

A Journey To Life

Lonely People,
Lonely Places

Mending Brokenness



by Bob Ayres

Table of Contents

LONELY PEOPLE, LONELY PLACES

Misty Mourning

Oil Lamps

Rain/After the Rain

Station Rails

Summer

Casual Conversation

Should I Be Happy

Elusive and on the Stray

And you called it making "Love"

Lonely Maggie of the Harbor

I Be Living Here All My Life

Who Will Tuck in the Children of the Night

Ghetto Girl

Jumper

Rainbow

The Whether of Time

The Lone, Balding Eagle

Table of Contents

MENDING BROKENNESS

I am born
I'm young, you're younger
Patiently
You Would Be
Susannah Jane
More Than a Friend
The Word Became Flesh
Still He Prayed
Peace (The Omniscient Ocean)
Here We Are
Something Deep Inside
Kathryn Was a Maiden
I'm On My Way
The Circle of Sadness
Peacemaker
Praise to You, Oh God!
Live a Love Song
Light of Life

LONELY PEOPLE, LONELY PLACES

Jabo Cox taught me more about dying than any other person in my life. Not only did he suffer extensively through cancer, two strokes, cataracts and seizures during the last years of his life, and countless other disappointments in life, he personified the scripture "The Word became flesh and lived among us." Jabo fed the hungry and thirsty, clothed the naked, visited the imprisoned, invited strangers in and came to the sick. He poured his life into the hurts of others. He did not do this as a "do-gooder" but as a fellow-sufferer. He WAS all of these people. He was loneliness... and wholeness. He was my friend.

MISTY MOURNING

The empty rocking chair sits
like the pain I have here inside me.
The unmoving motion I feel,
my feelings hide here
inside me.

I can see you, I can see you...

The bird flies away to a better place
but then this bird crashes;
time will be as time will be
and the fruitful turns to ashes.

My book without pages reminds me
that I can see you, yes I can see you
yet can I touch you?

Looking back on all the times we had together;
having picnics with wine in all types of weather.
Throwing a stone across the canyons of life
to link our hearts.

Peaceful encounters with the wild flowers
the taste of wind

and the feel of summer showers.
These and other memories
encompass my thoughts
on this misty morning.
My unsung songs remind me
that I can see you,
I can see you but
can I touch you,
 hold you
 and just know
 you are mine?

And then my tears come strolling down
 my face;
must be sign of my years
 they come rolling down,
 strolling down my face.

OIL LAMPS

Oil lamps shining
 through the muddled whispers.
Stained glass windows
 for effects to the lonely.

Silhouetted faces on the yellow-colored
sidelight.
It's quite an evening for the rain
 the pain of crying.

Of remembering the time before
when we shared a table here in the lime-
green glow
of a thousand Chinese candles
and a thousand lonely souls
a thousand years ago.

The flowering curtains
beyond the wooden mantle
revealing blossoms that flow with the wind.

Let's share a glass or two
and watch the people's tiny worlds.

It's quite an evening for the rain
the pain...
of lost lovers declining motion.

The torrent of the rain
the sky's
blazing emotion.

Of a rainy night
a rainy night
a pattering lonely night
down at the cafe away from the rain
away...
from the night.

RAIN/AFTER THE RAIN

Listen to the rain
 drifting lightly to the ground.
Hear it call your name
 listen, listen to the sound
of rain... rain... rain...
nature's nectar.

The pressures of the day
 washed completely from my head.
The softness of your gentle touch
 makes me think of you instead,
 listening to
rain... rain... rain...
nature's nectar.

Listen to the rain
 drifting lightly from above
You touched my face with your lips
 and said, "It's you that I love."
Stay with me, stay here with me
 and we'll listen to the rain.
rain... rain... baptize my brain...
sweet nature's nectar.
just rain... rain... rain... rain...

The rain is ending
my feelings are depending on the way it is
after the rain.

The air is washed down
outside the earth's so quiet, it's nice to know
that you're around
but are you?

Walking beside you I dream
of how it would seem
to know that you loved me
to know you still love me,
after the rain.

You said you'd never go but somehow I know
that the rain is not the only thing that's ending.
When will it end?
How much longer do we have; will you part with
the
summer showers?

The sadness seems to flow
as now I know that you're leaving me.
Your melancholy smile, all the while
you apologize for giving me
so much happiness,
after the rain.

After the rain
as my heart is crying
the mist flies around the air drowning.

I care about you.
Can't you see I wish you'd remain
Can't you see I still love you

after the rain...
drifting lightly to the ground...
after the rain...
after the rain...

STATION RAILS

(Come Back Yesterday)

The station rails lie waiting
 stretching 'till they meet.
I stand so still and all alone
 and strangely so complete.
I hear you in the distance calling someone else's
name.
Time will not surrender,
 and the memory, the same.

The movement from the train cradles me
 to sleep;
rocking me in harmony, rocking me so deep.

And in your arms I hold myself and touch you
through my dreams.
Gentle like country waters
or the peace of a mountain stream.

So come back yesterday
or hurry tomorrow
anything is better than right now.
No one is left to fill the hollow,
yesterday's a memory that leaves me when I
wake,
tomorrow's just another today when the early
morning breaks,
when the early morning breaks.

The train is much too real for me
to stay for very long.
I'd rather travel far away, carried by
your song.
Like a river flowing so gracefully
around its every bend,
I'm here with you throughout our love
the beginning to the end.

My hands within my pockets, I stretch and close
my eyes;
the air is like a blanket, hiding the sunrise.
In my mind I'm going back and I hold you once
again,

with your laughter and your teardrops
and the misty morning rain.

So come back yesterday or hurry tomorrow
anything is better than right now.
No one is left to touch the sorrow.
Yesterday's a memory that leaves me when I
wake,
tomorrow's just another today when the early
morning breaks,
when the early morning breaks.
I'm here with you throughout our love... the
beginning through
the end.

SUMMER

Summer
Glance
Smile
Glance away
and back again.

Conversation,
thoughts
Date?
Maybe,
Yes.

Great!

Touch,

kiss,

Nice.

Picnic?

