TESTING

Pushing against You,
Pulling away from You,
Tugging You – all ways of getting to know You.

I use You as an anchor
But also as a plumb line
From which I rebound as I test.

Some of it is playful, sometimes I see Your jokes
But I don't always understand Your humour;
Sometimes it hurts because I don't understand
And I stand wondering quite what's happening,
But I always come back to You
To make some sense of it.
You always seem to know and understand
(Even if You don't tell me).

I have to keep pushing, pulling, tugging
To keep finding out, discovering and learning.
It's hard occasionally
Because You don't seem to want to play
But it's not because You're tired,
But because You're playing a different game
Or You've changed the rules for me.

In the long run we'll get closer
And closer
Until I can know what You're thinking
Without having to ask You –
Just as You know my thoughts.

I enjoy some of it
And I hate it at other times
But You will always be my loving father.

PRAYER FOR ESCAPE

Frustration, anger, sadness,
All emotions which I feel so weighty
On my being.
So much seems to be slow and heavy upon me,
Yet in reality it is so little.
I need a break, a rest,
A way of walking with You without the hassle.
How can I escape what I feel?
A prayer sent to Heaven asking for reprieve.

BENT LIKE A REED IN THE WIND

Bent like a reed in the wind,
Broken as a clay pot dropped,
Disciplined as a newly yoked ox.

You claimed my allegiance, my heart,
You asked for my self -
It was hard and still is.

Still the questions and the heartache,
Ever the seeking to understand You.
I am despondent – hopes come to naught
And I wonder how much longer it will last.
When will the success come –
Or is it being formed?

Fragments of learning being pieced together,
You the thread, I the pattern.
What do I depict?
What is the shape I take as You
Knit together my irregular stitch?
Can I see the whole picture Dad,
Or at least some of it?
To me I am cut short, unused
And the picture is not one of happiness.
I do not want my present picture –
I see a different one in hope and dream.
Do You see it – will You paint it for me?
Will You lift the aches and pains I feel
And give me the encouragement I need?

IN HOPE OF THE FUTURE

Sovereign Lord God,
Self Existent Creator,
Epitome of Truth,
I am totally reliant on Your grace.
Destroyer of Satan,
I give You my praise – for what it is worth:
I doubt You sometimes, sometimes I can't understand,
But I always return to You.
I have felt that You've left me in the dark,
Allowed me to fall – perhaps You have –
In order to strengthen me.

Holy Father, in all I do I need You to guide me,
To tell me what You think
To show me Your ideas,
Your attitudes,
Your opinions,
Because they are the tempers of my paths.

I deserve nothing
But I rest on Your rod of grace,
Love and mercy.

I can do nothing without You – build no towers,
Earn no favour.
I look to You to show me Your ideals for me
So that I may become what You want me to be,
However strange it may seem.

THE LOVER

Help me now to see You.
Be close to me,
Hug me as one who is deeply in love
So that I may cling to You
And bury my face in Your shoulder.
Whisper comforting words in my ears,
Touch my lips and reassure me
That You are there;
Be the blood in my veins,
The air in my lungs,
The beat of my heart
Show me how to feel You, to know You,
To trust You totally and completely
So that when I feel I am hanging
From the edge of life and I see no way of pulling myself up.
I look to You and know that
You will protect me.
Even if I fall You will protect me
As a mother would protect her child,
As a father would support it
And as a lover would embrace and love another

Where is our love story;
Whither the affection,
The declarations of undying love,
The times spent held and unspoken
Yet treasured and, each one,
In silent communication?
I yearn for such a love with You –
Then I may perhaps impart it to another –
But with You it must be special:
A love so deep that worlds move
And people change.
One that ferments inside,
Warming and wanting to burst out
But which is so personal that to try to explain it
Would be impossible

IN PRAISE OF GOD

Holy God,
Father God,
Almighty, Wondrous Creator,
Awesome Majesty;
Glory be to Your name.
Ultimate Power,
Author of Everything,
Finisher of All,
Conqueror, Vanquisher, Ruler;
Honour to Your holy name.

