

*Give me
a heart
of mercy,
Lord*

*a book
of poems*

by

*Christine
Beadsworth*

***Give me a heart of
mercy, Lord***

a collection of poems

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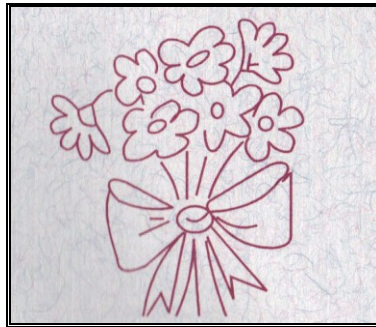
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Dedication

I publish this book with the prayer that these words may find their way to many bruised reeds and smoldering wicks and minister to them new hope and faith in a God who never fails us; Who understands that the questions we wrestle with in our darkest hours are no reflection of our lack of belief in Him, but rather a sign that we do indeed carry this treasure in earthen vessels.

And so the greatness of the power is seen to be of Him. Halleluyah!
(2 Cor 4:7)



For my parents, who taught me to know Him and who daily demonstrate the love of God in myriads of little ways.

For Betsy, who constantly encouraged me to keep on writing and who taught me what it means to always consider others better than yourself.

For my family, who has filled my life with love and joy and laughter.

And most of all, for my Lord and Friend, Jesus Christ, for I have found You to be a God of hope and new beginnings.

Prologue

It causes pain a poem to share
It's like removing all I wear
My shrinking-violet soul stands bare
Before the reader's sharp-eyed stare
And hesitant, I want to say
It's not the menu of the day
So don't pick out words to your taste
And swallow other lines in haste
But rather savor every phrase
And search your mind for words of praise
Always keeping this in mind
I've scoured my heart these words to find
They come from corners deep inside
Sometimes they're things I'd rather hide
And yet, I choose to let you see
That you may know a part of me.
Yes, it takes courage every time
I share afresh a verse of rhyme
So don't just throw it on the shelf
Because I'm giving you MYSELF!

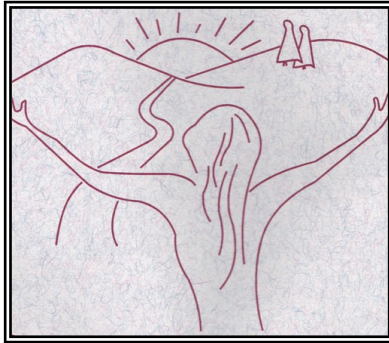
'Woe to one who falls and has none to pick him up' - Eccl 3:10



Give me a heart of mercy, Lord
For wounded soldiers that I know
Forgive me for I've stood and watched
And thought in pride, they've got their due
For being double-minded, weak
And washed by every wind and tide.
In truth, Your Spirit's shown me
They've fought in frontlines for their King
And, tired from battles hard and long
They drop their guard and fall
And satan, cruel and merciless
Moves in to finish all.
Lord, let us pour the healing oil
And hold their heads and give them wine
And cover them with love so strong
That they feel warm and safe again.
Teach us to care, to feel, to pray
For all your servants every day
Judging not as man would do
But leaving just rewards to You
You've given us one another, Lord
You prayed we would be one
Oh, give us Your compassion, Lord
The mercy of Your Son
To bear the failings of the weak
And heed their pain-filled cry
So that behind the battle lines
The wounded do not die.

A poet writes

My heart, Lord, is an alabaster box
With songs of my soul full inside
And only when I'm deeply touched
Do words spill out in praise or prayer
And when I'm struck by cruel tongues
Or harsh words cleave my soul in two
The tears that fall are black on white
In lines that deepest groans express.
Word torrents flow and ease the pain
And soon I'm standing tall again
For when You hear my spirit's cry
Your strong hand reaches from on high
And lifts me out of hurt's despair
To where I breathe anointed air
And balm of Gilead makes me whole
And gives me new songs in my soul.
The river flowing from Your throne
Brings life from Your heart to my own
So my heart doesn't break in vain
You fill me up to give again
I so desire my life to be
A pure vessel poured out for Thee
Lord, flood my soul and use my pen
To bring the scent of Christ
to men.



This is the Day that the Lord Has Made!

