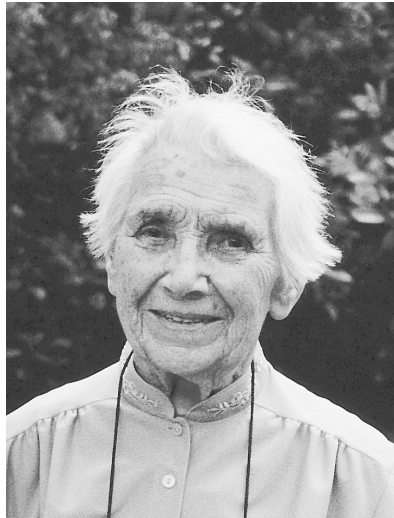




POEMS and ARTICLES

LOUIE HORNE

compiled by Gervais Frykman



FRIENDS FELLOWSHIP OF HEALING

2025

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## A testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Louisa Horne, 1906-1999

Louie, as she was known to her friends, was born on 28 March 1906 in Bunbury, Cheshire, the younger of identical twins. They were the daughters of a Primitive Methodist minister, and organised religion was a strong part of family life. Both Louie and her sister Rose trained as teachers in Sheffield, and both found a deep social concern in their work, Rose teaching blind children and Louie specialising in teaching children with learning difficulties.

While in Sheffield Louie met her future husband Fred, and they trained together to become Methodist local preachers. At this time Louie wrote her first poem which, set to music, was sung by Louie in church. With her two sisters Louie sang in the Sheffield Orpheus Choir for a number of years. She married at Christmas 1930 and her only child Hazel was born two years later. Fred's work took him to Nassington near Oundle and it was here that Louie found her spiritual home, joining Peterborough Monthly Meeting. In the 1940s they moved to Wellingborough and in 1947 Louie was widowed when Fred died of a brain tumour.

Louie returned to teaching and used to travel to work on her bicycle. She became a familiar figure in the town, wearing a safety helmet long before others realised its necessity.

Louie contributed much to the life of Wellingborough; when Godric Bader founded the local branch of CND Louie joined at once and became an active member. On one occasion in London she was arrested together with Bertrand Russell. She is remembered for her support of the Peace Camp at Molesworth, travelling regularly to vigils, and stoically

waiting in freezing weather at the gates of Molesworth Base when transport failed to arrive on time.

One of Louie's less well-known activities was as a prison visitor. She supported the Quaker meetings for worship at Wellingborough prison and also became an approved prison visitor, making herself available to befriend any prisoner who requested it. She had a glass fronted notice board in her garden in which she displayed posters on environmental matters and in support of Quakers.

Louie was founder member of the Wellingborough Racial Equality Council and supported their activities throughout her life. She was also an early member of the Victoria Centre Inter-Faith group.

Healing Friends have experienced relief from pain when Louie laid her hands on them. One mother became a life-long friend when Louie healed her son who was suffering from three serious, potentially fatal, diseases. Doctors were amazed at his recovery.

Friends remember Louie's contribution to discussion groups, always relevant and often humorous. She was a loyal Elder and Overseer and for many years was editor of Northamptonshire Friends Newsletter. Later she occasionally sent a poem for inclusion in the newsletter 'if deemed appropriate'. Among her incidental activities were helping in the Save the Children Fund shop, going to Lourdes as a helper, and spending her holidays cleaning in elderly persons' homes. She enjoyed representing Northampton and Wellingborough Monthly Meeting at Ackworth Quaker School AGM.

Booklets of Louie's poems have been published by the

Friends Fellowship of Healing. Tony Noakes set some of them to music and on 10 June 1989 a dozen of them were performed at Northampton Meeting House. They were sung by the American tenor Douglas Robinson, accompanied by pianist/ composer John Strange. Louie and Tony Noakes continued their friendship by correspondence and telephone. [Tony Noake's songs are available on IMSLP]

Louie's character was full and varied. As a young person she showed a great sense of fun and mischief. She displayed courage in helping her husband cope with the onset of blindness and after his death, in facing life as a single mother for Hazel. Louie's twin sister died in 1991 and she courageously faced the blow of her daughter's death in 1997. Courage was needed for her active support of CND.

She had a great love of literature and once remarked to a Friend that the public library was her second home. When visiting another Friend Louie asked that she restrain her when tempted to go into a bookshop. A good correspondent, Louie's many friends found that she kept in touch even when her sight was failing and she made each person feel equally valued.

Louie lived her life in the presence of God and those who knew her as a person of seemingly steadfast faith may be surprised to learn of what Louie herself referred to as her 'Wilderness Experience'. This occurred in late middle age. Louie wrote about this experience and concluded 'Even though I may not hear His voice, I know His arm is about my shoulder as I trudge along. I am well content'.

Louie died on 10 August 1999.



## Welcome

I run with open arms to welcome life,  
Knowing that at the heart of whatsoever it may bring  
Of good or seeming ill,  
Awaits a jewel hidden there  
by God For my enriching.

The joy of God  
The joy of God is glowing in a cherry,  
It is merry in a kitten,  
It is swinging in the sea,  
It is flowing in a stream,  
It is a gleam within a dewdrop,  
And the joy of God is singing now in me,  
Singing,  
Singing,  
The joy of God is singing now in me.

## The juggler

In the westering gleam of the winter sun,  
Dancing in ecstasy,  
And tossing a thousand glittering stars,  
Was a wind-crazed holly tree.  
I stood and stared; but too busy was he  
With his fountain of stars to notice me.

Sun, moon and stars  
You are my ripening sun;  
Your love about me pour,  
Mature me, Lord, and make  
Me mellow to the core.

You are the rounded moon  
That swings my spirit's sea;  
Your joy has called, and I'll  
Your dancing partner be.

You are my heaven of stars;  
Lift up my level sight  
To where your shining truths  
Make beautiful the night.

A singing murmur  
Immured in the metropolis of Time,  
Far from the mighty music of the sea,  
Within my soul, as in a shell, I hear  
A singing murmur of Eternity.

Night scent  
Heaven drifts about us  
With honeysuckle breath  
From the moonrise moment of birth  
To the sunrise moment of death.

Joy

He sweeps by on the wings of a swallow,  
He looks out from a petalled face,  
I find him waiting in the stillness  
Of a green and golden place.

The whispering of leaves in the night wind  
Is His voice in my heart as well:  
I sense the glory of His approaching  
In the ocean's surge and swell.

Any one of a thousand doorways  
May suddenly open and shine:  
With a leap my spirit will be with Him,  
And His joy will be welcoming mine.

The Singer of Heaven  
The Singer of Heaven is singing  
Eternity's ever-new song;  
On the hurrying breezes of Time  
Its cadences echo and throng.  
The Singer of Heaven is singing,  
And I am a note in his song.

A Shining-place  
Sun-bright, sun-vast,  
Within my dingy heart Thou hast  
Made for Thyself a shining-place,

So meek Thy grace.  
Dance to my piping  
Dance, Dance, Dance to my piping.  
Like a loosened leaf on the wind, like dimpling water,  
Dance with delight, My son, My daughter.  
Dance with snowflakes turning in tranced whiteness,  
With swallows skimming the river's brightness.

