

THE NAZARENE FROM GALILEE  
METRIC VERSE CHAPBOOK



“Circle of Angels” or “Celestial Rose,” by Gustav Doré

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## OLDEST QUESTIONS

### Playing Dice With God

“With the universe, God does not play dice”  
 From a man who dismissed “God” with a smirk.  
 All that exists is based on quarks and quirks,

With thermal extremes of novas and ice.  
 Thus, a human’s life, dies down some black hole  
 As the body decays—and hence ends the soul.

I marvel at those who scorn Paradise  
 And, of course, hell. After the final breath,  
 There is nothing, nothing, nothing but death.

AΩ

### Light’s Gravity

So what is ultimate reality?  
 Quantum waves; cosmic inflation?  
 Things bend and wave in relativity...  
 The soul?—destined for cessation?

Mind quests for a “theory of everything”  
 But soul beats time in every mortal.  
 At its last tic, will Physics feel death’s sting?  
 Does soul dust scatter in some dark portal?

Dark matter, dark energy: Physics’ goal...  
 The Light of the world seeks the darkest soul.

## Optical Illusions

Perception is reality, the glue  
Of Post-modernism, humanists sing:  
“Seeing truth depends on your point of view.”

Not true! Says the Muslim, Jew, or Hindu;  
The universe is more than quarks or strings:  
“Seeing Truth depends on God’s point of view.”

The skeptic pronounces a bold adieu:  
“Your absolutes all have an empty ring—  
Seeing truth rests on a relative view.”

The mystic sees through such optical stew  
And delusions, to which some dearly cling:  
“Seeing Truth as One, has no point of view.”

Around and around we strive to construe:  
“Are there absolutes behind thoughts and things?  
Is there any Truth beyond point of view?”

Beyond a zoom lens or wide-angle views—  
Besides any theory of everything—  
An ancient man was nailed, buttressed, and skewed:  
The Truth came incognito, as a Who.

## The Only Watchmaker

The only watchmaker is the blind forces of physics.  
—Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*

From quarks to cosmos, things join, then scatter.  
Men probe, dissect, and then pontificate:  
From dust to dust. So, what do we matter?

Is there extraterrestrial chatter?  
SETI seeks signals to corroborate  
Patterns, that cannot come from dark matter.

All life began from chemical batter.  
But every human being has the same fate  
Since, ultimately, all life is matter.

Forensics collects and tests blood splatter  
From a dead man, sprayed on a basement gate.  
From dust to dust. So, what does he matter?

Palliative care begins—last hope shatters.  
The oncologist does not forecast dates.  
Does it, or does it not, really matter?

The rain beats down in relentless patter,  
However early in life or how late.  
From dust to dust, so what does it matter  
Since ultimately, all life is matter?

## THE REASON WHY

First Love

*We loved him because he first loved us.*

—1 John 4:19.

[Love] is an abyss of illumination, a fountain of fire, bubbling up to inflame the thirsty soul.

— St. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*.

For the beauty of your face,  
Body clothed in glowing lace.  
For your touch, which since our birth,  
Gave us faith and cosmic worth.  
From your life we conquer death,  
Safe beyond our final breath.

Your love, a fount of fire,  
Your love, a blazing spire,  
All of this, we are immersed.  
The greatest gift? You loved us first.

### Abba's Anthem

This rabbi was the strangest man. He hardly wrote a line.  
He spoke on hills, near streams, in ports with words of great design.

He asked "What profit can you gain to covet selfish goals?  
What way of life can people claim who march with leather souls?"

He rubbed his spit on man's blind sight and said to wash them free.  
The man rejoiced as night turned bright; the others would not see.

Arrested by a mob's death wish, accused by men in dark,  
He had the court of a hooked fish thrown in a sea of sharks.

Some ponder now that ancient site, long after icons dull—  
They raised him up, those men of might, to die upon a skull.

This Teacher's words, alive today, speak out from hearts and shelves.  
The crime his judges had to slay? He made them see themselves.

The Week the World Knows Well

This is the week the Christian knows.  
 This is the time of dreaded lows.  
 When angels weep, and demons lust  
 As palms curl brown in roadside dust.

This is the week when hate stood up.  
 This is the week He drank His cup.  
 Judas sold Light and Peter fell.  
 "Crucify him" the mob did yell.