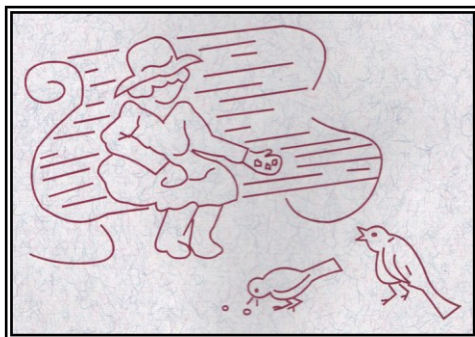
Each new day is a wonderful thing
Who knows what blessings this day will bring
Straight from the storehouse and given to me
To use for Your glory that others may see
The wealth of Your kindness, the depths of Your love
That You're not just a God that resides up above
But You're with me and hold me each step of the way
Guiding me safely and for me You pray
That I may have victory in all I go through
Strong in my weakness as I trust in You
And that's why, Lord Jesus, I'm able to say
I thank You for this and for every day!

My Life - a Living Letter

*Lord, make my life an open book
Reflecting well Your face
And every page from start to end
A tribute to Your grace
That those who choose to scan the lines
May hear You loud and clear
And, searching for the way to Life
May find the pathway here.
Let water from beneath Your throne
Drench every word and phrase
And each new chapter I begin
Resound with songs of praise!
Lord, do not print my cover
In the glossy hues of pride
For choosing to lay self aside
And lifting Jesus high
Will beckon those who hurry by
To lay their burdens down
And change their rags of sin and shame
For new life and a crown
So write Your laws upon my heart
In inks of faith and love
That honor for the deeds I've done
May go to You above
And when my book of life is closed
Memories of me may fade
But through eternity will ring
All glory to Your Name!*

God's Sparrow

She is old now
And the penthouse-body
Of her youth
Has been exchanged
Roughly rearranged
To the ramshackle confines
Of a hovel.
Rusty joints
Barely hold together
Her corrugated sheet limbs
And even the windows
of her soul are filmed
with rheumy grime.
Each day she shuffles down
To the park bench
To join the rest of
The squatter camp
Informally settled
On a park bench
Feeding God's other birds
Society's refuse
Bundled on the edge
Of the highway of life
And I would not be surprised
If the traffic officer
Doing his courtesy call
Should discover
That one of these tenants
Has quietly slipped away...
Leaving her premises vacant
Somewhere between
the early morning rush hour
And his tea break...
But God knows the worth
Of these
The world calls Worthless
And none pass unnoticed
By Him.

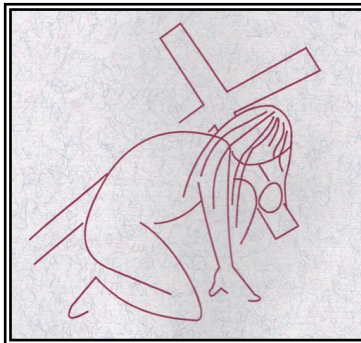


For Margaret who reminded me that God can do it in a moment!

Though mountains rise before me
I choose to still believe
You're able to break down those walls
As easy as You please!
When trials come and harsh winds blow
Nothing comes my way I know
Unless You let it be.
So I will have faith in Your Word
And heed the still small voice I heard
Knowing what You've said will be
You will fulfill Your plans for me
And lead me safely through
I'll walk by faith and not by sight
I will not doubt You in the night
The Word You spoke will be my light
And faith will keep it burning bright
Until that Word comes true!

Dying to Self - Luke 22:42

This path looks familiar, Lord
Every hideous bend and turn
And what's that nauseating
sick-sweet smell clinging to me
Death
Not bouquet and funeral-parlor sweet
But seating writhing
Slaughter-ground of self
And I can hear
The echo of a scream
That rings a bell somewhere
Oh, yes, the voice is mine
A remnant from the last time
I staggered through this way
But, Lord,
The road leads deeper down
Than I remember
And the shadows stretch longer
And the thorns pierce
Deeper this time
Just as well I do
Not tread this winding way
Alone
For You are with me, lord
And so the
Valley of Death's shadow
Holds no fear
How can it...?
If Light is holding me fast
And Love carries me home.



***'He will swallow up death in victory and the Lord God
will wipe away tears from off all faces'***

- Isaiah 25:8

Written on the death of my uncle

Lord
You are God
All-wise
Always
And so we know
You know all things
That this is not
Some cruel mistake
Some accident
But part of Your design
Preplanned
Because You, God
Delight
In turning darkness
Into light!
Therefore this night
Of weeping
Though so dark
Will show the brightness
Of Your light
When eyes can't see
The reasons why
And ash-grey mourning
Clouds the sky
We'll walk by faith
And not by sight
Trusting that
Your way is right
Finding true security
In knowing that
Our lives will be
Guided step by step

By thee
And one day soon
We'll understand
This seeming harshness
from Your hand
and sorrow then
will flee away
and oil of joy
will greet the day
and with our loved ones
then we'll sing
our God has conquered
everything!
O grave, where is your victory?
O death, where is your sting?