Great!

And so forth,

and so on.

Time advances and so does love.

The embraces are longer as are the months

Winter. Cuddle up,

Great.

Cold hands, cold lips, yet warm kisses.

Frozen winter thaws into spring as a

warm affection thaws into passionate love,

but along with the passion comes

unexplained problems.

Moods

and apologies.

Why? Who knows?

The intimate thoughts initially shared

seem not to be held within.

Touch,

cold.

Picnic?

no
pain.
Thoughts,
Dinner?
glance away
Let's talk,
yes.
What are feelings?
What is love?
tears
smile
summer?

*On my bed night after night I sought him
whom my soul loves;
I sought him but did not find him.
"I must arise now and go about the city;
in the streets and in the squares
I must seek him whom my soul loves."
I sought him but did not find him.*

(Song of Solomon 3:1-2)

CASUAL CONVERSATION

Casual Conversation

Playing games that everyone understands
to be different than what you are saying.

Experience Revelation?
Don't get involved but pretend to be
so goes the games we are playing.

Why do we live, pretend that we die, when
another person cries,
or seems to..
Still we thrill, when their progress is nill, their life
uphill,
or seems to.

Through all our years
we say we are well, when it's clear
that we really are dying.

Smile through our tears
as the hurt turns to fear
and we really are crying.

Does anyone hear?

Casual Conversation.
Experience revelation?
Discuss our creation
with casual conversation.

SHOULD I BE HAPPY

Should I be happy, when I
see your smiles and miles of laughter?

 The way you walk, the way you talk
 like you know what you're going after.
You think you've found your own mind in a
world of myth and illusion
you've questioned everything you are.

Should I be happy, that you're old enough to
strut your stuff and attract all the pretty boys
who stay until
your life gets rough then

they are on their own way and your world
 begins to crumble... they've taken
everything you are.

You think you've found your own mind
You think you've got your own kind
You think you're on your own
and all the time you are really quite alone.

Chase them away, they think that they are
pleasing you
really releasing you, even increasing you.
You're wanting to stay,
 but somewhere deep in your heart...

you want them to go.

Should I be happy, that you wear the clothes that
make men notice

your slender waist, your good taste
your perfume smells like the summer roses.

You spend a lot of time
looking good and looking for that someone
you thought you had found him every time.

Should I be crying
as I view that way your life is revealing
you don't know how to end the show
make-up could not hide what you're
really feeling.

You paint your face so pretty
with a smile for anyone who's watching
but you can't paint away your fears.

You think you've found your own mind
You think you've got your own kind
You think you're on your own
and all the time you are really quite alone.

Chase them away
they think that they are pleasing you
really releasing you, even increasing you.

You're wanting to stay, but somewhere deep in
your heart...
you want them to go.

ELUSIVE AND ON THE STRAY

Sing on about tomorrow
how the sun won't fade away.
Sing so softly of your relations
what you want to give away

But the night won't hide your eyes
from the things you are in the day
and the sleep you call to hide yourself is
elusive and on the stray.

There's a message in the morning
that your soul won't listen to.
It's written in guilt from too many nights
that's all they were asking of you.

And your eyes remain so mystified that
I won't be used this way,
and the love you call to find yourself is
elusive and on the stray.

Peace...
is the life I wish for you.
Love...

is the tune to listen to,
but if you continue and hide away
and always remain at arms length,
you never will find the light of day
of what it means to have real strength.

So check your light in the morning
is it dim and flickering too?
If you'd leave the thought of losing
yourself, I'd soon be beside you.

But your eyes seem so unsatisfied
no, you've never known love this way...

I can't meet your needs because your wants are
too great
they're elusive...
and on the stray.

AND YOU CALL IT MAKING "LOVE"

People weren't created to be used
for something else
but we take away their very souls
to benefit ourselves.
We wash away their pureness

take away their dreams;
soothe them with our words of love
which are nothing more than schemes.

You laughed and thought it funny when she
spoke to you of hope
so she gave you things you waited for
and you knew she couldn't cope.
Yet you're eaten up with emptiness as you hide it
with your boast,
that which hurts you most of all
is what you are seeking most.

God took a lot of time to create us very pure
and whenever we were ill
he'd have for us the cure.
And the children's laughter everywhere are the
songs the angels sang
the bells tolled long ago
but we never knew they rang.

But you never saw the pureness and you never
felt the need
and your call for her was to follow you
wherever you could lead.
You never spoke of promises for the things you
took away
like her dreams for a lifetime
or her dreams for the day.

oh...

Sometimes I wonder why...

Are you filled with hate beneath your well-
worded reply?

For she was all alone and it was you,
you were thinking of
you've torn apart her very soul
and you call it making "love."

Life has its way of healing as we let it fade away
she left all the darkness within him
and turned to greet the day.

She was born again as new inside her very soul
she's holy as the morning
and wholeness is her goal.

oh...

Sometimes I sit and cry.

When I think of him and his well-worded reply.

For he is all alone and it is him,
he is thinking of..

He's torn apart his very soul and he calls it
making "love."

He's torn apart his very soul and he told her,
it was making "love."

LONELY MAGGIE OF THE HARBOR

She stands alone in the harbor
wearing a silk dress and an old green bonnet;
a gift from long ago.

The lonely nights seem to thrill her
she looks at home in the lone street light
where she stands.

Until some sailor resembling her lover
wants to know her name,
he takes her in his arms away from herself.

Lonely Maggie of the Harbor
What is it all for?
Is it loneliness you're hiding, or much more?

Has your soul already left you?
How can you be sure that tomorrow's not the
day you'll be
something more.

You can sail upon her crest and feel the ocean
while you're lying there brushing the hair from
her face.

She only lets you stroke her when

she closes her eyes
and sails away
to the one beyond the shore.

And when you'd drift away, she gazes
at the paint peeling from the ceiling
calling for the one who left her for the sea.

Lonely Maggie of the Harbor
What's it all about?
Is it loneliness you're hiding,
things you're without?

Has your soul already parted,
for some distant sea,
where beneath it your husband
is resting tonight?

