

Contrasts

POEMS, PRAYERS AND RANDOM THOUGHTS

by brad alexander

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Introduction

This book is a collection of varied, somewhat eclectic writings as the title infers. The poems, prayers and random thoughts range from deep, intimate and introspective to sarcastic, yea even sardonic. Anything seeming critical of the church, please understand I am pointing the finger at myself first. I had considered giving explanations or details of what I was going through or recalling at the time I wrote each piece. What was my inspiration? I opted against this wanting the reader to allow the words to speak to them in whatever their situation. Suffice it to say the people in my life, family, friends, pastors and God have inspired my writing.

While I have written most of this book over the last couple of years, much more intensely the last year, it represents a lifetime (so far) of experiences. It is my sincerest desire and prayer that those who read “Contrasts” will be blessed, reassured, comforted, inspired, provoked or just reminded fondly of their own upbringing.

Dedicating this book actually was not as simple as I thought. I figured on dedicating it to my bride, Bernadette, of over 18 years and being done with it. Then, what if I never write again? What about my parents? How about my brother and sisters, John, Kelly and Amy? What of my children, Tyler, Tiffany and Seth? I can't forget my friends who have encouraged me can I? I think I shouldn't have second guessed myself to begin with. Who could be upset with me for dedicating a book to my wife?

Finally, I must thank God, through Jesus Christ for so richly blessing me. Please note that this is not an arbitrary “Thanks to the Big Guy upstairs”. This is a true heartfelt “Thank you”. I recognize that anything I have or am is a direct result of God's grace, mercy and intervention in my life. I really don't know if I can call my writing a “gift”, I'll let you be the judge of that. I am thankful for the “gifts” He has allowed me to experience the pleasant and the painful, as well as the people, the pleasant and the painful. If there be any glory in this book, it goes to God. “Contrasts” is simply my recollection of these times, moments and people.

Hope you enjoy.
brad alexander
Hebrews 12:1-2

Dedicated to
My Bunny: Bernadette

Contrasts

Poems, Prayers and Random Thoughts

Can I Get A Witness?

Temptation, test, tribulation and trial,

Manifold assaults on my being, on my faith;

Overtaken by circumstances beyond my control:

Why here? Why now? Why me?

Shall I count *this* as *joy*?

Yes, joy.

Your faith's trial produces steadfast patience, endurance and resolve.

"Count it all joy",

Rain falls on the just and the unjust,

The difference is in the *end*.

The heat might be intense and the river may continue to swell,

Fire and flood will come with no promise of rescue,

But an oath of comfort and companionship to endure the storm:

He is the fourth man in the fiery furnace,

He is the ark in the flood,

He is the pillar of cloud and fire leading onward,

He is the rock yielding water in the scorching desert,

He is the flour and the oil when all resources are gone,

He is the healing balm when overcome by illness,

He is the resurrection when all is left for dead,

When all that we have, when all that we are, when all that we hope, is *not*,

He is.

Thanks be to God that He would consider us worthy to face this test;

His confidence in our faith, greater than our own;

What an honor to stand-up under this burden with our Lord.

What a blessing to have Him as our character witness while our faith is on trial.

Can I get a witness? Indeed.

My Treason

I did it again, repeated my offense,
I left the door open,
Affording my enemy opportunity;
Leading the adversary directly into our camp:
Willingly giving a foothold,
Allowing him free-reign:
The blame rests with me;
He *cannot* take what I *do not* give;
Failure is mine; *defeat* is *not*:
Revelation, recognition, repentance, remission;
Quickly, remorsefully, I take it to the altar,
With a broken heart and downcast eyes,
I present my treason to the One I have offended,
The One who has atoned for it:
A temporary setback on the narrow way,
Dust me off, set me back on Your path:
My enemy desperately roams on borrowed time,
Ah, but “greater is He who is in me than *he* in the world”;
My forgiveness is complete, final,
My standing is sturdy and sure,
My God eternal, everlasting,
My sin removed from me as far as East is from West,
His one sacrifice for all sin, for all time.