Waiting...

'my eyes fail with watching for the fulfillment of Your promise'
Psalm 119:82

Lord,
I thought
There were sixty minutes
In an hour
But now
Each second
Drags on
Indefinitely
Painfully
And the clock hands
Just don't seem
to move
the way they did
Before
I know my times
Are in Your hands
But Lord,
Do you think
Perhaps
You could
Wind the clock...?

Backsliding

'Come let us return to the Lord...'

Hosea 6:1

Oh God
What is there
Left for me to say...?
My word supply
Is dry
Only pain remains
But You see -
That comforts me.
You know -
And I'm Yours
Battered and bruised
Maybe
But still
Unmistakably Yours
And I know
That only You
Can help me now
Your child
Come home...
To stay...
Is that okay?

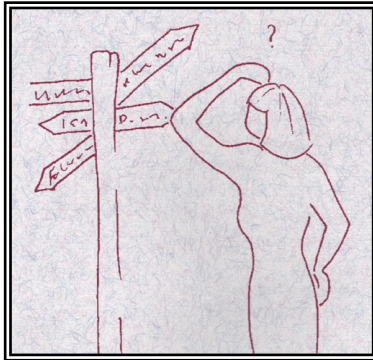
For my friend Gaddi

'the Lord my God illuminates my darkness'
Psalm 18:28b

Thank you Jesus
That because we're in You
We do not
Breakdown
We break through.
Your ways have always been
Higher than our ways
We think we must climb
To elevate ourselves
In truth
The way up
Is down.
The path to life
Is death.
This is beyond
Our understanding
Too wide
For our narrow vision
But You have said
That even in the valley
Of death's shadow
We need not fear.
When parameters of reason
Will not stand firm
And all our strength
Will not hold
Our emotions calm,
It does not mean
You do not hold us
In Your great palm
Nor does it follow
That You have lost
The roadmap of our lives!

It must feel cold and dark
For a seed to find itself
Underground...
If only it knew
What You planned
To bring forth
- that age-old wonder
Of the first green shoot
Pushing aside its grave-clothes
Happens for us too.
We emerge anew
Leaving the old dry husk
Behind
Growing with an ease because
The tight restrictions
The seed-case of
our own standards
lies cast aside
for as it always is with You
the path of darkness,
pain and death
brings forth Your
resurrection Life
beauty from ashes
Yes, Lord, ashes
Grey fragmented soul
Take it, Jesus.
I know You
Can make it whole

Crossroads



Dear Lord, please don't think it rude
If I should need to question You
It doesn't show a lack of faith
Or lost desire to serve Your name.
Sometimes I've see an open door
And rushed ahead, eager for more
Yet, coming round a hairpin bend
An obstacle's stretched end to end
Now should I pray for fresh supplies
Or is this a 'no entry' sign...?
You said a voice would speak to me
If at the crossroads I should be
Indicating, clear as day,
The only right and tested way
But Lord, I cannot run this race
When pea-soup fog obscures Your face
I cannot make out east or west
How can I know which path is best?
Confusion reigns at this stop-street
Does change of plan equal defeat?
But maybe lord, this light is red
To prevent accidents ahead
And I must learn to trust the hand
That waves me on or bids me stand
for You will surely bring to pass

the vision whispered to my heart
these works prepared for me to do
I now commit afresh to you
And if I heed Your traffic signs
I'll reach my goal in Perfect time!