If you listen softly to her
when she looks your way for some company
anyone who will come in.

In harmony with the sea wind
she hums a song that once was theirs
many years ago.

Sailors say she's crazy
some half-lady of the coastal waters
but she swears his ghost is somewhere

near the shore.

Lonely Maggie of the Harbor
When do you rest,
do you still shed your garments
upon the oaken chest?

When the one tonight is sleeping
will your tears still flow;
as you call out your husband's name,
so low....

*"Now, then, hear this, you sensual one,
Who dwells securely,
Who says in your heart,
'I am, and there is no one besides me.
I shall not sit as a widow,
Nor shall I know loss of children.'*

*"But these two things shall come on you
suddenly in one day:
Loss of children and widowhood.
They shall come on you in full measure
In spite of your many sorceries,
In spite of the great power of your spells."*

(Isaiah 47:8-9)

I BE LIVING HERE ALL MY LIFE

I be living here all my life
in the filth and smell of the city
in a small room, just me and my brothers;
no one cares though
no one cares about me, I be just a kid
twelve years old but I fight good.
Still I share my room with three
and my food with them rats.

I be living here all my life
with the sounds of the city
of cursing and broken bottles;
still it hurts most when it's momma
who is crying.
No one cares though.

I be living here all my life
and even at twelve you know
that church is for rich folks
who stay far from here.
I seen a preacher once
he promised me healing

if only I'd be sending him money
but I weren't sick

and I didn't have no money, no how.

I be living here all my life
I always will
you got to read to leave
in here you just fight good
but who cares?

Maybe someday I'll pray to a God
like my momma wants me to
she don't want no money
she just wants me to be "saved."
But maybe there ain't no God
maybe he's white, and rich
Momma says he's in all colors,
in any heart that lets him in.
Maybe it's just them preachers who don't care,
all I know
I be living here all my life
I be leaving' someday, maybe.

WHO WILL TUCK IN THE CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT?

Whenever the weather is stormy or cold
lookin' for shelter are the young and the old.
The cops tell them options, or so I'm told

but they can't stay in here for the night.

Some look like runaways
others like bums, slipping in quick shots
of whiskey or rum.

The price that they pay
they pay each and every day
while I am a traveler
who passes this way.

I wonder...

Who will tuck in the children of the night?
An image of freedom is within their sight
but you know and I know that something's not
right.

We accept their slavery as if it isn't our plight
I wonder,
who will tuck in the children of the night?

There once was a wanderer
who specialized in love.
Some called him master,
said he came from above.
Descending upon him
came the Spirit as a dove
and he promised that he would not leave.

So the bus station is filled
with junkies and jokers;

some passing through and some passing on.
They watch and they wait
and their life is a pick-up.
Each night is another day passing them by.

I wonder...
Who will tuck in the children of the night?
Will he hear their prayers,
tell them all to sleep tight?
Will he suffer beside them as they
flee from his sight?
They remain in a slavery that seems to be all
right,
but I wonder,
who will tuck in
the children of the night?

Who will tuck in the children of the night?

GHETTO GIRL

There's no place for her upon the playground
for she's not so fast or quite as pretty
When she asks them they laugh and run around
calling "Homely girl, go back to town."

So she shakes her fist in anger
to hide the feelings she has inside her
she runs as far as the school-yard will let her

the teachers call "Hey girl, don't you hide."

"I'll run as far away as my legs will let me go."
She curses and mumbles under her breath
Stares at her legs, at the abuses of long ago
and she'll carry them until her death.

They laugh, the children laugh
at the way she never smiles.
They make fun of her, or just leave her alone;
For the ghettos stretch for miles and miles
and she always has to go home.

When she gets there she has to listen
for someone unseen who's visiting while her
father's away
She reaches deep in her pocket for the key
The noise is behind closed doors, so it's okay...

The teachers don't understand why she doesn't
seem to learn
or why she doesn't even care.
But what is there for her to try and ever earn
there's no one to share it with
no one is ever there.

They laugh, the children laugh
at the way she never smiles.
They make fun of her or just leave her alone;

For the ghettos stretch for miles and miles
and she always has to go home.

She is always on her own
Does anybody care...
just how alone?

JUMPER

A young man flew down from that bridge last
night, but that's okay
I'm sure he was half crazy.
He had left himself somewhere else didn't
understand that only his mind could fly away his
body's much too lazy.

So somewhere a mother's crying
over his unexpected dying
and she wonders what made him think he
could fly.

The light in his eyes went out last night
and he never really knew what he was doing.
He didn't breathe a word as he came to
meet the earth.
Did he understand all he was losing?

The crowd's laughter in the night
showed they knew he wasn't quite right

and the demon gunfighter has one more notch
on his gun.

He heard an old familiar lure with only one cure,
his protection was insured but now

he's on the run, he's on the run.

So in retrospect we remorse over another
pharmaceutical loss and the world continues on
its own determined run.

There was a fight last night and the demon
gunfighter blows the smoke away from his gun.

He's on the run...another's on the run...
the loser's on the run

he's on the run.

*"Your wisdom and your knowledge, they have
deluded you; For you have said in your heart,
'I am, and there is no one besides me.'
But evil will come on you
Which you will not know how to charm away;
And disaster will fall on you
For which you cannot atone,
And destruction about which you do not know
Will come on you suddenly."*

(Isaiah 47:10-11)

RAINBOW

He's a dreamer, he's a singer
he's a rider of the sky
owns a mountain without ranges
and it helps the days go by.
Just a worker for the railroad, carries luggage
much more than his share
and when no one's around at night
beneath the sound of his swishing broom
you can hear him sing an old love tune that he
wrote.

Rainbow is his name
a musician, his gifts are so complete,
but in his day the black man owned the blues
and the white man owned everything else,
Rainbow, he could not choose.

One day I asked him quietly,
"Hey, how'd you get your name?"
Said his mother was a white woman
but his blood's not the same.
Doesn't know who his father was or even if his
father was a rainbow, too.

When he was a young man, there was a world
he knew he'd never know so he gave up and
started smiling...

and said his name would be "Rainbow."