Come, Dance, Dance to my piping  
With white foam horses, tossing in ocean spaces,  
With sunlight flickers in woodland places.  
With the sun that leaps through the golden gates of  
morning,  
With the stars a-patter from dusk till dawning.

Come, Dance, Dance to my piping.  
You are a part of the joy of my creation.  
Join in My children's jubilation.  
Deep in your hearts are My note of love and laughter;  
Dance through life, and dance hereafter.

Come, Dance, Dance to my piping.  
Dance, Dance, Dance to my piping.  
Dance, Dance.

### The spell

Sun above, and rain on earth  
Conjure up a rainbow's birth.  
Falter drops or brightness fade,  
And the rainbow is unmade.

Neither sun nor shower can  
Rear alone the magic span.  
In this fine and fragile art  
Each with each must play its part.

Warp with weft must intertwine,  
Earth with heaven, rain with shine.

I've walked into a sunset  
I've walked into a sunset  
In sunset I am gowned,  
I'm wading through a sunset,  
With sunset I am crowned.  
There's sunset drifting round me  
Like confetti on the breeze.  
I'm walking in a sunset  
Of autumn-coloured trees.

### Autumn fun

The wind is frolicking in my hair,  
Leaves are riding on gusts of air,  
Leaves are running on rustling feet  
And turning cartwheels down the street,  
Clouds run races across the sky,  
The morning's merry, and so am I.

Love and...

Love and joy walk hand in hand  
Through a shining summerland.

Love and sorrow weeping go  
Through a winterland of woe.

He who such extremes would shun  
Must lock his doors and live alone.

Hooded and cloaked and shod  
Undaunted on my way I go  
Through summer rain and winter snow,  
Hooded and cloaked and shod  
In God.

Quiet  
Still waits the field beneath the snow;  
Safe lies the seed within the clod;  
Soft-enfolded curls the embryo;  
Quiet rests my soul within the love of God.

## Hope

The January air is mild and still;  
Somewhere a little bird begins to sing.  
The lingering sunset holds a secret hope.  
The earth is dreaming of the distant spring.

I walked  
I walked with downcast eyes,  
And looked at mud,  
And hope and ardour fled.

I walked with lifted head,  
And saw the skies,  
And knew that life was good.

The luminous air of Heaven  
In prayer I think of friends who've died, and passed  
Into enfolding radiance, pure and vast;  
And thus, if only for a moment even,  
I breathe, with them, the luminous air of Heaven.

## Viewpoint

I saw bare trees against the sun,  
As black as black could be.  
I saw them from the sun-ward side,  
Gold-limbed, most fair to see.

I looked at people passing by,  
And as I saw them then  
Against God's righteousness, they seemed  
But common, sinful men.

I stood by God, and with his eyes  
Beheld them, heaven-lit,  
Caught in the beauty of His love.  
And glorified by it.

Jailed  
When with self-concerning thoughts  
I fold myself about,  
I build a jail that walls me in,  
And God and others out.



### Distant?

How can I gain a vision of God  
Who dwells in heights above?

In the face of a rose His beauty I see,  
In the smile of a friend His love.

How can I know the will of God,  
Who dwells in distance dim?

In another's need He beckons me  
To work along with Him.

How can I learn the truth of God,  
Who dwells obscure, apart?

Quiet as dawn I hear His voice  
In the stillness of my heart.

### Diminishment

When I ignore God, I diminish Him.  
If, when He speaks, I shrug Him off, as lightly as a whim,  
His light within and round about me flickers and grows  
dim.

When I ignore God, I diminish Him.

### Unique

In God's inscrutable economy  
I am unique:  
Through me He has some word to say, which else  
He could not speak.

Needy  
The fact that I have need of God  
Is hardly odd;  
But odd, indeed, it is that He  
Has need of me.

### Faith

Upon the perilous waters of love You walk,  
Trusting Your weight to their unstable flow.  
From my frail barque of worldly caution, Lord,  
To venture forth with You I dare not go.  
“Who trust to love, upheld by love shall be.  
Come. Take my hand, and walk the waves with Me.”

### Freedom

Lord, Thou hast made me free  
To walk beside, or wander far from Thee;  
Yet never can I rove  
Beyond the confines of Thy love:  
And in the end my feet,  
Whether they've trod a straight or devious road,  
Will find themselves to be  
Where all roads meet –  
At Thy abode,  
The place prepared for me.

### Spendthrift

When to the Lord of life I must present  
A full account of how have waxed and waned  
The sums at birth He lent,  
The heavy score that best will Him content  
Will be, not in the goodness I have gained,  
But in the love I've spent.

### More like marriage

Prayer is not an occasional nod  
Given in passing to God.  
It's more like marriage – a closeness of living,  
A constant receiving and giving.

### Impoverishment

Should I today neglect to pray,  
I'd poorer be.  
Might it be true that I would, too,  
Impoverish Thee –

### Transfusion

Prayer, in full effectiveness  
Is God-transfusion – nothing less.

Rainbow bridge  
When we, each for each,  
Raise to heaven hands of prayer,  
God links hands with both:  
Rainbow-shod upon this bridge  
Run the eager feet of love.

### Temptation

Temptation – good or evil? Could it be  
That we are tempted that we may resist?  
If life is for the fashioning of souls  
And if by choice and struggle we achieve  
Discernment, courage, confidence and strength,  
Temptation may a chisel be, with which  
God shapes an angel from a rough-hewn block  
Of unperceptive animality;  
And for temptation we may well give thanks.

...Where angels fear to tread  
Blithely I strive your image to define  
In jigsawplay with verse and flowing line,  
While saints and mystics find their dazzled sight  
Blinded by Your obliterating light.

We seek  
We seek  
    in order that we may be found;  
We are tempted  
    in order that we may resist;  
We fail  
    in order that we may be taught;  
We lack  
    in order that we may learn to receive;  
We doubt  
    in order that we may receive greater insight;  
And we die  
    in order that we may more fully live.

Love that will not let me go  
See the plunging kite,  
Playmate of the madcap wind,  
Sideswung, lifted, dropped,  
Yet safe-anchored by its string,  
By its string brought safely home.

The moon and I  
Naught of her own does she possess,  
The moon that sails the sky,  
Wherewith the darkened earth to bless;  
Nor, Lord, do I.

But, see, her gaze she centres where  
The Lord of life is throned on high,  
And longs the sight with all to share:  
So, Lord, would I.

His radiant bounty she collects,  
And, smiling, scatters far and nigh,  
And down toward the earth deflects:  
So, Lord, may I.

With such resources to dispense  
No reason does she have to sigh,  
Bemoaning her own indigence:  
Nor, Lord, have I.



# A GULL.

Poised upon tilting wings—a circling gull,  
Its every sweep serene and beautiful;  
Spume of the breeze, riding with easy motion  
The shifting currents of its airy ocean;  
Upon their fall and toss leaning its breast,  
Taking their turbulence with joyful zest;  
Sporting with challenge, turning into dance  
The erratic, sudden buffetings of chance;—  
Winged victory, exultant, beautiful.  
God, give to me the spirit of a gull.