Personal Revival

No longer can I hide myself under this cloak of shame,
The Word that smolders in my heart has been bellowed to a flame.
Layer by layer every weight is removed each distraction falls to my feet,
No longer will I wallow in this selfish pity and defeat.
My accuser has correctly surmised I am guilty on every count,
A death sentence is truly mine as his list of charges surmount:
Yet I stand here free for an Abundant Pardon has been granted,
And now on the Rock of my Salvation my feet are firmly planted.
No longer will I look to the chair next to me or the pulpit or in the pew,
My Lord is the source of my strength and so my friends may be few.
I must walk in the Spirit, be spiritually minded and bear the Spirit's fruit,
My personal revival has begun though the world would try to pollute.
I cannot, will not rely on others or wait for the right feeling,
My purpose is clear to further God's Kingdom
And regain what the devil's been stealing.
The Price God paid is far too high for what He's gotten in return,
I'm damaged goods but He sees me whole; it's to please Him that I yearn.
Zeal for Him, for His house a hunger never satisfied,
To serve Him, to do His will a desire not gratified.
No more watching the suffering and standing by as a spectator,
Excuse me while I enter the arena, I hope I'll see you later.
I am not concerned the enemy sees me for in hell my name shall be known,
Having done all, I will stand and God's glory will be shown.

Welcome to Our Service

With hope filled eyes the needy assembled

Lame, sick, destitute with hands so weak they trembled

Broken homes, broken bones, broken spirits and broken hearts

A glimmer of expectancy as a proud procession starts;

Physicians, builders, farmers, and esquires people of great means

Enter the assembly hall with heads held high they preen.

A hand gesture, a head nod, from the sufferers their eyes avert;

Happy songs begin and a child begs "Will someone heal my hurt?"

The service continues as many heart-felt words are spoken

The hungry cling to what is said but to the fat they are just a token.

The ceremony comes to an end with much pomp and circumstance

The paupers and those in need think "Perhaps there's still a chance"

As a well dressed man addresses the group and calls for their attention,

"Won't you join me in a cup of apathy to wash down our pretension?"

They filed out just as they came smug and condescending,

Off to handle private matters today there'll be no mending.

"Thank you for attending our service, we hope you'll be back soon."

And in the distance a choir of orphans sings a melancholy tune.

My Closest Enemy

How long must I suffer this?

I listen and all I hear are coarse, harsh words and profanity;

Filling my ears to the point of overflowing.

I cover them, I scream to drown out the offensive onslaught

But it won't go away, not for a moment, not at all.

Like a bitter stinging rain on a cold autumn night

No coat, no shelter just left to the elements, exposed.

But if *that were all* I may bear up on my own,

Yet there is worse to come, so much worse I almost long for the former.

The lies they come and they repulse me making me physically ill:

Lies of convenience, lies for gain, lies to build oneself up,

Lies to tear others down, lying to one's own self, a lie to cover up pain.

I am besieged as the surmounting fraudulence engulfs me.

I push it away; I lean my head back and gasp for clean air

Just one breath, one pure inhale for a brief retreat,

It's not there. It feels like the stench is permeating my being

Like stale smoke in a closet of wool clothing, nothing is untainted.

All that distracts me from what I *hear* are the sights that flood my eyes.

I see abuse, neglect, rage and violence things that break my heart;

I long to stop it to bring it to an end but I don't know where to start.

I wince and look away only to catch a glimpse of lust and greed and murder:

It's a macabre, perverted one act play with no end or intermission.

When I close my eyes I only visualize the horror that plagues my sight.

How to end it? How to fight it? Where do I begin?

Stepping back I steady my gaze, my eyes become fixed on my adversary:

With boldness I step forward to engage; he, unfazed draws nearer to me.

When the space between us evaporates I study my wretched foe,

Every line, every wrinkle, every blemish, each and every vessel in his eyes.

My entire body on the *qui vive*, prepared to defend and to assail;

Then my quarry baffles me as tears stream down his weathered face,

I'm taken aback as my anger and fear suddenly become alarm!

When I see the one who has beleaguered me, for I am looking in a **mirror**.