Window Shopping

Looking at these goods displayed
It seems that most things are on sale
And 'prices slashed' beckon and call
But all that glitters is not gold.
Its good then, to recall afresh
The price You paid in Your Son's death.
Your 'special offer' made to me
Is valid through eternity
And all the claims You make are true
There's nothing shop-soiled in You!
And those who just can't make ends meet
Are still called to come, buy and eat
Food without price, to satisfy,
Something no restaurant can try!
I wish folks would not window-shop
To just admire, but rather stop
Undo the wrapping man has made
To see the contents deep inside
For promises of gold are there
Hall-marked and flawless, psalm and prayer
Lord, hear my earnest cry today
It's for these searching souls I pray
Who scratch for grains of hope within
False-bottomed worldly bargain bins
That unexpectedly they'd find
A treasure of the life-time kind
Eternal Truth to make them wise
And clutching this pearl of great price
They'll give up what they cannot keep
To purchase what they cannot buy
The gift of Your Eternal Life



'I Stand at the Door and Knock'

Rev 3:20

My heart
Lord
Is a house
With many rooms
As far as I,
The owner, know
All the rooms
are open and
full of Son-light
but then
only the Builder
the Master-Architect
knows how many
rooms He designed
and how many still
are closed
un-entered
dark...
I need
to spring-clean, Lord
to whitewash every wall
and polish every floor
so that You
the One
who lives in
the Master bedroom
may wander freely
in Your own home.

Friends are Friends Forever



*Lord
Thank you for
This friend so true
It's good that we
Are one in You
Distance can't
Separate us two
You span the miles
With strands of love
Crocheted by prayer
So we can be
One in You
When we are anywhere.*

'God is our Refuge and Strength, a well-proved help in trouble'

Psalm 46:1

*God - What does one do
When everything that spells
Security
Is shaken...
The temptation is
To fall apart with it -
To allow oneself to be
Buried under layers
Of rubble and reality
But somewhere in the turmoil
Right in the eye of this storm
Is Your still small voice
"I've not seen the righteous
Forsaken
Or their seed begging bread"
And so
Clinging to this life-raft
Of Your Word
And having this hope
As an anchor for my soul
I put my shoulder to the wind
Letting it blow from me
Every encumbrance
streamlining my Christian profile
I set my face like a flint
And choose not to fear
For if the mountains should fall
To the depths of the sea
Even still Your right hand
Holds me fast
And because You are
My refuge and strength
There is no need
To be afraid.*



Depression

*'O my God, my life is cast down upon me and I find the burden more
than I can bear...'*

Psalm 42:6

Lord

*If I could lift my head to scream
Or raise my hands to You
Then I would know I live for sure
But this thick blanket presses so
That inside I'm using all my strength
Just to stay bent double
And all the weighty chains of gloom
And shackle-fears of all my failings
Drag down*

Down

Down

*What is this creeping death
of life and limb
that coils vice-like round and round
my brains commands do not get through
each step and turn is snail-slow
and sleep envelops every sense
prisoner in a Perspex box
and looking out at all around
I'm far away from warmth and sound
And laughter doesn't penetrate
And kindly words reverberate
And though I long to touch the hands
Reaching out to help me stand
I'm moving to a slower song
A dirge that doesn't reach their ears
And when they look into my eyes
It seems my soul has gone away
And all the rooms are shuttered, dark
But Lord, You know I'm here*

*And Your ears hear my mute appeal
And so now, like a child, I must
Choose, in darkness, Light to trust
Blindfolded by fear and doubt
But lighthouse-strong, my heart calls out
No matter how long it may take
Your Word says, my Dawn will break!*



Entertaining Angels

*God
You often pop up
In unexpected places
And I think, Lord,
That You have many faces
This week I saw You
Clear as day
In multitudes of little ways
You opened Heaven's windows wide
And made me feel so loved inside
Kindnesses so undeserved
Thoughtfulness in deed and word
Time and time again You gave
Blessings coming wave on wave
And through this friend I felt again
The awesome love You have for men
And I don't think he even knew
That he was representing You!*

For all God's wounded birds...

*God
Put my tears into Your bottle
Please count them as they fall
I seem to shed so many these days
That You will be on constant call!
I have inside this huge salt lake
So full
That slightest tremors make
Shock-waves multiply and rise
Through the spillways of my eyes
The world says cry and you're alone
But that is just not true
I know
For here You stoop
To lift me up
Catching saline in Your cup
So not one drop's unheeded, lost
You care enough to count the cost
And walk with me
Through this dark pit
And hold me gently whilst I sit
And mourn for life and days gone by
And love I've lost
And questions why remain unasked
And all dreams die
It seems I'm drowning in my pain
And then I hear Your voice again
Speaking peace to wind and rain
And like a dying man
I grasp the hand outstretched
Who knows my path
The Rock I run to
Tall and strong
When I am small and overwhelmed
Just rock me, Lord
And stroke my hair*