LOUIE HORNE

A flock of chimes

A row of chiming rods, so hung  
That when the first of them is swung  
It strikes the next to get it swinging,  
To touch the third and set it ringing,  
Waking a flock of chimes that go  
Singing and winging down the row –

Take so this act of love, my brother,  
Rejoice, and pass it to another.

Seeing

My gaze on things of earth may dwell,  
Or pass beyond to things eternal;  
May rest upon the outward shell,  
Or see within the living kernel.

Support

“Lean hard on God”, she said to me,  
In accents suave and solemn.  
But I don’t need You as a stick.  
You are my spinal column.



Pip-pip pip-pip  
A hot line between yourself and God?  
To me that seems extremely odd –  
Telephone calls to Someone who  
Lives in the house along with you!

Transformation  
Folly, failure and mistake  
Good compost make.

Shake the bottle  
Doubt, disruption, accident  
Stir up the tonic sediment.  
Without them little would we know  
But the diluting H<sub>2</sub>O,  
And very soon would limply be  
Anaemic with complacency.

Jigsaw piece  
God sees from heaven's perspective  
The picture He had planned,  
While I see but the jigsaw piece  
I'm holding in my hand.

## Choice

In ages past, when thought had scarce begun,  
Unquestioning, man heeded nature's voice;  
He walked as those who see no way but one,  
Untroubled by the tyranny of choice.

But now a thousand siren voices call,  
And now a thousand beckoning paths appear;  
I turn to this, to that, would try them all,  
Now quick with hope, now checked by doubt and fear.

Nor shall I ever know that primal peace  
Till from the many I have broken free,  
And, heeding but the one, I find release  
In choosing that which Thou dost choose for me.

## Grievous love

Oh, grievous love! I have no healing art  
For those distressed in body, mind or heart.  
So many, does it seem, that headless fate  
Has doomed to suffering naught can mitigate,  
And nothing can I do but weep for them  
As Jesus wept over Jerusalem.

“Thou art ever come, thou art ever coming”

When I was born, You came  
With me to stay,  
You knew my smiles and tears,  
And shared my play.

With understanding grew  
More clear Your voice:  
Choices increased, You shone  
About each choice.

With the enfeebling years  
More closely fold  
Your arms to comfort me  
And to uphold.

What lies beyond death's door  
I cannot tell:  
But You will greet me there.  
All will be well.

## Gratitude – a Gift

Gratitude is one of the loveliest of the virtues.

It is at once a gift of God to the soul, and a gift of the soul to God.

It marks the perfect poise of health, being both its sign and its enabling,

For without it the soul is crippled by disharmony, as is also the body.

It is the exhalation of the breath of life that empties the lungs for the next intake;

The returning of the flow of love to the heart of God, thus maintaining the circulation of His self-giving.

Gratitude perceives the halo of divine origin about each good thing that it beholds,

And guesses at a hidden glow at the centre of every darkness.

Its face, lifted in bliss to the light, reflects a shining into gloomy places.

Gratitude cleanses the soul of greed, and frees it from pride.

It is an acknowledgement of human dependence upon God,

and joy in that dependence;

An acceptance of the Father-child relationship, receiving without embarrassment, and with no thought of claim or reward.

It is a spontaneous smiling up into the face of God.

It is an echo of the angelic song, “Glory to God in the highest”.

Meeting for worship  
How gently in this place the rain descends,  
Through softened earth to seep,  
Deep, down deep,  
To where each separate drop and trickle blends  
With earth and all, to make  
A hidden lake;  
Till from the stillness and the darkness springs  
A little rill, that flows and shines and sings.

In loving memory  
Set up no stone to keep alive my name.  
I am content that when have gone from earth  
The few who shared my pathway for a while,  
And who so generously gave me love,  
All memory of me should be dispersed  
And thinned to nothingness by winds of time.  
Enough that in the timeless mind of God  
I shall be held and loved eternally.

A full three inches  
A dandelion growing near a lawn  
Surveyed the daisies in the grass with scorn.  
“I’m nearer to the sun” exulted he,  
“Than you poor, stunted things will ever be.”

The sun looked down, his eyes agleam with mirth;  
“From here you, too, seem fairly close to earth.  
My little giant, you’ve still some way to go,  
A stretch of ninety million miles or so.  
Compared with daisies, though, I grant you score –  
A full three inches! Maybe even four!!!  
And, by the way, some flowers, quite a few,  
Are more than twenty times as high as you.”

Then from his face the light of laughter died.  
“Oh, flowers can be such foolish things”, he sighed.  
“Among whom else could such a scene take place?”  
Said God, “Have you observed the human race?”

Crazy

God's seated Himself on the back of a mule,  
Where the whim of the mount seems a general rule:  
The creature may take a dislike to the highway,  
And fancy a quick little trot down the by-way:  
Or suddenly stall,  
And not budge at all,  
Deciding, "Whatever is Your way's not my way".

By sharing His plan  
With obstinate man,  
Who is sometimes a knave, and often a fool,  
God's seated Himself on the back of a mule.

To us it seems hopeless and crazy and odd,  
For who, except God,  
Would devise such a scheme  
The fool to enlighten, the knave to redeem?  
And who, except God, would be willing and able  
To pilot a mule to a heavenly stable?

Like a dwindling star  
“Who will go for us? Whom shall we send  
To swing back the Earth to its destined end?  
Who from this radiant realm will go  
To a stifling world of confusion and woe?”

Thus faltered and failed the heavenly song;  
Behind veiling wings shrank the angel throng,  
As one with a face like the light of the sun  
Stepped forth and approached the celestial throne.  
“Father, here am I. Send me.”

Then down like a dwindling star he fell,  
Among darkened hearts and minds to dwell;  
And small and helpless and cold he lay  
Near a looming ox, on its manger hay.



Shepherd boy

“Look after the sheep”, they told me,  
And ran down the hillside, and left me behind.  
What was it they heard in the music,  
And saw in the brightness that dazzled me blind?

I stand here, alone on the hilltop,  
My heart untroubled by fear of alarms;  
It seems, so sweet is the stillness,  
That heaven is holding earth in its arms.

I pray that my brothers may tarry  
And leave me awhile to savour my peace,  
The music like thistle-down drifting,  
The dimness a-glimmer on grass and on fleece.

Phoenix

“Ah-ha”, mocked evil, on that black Friday,  
“The fight’s been long, but Hate has had its way.  
The final verdict lies with those who slay”.

“Not so”, said God, as broke the Easter morn.  
“Look to the sunrise: in the flames of dawn,  
Phoenix-like, Love, triumphant, is reborn.

“Less deep the grave than heaven is high above.  
The final verdict lies with those who love”.

## Resurrection

Last night, within the garden of my spirit,  
By my betrayal slain, entombed He lay.  
This morning with the dawn He came to meet me,  
And gloom and desolation slipped away.  
A sudden burst of sunlight lit the garden,  
And birds awoke, and sang of peace and pardon.