I want out. Out of this flesh, out of this vile shell that contaminates me so;

Just let me step out, peel it off, remove myself from this tattered, lifeless cover.

There is no escape: One cannot leave one's self, can he?

Despair consumes me and I resign to my condition, yet *the Door* catches my eye.

I enter in, this is *the Way*, and my salvation is at hand.

I partake of *the Bread*, *the Water* cleanses me, I bask in *the Light*.

I looked back to the mirror once more and still I saw me,

The enemy I keep closest is the friend I never had;

I stay with him, following him, where he goes I must too,

Oh, but for the grave, that is where we will part company.

A bitter-**sweet** adieu.

The Anchor

The three that abide are faith, hope and love,

Love, we know as greatest and she will never fail:

Faith is the substance, the assurance of that for which you hope,

Faith is the convicting evidence of that which is unseen:

Ah but what about hope? With faith and love can we not conquer all?

Is hope not but a desperate man's attempt to cling to what he knows is lost?

Is not hope the fleeting gasp we carelessly throw out to simply save face?

Underestimate hope and witness those full of her, experience what you desire;

Deny her and you find yourself at the mercy of an unmerciful enemy:

"Hope is the anchor of your soul", she has shored herself beyond the veil;

Hope is that glimmer when darkness encompasses you,

Hope compels the journey though the elements are contrary to you,

Hope allows you to draw on strengths unrealized:

She is your second wind; she reveals your life's new lease,

Hope does not, hope cannot and hope will not disappoint:

If you see hope, you *have not* seen hope at all,

"We hope for that which we do not see"

Since love "hopes all things" and faith is the substance of what is hoped for,

If you have not hope as your anchor...

You are adrift on a raft, left to the will of an ever maddening sea.

It Is It

The just are called to live by it;
In it, the ancients found approval,
Through it, the dead still have a voice,
With it, salvation was prepared while the world was condemned;
By it, a man can live as a stranger in a place he will call home,
Because of it, a child is born from a barren womb;
Through it, the gift of promise is expectantly returned to its presenter:
As a result of it, an infant is spared without deference to the royal edict,
In it, purpose is found to make one stride as though seeing the unseen:
Walls crumble simply by the presence of those who walk in it;
A den of lions loses their appetite at meal time when confronted with it:
An insurmountable army is overwhelmed by an insignificant troop immersed in it,
As stones are cast, the martyr calls for his executioners' forgiveness, trusting it:
The blind squint at the light of it,
The deaf rejoice at the sound of it,
The lame leap in the presence of it,
The mourners' grief is turned to laughter by it,
The dead shed their grave clothes for garments of praise due to it;
A funeral becomes a coronation because of it:
It is the door, through which we exit finite judgment and enter infinite grace,
It is easier found and more abundant in a child than a room full of adults;
A seeds worth can uproot a tree and displace a mountain:

Without it, you can not please God,
When all else is stripped away, it still *is*;
It is faith. It is it.

What Will People Think?

I saw You strike up a conversation with a prostitute,
I watched You sit and break bread with a man of ill-repute:
You walked with that drunkard as though he was Your friend,
To see You with these people, what message does that send?
I spied You conversing with one of questionable morals,
A witness puts You with a man of rage, who only seeks quarrels:
You were observed having discussions with a criminal element,
Thieves, rapists, murderers, people with evil intent:
You spend your time with those who profit from games of chance,
One identified You speaking to a woman who enchants:
You were seen having discourse with corrupt politicians,
Clearly You have allied Yourself with those of the foulest conditions:
You have not even attempted to make Your relationships discreet,
You consort with these ne'er-do-wells out in the open and on the street:
You have made Your affiliations plain for all to see,
Through it all what is most puzzling is Your association with me:
Line me up with all the rest, of sinners I am the chief,
And You would commune with *me*? Grace and mercy beyond belief.
I hope Your being seen with me doesn't tarnish Your reputation,
I am drawn to You as I desperately seek to partake of Your Salvation:
The Physician has come for those who are sick, not those who are well,
The Savior is here, not for the righteous but those in danger of hell.