This is the week when Pilate slayed.  
 This is the time a gibbet swayed.  
 The tomb is bare! Death's angel fled!  
 Our souls will rise on Pascal bread.

ΑΩ

The *Praetorium*

The Nazarene stood  
 Before the cyclops' eye,  
 In the shade of the Judgment Seat's hood,  
 Under the bloodshot sky.

The cyclops winked, asked  
 "You, a king? What is truth?"  
 He hoped he would learn this "truth" at last,  
 This puzzle since his youth.

"For this I was born?"  
 The cyclops shook his head.  
 Swaying, tilting, held straight, battered, worn:  
 "Here is your King," he said.

## Psalm 22

For thirty coins a man exchanged  
His soul's eternal cost.  
In candle light, the plan arranged;  
The healer would be crossed.

The lion's jaws were opened wide.  
"Crucify him!" They brayed  
His mother swayed, then bowed and cried.  
He marched in grim parade.

A Roman shoved, then pounded nails.  
In scorn, they wagged their heads.  
Amid His wrenching joints and wails,  
Soldiers poked with spearheads.

"My God, my God! Forsaken me?  
Have You not heard my cry?"  
The Son of Man felt their fury,  
Hung up by men to die.

In Potter's Field the grasses grow  
Although the place is lost.  
The Place of Skull marks his deathblow,  
Where death and life crisscrossed.

Empty

He lay stone still, wrapped in a sheet,  
 In pitch behind a boulder door.  
 If eyes could see, His hands and feet  
 And side, bled drops upon the floor.

His heart stopped cold and breathing ceased.  
 From heart and soul His spirit fled.  
 His human life was gone, released.  
 He did not sleep—he was stone dead.

Salome, Mary of Magdalene  
 After sunrise, came to the tomb.  
 They stared into this empty scene . . .  
 There was no body in the gloom.

They told His men, who shook their heads.  
*The massive stone was rolled away?*  
*The wrappings folded by His bed?*  
 An angel said, *He rose today?*

Behind locked doors, they hid in fear  
*Who moved the stone? A women's tale?*  
*How could He rise so nailed and speared?*  
 Then suddenly, alive but pale,

His face had lines from wrapping bands;  
 His punctures ringed where blood had dried.  
*Peace be to you!* He showed his hands,  
 And feet, and side—then smiled wide.

He left the earth. His spirit reigns  
 From highest peaks to dungeon cells.  
 My rocky heart is strewn with chains—  
 Lord cast them out, and there He dwells.

Welcome Happy Morning

In the garden's break of day,  
Women walked their dismal way.  
Myrrh and spices they did bring,  
Feeling anguish at Death's sting.  
Dawn's pink light was all around,  
And to the tomb they were bound.

The gates of Death opened wide;  
The massive stone, pushed aside.  
They stood, awestruck. An angel said,  
*He has been raised from the dead.*  
*In Galilee is where He went.*  
There, His words rose like sweet scent:

*I said I'd rise on the third day;*  
*Suffering was the Father's way.*  
He took bread and offered it.  
He pointed to the spear's slit.  
*Thomas, put your finger here.*  
*My Lord, My God,* he said, sincere.

The Enemy's reign was done.  
Eternal life, Christ has won.  
How could I dare fear the grave?  
His promise is, He shall save.  
My faith is lean, I agree.  
Give me the strength to *Follow Me.*

*Paschal Triduum*

—from the evening of Holy Thursday to the evening of Easter Sunday.

## Friday

The pain! The griefs! The mourners' tears!  
 The nails! The thorns! The Savior dear!  
 The seven words! The bloodied spear!

## Saturday

Nightmarish sleep. A gloomy morn.  
 His friends are dazed. They brood and mourn.  
 The temple veil and hearts are torn.

## Sunday

The women go. The stone? aside!  
 "The Lord has rose!" they plead and cried.  
 All left and hurried to His side.

ΑΩ

## Fiftieth Day after Passover

—*Pentékosté* from *pénte*, "five"

The Spirit of Truth poured out that day,  
 with wind and celestial flame,  
 To teach, remind us of all He did:  
     the Roman cross was why He came,  
 To rise from death and tell amazed friends,  
     from tombs they too shall soon appear.  
 The Twelve heard wind and saw His fire,  
     blaze and fill their hearts' atmosphere.  
 Pray for Holy Spirit desire—  
     the gift of Christ, with joy proclaim.