All shall be well

Did I not hope that in God's providence  
Evil will pave the way to final good,  
And the bewildering questionings of sense  
Give place at last to songs of gratitude;

And did I not believe that God has planned  
That fruit shall swell though petals fallen lie,  
That all creation's cradled in His hand,  
How could I bear to live? How bear to die?

But, by the empty tomb bright angels tell,  
"Lo, He is risen". All things shall be well.

Through the Valley  
Through the Valley of the Shadow of Death we walked  
Towards the ultimate strand,  
Receiving and giving comfort each  
From the clasp of the other's hand.

He was received into mists of light  
And swept towards realms unknown:  
And now through the Valley of the Shadow of Death  
I must return alone;

Must return to the scenes of the life we shared,  
But without his hand in mine.  
Oh Lord, I am weak and sick of heart.  
Take Thou my hand in Thine.

But Thine are strong  
I slip. I slide  
Toward the engulfing sea.  
My hands are weak,  
I cannot cling to Thee:  
But Thine are strong.  
Oh Lord, dear Lord, hold me.

I smiled  
"Reach out your hand", they told me. "Groping through  
The darkness, you may touch the hand divine".  
I smiled; they did not realise that You  
Already had reached out and taken mine.

## Grief

I thought that in my grief I sat alone,  
But in my hand another hand was pressed,  
That silently and comfortingly drew  
My limp one on another lap to rest,  
And on it fell a teardrop not my own.

Oh, loving Lord, I might have known that You  
Beside me in my loneliness would be,  
To share the anguish of my grief with me.

Lark-song morning  
This life's a tangled dream, from which  
When night is done, we will awake  
Into a lark-song morning of Eternity.

## Return

The wave that crashed and shattered in flurries of foam  
With a sigh of relief runs home.  
And, ah! when my leap into Time has expended me,  
I will slip back into Thee.

## Planet

Prayer is the gravitational pull  
That holds my spinning spirit in its place  
To orbit its life-giving Sun,  
Lit by the shining beauty of His face.

Birth

For my maturing I here must be  
In time, the womb of eternity,  
Until the midwife, Death, shall place  
Me in the realised embrace  
Of God's maternity.

Umbilical Cord

Prayer - the umbilical cord  
Which binds me, God, to You,  
And which the life of Your own heart  
Comes pulsing through.

Passed away

My child, they have not passed away,  
Those that you held, and still hold, dear;  
They are alive and with you still  
In the Eternal Now and Here:  
For naught can you or them remove  
From the enfolding of My love.

Lark song

This song my winged spirit sings  
Soaring the mundane mind above:  
God is unerring Wisdom, and  
Inalienable Love.

Say not that they are dead  
Though they have died, say not that they are dead,  
For death is birth into a life more vast,  
More free, more vibrantly aware, more rich  
In possibilities, than we in this  
Our foetal, cramped existence can conceive.  
'Tis they, not we, who fully are alive.

Twilight  
The flowers that through the dancing hours of day  
Have, in a carnival of colour, made  
The countryside and gardens gay,  
Their jewel lanterns dim  
At day's decline,  
Retreat into the shade  
And hide away.  
Then do the flowers white  
Emerge their lamps to trim,  
Which soon triumphant shine,  
And with their pure, unfaltering light  
Adorn the shrine  
Of soft-approaching night.

When in my life the festive lights decrease  
And with exuberant day depart,  
Come, evening, with your lamps of peace,  
And hang them in the twilight of my heart.

Miracle  
My life's a goblet God has given me  
To fill, on His behalf, for friends of mine:  
But water's all I have - a beggar's draught.  
Yet cannot God turn water into wine?

Crowning grace  
That I may see the stars, bring on the night:  
That I may see the flowers, restore the light:  
And, in thy mercy, grant this crowning grace -  
That in both stars and flowers, I see thy face.

Clarion Call  
Floodlit to celestial loveliness,  
A slender, tapering ascension of light,  
It pierces the blackness,  
Pure, serene, unfaltering,  
A shining affirmation  
In the pervading nothingness of night.  
  
From the dense gloom of obscuring tree  
It rises through surrounding darkness  
To the vast darkness of the sky,  
Transforming the darkness itself,  
Endowing it with the clarity and silken softness  
Of still water.  
See!  
From the summit of this redeeming radiance  
Its glimmering cock proclaims to the listening air,  
"The light shines in the darkness,  
And against it the darkness has no power".

Linked  
My hand in His one,  
And yours in His other,  
Sister with Father,  
Father with Brother.  
My small love to Him  
His power to release  
His great love to you  
With healing and peace.  
I here and you there: -  
What matters it whether  
We meet or meet not?  
With Him we're together.

### God Bless

My prayer for you is an uncrafted thought  
I put into God's hands, that from the play  
Of His skilled fingers aptly may be wrought  
Something of needed or delighting sort,  
That He will wrap in love, then give away  
To you, for whom I pray.

### Cradle-song

I sang a song to my love,  
And my love sang a song to me too,  
Then we both sang a love-song together,  
And the song we sang together is you, little one,  
The song we sang together is you.





Grandeur

Although the grandeur of His full design

I may not understand,

Some part of its fulfilment may be mine

If, guided by God's hand

I walk in glad obedience day by day

Along my commonplace and dusty way.

Deprived

He who treads only the city streets

Of reason, will never find

How many and sweet are the flowers that grow

Where the paths of the spirit wind.

They whom the drum-beat of the law

Keeps marching along the way,

Are deaf to the dancing tunes of love

That the pipes of the angels play.

And he who with ordnance map has planned

The way that his feet have trod,

Has missed the peace of him who walks

With his hand in the hand of God.

## Brief Moment Of Eternity

No sound-  
Only silence!  
No movement –  
Only stillness!  
No person, no object –  
Only You, God,  
You alone!

You,  
Speaking without sound in the silence:  
You,  
Moving without stir in the stillness:  
You,  
Encompassing me about with Your own being:  
So that,  
For this brief moment of eternity,  
You are to me  
All heaven and all earth.

## Meeting For Worship

Listen to the silence,  
Rest in the stillness,  
And become aware of an expanding space  
As little selves withdraw  
And leave an emptiness for God to fill:  
Then wait.

Wait like night-wearied flowers that watch for dawn  
Whose smile will fill their proffered cups with light

For Me No Glimmering Ladder  
For me no glimmering ladder rears aloft  
Linking the earth to heaven's starry height;  
No drifting shine of angels moves between  
My pillow and celestial halls of light.

And why a stair to heaven should I crave  
When heaven's self irradiates my breast?  
Why for the messengers of God repine  
With God Himself my ever-present guest?

*With acknowledgements to The Science of Thought Review*

Blessed Are The Pure In Heart  
Crystal-cradled in a dewdrop  
Rests the dawn, serene and bright,  
All the arching heaven's splendour  
In a diamond point of light.

So, Lord, would my spirit be  
Dewdrop-clear, a shrine for Thee.

Come In  
Why pitch your voice beyond the farthest star  
God's ear to win?  
You'd hear His gentle knocking on the door  
But for your din.  
You only need to say, "Dear Lord, come in".

## The Soul

Chaliced in a flower  
Lies a shining drop of dew  
Mirroring the sun.