The Deep

She hides countless secrets, conceals wicked deeds,
Untold bodies with untold sins litter her floor;
Thrice the water tried to take me for her own,
Thrice I was delivered on the verge of resignation;
She would not have me, could not have me,
Till I yielded myself, in obedience, to be buried:
Baptized into the grave by Golgotha,
Raised from the depths in newness of life:
As I breach the water's surface I gasp for air,
Like a newborn's first inhale I am filled with the Breath of Life:
My lungs take in to the point of bursting,
I exhale bringing relief and reassurance:
The old self in the water's mausoleum,
Crucified dead and laid to rest:
The water is stirred she even boils,
That *serpent of old* drags the bottom to dredge my former self:
Would she betray me? Expose me?
No, she bears me witness, the water, my confidant,
The Spirit and the blood are in agreement with her:
I have an Advocate with the Father,
One who walked this road for me;
Died my death and pulled me by my hand from the water,

When He was sure I was dead, like a seed planted:

To rise up anew, stepping out of my watery tomb.

To Tar-shish

It is warm and comfortable here,
I am mirthful, surrounded by my content acquaintances:
Soothing words are spoken, they appease me,
Stroke my ego, reassure my adequacy, and wink at my trivial sins,
I like it here, my light seems so bright inside this bushel,
Aboard this ship I share my successes and revel in adulation:
On to Tar-shish we sail but I do not care if we ever arrive at port:
Ever onward our jaunt continues the crew's ignorance is our compass:
A tempest brews on the horizon and the wind becomes contrary to us,
As the craft is tossed I take solace and sleep in the hold below:
We take on water and the captain abandons the helm;
Abruptly my rest is disturbed my serenity has been shattered,
No longer can I delay the inevitable, no longer can I hide:
Cast me out, overboard and your way will be made straight,
In the depths I will make my peace and there receive my recompense:
I await my sentence for my conviction, my confession is absolute,
The judgment seat that caused me dread has become a Throne of Grace,
Remission and forgiveness granted me in the bowels of a fish:
The sea gives me up and gives me back to the land where I was called,
Use me outside the camp, employ me beyond the gate:
Lead and I will follow; pour me as a drink offering,
Scatter me with Your wind.

This Cup

One sip from this cup of bitterness,
And my seething frustrations are released;
A single taste of this cup of wrath,
My vengeance exacted, and all is settled;
I will put my lips to this cup of violence, but once,
And I shall be justified:
I have been forced to partake of this cup of jealousy,
I must expand and lay hold of what is mine;
This cup of deception offers me relief,
With just one drop my petty crime serves me well;
A lone drink from this cup of lies,
My misdeeds shrouded, never to be exposed:
To take a nip from this cup of gossip,
And give my miserable audience comfort with company;
Just a swallow from this cup of idols,
An innocent retreat of coddling tolerance;
A solitary mouthful from this cup of sensuality,
I will be content and I need it no longer;
To imbibe the smallest portion from this cup of abominations,
My flesh will be satisfied and no one is the wiser:
Moderation openly mocks you,
The latest victim to her cruel joke;

This cup that you put to your lips, seeking temporary solace,

You will drink it complete and taste it to the full:

“Take ***this cup*** of the new covenant

Which is My blood poured out for the forgiveness of many.”

Can you drink from the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons?

“My Father, if it is possible, let ***this cup*** (of suffering) pass from me;

Yet not as I will, but as You will.”

Unsavorly Salt

Has this salt lost its flavor?

Is this light hidden under a shade of shame?

Has this fire been reduced to the comfort of lukewarm?

Does this ambassador now play to the crowd to tickle their ears?

This tree that stood proud bearing fruit, is it now alone and barren?

Will this dog return to consume his own vomit?

Could this pig revisit the mire to wallow again?

Trying to avoid embarrassment is this a justified guise for my denial?

Is this an attempt to crucify afresh the Lord of Glory?

What is that in the distance? Did you hear the rooster crow?

Am I now only good to be trampled underfoot?

Is my light to be extinguished?

Will I, now tepid, be spewed from Your mouth?