*Pax Christi*

Good Friday is over, its requiem.  
 Your sacred soul, piercéd by hate—  
 We celebrate each Passover.  
 What death and darkness? You obliterate!

Saturday: Bradford Pears and Dogwoods bloom;  
 Serenades of songbirds resonate.  
 The hour of nails, of bloody gloom  
 Is dead. Your sacred heart:

I contemplate.

ΑΩ

## Gospels' Razor

Among competing hypotheses that predict equally well, the one with the fewest assumptions should be selected.

—William Occam (1287-1347), English Franciscan friar, scholastic philosopher, and theologian.

Jesus the Nazarene

Nailed to cross beams.

That Sunday empty tomb

Rose in spring bloom.

They saw him eat fish and bread

And where he bled.

“Go into the world and preach

My Father's feast.”

## EXORATIONS

## Navigation

North Star gleams on the canvas of night;  
Day Star beacons in the heart's dim light.

Polaris led sailors at night on sea;  
*Christos* shines the way with luminosity.

## ΑΩ

## Battlefield

*But in your hearts sanctify Jesus Christ as Lord, \**  
So voices singing fill spaces with light.  
The chambers shall ring in harmonious accord.

But in the distance is heard a marauding horde  
Of shrikes and clawing that shred through the night.  
*But in your hearts sanctify Jesus Christ as Lord.*

Take heart! The throng seems louder than an ocean's roar  
And towers above Himalayas' height,  
But chambers still ring in harmonious accord.

The deepest abyss should not be left unexplored.  
The Light of the world scares darkness to flight.  
*So in your hearts sanctify Jesus Christ as Lord.*

Let the words of His mouth be your keenest sword  
And dice their lies smaller than the widow's mite.  
The chambers shall ring in harmonious accord.

He warned not to leave the heart empty and ignored,  
Or legions return in hideous sight.  
*So in your hearts sanctify Jesus Christ as Lord;*  
Your chambers shall ring in harmonious accord.

\*1 Pet 3:15

### Already and Not Yet

“Thy Kingdom come?” Tomorrow eve?  
 As lightning comes from east to west?  
 The eons pass,  
 Not yet, not yet—  
 And cynics smirk and jest.

Today’s the day and only day  
 The Kingdom is already here—  
 A vagrant waits  
 Holding a sign—  
 It is not far but near.

ΑΩ

### Doorjamb Shadow

Gentle knocks are sounding  
 Outside the bolted door.  
 A guest has come, obliged to wait—  
 Never, never pounding.

There is no door outside,  
 No key lock on the door.  
 Each day the guest steps to the mat,  
 At the door’s great divide.

Unbolt and breach the door?  
 Or hope the guest will leave?  
 Who knows which meal will be the last?  
 Who hears the voice no more?

ΑΩ

### Sunday Mood

We walk by faith, and not by sight—  
 Yet godly eyes gaze at the height

Above the sky, beyond the stars:  
 The gates of heaven are ajar,

For all who see through dark to light  
 And hold His hand in sheer delight.

## Healing Winds Conference

Geese and ducks called at daybreak  
 As mist wetted one's eyes.  
 Across a vast and still lake,  
 Mountains' foggy skies.

We gathered to pray and sing  
 In sanctuary rooms,  
 To let loose all shadowing  
 And hiding us in gloom.

The Word uttered flew like flares  
 And singed us with sparks,  
 Consuming fears and cares,  
 Which are our flesh birthmarks.

Some laughed—some wept—some were stilled  
 As their hearts ignited,  
 And incandescent, were filled  
 With light, so excited!

We left the sanctified place  
 And traveled to our homes.  
 Each of us are blazed in grace:  
 Let's light up Christ's shalom.

AΩ

Who Leads?

When the Son shines behind us,  
 Shadow takes the lead.

When the Son shines before us,  
 Light takes the lead.

*Veni Sancta Spiritus*

—Ln. Come Holy Spirit

Fluttering over as a white-winged dove,  
Spirit hovers from worlds above—

Hoping to alight in my dusky soul  
And mend my core from rift to whole.

Come Holy Spirit, rippling light;  
Lift my soul in feathery flight.