At the door of decision  
At the door of decision there came a knock;  
"May I come in?" I heard God say.  
I quietly turned the key in the lock,  
And tip-toed away.

Wayside Shrine  
Of the chill of the night  
And morning shine  
God has fashioned  
A wayside shrine.

Oh, the gold of the sun  
And the silver of frost!  
Pass, and your soul  
A vision has lost.

Oh, the silver of frost  
And the gold of the sun!  
Pause, and your soul  
A vision has won.

### Water Lily

Buoyed on the waters of prayer my spirit lies,  
Bud-blind, yet turned toward the shining skies.

Great Sun, unfurl the petals from its heart,  
Where waits, in small, Your golden counterpart.

### Signature

Your name across the sky in stars is writ,  
It runs in foam across the ocean's fling,  
And flowers on the earth emblazon it,  
'Tis etched on air by swallows on the wing.

On nature's page in bold calligraphy  
Your signature of Beauty we behold -  
A flourish of creative ecstasy:

But be Your greater name of Love enscrolled  
Upon my life in characters of gold.

### Incarnation

"Oh God", I pray, "come now again  
To dwell upon our earthly plane".

"If this you really wish", says He,  
"Yourself My incarnation be".

### Meeting

When I meet a friend with smiling face,  
God I meet, arrayed in sunrise grace:  
When I meet a dreaded bore, why then,  
God, though garbed in gloom, I meet again.

## Leap-Frog

Off they go,  
The inseparable playmates, Seeking and Finding,  
Each in turn 'back' and 'frog',  
Each flying landing becoming the next stooping point  
of take-off.

Off they go,  
Leap-frogging along the pathway to Truth,  
The pathway of Truth,  
For each landing is an arrival,  
No less than it is a new setting forth.

And the final goal?  
Since God is infinite,  
And Truth is unending,  
May not the game be continued throughout Eternity-  
Seeking - finding, finding - seeking,  
Each take-off a promise,  
Each leap an exhilaration,  
And each landing its own reward -  
A swinging progression from glory to glory,  
And ever to glory more glorious still?

*With acknowledgements to Quaker Monthly*

Through a Knot-Hole  
The ray of light that, through a knot-hole sped,  
Startles the gloom in an unwindowed shed,  
Flows no less from the glorious sun on high  
Than does his radiance flooding all the sky;  
And, burnished by the darkness, brighter spills  
Than does the noon light upon basking hills.

### The Guest

I walked abroad  
To seek my Lord.  
"I'll find and bring Him home  
Henceforth to rest  
An honoured guest  
At ease within my home".

My Lord unfound,  
I turned me round:  
"I'll sleep, then wider roam".  
With weary tread  
And hope half dead,  
I neared my empty home.

The door swung wide,  
He stood inside:  
"You called and I have come.  
The meal is made,  
The table laid,  
My dear child, welcome home".

### Gravel Chips

Strewn in a forecourt,  
Mint-new gravel chips,  
Facetting a richness of sun-silk variations.

Earth - heaven's forecourt,  
All creation - gravel chips from Time's hard rock,  
In subtle, muted harmonies



Refracting the intolerable glories of the Sun.

### Diamond/Opal

I cannot, like a diamond,  
Fling rainbow colours bright;  
But might I be an opal  
And gently nurse Your light?

### Friendship

The heady vintage of His love our Lord  
Has into little earthen vessels poured;  
Diluted though, lest for our mortal state  
Its potency should prove to be too great.

But how can angels bear to take it neat,  
When even human love's so strong and sweet.

### Deaf And Blind

I've just sufficient sight to know  
How little I can see;  
And hearing just enough to guess  
How sweet Your songs must be.  
But I would see Your beauty, Lord,  
With vision clear and true,  
Would hear the richness of Your voice  
And sing Your songs with You.

Oh, make me whole, that more and more

I love and wonder and adore.

### When I Have Died

When I have died, think this of me:

Here was a mountain stream  
That danced its silver way midst craggy rocks,  
And deeper, wider grew;  
Flowed on in murmurous content through placid fields;  
Until it slipped at last, with grateful sigh,  
Into the vast enfoldment of the sea-  
The sea whose call had ever lured it on,  
Beneath the stars of night, and shine of day  
Toward its waiting home.

### Pantry Shelf

I'm just a plain, deal pantry shelf  
That's nothing special of itself.

When, sometimes, kindly people say,  
"Thanks for the food supplied today",

I simply give a wooden stare -  
I hadn't even known 'twas there.

Who was it who had taken heed  
And made provision for their need,  
And stocked the empty pantry shelf?  
It could be - must be - God Himself.

Louie Horne's guest editorial TW 44, Winter 1982/3  
When someone we love falls ill we long to give comfort and relief. We may visit, take a gift of flowers or fruit, send a 'Get well' card, baby-sit to release the family to visit the hospital, engage in healing meditation – all helpful activities. And/or we pray.

Does prayer differ in some vital way from these other responses? And is it, in particular, any more effective than positive thinking?

When the eager crowds who had followed Jesus to the far side of the Sea of Galilee emerged from the spell of his teaching, they realised that they were hungry. Perhaps some of them had brought with them some food which they now ate, or even shared with their neighbours, so that a handful of the huge crowd was satisfied: but a lad gave his snack to Jesus, and as it passed through those hands some spiritual quality was infused into it, and all had their fill.

Perhaps this strange story can give us an insight into the working of prayer. Our love, however deeply caring, has very limited effect, but passing through the medium of God's love, lifted into that spiritual dimension, it is transformed by a divine alchemy to become a dynamic force.

Our will may not always be done: we may question whether God's will does not, at times, fail to be done. We have much to learn – 'This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer': and how little most of us really know about prayer. Yet we cannot deny our sick friend – or God – this opportunity of healing. Our love needs God's love to empower it and, surprisingly, God's love needs ours to

‘earth’ His.

So we offer Him our five barley loaves and two small fishes.

In the bleak mid-winter The Friend, February 21 1986  
We were driving through the darkness of a wintry – very wintry – early morning. Nothing was visible but the dark highway, the snowy roadside banks and the ghostly pale grey tracery of passing trees. Then we were there. The walk from the minibus to the Molesworth base perimeter was along a treeless road between fields stark white in the pre-dawn dimness – bleak mid-winter, with a vengeance.

We settled down on our various paddings against the hard-packed snow, some with legs encased in black ‘dustbin’ bags, some with heads reaching from a hole cut in the closed end; and the long vigil began – an exercise in stoic, freezing boredom.

More and more groups came along, little clusters darkly dotted the ground; after a time flasks were produced, food was eaten and sweets passed round. The groups took on the appearance of beach parties with white snow instead of golden sand, and voluminous mufflings instead of sun tan exposure. The police kept a low profile, remaining for the most part in their (presumably warm) vans – sensible fellows.

I went for a stroll back along the lane. A man was catching and keeping in the air three (or was it four) snowballs; a group was tossing a ball across a circle, another group was keeping warm – I hope – with a ring dance; cameras were being pointed.

