

First Light

Hymns
by Cory Shipman

Hymns are a special gift. A blessing when we rejoice, a comfort when we grieve. Hymns often evoke powerful memories of loved ones. For many they remind us of funerals, camp/outdoor experiences, the pews we grew up in and the dear souls that sang in them. I often recall particular refrains I can still vividly hear my mother singing as I sat by her side, unknowingly soaking in lessons that inspire and challenge to this today.

I freely acknowledge a sense of nostalgia about these memories. They are the likely source of many of my favorite hymns dating to before 1900. There is something very powerful about standing the test of time and I recall with admiration and respect so many, who like the hymns they sang, stood or are standing, the test of time. Songs, like people, hold pieces of our hearts. We shall all sing together again. What a day of rejoicing that will be.

Another thing I love about hymns is that like prayer, they are always there. No force on earth can take them from us. When we rise, before we sleep, as we travel, while we work, we can sing to God. If not aloud, silently in our hearts and minds. Alone in the woods, working outdoors, around our tables, we can sing. Overflowing with praise, distraught with grief, we can sing. Don't have the voice of a gifted brother who sings wonderfully? You can sing. Reunited in familiar auditoriums or sequestered in our homes during a pandemic, we can sing. Praise God, we can sing.

Take time to be holy,
Speak oft with thy Lord
And He walks with me and He talks with me
Trusting Him as my all wheresoever my footsteps roam
Master the tempest is raging
Carest thou not if we perish?
Oft in the storm, lonely are we,
Sighing for home, longing for thee

Tis midnight and on Olive's brow
With grief and shame weighed down
Then in thought I go to thee,
Garden of Gethsemane

I cast my mind to Calvary,
Where Jesus bled and died for me
How does that visage languish,
Which once was bright as morn

Low in the grave He lay
Vainly they seal the dead
Then bursting forth in glorious day,
Up from the grave He rose again

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Holy! Holy!

Are you Lord God Almighty!

O trampled death where is your sting?

The angels roar for Christ the King

Do you know my Jesus?

Have you heard how He loves you?

Into our hands the gospel is given

Who like me thy praise should sing?

All the vain things that charm me most

And then I cried dear Jesus,

Come and heal my broken spirit

Our darkest night will turn to day

There is beyond the azure blue

The clouds be rolled back as a scroll

The trump shall resound

And the Lord shall descend

He is our God

The great I AM