IN PRAISE OF GREATNESS

Holy, glorious Father God
You are awesome and unshakeable,
You sit on a throne of splendour, beauty, majesty,
Great jewels pale in Your presence –
You are without compare.

The winds come and go at Your command,
The hail pelts at Your bidding,
You say to the rain “Fall”
And to the storm “Cease”;
Thunder crashes for Your delight,
Lightening cracks at Your raised hand
Blizzards and sand storms rush and calm
According to Your word.
You are omnipotent –
The one who is all powerful:
Nothing can be too great for You,
Yet nothing too small.
As far as the galaxies spill into the blue,
Then black and, who knows, beyond,
As near as the atom splits to its centre
You are there.
You give birth to the snow,
You command the dawn to break,
The moon to shine,
The sun to hold its distance.

I cannot fathom Your power or gentleness,
Your wisdom or simplicity;
I cannot command You or demand from You.
I am made in Your image, yet I am nothing before You
Except Yours.
In humility I receive Your love, plans and might
So that You may show me Your power, Your intensity,
That I may glimpse a tiny fraction of who You are.

QUESTIONS OF GOD

So many questions
So many unanswered questions.
I do not understand why the great men of the Old Testament
Were so caught up in You
And yet I am not.
What was it they had Lord?
How do I display a shiny face;
Shut a lion's mouth;
Build a boat when I've never seen the rain;
Interpret a dream;
Talk to You face to face;
Trust You through jail, slavery, temptation?
How do I get closer to You,
How *do* I become one with You?

Where can I find intimacy, human intimacy with You,
How do I find favour with my God?
How I yearn for You, stretch to be like You, with You.
How I crave to be closer to You.

Will You give me the faith of the old prophets,
Will You allow me to be buried by You,
To be and then not be,
To see Your pillars of fire and cloud,
To part waters,
To challenge kings and rulers,
To see You as Moses did?
Give me the faith of Elijah, Elishah,
Can You not see my desire for You to be close?
It is not where I am but where You are,

The driving force in me is what You feel, want, plan –
Come Lord Jesus, show me what the cross is *really* like
Because I don't understand that kind of pain, agony, love
The story is told so often that the emotion is often lost
And those feelings are alien anyway.

I cannot know Your feelings then – I cannot know
What it was to die for love, because of perfection.

I cannot know what it was not to know You personally
As it was before You came.
Reveal Yourself, show Yourself to me,
I'm ready!

THE CONSTANT (Part i)

If it were possible,
I would let You down so often.
Wrong choices, selfish motives, human compunction,
“I want” constantly overriding my desire for You,
Yet instead of me suffering, *You* hurt for *me*;
Can I know what that is!
Can I perceive the love behind that emotion?
You never blame me or victimise –
You only allow me to reap the consequences of my choices
And pour blessing upon me.
You temper justice with love –
Something by which You ache to win me,
The tangible care of a father.

THE CONSTANT (Part ii)

With You all things are possible,
Things unthought, unspoken,
Also dreamt and begged,
The impossible is not.
My wildest fantasy cannot contain
The ability of the Father.

He made my fantasy, my world,
My perceptions –
And He made them perfectly.

THE CONSTANT (Part iii)

All creation embraces You as Lord,
Provider, Protector, Authority.
To look at intricacies within intricacies
And enormities upon enormities,
Is to see You in Your creative self
And yet speaks of only a small part of Your ability.
How can the finite understand the infinite;
How does the imperfect understand the perfect;
How can I try to fathom You?
Sometimes I stand and question You
Or tell You what to do
Or tell You You've got it wrong.
Sometimes I'm insulting,
I doubt You,
I challenge You.
Occasionally I reckon I could do it better myself,
Or in a more favourable time, or less painfully,
Or....