I came back to huddle on my folding stool, and looked

round. What had these separate groups in common, apart from the pretty general rag tag and bobtail appearance of their multi-layered, arctic survival attire? Was there some common denominator? Yes. All these disparate little groups of people, the clownishly parcelled, the coxcombed and all, were quite special people, people with a vision, willing to suffer for their beliefs. (We had been handed “What to do in case of arrest” leaflets.) They were people believing in something more than comfort or appearance, more than themselves and their families, more than the present moment.

Then came the catalyst – a piano accordion. A large ring was formed, then, as numbers grew, a long caterpillar, hands on the hips of the stranger in front, on one’s own hips the hands of the stranger behind. But, no! Here were no strangers: all were co-participants. The caterpillar wove an intricate maze, 1- hop, 2-hop, 1-hop, 2-hop. There was laughter, there was gaiety. Apathy had become festivity. This was a celebration.

We may not have attracted the attention of the public, but we had, even in this bleak mid-winter, found a heartwarming unity. I wasn’t dancing, but my spirit danced with the dancers, it was part of them and of everyone in that suddenly transfigured scene.

For me those slow-moving hours had not been wasted. They had culminated in the joyful experience of a new way of loving.

Reconciliation      Quaker Monthly, July 1991

Last night I awoke from a dream so lovely and seeming to be

of such significance that I was loath to fall asleep again, and so, possibly, lose all recollection of it. As I drowsed between sleeping and waking, the dream continued to unfold its tale.

In my dream I had been on retreat at a healing centre; this, not because I was in need of such help, but in the hope of fulfilling a long-cherished hope of learning how myself to become a healer. Now, however, I knew that this gift was not to be mine. I had the assurance, though, that I was destined to become a reconciler. I saw the word 'Reconciler' before me in flowery script, with a large capital 'R'.

People began to visit me for resolving of estrangements; couples whose marriage harmony had turned to bitterness left me knowing the cleansing of forgiveness and the sweetness of love restored; adolescents who had left their homes in anger at felt misunderstanding returned to their parents to find a welcome awaiting them.

Then one day there came into my room a man who sank dejectedly into a chair. 'I am a wood carver', he began. 'For several months I have had in my possession a piece of wood beautifully marked with light and shade. I decided to use it to bring to life a vision I have nurtured for some time, a vision of a gull folding its wings as it alights on the crest of a rising wave. It was to be my masterpiece (perhaps symbolic of my resting on a peak of fame). I have struggled hard to give form to my mental image, but all to no purpose. The wood was cross-grained, both literally and, it seemed, figuratively. My failure has so disheartened me that I have begun to doubt my skill, and I have become morose and difficult to live with. Can you help me?'

I said to him, 'Go home. Sit down before your piece of wood,

and, with your mind empty of all plans or hopes, just look at it. Let it tell you its own tale, disclose to you its own inner being. Do not think of it as being of use to you, but as having its own unique purpose.'

Three months later the man returned, bringing with him a package. This he placed on the table and carefully unwrapped. There before me was the most exquisite piece of wood carving I have ever seen. It depicted, not an alighting bird, but a crouching frog. The little creature looked with intent and gentle gaze at the world before it, as it huddled contentedly in the shelter of a rugged tree stump, which leaned protectively over it. To me it suggested a delightful symbiosis, a mutual dependence, each – the frog and the tree stump – finding its fulfilment in the other.

'I have a small son', my visitor said quietly, 'a Downs Syndrome child, a mongol. The shock of knowing I had produced such an aberration hurt my pride. I mentally disowned him from his birth, and left him entirely to his mother. One day when I was busy with this' (he turned to look lovingly at his work), 'and happy because it seemed to shape itself beneath my tools, the boy came into my workshop. He put his arms round my leg and looked up into my face with an intent and gentle gaze.' The craftsman lightly touched the head of the frog. He continued, 'A surge of tenderness flooded my being, and I smiled down at him. He laid his head confidently against my thigh. I swept him up into my arms, and sat down to hold him on my lap. He snuggled against me with complete abandonment, gave a sigh of deep content, and, putting his thumb into his mouth, fell asleep. When my wife came into the room a quarter of an hour later, she stood stock still with surprise; a look of

almost holy awe transfigured her face and her eyes filled with tears. It was the most wonderful moment of my life.'

He rose and went to the table. He stroked a gentle knuckle down the peaky back of the frog and laid his palm tenderly on the bark of the leaning tree stump. Then he picked up the model and, smiling, placed it in my arms. 'Thank you', he said simply, and walked to the door.

Loss?                      Mourn us not.              FFH, 1992

Every bereavement is different from any other because every person is unique and every circumstance has its own particularities. My own recent bereavement had two significant features which affected my reaction.

Firstly, Rose was eighty-five: she had lived a full life, a life of delight in beauty, of generous appreciation of the goodness of others, of satisfying creativity and of spiritual awareness. She had been a warmly loving person, and had been warmly loved. For the last four years of her life she had been increasingly confused. This she had borne with patient and gentle resignation, but it was a sad diminution. How, then, could I begrudge her her release into a widened, shining awareness and a vaster joy?

Secondly, she and I were identical twins. From our conception we had been two halves of a unity. We had no psychological link, as have some identical twins, but even when, after our wedding (a double one) we went our separate ways, there still remained the deep, underlying, taken-for-granted contentment of our 'twinity'. We seldom visited each other – once or twice a year – and did not write frequently. In a way it was unnecessary,



I have often wondered how I would feel if Rose died before I did. Would I be like a tree riven down its length, half lying on the ground, half left standing? Would I have a raw coldness all down one side of me?

Standing at Rose's bedside a few hours before her death, I cringed from having to accept that unresponsive, mummy-like figure as my twin sister. When I was told that she had died, my reaction was a sense of great relief – Rose was no longer to be identified with that corpse-like form. Then swiftly followed a most satisfying feeling of completion. It was as if she/I/we had just finished a well crafted piece of work, had laid it down, gazing at it with pleasure, and were now looking forward with happy anticipation to the next assignment.

Returned home from the funeral, I looked at the photo in my bedroom of Rose and her husband taken on the occasion of their golden wedding – and there again was Rose, her true self, smiling, happy, and loving life. The years of pathetic diminution, the shrunken body on the bed, were dissolved away for ever. My twin sister was restored to me.

Looking back, now three months after the event, and asking what death has done to our relationship, I can affirm that it has brought both a restoration and a new beginning. To quote D.H. Lawrence's lovely phrase, it has 'been dipped again in God, and new-created'. I begin to glimpse the truth of Martin Israel's 'Death is not the end of life, but rather its moment of transfiguration to a more spiritual dimension of reality'. Thanks be to God.



This Had Been You  
I saw you in the nursing home today -  
My every sense recoiled in stark dismay.  
You? this mummy-figure on the bed,  
Rigid and unresponsive, worse than dead?  
Greet this usurping mockery with a kiss?  
The love uniquely yours transfer to this?

I loved you still for all you'd been to me  
And which, by death released, again you'd be;  
But to accept this travesty as you,  
Give it your name, was more than I could do

Yet, lest some trace of consciousness remain  
Lurking accessible within that brain,  
I spoke your name, bestowed the false caress.  
This had been you; how could I, then, do less?

Why Suffering?