AΩ

Uplifted

*The Lord is my light and my salvation;*

*Whom then shall I fear? \**

In You, today is a new creation...

Ice storm passed—sky clear.

At the feeder, birds feast in ovation

And sing sunbeam cheer.

I lift my soul in adoration:

My Christ—you are here.

\*Psalm 27

## A Banquet

*And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM."*

—Ex. 3:14

I AM arrived into a prison camp  
Saturday afternoon,  
Among a row of draped picnic tables,  
The twentieth of June.

Hamburgers and hotdogs and vinegar-coleslaw;  
Iced tea and grape snow cones;  
The inmates stacked their plates higher than wide  
As bands played gospel tones.

Volunteers dished out banana pudding,  
The last of lemonade  
And then the feast was done. The inmates groaned  
Under Sycamore shade.

I AM sent volunteers that steamy day;  
Inexhaustibly there.  
The Son of Man wore new food service gloves,  
Incarnate everywhere.

## ADVENT TO EPIPHANY

### *Messiah*

Pianissimo to Fortissimo,  
 Diminuendo into crescendo,  
 Handel's ink, deep from his mind's reservoir  
 Note by note by note—began to flow.

Across the world: voices, stings and horns play  
 In December's perennial bouquet.  
 Beauty for the ears—melodious sounds—  
 The Messiah flowers this winter's day.

AΩ

### Lessons and Carols

From *Jesus Christ, the Apple Tree*—  
*In the Bleak Midwinter* plea:  
 “What can I give, poor as I am?”  
 I give my voice, so joyfully.

*Lully, lullay, lully, lullay . . .*  
 Herod rages and still shall slay.  
 But in a stall, with sheep and lambs,  
 We sing in bliss, Bethlehem's way.

AΩ

### *Anno Domini*

In this world that spins too fast—  
 Where news glorifies carnage vast—  
 As bullets plunge their startled mark—  
 Mad bombers set yet one more blast;

Voices carol “Emmanuel”—  
 Pine scent enchants with zesty spell.  
 Eons ago, swaddled in flesh,  
 The Almighty came to earth to dwell.

*Cristes Maesse*

Of reds and whites and blues,  
Of winter's frosty hues,  
Diamonds sparkle on crests of snow;  
The landscape cheers in glow.

For those with wintry hearts,  
Life shoots icicle darts.  
The world is smeared in shades of grey;  
Advent is bleak each day.

The Master grieves with you,  
At home or in a pew.  
Though hours drag dreadfully slow,  
The Spirit's sap still flows.

AΩ

First Snow Epiphany

Mounds of fluff layer evergreen spires,  
As Black Throated Finches flutter about.  
A squirrel skitters on telephone wire  
And water is frozen in gutter spouts.

The mood is devout—this baptism of snow  
Appears late this year, Magi's gift of ice  
And priceless flakes adorn with diamond show.  
A peek of Paradise? Only you know.

AΩ

Lifted Up

*The Lord is my light and my salvation;  
Whom then shall I fear? \**  
In You: today is a new creation...  
Ice storm passed—sky clear.

At the feeder, birds feast in ovation  
And sing sunbeam cheer.  
I lift up my soul in adoration;  
*My Christ—you are here. \*Psalm 27*

The Voice

*Jesus said, "My sheep hear My Voice."*  
—John 10:27

Sing out my soul, the glory sung from old—  
Sing out to infinity...  
Sing to eternity.  
Sing out my soul, with spirit in my voice.

Sing out my soul, though human love grows cold.  
Sing in adversity—  
Through life's ferocity.  
Sing out my soul, in anguish still rejoice.

Sing out my soul, against Satan's stronghold.  
Sing in iniquity,  
Through all fatality.  
Sing out my soul, with all my heart and voice.

AΩ

*Agnus Dei* in the Kitchen

*Sanctus, sanctu, sanctus...*  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
Cardinal—red fluff on snowy spruce  
Or Rutter's Requiem—both exquisite.

*Benedictus, Deus...*  
You grace all those under Your Name:  
Eli, a banker; Sarah, a recluse:  
The Lamb of God, for you—and me—He came.