How foolish.
How You must wonder when we stand and try to do things our way.
How we fill ourselves with self importance and pride
And tell ourselves how good we are, or how powerful.
What are we compared to You
Who created everything we know
Or speculate?
With You as a friend how can I fail –
Listening to You, how can I err?

LOSS OF THE SELF

El Shaddai, You created me.
You made me,
You knew what I was going to be,
How I would live, feel and think
Before You created life itself.
You knew every idiosyncrasy,
Every chink in each part of my armour,
Every wish, fear, thought.
My desire is to be whole in You,
To allow You to use every part of me
Because, if I do that,
I will be truly fulfilled.
My fear is that I lose my individuality,
That uniqueness which is 'me'.
I pray You use me as only I can be used –
The only person like me –
As only I can be used,
So that I can be me in You.

LISTEN (from God)

Listen.

Listen to the birds singing in the trees

Shouting to each other.

Listen to them searching for food,

Bathing in the mud,

Singing from the tops of tall trees,

Each one knowing that his food and warmth

Come from Me.

Each part of that creature I created,

Each claw and feather I designed to function

To a perfect specification.

They live in harmony with me.

Are You not worth much more than the birds?

Do I not know You intimately, feel Your need,

Know the important things in Your life –

Both as You see them and as I see them?

Will You also be still and know that I AM God?

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS....

Father God I praise You for Your capabilities,
For Your ability to turn a quagmire of disillusionment
Into an eternity of hope and faith.
You are awesome, able to command anyone
Or anything
For You are God.

In the times when I see only dead ends
Help me to see Your way through –
When all around me seems black as starless night
I look to You to say “Let there be light”
And my situation, though unchanged,
Will be transformed
Because of Your greatness.

YOU PIECED TOGETHER THE EARTH

You pieced together the earth
You arranged for gravity to hold
You gave the stars their light
And set them at their distance,
Even the sun.

Your command controls the seas,
Your voice orders the wind,
Your hand, the sun.
You hold the moon at Your will,
Your almighty power shines
Through Your creation,
Boasting and proclaiming its father
As the true originator of creation.

You are mighty and worthy of praise.

FOR YOU ARE AN AWESOME GOD

For You are an awesome God,
A God without measure,
God who knows no bounds;
Nothing is too difficult
Or too easy
For You.
You are infinitely capable
Infinitesimally able,
Perfect in knowledge and understanding.

I bow before You
And acknowledge
That You are my victor,
My Saviour,
My champion as was in days of old.
The one true living expression
Of creation,
Omnipotence
And holiness.

AN UNFAMILIAR LOVE

Father I cannot understand Your love.
I cannot see that the perfect love
Which You feel for me
Is vastly more
Than anything I could feel.
Your love, as a groom for a bride,
Willing the best, wanting only good,
Always believing the best,
Never failing or slacking
But constantly burning
With the desire
To see my highest good,
My happiness realised.
I do not know
The depth of feeling
You have for me,
I cannot entertain
Even the smallest idea
Of how great Your affection is
For me,
Or how You long to see me
Smile, laugh.
You cry with me,
You hurt with me;
You share my feelings,
To give and give and give
Is Your burden
And when I do not allow You
To give
You hurt.

Your love for me
Runs so much deeper than this
For I only understand part of Your love
From that which I feel for another.
If You are my author and finisher
How much more must You feel
For me?

THE NAMES OF A COMPANION

Holy God,
Almighty One,
Risen King,
Light of Lights,
King of Kings,
All powerful,
Glorious Ruler;
Merciful One,
Lover,
Keeper,
Protector,
Provider,
The One True Living God,
These are Your names
My Friend.

LOSING SIGHT

Father

How is it that love for a woman
Can push Your love for me into insignificance?
How is it that You can love me as perfectly as You do,
Yet for one of Your creation
I can lose sight of how I should love
That creation?
Why do I become so confused,
Why is the distinction,
Once so clearly defined,
Now smudged and, somehow,
Pale?