TW 56

This is a problem as old as human thought. It becomes particularly acute when one believes in a loving Creator. Job dared to question the belief of his day that suffering was a punishment for sin; but his only answer was that it was folly and arrogance on the part of man to question the inscrutable ways of God.

Let us look first at physical suffering and ask, "Is pain desirable or, at least, necessary?"

In the parts of their bodies affected by disease lepers are insensitive to pain. It was thought that their loss of noses, fingers and toes might be due to their unawareness of the nibbling of rats while the lepers are asleep. A worker in a leprosarium tells of how a leper boy offered to turn a key in a

stubborn lock, and, unwarned by pain, cut his finger to the bone.

Pain acts in two ways- it warns that something is wrong, and it drives us to take appropriate action. When I was a young woman I became aware of a pain in my abdomen. It got worse, so I consulted a doctor. "Appendicitis", he said.

Knowing that appendicitis could develop into peritonitis, and that peritonitis could mean an agonizing death, I had an operation and was restored to health - thanks to pain!

The human body is a very delicate and intricate piece of mechanism, and just because it is so complicated it can easily go wrong - a watch is more vulnerable than an hour-glass, and a car than a wagon. Our bodies go wrong because in some way, through ignorance or folly, we have disrupted their intricate mechanism.

But what about externally engineered disasters? - an Aberfan or a Dolomite Alps catastrophe?

We live in, and we need a stable dependable physical environment. The same force of gravity that keeps our feet on earth and maintains erect correctly constructed buildings, must needs, also, drag a damaged aeroplane into the sea, or set an avalanche in motion.

It is part of our evolution as intelligent human beings to have to adapt to nature; it is no good praying that nature may adapt to us. God didn't want a world populated by human jellyfish.

Even so, why harmful bacteria, typhoons. volcanoes and such? I can't say. Perhaps even a meteorologist or a physicist can't say. There are times when, like Job, we have to admit that there are limits to our understanding.

To turn, now, to emotional suffering - to love is to become vulnerable; we suffer with those we love in their pain, and, in bereavement, for our loss. The more people we love, and the more deeply we love, the more open we are to suffering - and we must always remember that God loves more deeply

and more wisely than we do.

When we suffer, where is God? Does God suffer too? Is He "up there" or "down here?" - a spectator or a participant?

"Why do the innocent - little children and good, kind people - suffer?" is a frequent question: because they live in a world of physical laws and have vulnerable bodies and hearts no less than the "wicked". A landslide, a disintegrating dam do not, cannot differentiate between innocent and guilty. Moral laws and physical laws, though sometimes interacting, work on different principles.

"Why does God not intervene?" people ask. Do they expect Him to put out a mighty hand and hold back a landslide or a dam embankment? No. God does not break the laws He has made for our ultimate benefit. He has subjected Himself to them, no less than us, and, with us, He suffers the consequences.

To me, the most tragic cry in recorded history is the cry of Jesus outside Jerusalem - "I would ... you would not". "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not". And Jesus wept. He had striven to turn his people from their course of action that would, and did, bring catastrophe on the nation: and he had failed.

Are we justified in regarding God as omnipotent? Or, in granting us free will, (the cause of a good part of our suffering) has he limited His own power?

I think we must bear in mind that in the perspective of eternity the scale of values may be different. A small child, dumped by his parents in a strange building, then deserted, denied food the next morning while others eat, and later waking to frightening pain, cannot understand hospitalisation and operations. Lacking knowledge, we have nothing to cling to but faith - faith in an all-wise, all-loving God.

Would a world without suffering be a better world? Where, then, would be courage? Where would be compassion? If suffering struck only the guilty, what kind of people would we become? Just because we suffer as a result of each other's ignorance, folly and selfishness, we realise that we are all part of the bundle of life, irrevocably bound together. And now I come to the most important thing I have to say on this subject.

"And his disciples asked him saying, 'Master, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither has this man sinned nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him'." It seems to me that here Jesus was repudiating the attitude of his disciples, regarding this man's deprivation as a theological problem; he regarded it as an opportunity of doing God's work of healing. In other words, "Cut the cackle and get on with the job".

An illiterate peasant woman caring for a shuffling, confused, demanding old granddad in a third-world slum could know more about the Christian answer to the problem of suffering than a scholarly don, lecturing divinity in a theological college.

‘There he could do no mighty works because...’

Letter in *Towards Wholeness* no. 86, Autumn 1996

In his article, ‘Aspects of God’ (*Towards Wholeness* Summer 1996) Anthony Dungey writes, ‘If God is in all things and ever present, we must admit that He was present there in the gym at Dunblane... Why did He let innocent children suffer at the hands of evil?’

We cannot know with certainty the mind of God; we can only assume from our own intuitions, and our conclusions from observed or recorded data, especially from the gospel

records. Here, for what it may be worth, is my guess at the answer.

In order that we might be ‘in His image’, God plucked feathers from His own wings, that we, too, might fly: in endowing us with free will, He limited His own power. That we might say ‘Yes’ to Him, we had also to be able to say ‘No’.

We read, ‘There he could do no mighty works, because of their unbelief’, and ‘How often have I longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not’.

In *Jesus before Christianity* Albert Nolan points out that Jesus himself never claimed the power to heal, nor did he attribute it directly to God. Time after time he asserted ‘Your faith has made you whole’. It was spiritual obtuseness that blocked the working of a power already present. His role was to awaken awareness of its availability.

In the account of the healing of the man blind from birth it is recorded that, in answer to his disciples’ question, ‘Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man or his parents, but that the will of God might be made manifest.’ He refused to regard the man as a theological problem; he saw in him a potential recipient of God’s healing power. This was less an answer than a shift of emphasis, from intellectual curiosity to loving action.

God is spirit; the world is matter; human beings, belonging to both worlds, are the bridge over which God may have access to the world. The presence of evil is our opportunity to allow His loving purpose to operate.

‘My Father is working, and I am working right now’, Jesus continued. This assures me that in our attempts to heal we are working alongside a present God, who, moment by moment, is actively pursuing His loving purpose among us.

Quote from a letter about meeting for worship  
in *The Friend*, 12.3.1993

...I believe that as we enter the room, God comes with us, and is, at the same time, there waiting for us; also that as we leave, He goes out of the doorway with us, yet remaining behind. We may at times be absent from God, but He is never absent from us.

Reflections

The Friend, April 1994

It is realistic to believe that selfish and aggressive behaviour may have been necessary in our early evolution, but the time has come to replace it with co-operation for the survival of our world. I like Tony Noakes’ visualisation of God as a continuing and flexible Artist-Creator, experimenting with ideas to produce something of great power and beauty.

And here my mind pulls up short – not with disagreement, but at the implications. It seems undeniable that God, because of the intransigence of matter and the opposition of human free will, has had to reject some of his projects. But these projects, these throw-outs, have not been mere ideas, but sentient creatures – the children of a Father-Creator.

‘Jesus wept.’ ‘How often would I have gathered your children



together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not.' 'Would that you knew the things that make for your peace.' 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but for yourself and your children.' Jesus' mission to turn his people from their ambitions for political power and their sterile ecclesiastical jockeyings, to their true role as a spiritual force in the world, had failed; and he foresaw the abomination of desolation that they were bringing (and did bring) upon themselves.