## FEAR AND FAITH

You who are Weary

*...you who are weary and burdened...*

—Mt. 11:28

Ice-packing a surgical slit...  
 Seconds sludge with glacial speed.  
 Whether I stand, groan on, or sit—  
 I fear the wound will split and bleed.

He asks for prayer for his wife;  
 A tumor swells on her liver.  
 And I dare moan, about my life?  
 Ashamed, I began to shiver.

Sometimes He moves a mountain—miracle!  
 The praise we feel is almost lyrical.  
 Sometimes the cup of suffering remains;  
 In dying some waste in anguish and pains.

Either healing or heaven is the end;  
 Let grace and faith remind us of our Friend,  
 As hope and life seep from one's veins:  
*Worthy is the lamb who was slain.\**

\*Rev. 5:12

## Crossroads

Paul, a Pharisee of high repute,  
Sought to capture those of The Way.  
Hence toward Damascus, he took the route.

A blinding light struck this vengeful brute  
And he fell blind on trodden clay.  
*I am Jesus whom you persecute.*

I freeze—reflect—and cannot refute  
The Master's charge. I feel dismay;  
Regarding His will, I hedge and dispute.

(Or worse, ignore, as if I am mute.)  
What could be worse, to hear Him say,  
*I am Jesus whom you persecute?*

## Refuge

*These are the words of the Lord: the heavens are My throne and the earth My footstool.*  
—Isaiah 66:1

What metaphor, image or simile  
Grasps the vastness of His veracity?  
Whether below Europa's massive ice,  
Sublime charm of an alpine edelweiss,  
White-capped waves cresting on wintery seas,

The Unmoved Mover hides in secrecy,  
Beyond deduction and infinity.  
When wonder bursts, as shock and dread attack  
And beams of hope dusk into shades of black,  
*All who are weary and worn, come to Me.\**

\*Mt. 11:28

ΑΩ

## Ancient of Days

From a back porch, I spot a herd of deer,  
Does and fawns browsing in afternoon light.  
Some stag flashes antlers—points bony spears.

Spooked, they jump the rail fence and disappear.  
Absently, I scratch a mosquito bite  
And spy a crow preen like a buccaneer.

It wings and fades in autumn atmosphere.  
I ponder *What is there beyond my sight?*  
On the sill, her Snake Plant has spots of blight.  
As I pour over my life, my career,

Veins bulging on my hands, my speeding years,  
I lift my eyes to sapphire skies—so bright—  
Secure not to fear, but welcome tonight,  
To behold constellations' chandeliers.

**“THE LAST ENEMY...”**

Ode to Old

When you can see beauty  
In an old woman’s face:  
Beneath graying hair,  
Of youth Time left no trace;

Her jowls hang like figs  
And eyes have cloudy hue.  
With bony hands she knits;  
Her veins pulse richest blue.

I once sat on her knee  
And rode in rocking chair,  
Watching her antique face,  
Fixed in museum air.

When you can see beauty  
In an old woman’s face,  
Lovelier than that Grecian urn:  
Your eyes can kiss her cheeks through grace.

## Fragility

“I am” based on Belief:  
The force which shapes and drives my life.  
It’s stored in my brain’s golden sheath,  
With edge keen as a knife.

But when life decrees grief,  
That blade shatters like falling ice;  
The sheath is stolen by that thief  
And what is left, I splice.

AΩ

## Gravity

Wrists and ankles chained: temporal  
And eternal stretch time,  
From the heart to the pectoral—  
Thin as a train over a dime.

A stroke or car—aim at their marks  
At me or you tonight:  
Disintegrate in waves and quarks;  
Or live forever in bloom or in blight.

## Inevitability

The heart is more than valve and vein;  
It's there the soul feels deepest pain,  
When death's sickle has cruelly slain.

When pulse is stilled, a face pales cold.  
No touch or kindest word consoled  
The moment when life's end is told.

The funeral wake? It was a daze.  
The coffin glares; I could not gaze.  
I was elsewhere in floral haze.

Was that my dear beneath a grave?  
My home is now a grotto cave  
Where sorrow pounds wave after wave.

The empty pot rests on the sill  
And in the yard: a rusting grill.  
Even in June I feel a chill.

I build a shrine inside my heart,  
Where memories reside and start  
To flow that death can't keep apart.

I must take off grief's dark costume  
And step outside that empty tomb.  
Fill up the pot so flowers bloom.