But You love me as a bride,
You adore me as I might adore that woman
And much, much
More.
Nothing can function without Your markings,
Without Your lines, Your boundaries.
Help me to abandon myself to You,
To learn to trust another totally
So that You may prove to me
That You will never let me go,
Never let me down
And always
Let me be myself

TO TRUST AGAIN

So much has gone before,
Heartache, disappointment, despair,
Too much feeling, not enough distance.

Now I fear hope.

To have a hope, to entertain a dream
Is to admit that hope exists –
But what price the risk that
It may just be another
Broken foolish fantasy?

To trust that You know what You are doing,
To know that what You say is true;
I know You so little,
I have not grasped the meaning of relationship with You
So I cannot trust You fully.
I fear the prospect of You letting me down,
Yet You have said that the cup of bitterness
Will be tasted no more.
No more will the valley
Be filled with tears,
You have promised and said
“It is finished – Be still and know”.

How can I know oh Lord?
Why am I so afraid,
So incapable of knowing You,
Hence trusting You ?
Help me to befriend You,
Aid me in loving You
So that next time
I can be still and
Know
That You are God.

BEFORE THERE WAS TIME

Holy and mighty God,
Before the world was, You already knew me.
Before You made the sky and the earth
You already saw the intricacies of my life,
The disappointments and the failures,
The successes and laughter.
Before time began to pass
I was precious, special
And loved.

You are worthy.

WHO DREW THE VEIL OVER THE SUN?

Who drew the veil over the sun,
Why did You allow the winds to
Blow away my dreams?
Why the despair and sorrow,
Why is everything black and bleak?
You allowed what was, to become nothing
You allowed the happiness to turn to bitterness
And I do not know why.

But You know.
If only I learnt to trust You
And the ways You have,
It would not matter.
You created the wind,
You made the sun,
You ordered darkness.
Dreams You gave, You take away –
As if I was the keeper, not the owner.
Yours is rightfully the honour,
Pride of place and glory;
Do not let me take that from You.
If I lose everything else
Do not let me lose my humility,
For then I have lost everything.

OMNISCIENCE

Almighty God You are great,
Overflowing in wisdom.
You know all things,
See all things, made all things –
Things hidden, unseen
You see in perfect light,
Nothing escapes Your eye
Nor Your heart.
There is no one You cannot see,
No one You do not know –
Nothing You mistake or miss,
You cannot be fooled.

The security of knowing You know all things
Allows me to be honest with You.
Never will You turn away from me,
Never will You be surprised or shocked.
Maybe hurt.
You are awesome and deserving of praise
And trust
And even these You will not take
But receive.

IN TIME OF NEED

Have mercy on me father,
Listen to me as I cry to You
With heart unfolded;
Hear my plea as I tell You
How I'm feeling, what I need.
As I turn to You and say "No more",
Open Your heart to receive mine,
Open Your ears to hear my words,
Open Your arms to hold me
While I rest from weary trouble.
You hold the answers, You own the end –
I do not ask to know it all –
But that in my weakness,
As I am made strong,
You will give me the ability
To grow -
And the opportunity
To seek Your refuge.

SAFE HOPE

Oh God

Why is it that, when things go wrong,

I suddenly realise how little I know You?

When my world caves in leaving

Gaping holes in my reality,

My aspirations torn to shreds,

If I do not know You, how can I turn to You?

I long to know You are God

And that You can be trusted to see and

Oversee the end result,

But if the knowledge of You does not become

Reality in my heart,

What hope my dependence on Your unfailing love?

I ask that You become my feelings,

That You quicken my knowledge

So that I may know You intimately,

Trust You completely

And understand that Your fingerprints

On my situations

Are marks of total commitment.

WHEN ALL IS LOST....

You are my God,
You hold me up in times of despair,
You are there in times of trouble.
I can rely on only You when the world
Comes crashing around my ears,
When my world caves in and nothing but
Silence can be heard.