Rainbow is slowly fading into night
a musician, his gifts are so complete.
Rainbow won't ever tell us why he didn't touch
the stars
instead he stares out the window at the empty
railroad cars and he smiles.

He's a dreamer, he's a singer
he's a rider of the sky
even a mountain flyer someday has to die.
So the world will never feel his love
because his blood is not too pure
they would rather let him pass away unheard and
unrevered but like the quiet heart of a rainbow
he glows on after the rain.

Rainbow is slowly fading into night
no one knows where he calls home but we all
know where he's from.
Rainbow won't ever tell us why he never touched
the stars
instead he stares out the window at the empty
railroad cars
and he smiles.

THE WHETHER OF TIME

(reflections of the aged)

The whether of time
blowing through my mind
I know my decisions rest on me.
Whether or not this time
the emptiness of a chime-clock
as the hands rest on me.

Believe, believe your thoughts can slow down
time before time runs out.
Relieve, relive your life
from birth to death before it's too late.

The wind stirs wheat grain waving in my brain
that I know will never be harvested.
The disabled ships, the captain slips
he's not much in control of his own mind.

Live, live for God's sake live your life
Give, give, give your love
Live, give, don't waste your life away
Walk that mile, before it's too late.

The mountains I must cross
to see sunshine across
are not melting but growing with the tide.
The darkness surrounds me,

the quiet astounds me, this is my stop.
Thank you Lord,
for the ride.

*"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets
and stones those who are sent to her! How
often I wanted to gather your children together,
the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings,
and you were unwilling. "Behold, your house is
being left to you desolate!"*

(Matthew 23:37-38)

THE LONE, BALDING EAGLE

To be a bird,
a lone, balding eagle.
So much respect from the others as they know
I am the king of the skies.
Their respect mingles with their love, hate and
fear
of knowing my powers.

All alone,
sitting on my perch,
to maintain the admiration of my seniority.
Lonely as I am, no one must know, for
a lone, balding eagle
is a symbol of strength.

Strength. Unconquerable power.
A hammer. A rock.
A wall. An army of omnipotence in one being.
A clenched fist.
A whisper,
a whisper of the pain I feel.

The steam of the souls of men coming from the bowels of the earth curdle out the gray industrial plant chimneys. Chewing his pipe, he stands with clammy hands in his pockets. His eyes search the window ledge.

No thoughts...his eyes dart back toward the factory stacks and his empty heart is filled with memories of the struggle to his position. He paid dearly to become the president of this company. He paid the price of the loss of a wife and three children through the courts and the addition of a putrid, weak feeling of alcoholism.

As much as he resisted, he couldn't ignore these facts.

Biting down on his pipe, sending flashes of instantaneous pain through his jaw, he hoisted his overweight body on the window ledge...
balance...
courage...

patience.

The eagle is about to take flight.

Unconsciously opening his mouth, the pipe fell,
changing into some form of prey as it shattered
on the sidewalk
fourteen floors below.

"What if one of the younger birds saw me lose
my food to the earth? Embarrassment.
I must spread my tremendous wings, pointing
my end feathers to display my seniority.

All must see my flight."

So he flew.

And everyone attended the funeral.

It seemed that the ones who always professed the
loudest to be the closest to him, rattled off to
one another how they would improve the
company
if they were president.

They didn't cry
but even actually laughed at the old fool who
flew to his death,
losing all he had ever gained and yet, not
one of them realized that it was the greatest

and last flight
of the lonely balding eagle.

"For there is hope for a tree, when it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and its shoots will not fail. Though its roots grow old in the ground, and its stump dies in the dry soil, at the scent of water it will flourish and put forth sprigs like a plant. "But man dies and lies prostrate. Man expires, and where is he? "As water evaporates from the sea, and a river becomes parched and dried up, so man lies down and does not rise. Until the heavens be no more, he will not awake nor be aroused out of his sleep."

Job 14:7-12

MENDING BROKENNESS

Festo Kivengere,

a bishop in the Anglican Church of Uganda told of his wife's conversation with their young daughter. "Mommy," the little girl said, "you work hard all day long. I play hard all day long. What does God do all day?"

His wife pondered and prayed. Later she responded, "All day long, God mends broken things."

"Now at this time Mary arose and went with haste to the hill country, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it came about that when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she cried out with a loud voice, and said, "Blessed among women are you, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! "And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? "For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. "And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord."

(Luke 1:39-45)

I AM BORN

total darkness wrapped coating
slick dryness limbs curled strangely
comfortable tremendous pounding threatens
awakening strange feel
beating within body must kick out stretch
sounds funny murmurs

for first time, feel looseness within,
strange sliding insecure motion, floating sea,
rocks and pitches, strain, pressure, change,
pressure, pressure, more intense pressure, stop,
no more, no
more pressure, no...
for a moment,
nothing,
no here
no there

Light. A pain from dislocation of the
body. My body? What is a "me?" So many
thoughts begin to rush into the mind. Thoughts
replacing feelings.

I am born.

I'M YOUNG,
YOU'RE YOUNGER

love
together
you
me
we
together

I'm young, you're younger
and I think I want to give you my life.

but I'm young
and you're younger
to cling to each other means releasing
important parts of ourselves
is that right?

Together!
You
Me
We
Forever!

When I'm old and
I know we can make a life out of the
two? or one? of us.

I'm young and you're younger
why so many decisions?
why so intense?

The movies,
show love like a two hour endeavor
with credits at the end
which are hard to read.

is that love?
or is it Hollywood?
I wish they would tell the truth.

I'm young, you're younger
and I may care enough to let go...
we will see
we will see.

PATIENTLY

patiently
gentle as the morning, glowing through
your hair
so soft, it's like the seabreeze that is
rustling there
in the pureness of the moment, the
strength of your care
and so patiently.

beside you
strolling in the meadow while the dew lies
so wet
kick about a pinecone for a
laughter filled bet
you're peaceful yet exciting as the
morning unmet
and I'm beside you.

It is the trusting way you look at me
when you share the love inside!