My Lord felt lost, nailed to a beam  
So long ago, it seems a dream—  
How life goes on, flows like a stream

To vanish in an ocean wide,  
Impervious to wind or tide,  
And I shall join my dearest's side.

*Soma Pneumatikon*

Listen! Here is a mystery.  
For flesh and blood cannot discern;  
God's plan will reign in history.  
His trumpet blasts our last sojourn.

The Son of Man rides on the clouds  
Like lightning from the east to west.  
Archangel's voice shall cry aloud  
And gather those into Christ's breast.

Imperishable you shall rise,  
Like light, at sunrise, night sets free.  
Immortal as the Kingdom's sky,  
You'll walk across a crystal sea.

The grave will feast as bodies sleep  
From skin to bones under earth's crust.  
But who, O Death, who can you reap?  
For you, O Death, are made of dust.

The "sting of death" is but a lie.  
The first Adam gave us the key  
To lose bondage and let fear die:  
For He gave us the victory!

## Eastertide

In Flanders Fields those rows—Auschwitz ditch graves—  
Gulag mounds below snow—lost souls heaved in caves—  
MRSA steals a child—one too many pills—  
A bullet rips through flesh—hypothermic chill—

The end? Such spearing grief—the bare seat and bed—  
The memories that haunt—the future, all dread?  
There is one hope for all—everlasting spring—  
The balm from Death's cruel sting—the eternal King.

From Roman nails and wood—from limestone-sculpt tomb—  
The Holy One rose up—to open spring bloom—  
Death forever vanquished—past the sky's blue sea—  
He holds the key to life—for eternity—

## APOCALYPTIC

### *Mysterium Tremendum*

—Rudolf Otto, central concept in his *The Idea of the Holy*

I pondered the ocean's expanse  
 And slipped into a dreamy trance.  
 The mammoth storm front drowned the sun;  
 Light sank into oblivion.

Two miles up the dark clouds came  
 As lightning pierced with white-hot flame.  
 I pondered well mortality,  
 Beneath the storm's ferocity.

But here is calm. I lay, looked deep  
 At stars so wide, so far, so steep  
 Their hidden planets spin, revolve.  
 I felt my bookish mind dissolve.

Our solar home? A cobalt spot  
 In orbit round a white-hot dot.  
 Between the stars, the coldest space  
 Fills me with dread and pricks my face.

I lay awestruck in awesome stare,  
 Eternity gave awful glare.  
 Submerged beneath colossal night,  
 I seem a ghost clothed in moonlight

As stars waltz round in gay ballet.  
 My veiny hands, uplifted, pray  
 Despite the timeless void and death,  
 The Holy One gives living breath.

God Looks Down

*God looks down from heaven upon us all,*  
—Psalm 53:2

Viewer: hush and gaze into the night sky:  
The Zodiac immeasurably high  
The Milky Way, galactic home  
Leo and Pisces' canopy dome

Jupiter and Mars in vertical plane  
The crescent moon circling in its lane  
White-capped clouds breaking without sound  
The viewer mute and left spell-bound:

Immortal, invisible is the One  
Behind and beyond every planet and sun  
Who walked on dirt, beckoned with voice:  
*I am the bread of life.* Come feed. Rejoice.

AΩ

Ancient of Days

From a back porch, I spot a herd of deer,  
Does and fawns browsing in afternoon light.  
Some stag flashes antlers—points bony spears.

Spooked, they jump the rail fence and disappear.  
Absently, I scratch a mosquito bite  
And spy a crow preen like a buccaneer.

It wings and fades in autumn atmosphere.  
I ponder What is there beyond my sight?  
On the sill, her Snake Plant has spots of blight.  
As I pour over my life, my career,

Veins bulging on my hands, my speeding years,  
I lift my eyes to sapphire skies—so bright—  
Secure not to fear, but welcome tonight,  
To behold constellations' chandeliers.

### The Plunge

From the Yukon, cold swatches came  
And through the South it raged,  
Glazing houses in icy frame.

Peering out an icicle cage  
A frost giant blew sleet  
And shivering war he waged.

Cold prickled through socks to feet.  
We crunched on frozen grass  
With boots heavy as concrete.

A ditch deep as a crevasse  
Beckoned us to draw near,  
As branches shattered like glass.