I sit and stare into nothing
As the void engulfs me and
I know that nothing is left.
My hope is crushed and my
Stature crumpled.
I feel demoralised and the emotions I possess,
Once so erratic, are now steady in pits
Of darkness.

Happiness, laughter, joy become foreign.
The pain and anguish which I feared for so long
Have wiped their feet and walked in,
Invading my space and taking over.

But I know, as they do, that I have
Joy where there is none,
Laughter will return;
You will take me from this den
And give back to me what You own.
You will give with abundance and
Not hold back.
You test and try, temper with fire
So that all that is, is Yours.

You are constant, total and trustworthy
And in the face of adversity I look to You
And see only good, only purpose, only love
And I praise You for that.

WHAT IS LIFE

What is life except a charade
In which we rush and hurry
To do things and satisfy ourselves?
Things material, holding on to futile strands of hope
Which, once accomplished, disappoint us –
For we must then find another goal to conquer.
We aim so high, fall so low, fool ourselves
That we can make it happen.
How small the human mind!
We have no control over our situations,
We cannot suddenly change our circumstances
Or remove ourselves from pain, disenchantment
Or even happiness.
Oh, we try, but in the end
The story stays the same.
We have no power to perform some miraculous feat
To change the past or know the future.
We strut and fret our life upon the stage,
Full of sound and fury, signifying nothing,
As Shakespeare knew.

But this is not some defeatist theory –
Merely an observation of mistakes which repeat themselves
In the wake of “Lest we forget”,
“Never again” and “Learn the lessons”.
‘Tis true that Homo Sapiens can achieve much for himself,
Given a motive, or pride, or greed,
But in the area known as the self, the soul, the persona
He cannot work, buy, or save;
For what is death? Who controls *that*?
When three score and ten has passed
Where will we put our efforts,
What value our achievements,
Who will honour the tales of strife and heroism?
Seventy years to please ourselves (sometimes more – often less)
And then?

The frail frame disintegrates or is eaten in a grave
By the lowly worm or invisible spore.
Everyone will say nice things because You're dead (they always do)
But then?
Is it all a mad show, aiming for goals
Which please our egos but not us?
Scrabbling for the satisfaction of peace or tranquillity,
Or a filling for the holes
Whose shape we do not know?
Calming the feelings of emptiness in places
We didn't know we had a space?
There must be more than us to rely on;
If we are all we have, we don't have much.
In a galaxy we can't even reach, see or comprehend,
What a cruel joke it would be!
I ask myself a question – who is in control?
I tell You, it isn't me.

IN THE NORMALITY OF LIFE

In the normality of life
When the world just gently ambles by
And nothing much appears to be happening,

In the hustle and bustle of a busy day
When it seems I couldn't fit
Another minute in for fear the day burst;

In the quiet 'me' where no one is allowed
Or disturbs the peace
Where I sit or lie or stand staring but not looking,
Thinking but at the same time thoughtless.

As I walk down and up and over hills
Which gradually bring me nearer to far away
And older and wiser from Youthful ignorance,

In the whirligig world of dreams, hopes,
Whims and aspirations,

It is good to know that You are in control.

AS I SIT HERE

As I sit here, quiet, alone,
Breaking from the hard mad rush pace of life,
I realise You're there.
I've needed a rest for a long time
So I've taken a break to catch my breath
And You've talked to me.

We scurry and rush in a world we try to contain,
Worry and fret as we get it wrong
Or just give up.
We do not understand Your plans or see Your timing:
We grow impatient and question Your wisdom;
Our faith dwindles as we try to do it ourselves.
We cannot see Your fingerprints,
So we assume You've let go.

Next time we look or consider consulting You,
Perhaps You could show us that You know best.
Maybe You would make us realise
That You made us, You formed us and,
If we let You,
You will lead us.

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(Where to go when you're feeling....)

This list is for You if You want to explore a specific emotion. It is not exhaustive, but may give You a starting point. Do be aware that, for example, when feeling despair, poems of praise can often help.

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