True, there was the resurrection: the Spirit broke its banks; but the horror of the brutal subjugation of his people by the Romans came about.

If God is a Father-Creator, if he is truly incarnate in his creation, he must suffer in our suffering. His transcendence does not cancel out his terrible, costly identification with ourselves, discarded to the forces of destruction. Do we have a God of sorrows, and acquainted with grief?

No resurrection? Letter to The Friend, August 26, 1994  
I am deeply distressed to read of the omission in the new Book of Discipline of the central reference to 'the mystery and truth of the resurrection'.

To me the Gospel story is more than a record of the life of Jesus: it is a showing forth of the pattern of spiritual evolution in time, in the planet, and in each individual soul; through birth, through the struggle to balance the demands of spirit and matter, through apparent failure, to the final triumph of God's purpose.

This feeling is not a hankering after a fairytale 'happily ever

after' ending: it is a compelling need for a motivation in striving, an assurance that, eventually, in some way, right will triumph and 'all manner of things will be well'.

However we may interpret the Gospel accounts of the resurrection, we must allow that something – and something very dramatic – must have occurred to transform the small band of followers of Jesus, dejected and demoralised, into the confident and joyful men and women whose ecstatic assurance gave birth to the Christian church.

Without the resurrection the life of Jesus peters out in pathetic failure, love is smothered to death by ruthless temporal power, and our life is a hopeless struggle against the powers of evil.

Quote from a letter to The Friend, October 23, 1998  
...how can God be almighty if he has divested himself of some of his power by giving humankind the inestimably precious gift of free will? It is by exercising our ability to make decisions that we gain some degree of maturity: in order that we may freely say 'Yes' to him, God has given us perforce the opportunity to say 'No'.

God's highest attribute is not power, but love, and in love he has plucked feathers from his own pinions, that, from them he might make wings for us.

*Louie loved cats, and liked talking to them. When writing to friends she often enquired after the wellbeing of their feline companions. One time when she sent me another poem for Towards Wholeness she also included this 'Cat talk' – with an*

*emphatic ‘not for Towards Wholeness’. I cannot resist the opportunity to share it here.* JH

Cat-talk 1992

Yesterday when going to visit a friend in a complex for disabled people, I saw at a slight distance away in the grounds a tabby cat. It eyed me, with the direct glare that cats can muster, then mistrustfully slunk off, away from me. It stopped several times in its retreat to give me a look to assure me that its distancing itself was deliberate. I did not feel flattered.

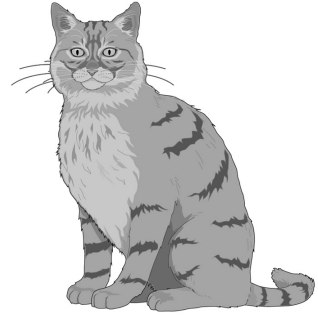
On my return journey, near home, I saw a little black cat sitting contentedly on a front-door step. It was sleek and wore a narrow, brilliantly scarlet collar. I stood and said, ‘Do you feel like engaging in conversation, puss? I think I would enjoy it’.

The cat gave me an appraising look, then got to its feet and slowly came towards me. It leaped onto the wall where I was standing, lowered its chin, humped its back and erected its tail. I stroked its glossy fur and it pressed itself upwards to enjoy the maximum contact. After a few seconds it turned through an angle of 180 degrees and invited me to stroke in the reverse direction. So the process continued. I tired before the cat did; but it walked alongside me along the top of the wall. I felt greatly honoured that it had responded so willingly to my invitation to friendship, and have had a warm and gentle happiness about me ever since.

And yet –

The basking cat before the fire  
In drowsy comfort lies;  
The dog looks up with joy complete  
Into his master's eyes:

And yet – and yet – I'd rather be  
A member of the clan  
Of ever restless, ever seeking  
Ever God-sick man.



*The following article was sent to the editor in June 1999, and was Louie's last contribution to Towards Wholeness.*

'Master, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' John 9 verse 2

It would seem that from the time that he became capable of reasoning, man's thinking has been dominated by the concept of justice. In the Biblical tradition Adam was condemned to toil to render the earth fruitful, and Eve to suffer pain in childbirth, as a punishment for disobedience. Throughout the Bible we read of instances where it is taken for granted that misfortune is an indication of wrong-doing - a person suffers, therefore he/she has sinned - Q.E.D. Today we still hear the comment, 'What have I done to deserve this?'

In his answer to this insistent question Jesus made two assertions. In the first he point-blank denied the connection between sin and suffering - Jesus answered, 'It was not that this man sinned or his parents'.

Then he countered, 'But that the works of God might be made manifest in him'. This could, at first, suggest that the man had been born blind in order that God might be glorified by his healing: but could not Jesus rather be saying, 'You are regarding this man as a theological problem. My reaction is, 'here is an opportunity for the exercise of God's healing grace'.

It is no good trying to square the circle. Each of them, the square and the circle, has its own validity; they co-exist; but can modify each other. We live in a dual world - of matter, with its own amoral laws of cause and effect; and a spiritual world of grace - the freely lavished, undeserved, compassionate love of God, capable of interpenetrating and redeeming the world of matter.

By our over-intellectualised emphasis we misdirect our energies, attempting to rationalise a situation, rather than bringing God's compassionate love to heal it.

Should we read into this gospel story the injunction, 'Cut out the cackle, and get on with the job?'

### Afterword (A Closeness of Living)

When in 1987 the Fellowship published a first collection of Louie Horne's poems, *A Shining-Place*, Louie herself was by no means convinced of its possible success. But when more and more copies were sold, within the Fellowship and beyond, she expressed her astonishment and delight. In a letter to me she wrote: "With declining years have come decreased competence and a sense of having nothing to offer to God or humankind. I have not been depressed, accepting it as inevitable, but have felt diminished.

...Now I begin to realise that I am sharing with other people, perhaps awakening in some, the joy I find in God."

And in a later letter: "About two years ago a friend

asked me what I most wished for in life; and I answered, 'To gain continuously more insight.' Now, to my surprise, I find that just that must have been happening: and what is even more astounding is that through your initiative it seems to have been used to give insight to other people. I can't think of any more rewarding result in life.

Maybe I am grossly exaggerating, but I do feel like the little boy in Keats' rhyme for children who

'Stood in his shoes,  
And he wondered,  
And wondered,  
And he stood in his shoes  
And he wondered.'

So, rejoice with me!"

I did. And I hope that through this memorial publication Louie will still be sharing her insights with many.

*Joanna Harris*

#### Afterword (Poems and Articles)

Several poems came to light in the archiving of *Towards Wholeness* which were not in *A Singing Murmur* (1990), nor in *A Closeness of Living* (2002). Louie Horne's last contribution to *Towards Wholeness*, her maturest treatment of the problem of evil, needed to be included. This publication is based on *A Closeness of Living* in that it contains poems and articles, but the layout is based on that of *A Singing Murmur* with its larger font. All poems from these publications are included, so this supersedes both.

*Gervais Frykman*