We trudged to an ocean pier,  
Looked down at the frothy mass  
And felt our lives disappear.

*Who can stand against His cold?*

—Psalm 147:18

From northern heights He blusters cutting cold.  
Tempestuous winds unrolled and unrolled.

Tumbling clouds, scattering snow and sleet,  
And on the windows, they beat and they beat.

Mountains and valleys heard the wind howl  
And its freezing breath warned of its prowl.

The blizzard's blast hid all in blinding white  
As windblown snow obscured horizon sight.

He sends out His word and quiets the storm.  
All is still—so still—and begins to warm.

The trees shagged in ice exalt as they drip  
And all creatures stir from shivering grip.

*He blows with His wind and the waters flow;*  
We're carried along in spring's under-tow.

### In Our Darkest Gethsemanes

In our darkest Gethsemanes,  
 When we feel the Tempter's power,  
 We flounder for the Master's key—  
 Seems locked within this dreadful hour.

So easy to blame Beelzebub's beast  
 That skulks out there, with crosshairs sight.  
 So pointless to knead the soul's rising yeast,  
 Or fear the darkness beyond torchlight.

Night's fierce powers have fled their feast.  
 What stone? waved aside. He stepped into day.  
 Beneath His feet, grovels the beast—  
 In our Gethsemanes, He beams the way.

ΑΩ

### Postscript

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Spain, 16th century (metric revision)

Teach us, good lord, to serve as you deserve;  
 To give you our all, not count the cost;  
 To fight, not heed the wounds with full reserve;  
 To toil and not seek for rest those lost;  
 To labor and not ask for a reward;  
 Knowing we do your will in full accord  
 Through God our strength and Jesus Chris our Lord.

## AUTHOR

I retired as an addiction and mental health counselor and volunteer at a local prison camp and jail, church food pantry, and lead vesper's services at a senior citizens home. I sing in a choir and in the Mozart's Club's annual Messiah. I am graced with a happy marriage, a fine daughter and son-in-law, and strive to honor God the Father, God the Son and God Holy Spirit.

This is my second volume of poems; the first by the same title comprises free verse poems.

My fascination with rhyme and meter began in college, absorbing Donne, Milton, Blake, *et al.* In addition, no doubt due to singing in choirs over decades, I found (and find) lyrics in anthems, and especially hymns, mesmerizing. How delightful it is to read aloud or sing their lyrics and appreciate the creative ways composers rhymed and metered their works. William Cowper and Emily Dickenson are exquisite versifiers and inspired me.

Jesus often spoke poetically in his native language, Aramaic, and certainly was fluent in Hebrew. His teachings were rich in metaphors, similes, paradoxes, parables, hyperbole, idiom, proverbs, irony, puns, probably articulated in Aramaic meter and rhythm. A favorite: "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (Luke 18:25). Christ was a poet, a creator and a maker. He was the Word who spoke "Lazarus, come forth" and the dead man became alive. Words are cells that become organisms, and the poem grows into a living body. May these inspire you accordingly.

Numerous people have acted as spiritual transformers in my life. They are incarnations, avatars, images of God and archetypes of what it means to be human.

I thank the following whose lives have enhanced my own: my parents, Paul and Jan Venable and my Uncle Joe Venable. Christine, my wife, is as much a gift today as she was when God matched us in 1979 when we "happened" to attend a church supper (coincidences are God's way of keeping Himself anonymous). My daughter Jessica is flourishing, and I pray someday she and husband Daniel will discover the Holy Spirit dwelling in them and follow Christ, and their daughter Emma.

Thanks to the many clients who gave to me and allowed me to pass on the spirit of their recovery to others. Maple Springs United Methodist Church is my final church home. Appreciations offered to many clergy, co-workers, and clients who deflated my ego. Thanks also to the Winston-Salem Writers.

Many authors and their books have shaped my beliefs, knowledge, and understanding. I have read numerous books by early Christian Fathers and Mothers on monasticism and asceticism, and many contemporary Christian books. Their writings jarred my complacency and enabled me to apprehend the deceptiveness of my sin and vices, and glimpse true humility. The Bible? I cannot stand in the same Bible twice.

I give eternal thanks to our Holy Father, Holy Son and Holy Spirit and how they inspired the authors of the Old Testament and New Testament—and this writer.