Shall my audience grow weary and look for some new thing?

Are my branches to be pruned and thrown in the fire?

Would You look me in the eyes and say "Depart from me I never knew you"?

Is this acrid stench I choke on a cloud of self?

"Who shall deliver me from this body of death"?

It is grace. Grace inconceivable. Grace incomprehensible. Mercy unfathomable.

God undeniable.

Ah, Sweet Victory

If we hurt the ones we love,
I have been loved by many;
Time does not heal all wounds,
Scars develop, limbs are severed,
Hands wither and vision is lost;
You cannot avoid thorns in the flesh,
When you live in a brier patch;
I am the company misery longs to keep,
Bitterness yearns to take root in my infirmities;
I have not time for them,
Nor place in my life,
Somber, sullen, melancholy and morose,
They may shade the silver lining of my countenance with gray,
But all are overshadowed by radiant joy, peace, contentment and gratitude;
I will walk with a limp,
Bare my scars for all to see,
Leave myself open, naked to be hurt again:
You may injure my body,
Take advantage and batter my feelings;
Immersed in a grace unimaginable,
I exact my revenge by loving my malefactors,
Not for the spite of heaping burning coals on their heads,

**But for the sweetest of victories,
Disallowing others to change or dictate who I am,
An unfettered, incorruptible, impenetrable, exposed heart.**

The Sunrise

Sitting and waiting for the sun to rise,
Enveloped in the darkness of night;
My downcast soul seized by her ebony grip:
I have done all within me, my resources spent;
Now, I can only sit and wait for the sun to rise:
Night has not been endured that the sun did not chase away,
Some longer, some darker, some colder and lonelier;
But God has brought the sun to rise on them all.
Yes, there it is, the mornings first light,
Not much to begin,
Simply a pale gray haze on the horizon;
I catch my breath at this glimpse of hope,
And still I sit and wait for the sun to rise:
Why does it tarry? The blackness of night prevailing.
My heart morose, searching, watching, listening intently,
Perhaps this is the night without end, darkness' triumph;
Will the day merely yield to the onyx fortress?
Time escapes me as I stare at the mountaintops,
Relaxing my gaze to the panorama about me;
A peculiar occurrence is revealed,
While the horizons light was unchanged in brightness and color,
It now possessed more of the vast expanse;

Forcing back the evening's dark deluge;
Chasing it away, chasing it away, chases it away.
Looking back to the landscape with renewed hope,
I see the first shaft of yellow,
Exposing a small portion of my surroundings:
Back to the sky to witness the night in full retreat,
I now stand and wait for the sun to rise:
The melancholy shades of gray dissolve,
They are replaced with vibrant greens, reds, violets and yellows;
My eyes are entertained, my heart gladdened, my soul refreshed:
At last, the brilliant sun makes his entrance!
Cresting the mountains,
His arrival punctuates the end of the night's reign;
Declaring the day's victory.
So beatific that I sat and waited for the sun to rise.

Speck in Your Eye

I could not help but notice that speck in your eye;

I am sure you would like me to remove it,

After all, it hinders your vision;

You are all but perfect, save the speck:

It brings me joy, finding fault in others,

So many there are, they assume all is well,

But there I am, quick to point out the flaws;

What a shame to wander full of disillusion,

This further underscores their inadequacy,

Another speck in the eye.

Don't mind me; I will just go about my business:

Most fail to realize their own shortcomings,

Where they have missed the mark;

Believe you me, I see them all:

Some are apathetic to the situation,

While others are down right embarrassed,

As well they should be;

I would love to help you clean up,

To free you of your imperfection, however minuscule,

I would be glad to get that mote from your eye,

But for the plank of hypocrisy in my own:

God speed to you, do work on that.

Helping Hand

Your blood stains remain on the dagger of my words,

Cry out in earnest for relief;

So much easier to kick you when you're down:

Call me brother?

A stranger would be quicker to show compassion.

Starting to heal?