It is the lovenotes of your laughter and the
brightness
of your stride;

I'm waiting here beside you for the life that we
share, trusting in tomorrow and
trusting
patiently.

dreamer
you seem to find it troublesome to live in
today
your dreams are much nicer but she's so
far away
there is a realness in her smile and a
smoothness
to her sway
pleasant dreams.

But like the morning comes to sunlight
and the night time brings the day.

You have to taste the moment...
before the realness
fades away.

YOU WOULD BE

It is such a pleasant thing
to want to walk beside you,
hold your hand so gentle,
see our Father's light upon you.

If I had to choose one person
to spend my life with me,
you would be, you would be...

but if the time arises like the mist
and the wind says our life may never be,
I would go, go away
and leave your love behind
except in my mind.

There is an angel in the meadow
when I'm walking there with you.
He guides our falling footsteps
so stumbles are quite few
and the Lord smiles as He watches
our laughter
and our tears
over the years, over the years...

In our life the dawn is breaking
we are so lightly waking
to the freshness of the day, we will see

His world unfolding and walk to Him
hand in hand.

It is such a pleasant thing
to want to walk beside you,
hold your hand so gentle,
see our Father's light upon you.
If I had to choose one person
to spend my life with me,
you would be...

we would be.

SUSANNAH JANE

A bright yellow bonnet
with paper and flowers,
sitting on a blanket
stretched on the meadow,
it doesn't look like rain
and I'm feeling no pain,
it's just nice to be here with
Susannah Jane.

So young and pure,
unfamiliar with life
she smiles and looks down
losing her bonnet,

blushing and laughing
I kid her so gently, hold her tightly,
close to my side.
And the waterfall in my mind
comes rolling down,
refreshing my mind
alive and around,
so young and pure yet
not at all plain,
an old fashioned girl,
Susannah Jane.

My mandolin in my hand
I play her a song,
she smiles and gazes
and hums right along;
she laughs when they are happy
and cries when they're sad,
yet always contented and I'm always glad.

Summer child living in spring
makes me happy, makes me sing
we laughed and played and
I will remain,
just me and God and young
Susannah Jane.

She wanders in the distance
gathering flowers

I could watch that young maiden for hours and
hours;
her long silken dress
blowing in the breeze
fascinating nature
and moving as she please.

And the avalanche of snow rolls around
in my soul,
cooling and cleansing
out of control
we laughed and played and
it's very plain
I've found a young maiden in
Susannah Jane.
I've found my love,
Susannah Jane.

*"May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!
For your love is better than wine.
Your oils have a pleasing fragrance,
Your name is like purified oil;
Therefore the maidens love you.
"Draw me after you and let us run together!
The king has brought me into his chambers."*

*"We will rejoice in you and be glad;
We will extol your love more than wine.
Rightly do they love you."*

(The Song of Solomon 1:1-4)

MORE THAN A FRIEND

There have been a couple of times when I've had
a loss of friends
but amidst all of my loneliness
your love for me,
it never ends.

And there has never been, never been,
there has never been
a friend like you.

You are more, more, More Than a Friend
and I need someone who is more than a friend;
more, more, more than a friend,
the questions that are answered
will see us far beyond the end,
for you are more, much more,
than just a friend.

Plenty of lovers have all types of covers
but I have the feeling that they are wrong
for love is patient, gentle and kind
and love is oh, so strong.

And your love is so sure, your love's so pure and
I love you more
with each passing day.

People may come your way and people may go
but too many people never know...

what love is.

I know love grows if you are open to it
and it dies on the vine if you're not
but to understand love means
knowing the Lord because

he really does love you a lot.

And he will make you smile,
love you all the while
because you are his child
and He is love.

THE WORD BECAME FLESH

Restlessly rocking her child in the cradle,
there must be an answer to its pleasant, good
night. When there is trouble in town and
troubles all over her the tears are quite silent but
the tears are all right.

Singing "Glory Hallelujah" doesn't seem to do it
to you when your stomach is on fire and your
soul is breaking down.

There must be a someone who will take the time
she needs to show her the love of Jesus and help
her touch the Lord.

And the Word became flesh
and dwelt among us
so don't be afraid to take him
where he is needed.

A little girl lies alone and cries alone tonight;
wishing she had come on home when he was
turning out the light. She is just too young to
be a mother to her unexpected child won't
someone take a word of love to her.

Be ye doers and not hearers only the questions
that are answered will see us through the ones
that aren't.
There must be a someone who will take the time
she needs to show her the love of Jesus and help
her know the Lord.

And the Word became flesh
and dwelt among us
so don't be afraid to take him
where he is needed.

He plugs up his stereo and blows up his mind,
listens to the golden needle to fascinate and find.
His death is looking, lurking, waiting, wanting
him defiled; won't someone take the Savior to
this child.

I'm not trying to point a finger or call down
anyone's bluff; lots of people are doing that and
one is more than enough. But I hurt each time I
look around at a world of death
and it's a lousy living death
but Jesus came to give us life.
It's a lousy living death
but Jesus came to give us life.

And the Word became flesh
and dwelt among us,
the Word became flesh
and dwelt among us,

the Word became flesh
and dwelt among us,

so don't be afraid to take him...
where he's needed.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word
was with God, and the Word was God. He was in
the beginning with God. All things came into
being through Him; and apart from Him
nothing came into being that has come into
being. In Him was life; and the life was the light
of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and
the darkness did not comprehend it..*

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John bore witness of Him, and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

(John 1:1-5, 14-17)

STILL HE PRAYED

As he hung there
 looking upon us,
 broken and shattered
 dying all along,
surrounded by those who hated his love.
 They cursed the one who claimed
 his father's name
and came to release the captives.
His bones are all out of joint,
 his heart is as wax;
it melted deeply while his flesh was pierced
and his friends had deserted him.

But still he prayed
though his prayer was a broken one,
still he hung on to the holy One
who hung on to his only Son
while we hung him
on a cross of our own making.

He cried out his prayer,
"My God! My God, have you forsaken me?"
The dogs of death have taken he
who paid for all our brokenness
and set us free,
still he prayed.