*I feel such comfort when I'm there
For I do not need to explain
You understand
You've felt the same
And one day soon
I'll stand and say
The night is gone
You've brought the day
Beauty from ashes
Joy from pain
And I'll give glory to Your Name
For only God
heals broken wings
and makes the shattered heart
to sing!*

Grumbling

*My thoughts
Are birds trapped
In the steel case
Of my financial limitations
Frenetic needs and greeds
Beat their wings
Against the bars
And discontent
Sulks on its perch
While self-pity
Squawks discordant
Scorning the seed
of provision...
Lord, I do not want
This crowded cage
Of flat black
Squabbling crows.
Make me
a single-hearted
songbird - nightingale
whose song is sweetest
when my cage is dark
and circumstance has
clipped my wings,
content to stay within
the boundary-bars
that You have set,
my song
a serenade of praise
which frees my soul
to soar above restraints
rejoicing in the liberty
contentment brings
my eyes on You
and mind set not
on earthly things!*



***'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial
which comes to try you'***

1 Pet 4:2

Pain

*Is Your scalpel, Lord
You carve our souls
Into sculptures
Of beauty and worth
You sandpaper
with suffering
to bring out
the grain in the wood
and You oil us
with Your sweet-scented
Holy Spirit
To draw forth the true colors
The rich deep velvet hues
Deep inside our souls.
We are Your workmanship
Vessels of majesty and honor
Being formed beneath
Your Master fingers
Take pleasure in us, Lord
Perfect us
please*

Old Age
For all mom's Hospice patients

*Old age is
Just not pretty
God
Each day
I ruefully survey
The ravages
Of years and pain
Unseen landslides
Gouged again
New crevices
Upon my frame
And it seems rust
Has filled my joints
Which creak and groan
At every turn
But inside I am
Still sixteen
A peach
Hemmed in
By old-prune bones
Chaperoned by shackles
Of my maiden-aunt aches
I'm forced to travel
From my chair
And visit other lands
By prayer
Now, Lord, you know
That I'm a pot pourri
Of interesting information
Fragranced by a jot
Of common sense and wisdom
So why does this sick society
Shove me on the shelf
When I should be
The centerpiece
Perfuming richly my surroundings
Never mind, Lord*

*One day soon
My failing ears
Will hear Your call
And child-like eager
I will rise
And shed these fetters of the years
The un-ironed dustcoat
Of mortality
Will slip unheeded
To the floor
And straight and strong
I'll take Your hand
And run with joy
Into the morning
Of eternal youth,*

Gestation

*Sometimes
An unexpected
Sperm-idea
Penetrates my mind
And then conception
Inspiration!
Word-cells multiply, divide
Lining up to form
The pulsing core
The heart-beat of a new life wombed
Far beneath my own heart warmed
A part of me and yet
Apart
Unique creation
Deep within creator
Stillness
Embryonic sleep
Until thoughts flutter
Phrase-limb flexes
Interrupting reverie
As from gene-pool
Of all I've known
Fingers growing joint and bone
Eyes and nose
Molded to grace
The face
Of this very individual face
And as the fetal stanzas grow
I recall nocturnal toes
Which banish sleep
By raining blows of protest
On my ribcage-soul
At last discomfort indicates
Excitement of impending birth
I wear the suit of parent-pride
And yet can't help
But stand in awe*

*As I behold the miracle
Fruit of labor
Full-term born
Flesh of my soul-flesh
Bone of bone
As God draws forth
His gift - a poem.*

***'Eagerly pursue and seek to acquire this love. Make it
your aim, your great quest'***

1 Cor 14:1

Christine

You don't love someone

For your good

But for theirs

You don't give to someone

For your pleasure

But for theirs

You don't lay down your life

So that you may gain a reward

But that they may get

A little closer to God

Through you.

True love starts

When you expect

Nothing in return.