Let me pick your scab and reopen that old wound,

My friends all laugh while I pick up another stone;

They revel as I pour some salt in that raw sore:

Trusted me with your most intimate pain,

I exposed you and your weaknesses to the wicked elements;

Nothing is sacred, no one is immune:

Don't take yourself so seriously,

Let me pull that carpet from under your feeble legs;

Infirmities have a high entertainment value,

Far exceeding the level of your discomfort I am sure;

You seek shelter, you seek comfort,

Just the crumbs from my table;

I deny you refuge and heap misery instead,

Your demise becomes my cynicism's fodder;

You pitiful wretch; but none is worse than I:

I disgust myself, I know better,

I **am** my brother's keeper:

Place that burning coal on my unclean lips.

Here am I, send me.

Paradox

Looking intently for evidence of You,
I am straining to hear You speak,
Calling out but You do not reply,
The wealth I have brings only temporary satisfaction,
With all my knowledge I have not figured You out,
The years I've lived bring me only closer to death, not You:
Do I need to be blind to see Your glory?
Should You deafen me so I can hear Your voice?
Will You cut out my tongue so I may sing Your praise?
Do I have to be made poor to partake of Your riches?
Must I become like a child to understand You?
Shall I lose my life so You can save it?
With my eyes I have sight but not vision,
Through my ears I hear yet I do not listen,
From my mouth comes blessing and still there is cursing,
My money affords me much though I cannot ride my camel through the needle's
eye,
I am learned and wise, and You would speak through an ass,
The time I have spent means so much, but all is loss:

Take my shoddy eyesight,
Have my ignorant ears,
Keep my bitter tongue,

My wealth is Yours,
I give You my vast foolishness,
I present You with my filthy rags and a hill of dung;
Have all of me,
I am Yours.

The Me-attitudes

Blessed are the rich,

Their kingdom they have already received:

Blessed are the calloused,

Comfort they do not need:

Blessed are the proud,

The world awaits their command:

Blessed are those with insatiable appetites,

They will never be filled:

Blessed are the vengeful,

They who live by the sword shall die by it:

Blessed are the double minded,

For they shall see their own reflection:

Blessed are the rebellious,

They will be called the sons of wrath:

Blessed are those who stand for nothing,

They have no kingdom to lose:

Blessed are you when men flatter you,

Compliment you and speak all manner of accolades

Towards you for your own sake;

Lament and be exceedingly sorrowful,

You have your reward in hand.

Hunger

My hunger and thirst must be satisfied,
As I forage for sustenance, provision comes;
I feast on a banquet of foods that seem to *fill the void*,
Consuming large quantities of drink to wash it down:
Alas, my comfort is temporal, back to the banquet I go;
A different assortment this time,
Not quite the gourmet meal previously served;
My host assures me, "*It will fill the void.*"
Contentment, now I can move on:
Move on? To what? Is it not good to stay here and be fed?
I see no need to be hasty in my departure,
I will stay; I will eat and drink;
It is well that I did not leave,
Hunger returns to me quicker than before;
Back to the table to feed that growing appetite:
A foul odor fills the air as my server presents the entree`,
A platter of rancid meat, stale bread and sour milk placed before me;
I am told it will quell my pining, "*It will fill the void.*"
I force it down to fuel myself,
The awful taste will not leave me;
A glass of this, now bitter, wine perhaps will cleanse my palate;
I am full, and that is all that matters:

Weary, groggy, weighed down, I just need to rest.
In my stomach the milk curdles, the bread molds,
Worms are hatched from within the meat;
I want to expel it, but it is too late,
The worms consume it all from inside of me;
Leaving me empty, hungry again:
The banquet hall is closed,
The host ushers me around back;
I am shown to the dumping area where rats and dogs contend for scraps:
"But I am hungry", I cry. "*It will fill the void*", I am told.
Any dignity I had is gone as I wrestle with vermin for my dinner,
What I scrounge does take away the pangs;
My senses become dull and numb:
The worms scavenge from me internally,
The hunger never goes away!
No matter what I fill it with, it stays;
I throw all I can, good and bad, at it with fleeting results;
Food, drink, women, work, charity, family, nothing stops the craving:
I hear the banquet host and the servers laughing in the shadows.
I am approached in my squalor by an imposing figure,
Does he wish to take from me the crumbs for which I have fought?
He kneels beside me, holds out His hand and declares I will hunger and thirst no
more;
He calls Himself, the Bread of life;

He gives me to drink of His living water:

“Taste and see”. My hunger and thirst for righteousness finally satisfied.