Mary stood there weeping
 looking upon her first-born child
who never hurt anyone but gave and gave
 and still somehow was despised.
How she longed to take him down
 to kiss away his hurt and shame,
 rock him in her arms again
 like she did when he was a child.
Many thoughts filled her mind.
 Could this be true
 that one whose life has been given to
 mending broken things
 is now beyond the safety of the love
 he had lived in?

But still she prayed
though her prayer was a broken one,
still she hung on to the holy One
who hung on to his only Son
who hung upon a cross of our own making.
Did she cry out her prayer?
"My God, my God, have you forsaken he
who years ago was born of me?
He paid for all our brokenness and set us free."
Still she prayed.

Have you ever stood at the cross
and viewed the one who took the pain,
poured his life down the drain
so you can live again, in love?

Is the Christian life one of paying tithes
and knowing hymns and doing works
or mighty splendor;
of smiles and phrases of pious sound?
Or is there more than can be found?

Can you be broken and on your knees
in desperation before the Lord
and still be living
the abundant life?
Yes, I think so.

For still we shall pray

though our prayer is a broken one,
we can hang on to the holy One
who hung on to his only Son
who hung upon a cross of our own making.

We may cry out our prayer,
"My God! My God, have you forsaken me?
My heart is broken, I cannot see
but somehow I know that through it all
Jesus set me free." Still we shall pray.

PEACE (THE OMNISCIENT OCEAN)

The moon sparkled upon the rolling tides
its reflection wavered in rhythm
cool and fresh, the wind steadily blew
her hair across her face.
She walked along for this is where she often came
to listen to the omniscient ocean,
the all-knowing sea.

The sand rubbed beneath her feet
as she strolled and strolled down the lonely
beach. 'How peaceful' she thought
as the waves lapped upon her bare feet
'how much prettier this music is, than

any that man can re-create.'
The sound of the omniscient ocean,
the all-knowing sea.

She soon stopped her walking and turned toward
the sea.

Closing her eyes she held herself
and listened. The sky
was crystal clear, the stars were a million-fold,
the moon
floated there, bouncing upon the waves.

The clapping of the water, the rustling of the
grass behind, the wind would nudge her gently,
so gently,
just enough to keep her there.

Slowly she opened her eyes and raised them to
the sky, reaching out her arms,
'I love you' she whispered
'become a part of me, make me peaceful as this
night.'

And in her heart she heard the answer
through the sound of the omniscient ocean,
the all-knowing sea;
the love of the omniscient ocean,
the all-knowing sea.

"And the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the midst, they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act. Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what do You say?" And they were saying this, testing Him, in order that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground. But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And when they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she had been, in the midst. And straightening up, Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?" And she said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go your way; from now on sin no more." Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."

(John 8:3-12)

HERE WE ARE

Here I am

in your presence
in the spirit of your love;
patiently, with the hope
that somehow you will be
pleased with me
in the effort to listen to your voice.
Here I am, here I am, here I am.

Here you are

all the time
beckoning me to come home;
silently, your magnificence
overwhelms my heart from the start
you pursue and offer me your peace.
Here you are, here you are,
here you are.

Daybreak

glows upon the treeline.
For our sakes, gather up the morning time.
Don't wait,
draw us to your silence
filled with love, filled with love.

Here we are

with our lives

sharing messages of hope;
honestly, we must give ourselves
to others in need, you shall succeed
in creating us
new persons by your love.
Here we are, here we are,
here we are.

Here I am
in your presence
in the spirit of your love;
silently, your magnificence
overwhelms my heart, from the start
your pursue me
offering your peace
even though I resisted, you paid for my
release.

Here I am...here I am,
here you are...

SOMETHING DEEP INSIDE

The coffee's brewing
and there is dew upon the sill,
the wind chime is sounding
as we sit so very still.
We talk about the simple things
and laugh about the year,
you touch my hand and look at me

I like just being here
with you.

The world is going through changes
and it all seems so complex,
when I read the morning paper
I don't know what will happen next...
I won't ignore the questions
I won't sail on the tide
but the most important part of us
is something, deep inside.

We have good friends around us
and many lives that we have touched
there are people who care for us
we love them very much.
Let's not waste our time on pettiness
nor bicker over senseless ground,
if I had searched around the world
I still could not have found a friend
like you.

I like private life that is private
public life that is real.
I like sitting down and listening
to the feelings that you feel.
I like working out our problems
teaching you to sing,
I like praying together

and wearing your wedding ring.

The world is going through changes
and it all seems so complex,
when I read the morning paper
I don't know what will happen next...
I won't ignore the questions
I won't sail on the tide
but the most important part of us
is something, deep inside.

*Yet those who wait for the Lord
Will gain new strength;
They will mount up with wings like eagles,
They will run and not get tired,
They will walk and not become weary.
(Isaiah 40:31)*

KATHRYN WAS A MAIDEN

He takes her hand and walks with her
to the church beyond the town,
smiles at the way she stops to play
with some children gathered 'round.
There is not too much for him to say
because he has said it all before,
so they stroll on in silence never asking
for anything more.

They danced across the cobblestones with the
riddles of ancient walls, so long ago the image
arrived of Holy and silent calls.

They have walked this lane so many times they
know the rocks by name, their children left them
long ago but their love
remains the same.

Kathryn was a maiden on a voyage long ago,
their hearts were brought together

by the wind,
"Kathryn" the old man smiles,
you know you never let me go
but the tired wind is blowing,
much nearer to the end."

They pause for just a second as he touches her
lips with his, holds her tight but gently
as he shares a golden kiss.

Some kids run by and laugh at them about the
things they shouldn't be,

"Old folks?" He smiles and says,
"They must not be speaking to me."

"Come on, old man, let's see the world
you know we've meant to all along.

How I would love to see you
write another song."

She held him close and spoke no more
for the words were hard to flow;
she knew her dreams were passing things
they should have shared so long ago.

They walk into the cathedral
on the lonely side of town,
knelt upon the altar, no one was around.
"Kathryn, you know I'll miss you
but I promise it won't seem long,
'till once again we'll laugh and play
and I will write you another song.