***'The whole of him delights and is precious. This is my
beloved and this is my friend'***

Song of Songs 5:16

*I love you more than life itself
More than you'll ever guess
My love is high as outer space
Wider than east to west
And all the oceans in the world
Could only just contain
The smallest droplet of my love
The tiniest sand grain
And if I counted all the stars
And added millions too
'twould be an under-estimate
Of all I feel for you!
You are the sunshine in my sky
That chased the dark away
You are the rainbow after rain
The sunrise in my day
Like water in a dry parched land
You've washed my weary soul
The love you give unselfishly
Has helped to make me whole.*

Your Blood

*Your Blood is still fresh
Your Blood is still wet
Indestructible Life
Speaking from the
Mercy Seat
For me
Imperishable
Grace
Ceaselessly flowing
Over all that does
Not meet Your
Holiness
Covering
Freeing
Delivering
Cleansing
Clothing me
In garments fit
To serve
The King
Who gave
His Blood
Of Love
For me.*

Wait and See

*Oh God
It is so hard
To wait
To see
The things You've
Clearly promised me
To watch the enemy destroy
The lives of those
I hold most dear
And yet be helpless
To contain his rampage
Or to stop the pain
I feel as my heart
Breaks again
To see the dark
But trust the Light
In spite of lack of sound
Or sight
Of victory that You say
will come,
when all of hope
lies in the dust
and there's not one
that I can trust
when weary day
follows each night
and giving up seems
good and right,
to find the strength
to not let go
takes every ounce of faith
I hold
Weariness engulfs my soul
This battle really
Takes its toll
Lord hear my cry*

*And rescue me
I've trusted You,
Believed to see
Your goodness in
My loved ones' lives,
Your rescue from
The serpent's lies
So now, Lord,
I'm reminding You
That You promised
A work to do!
Silence the mocking tongues
At last
And bring Your Word to me
To pass.*

For Aunt Leila-one of God's gems

Leila

*Strength of God
In frail earthen vessel
Courageous little candle
Burning with a light
That brightened all our rooms
Wearing contentment
Like a garment
Faithful to the God
Whose faithfulness
Upheld her.
Offering a cup
Brimful of grace
To all who entered in.
We came to give
And yet... received
Far more.
And looking back
we realize
that God gave us a gift
Of bright-eyed
Joy-filled
Selflessness
to teach us
how to live.
A life poured out for others
A healing balm that flowed
To touch alike both young and old
Soothe wounded knees
and aching hearts
and proudly watch us grow...
and now the jar is empty
The race of life is run
The pendulum has ceased to swing
Her work on earth all done
And yet*

*that candle's burning still
a call to follow on
and in the void left by
her death
the fragrance of her life
flows on.*

Learning to Forgive

*Lord, this leaden weight
Of hurt I hold
Has held me back
So long
So tight
The knuckles of my heart
Are white
And I find
I do not know how
To let it go
To lay it down
And looking at
This withered claw
I long to move
As others do
Then through the chambers
Of the years
I hear Your voice
Still ringing clear
In kindness
To a crippled man
You boldly cried
"stretch out your hand"
And so in faith
I too reach out
Extending in the Name
Of God
To those who deserve wrath,
A cup of mercy
And a cancelled debt...
My hand is empty now
And yet
I feel the pulsing life of God
Flow through the fingers
Of my soul
And find, at once
My heart made whole!*

Growing Up



*Once
Our love was new
With wide-eyed wonder
Of a new-born babe
Then childhood tumbles
Took their toll
And after falling
once or twice
our hearts learned
caution
no longer running blind
down hills
into our lover's arms.
Now it seems
That we've hit adolescence
With all its gawky moody
Pimple-picking
Introspection
If we can just survive
These stormy seas
In search of self
And weather winds
Of hormone's lashings
We'll float past
The flotsam of our fears
And find ourselves
Washed safe*

*To adult shores
Of self-acceptance.
Then I look forward
To the walk
As hand-in-hand
Up hill and down
Secure within a love
That covers flaws and failings
We can stride as one
Towards the warm rich sunset's glow
Of our love's mature years.*

1 John 4:19

*Love is not blind
God is Love
And God is not blind
That's what makes it
Breath-taking
Incomprehensible
Beautiful
He sees us
Knows our frame
Our frailties
Our failures
The ugly things
We hide inside
And yet ...
He holds us
Enfolds us
In His warm wings
Of love
And when we turn
And run in shame
We hear Him call us
back again
Unchangeably
Remarkably
Unshakably
Eternally
His heart
Calls out
To us...
Respond!*

Time

*Time does not heal
Time dulls the ache
But God can heal
If we will take
The time to really draw apart
Gather the fragments
of our hearts
and hold them up
with trembling hands
towards the throne of Grace
the heart that broke
with love for us
who feels our every pain
will place His nail-scarred
hand in ours
that we might live again
and binding up the gaping wounds
as only He can do
He'll walk with us throughout Today
And through Tomorrow too
Until the day we understand
That He restores our souls
So we can then touch
Broken hearts and
Help make others whole.*