Bitter Season

The clamor of my life drowns Your voice,
The clutter and clatter of my being chokes You out;
All along, I know You are there;
You are near, not far:
The veil between us was once so sheer,
Now it has become opaque,
My sin pigments it, ever darker;
You are no further from me,
Yet You are harder to find:
Am I more conscious of my wrongs?
Or less sensitive to You?
It is dry and arid here,
I convulse involuntarily,
Knowing for what I long but cannot obtain;
Dip Your finger in the cool water and touch my tongue:
I was placed as a watchman over the harvest fields,
And have been reduced to a scarecrow;
Where scavengers mockingly roost after they have their fill;
When will this bitter season end?
When will the fire of Your word, that is shut up in me,
Burn through the veil?
Don't let me reap from the harvest of anger which I have sown,

Quiet the noises around me,
Still the distractions,
Rend the veil that I have hung;
Let me experience You again.

Blessings In Disguise

Thank You Lord, for this wealth of bounty

You have blessed me beyond measure:

I receive from You so many gifts have been given

An abundance of worldly treasure:

I've acquired a great deal and surrounded myself

There is much but I could always use more:

Comfort is my ally in my fortress of possessions

Your still small voice grows fainter; I'm not trying to ignore:

More music now, entertain me now, please bless me now,

I must have the latest attraction:

I have begun to wonder, do You think it could be?

Your benefits have become a distraction?

Perhaps this present world is just a better place

With these accouterments I have amassed:

My guilt assuaged as I justify

How long can I make this last?

It's been some time, I haven't heard from You lately,

I'm sure You'll call me when I'm needed:

Thanks again for blessing me so,

Amen. Now may I be seated?

“Where your treasure is there will your heart be also.”

Surely

I could take just one and nobody would notice,

Surely one will never be missed:

I could take one sip to quench my craving,

Surely one taste will do no harm:

I can protect myself with this one little lie,

Surely one untruth could not injure:

I can appease my rage this one time,

Surely everyone will understand:

I can lock myself away from the world and it's troubles,

Surely your absence won't even register:

I could take one peek to quell my lust,

Surely that will leave no wound:

Surely minor indulgences cannot hurt ,

Just a brief, well deserved satisfaction:

The **most subtle of all the creatures** gives his assurance:

Now crack open the door just a sliver that is all he asks.

The petty thief, now a felonious wretch living in fear of the law;

A social taste leads to an insatiable, unquenchable thirst;

Your fabrication entangles you in deception's web unable to move to the truth;

Your one release of anger leaves you lying in wait to shed blood;

Your quest for solitude covers you in a darkened quilt of depression;

Your glimpse for lust leaves families tattered, lives destroyed forever:

That first step, that smallest indiscretion has opened an abyss;

The grave's hungry mouth is never satisfied:

Just one bite of The Apple," ***surely you will not die***".

Surely.

When the Thread Breaks

With all that is in me I fight,
I scratch, I claw, I scream and weep:
I use every weapon at my disposal,
I pray, I lament, I praise and grieve:
I strain and expend the last ounce of my strength,
My body quivers as every fiber has been depleted:
I stand empty, alone, exhausted and defenseless;
I am sifted, separated; the slightest breeze will scatter me:
I cling to a cord; a thread is my focus I wince to hold on:

Sever the cord, cut the thread, just let go.

A gentle whisper urges me to succumb,
I cannot let go, I will not sever my cord,
With nothing left in me still I struggle to clench this thread:

Sever the cord, cut the thread, just let go.

Is that my foe calling for my surrender?
I refuse, I will not release, I can't consciously sever my lifeline

Sever the cord, cut the thread, just let go.