My life is old and faded
but my spirit is still alive,
it's been a pleasant journey
and I've finally arrived."
She took his hand and closed her eyes
as the tears began to flow,
so he hummed an ancient love song
of a maiden long ago.

I'M ON MY WAY

There's a sun shining down upon
the oceans of my mind;
through the pinetrees
I can see its sparkling light.

Casting shadows on the countryside
and peace upon my mind;
the misty mountain shoreline
leads into night.

There's something in the way you reached out
and took my hand.
Gentle and so patiently, Lord,
you led me through this land.
There is no going back
to the place I used to be...

You are walking here beside me
so patiently beside me,
I am so glad you're beside me,
along the way.

I have been to see the mountain
and hear its windy roar;
climb so high upon its back
to see if there's something more.
There are pastures, green meadows there
and hills for me to climb;
there's much more of my life to live
and fruit upon the vine.

Sometimes I know I wonder how I
ever came this way.
Was it promises to tomorrow
or blessings of today?

There's a wind that is slowly blowing
through the aspen
and the pine...
no matter where I'm going
so patiently I'm going,
everywhere I'm going,
you're there,
on my mind.

There is a man deep inside of me
just waiting to be seen;
as I grow it gets much easier to show him.
He is not just a newfound friend,
I've known him for awhile;
in darkness his light is never growing dim.
Sometimes I feel so unholy
as I walk along this road.
The weight of life is too much to bear,
God knows
there's too much load.

But I know he's there inside me
as I pass along this way...
I know I stumble
the earth below starts to crumble,
hurting but oh, so humbled,
I'm on my way.

THE CIRCLE OF SADNESS

Fallen trees

snapped by the brutal hammering
of ice

suddenly, profoundly dead
lying still

slowly becoming one with the earth
the mother of creation
the source of life

death, life.

Grief flooding the community like
a relentless torrent

but for me

a slow, dripping pain
condensation within
compensation without

without my friend
life, death.

Quietness

simple silence, more than words
few know the depth, some care.

There are those

who pass through life
touching, feeling
hearing, listening
seeing, knowing

My friend was one
so am I.

Pain is so private
unique beyond compare
ungraspable, elusive
real,
possessed by time
under relentless authority;
it cannot be rushed
nor truly shared.

As a child
in grief waist-deep
quiet
imploded, unable to express
falling trees, breaking branches
emotions out of control
all around.

My grief is still water
deep
untroubled
unknown.

(for Janie)

PEACEMAKER

Love,
is not just for lovers
walking hand in hand.

Peace,
is more than footprints
fading in the sand.

For love and peace
came into this world
to mend the broken hearted
and make us whole again.

His love released the captives
from their chains
and the peace he gave unto us
will remain.

(He is the)
Peacemaker, Peacemaker
through the tempest in the night
we see the guiding light
in love, God became a man;
Peacemaker, Peacemaker
he stilled the raging sea
he calmed the storm in me
Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

One,

may search the whole world
for answers found in the heart.

Life,

is but a wooden ship
on a journey from the start.

For the life of one

who came from Galilee
he healed the broken spirits
caused the blind to see.

The life he lived gave freedom

from our chains
and the One he gave unto us
will remain.

*"I am not praying only for these men but for all
those who will believe in me through their
message, that they may all be one."*

(John 17:20)

PRAISE TO YOU, OH GOD!

Praise to you, oh God!

Praise to you from the highest peak.

Praise to you from the rocks which give me
footing yet also may cause me to stumble.

Praise to you from the pits of Gehenna
where the hail and cold and rain and path
never cease.

Praise to you from the valleys, the waters,
the trees, the plains, the clouds,
and the mountains.

Praise to you, oh God!
Praise to you when my burden is too heavy;
praise to you for my brothers and sisters who
strengthen me and challenge me to reach
new heights
with you.

All praise to you, oh God!

Praise to you from the pain which ceases;
the trails which develop character;
the footsteps that find their destination.

When I view your creation I am aware,
that my eyes still do not behold all
of your glory.

Only when I am fully with you one day,
fully in your bosom, at your side,
will I know the full praises of your creation.

Praise to you, oh God!
Praise to you.

May I carry the beauty and the pain
of your creation in my heart;
may I see you in your firmament;
may I lift my voice in praise of you;
may I be willing to climb new mountain
ranges and take your hand.

Praise to you, oh God!

Praise to you for your presence
in struggle, pain and victory.

Praise to you, oh God;
for as your hand molded the mountains,
so did your spirit create me
by your touch.

Praise to you, oh God!
Praise to you.
Praise to you.

(These words were written during a quiet time
on top of Peter's Peak, Colorado, elevation
approx. 14,500 feet.)

These things I have spoken to you, while abiding with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it comes to pass, you may believe. I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me; but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go from here.

(John 14:25-31)

*Blessed are these who mourn
for they shall be comforted
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called children of God.*

(Matthew 5:9)

LIVE A LOVE SONG

Like a child in a field,
 picking flowers for a friend;
or a dove in the sky,
 flying home upon the wind.

We will share the life before us
and all the world will see, what a glorious Savior
who's given your love to me...

May our life be a love song;
 may our love be a life long.
As the doors of our hearts were opened,
 may we always be open to the Lord.
There are answers to our questions,
 if we'll go on bended knee,
and Lord, you've written such a love song,
 by entrusting this person to me.

Chasing rainbows
 has always carried me
 to the other side of time.
Where I've seen,
 broken dreams,
 and the things I'd hoped to be mine.

Cherish all the golden memories
 of a God who's given us this day,

by the hand God's led us through it all,
and as One, God will lead us on our way.

May our life be a love song
 may our love be a life long,
as the doors of our hearts were opened,
 may we always be open to the Lord.
There are answers to our questions,
 if we'll go on bended knee,
and Lord, you've written such a love song,
 by entrusting this person to me.

LIGHT OF LIFE

Take me and hold me,
 help me to be strong.
Chase away the problems
 that plague me all day long.
Sing for me a love song,
 more than just an empty rhyme.
Help me know myself
 and give you all that is mine.

I have been away before
 and carried so far
that I never could have known
 if I'd ever come back home.
But I trust you and I see
 what you really mean to me.