Alas my strength has failed me,
The thread breaks and slips from my hands:
Expecting shame to fill me I am startled by relief,
Awash in comfort and astonished by confidence;
I reemerge with a resiliency unrecognized:

Alleviation, tears of joy as I am succored,
It is surreal as I watch myself from the outside:
A mighty wind billows my sails,
This battle is now in the hands of the Almighty:
The Ancient of Days raises His standard against my antagonists flood,
With boldness as never before I audibly laugh in the face of my enemy,
My faith multiplies as I revel in my Lord's victory.

The Toast

The echoes of your vows captured in the chapel;
A portrait of the joyous reception etched in the mind's eye;
The gavel drops, it's exclamation resonates evermore.
The door closes giving permanency to what was and what now is;
One final glance back, not for doubt's sake but for surety's.
The two simultaneously step towards eternity:
Not simply a merger or agreement or joint venture;
Not two vines entwined nor lives twain entangled,
Rather a grafting a conjoining, a unique hybrid birthed of beauty rare.
Along the road ahead the snare's task has been complicated,
No longer two random strays to entrap but a single foe of innumerable strength:
Armed with the prayers of supporters unwilling to be mere spectators,
And angelic hosts dispatched at the Master's command to embrace the
adversary.
Purpose, determination, focus and faith fortify your resolve,
Ah, but love..."Love never fails." the apostle wrote; and so it shall be:
Your love for one another, our love for you, and God's love for us all;
To sustain, to uphold, to enrich and to ensure the journey is seen to
completion.

Vapor

The refreshing vapor of the ocean's spray across your sun-baked face;

Sensing each minute drop of the mist your flesh drinks it in:

It cools, it nourishes, it comforts, it soaks, it stings, it leaves you wanting more.

The caressing moisture pleases you while it is slowly evaporating from your skin;

Almost undetected the water is drawn away as it's affects are taken for granted.

The moment you recognize it's presence fading it's already too late,

As the last bit is removed you want it back, want it more, want it again.

The heat radiates against you magnifying the liquid's void;

Sorrow and emptiness consume you now your surface is parched more than
ever.

In despair you turn to the left and right and amazement fills your eyes;

In both directions the beach is lined with endless faces whose countenance
mirrors yours,

Some are familiar, most are not, but all reflect the loneliness of the vapors
departure.

The wave that crashed blessing you with it's gentle cooling touch;

It was not yours alone, it touched so many others.

A collective sigh, tears are shed, and some drop to their knees,

Then one turns to another and a smile eclipses the somber expression;

Fond memories replace thoughts that were overflowing with sadness:

With rapid succession the joy is multiplied up and down the surf,

Smiles broaden, laughter is heard, a memorial of gladness revealed.

Recollections of the impact as we wait for the next wave,

Not to replace but to compliment, to remind, to continue...

Home

A place bold and beautiful, rich with a wealth of bounty.

Many have gazed to appreciate, taking this harvest of beauty for granted:

Intimidating to passers-by, curiosities left unanswered.

Her outward affront drew me near; I alone would enter in:

Her vast resources and thick, lush foliage; It was said they were to be left
untainted:

I could not resist her, I was compelled; to journey the depths of this visual oasis.

An open field I found at her heart; she entreated me to dig:

With my hands and with my will, I did breach the tender soil.

Wonder and amazement filled my eyes; as I surveyed my excavation;

She now lay exposed to me alone; Revealing secrets and stories concealed:

The layers before me impart what time could not erode: Her scars, her pains, her
fears;

Her dreams, her faith, her hope: Fearfully and wonderfully made;

Frailty wrapped in a cloak of resolve: Striking and confident, meek and insecure.

I would not betray her, I replaced her veil.

She is now my Eden, my home.

This Day

This day, like any other, I celebrate our love.

This day, like any other, I am grateful for you;

You contribute infinitely to my life,

You give meaning to everything I do;

You are the texture to my being,

The fragrance in the breeze;

Because of you the rose's red has depth and richness,

The pink of the tulip is delicate and frail,

The sky's blue has become brilliant;

All things that surround me are affirmed because of you;

My house is a home,

My days are quickened,

My existence is a life

Because of you.

So this day, like any other, I celebrate our love.