Help me understand
and hold out my hand.
For you're the Light of Life
shining down on me.
I was blind but now I can see
that your love is here,
it's chased away the very fear
of being alone,
thank you, Lord,
I'm coming home.

I have a lot of questions and I need some friends
to guide me and help me along.
One thing I realized when I looked into
your eyes
is that you'll always be with me
and help me to be strong.

I've tried so many times
and listened to the words
but it always seemed like someone else
was hearing what was heard.
You sang for me a love song
more than just an empty rhyme
Help me to help myself
and give you all that is mine.

For you're the Light of Life
shining down on me.

I was blind but now I can see
that your love is here,
it's chased away the very fear
of being alone,
thank you, Lord,
I'm coming home.

Thank you, Lord,
I'm know I'm
coming home.

Life is found in a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. It is not a religion, it is a response... to the God who created you and has been with you... all your life.

Accepting God's love is the single most important decision you can make. It will affect every aspect of your life. God created us to be in relationship with him. When we are not in this relationship, we try to fill our emptiness with other stuff; that kills us and never truly satisfies the longings of our hearts.

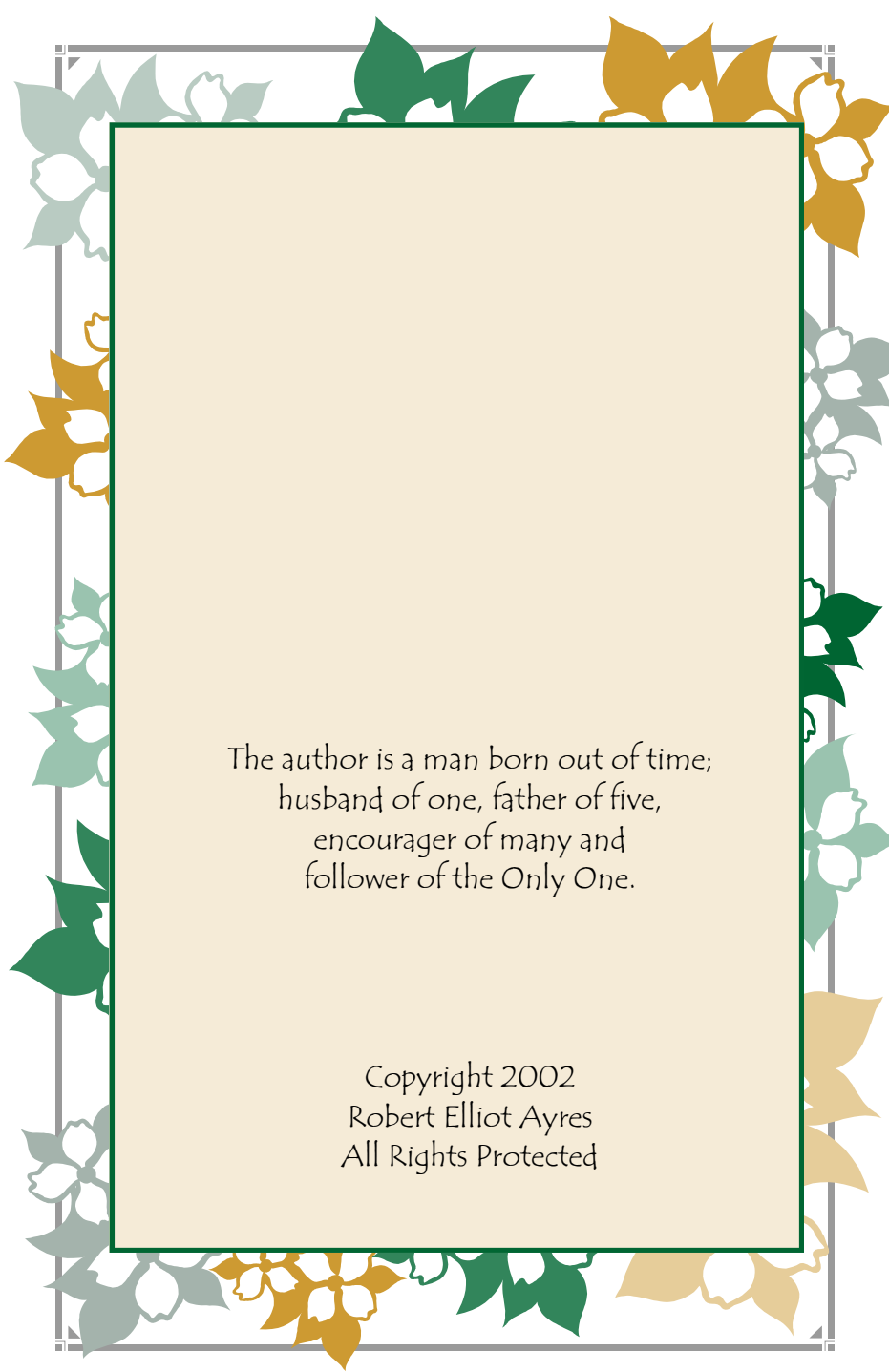
Don't be illusioned; life is often still troubled even after accepting Jesus. As Jabo Cox often said, "My problems began when I

accepted Jesus as my Lord! Before that, I didn't care about nobody! Following Christ meant I had to learn how to love people." But for the first time in your life, you will experience peace when you respond to grace.

So I will be honest with you... in the words of a great martyr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Christ bids you to "come and die." There is no cheap grace. Following Christ means learning to love life... and hate those things which destroy. Are you ready?

How does one enter into this journey? First, remember that God is pursuing you... you are simply responding to God's love. Let go and accept this love. Recognize your need and his ability to meet this deepest need. Secondly, find a fellowship of believers who are willing to accept and nurture your faith. Without community, faith dies. Read the stories about Jesus, first-hand, in the Bible. Finally, talk to God directly... just like you talk to a friend. Share your pain and your need. God understands. And more than you can imagine... God loves you and has reached down to give you life.

May your journey be full of peace.



The author is a man born out of time;
husband of one, father of five,
encourager of many and
follower of the Only One.

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