



A. D. HOLDING STILL

POETRY, VOL. 2
BY J. R. SCHELL

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J.R. Schell

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To My Brother Ray,

The best earthly friend that anyone ever had

Whose faithfulness and love

Show me all the time

The true nature of Jesus

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“I” to “i”

When i have taken all the wrong roads,
The Lord looks down on me
And still He beckons gently,
“Do not look upon me Lord,
For i am worthless even in my own eyes.
Do not keep me,
For i am unworthy of your love.
Why do you bear with me,
When i can cry no more?
Justice condemns me,
i dare not ask for Mercy,
Countess times,
i have thrown it all in your face.”
But You Love me Harder,
And turn me around
With Your Undeserved Mercy.

God Hater

At the Praetorium
A Roman
Beating Jesus over the head
With a staff,
And every ounce
Of vehemence and brutality
In my bitter heart.
Who are *You* to judge me?
Who are *You* to stand over me, Jesus?
Who indeed?

He looks at me,
So I hit him again.
But in His eyes, I see only Pity
Unswayed, in his determination,
To bear my enormous guilt,
And set me Free.
Standing in my place,
As God's judgement is meted out,
For countless sins.

He is crucified, crushed,
Cut off, abandoned.
Love overcoming my hate.
Redemption undermining my rebellion.
My defenses crumble.
A heart of stone
Becomes a heart of flesh
That now begins to beat
Only for Him.

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Holding Still

A man thrashing
Waves crashing
Far from shore
In a dark and stormy sea,
My ship of dreams
Sunk,
Everything I called True
Rocked
Panicked, dangerous
Ready to push you under,
To keep my head above the waves
But now finally,
Despite every effort
Going down for the last time
Into bottomless despair

Hold Still!

A cry not my own,
A voice calling to me over the howling winds
Hold Still!
I hear it and laugh,
Are you mad?
The depths tug at me, I can't stop!
And I can't go on.
Hold still?
It can only mean the death of me

HOLD STILL!

Now insistent.

A.D. – Holding Still

Me?
Who zealously proclaimed
That I could figure out Life on my own?
Only here
For the first time wondering
If being Captain of my own Destiny
Is what has shipwrecked my soul?
If so, then somehow,
I must turn away
From all that I ever was,
Somehow trust my life,
My dreams
My very Soul
To one I called Enemy!
Hold Still!
Abandoning my efforts,
I raise my arms above my head
Holding Still
And, as I most feared,
Sink like lead beneath the waves.

But then,
Through a lens of tears
I see the work-made hands
Strong and rough
A carpenter's hands
And robes of purest white
Bending so very low
To lift me up
Taking hold of me
And instantly,

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By some miracle of Grace,
I am suddenly standing
On the firmest foundation!
My God! I wonder,
However can this be?

Forevermore
A soul transformed
A sinner saved -
Not by my ability to figure Life out
But solely as a gift of Grace,
And Grace alone
Every day,
Striving no longer to save myself
But to Hold Still,
And let Jesus save me!
Not a swimmer, still a沉
Not a captain, just a lubber
Carried home on
The unrelenting winds of grace
Every day,
Poor, Pathetic and Weak
Every day, needing a Savior,
And having one,
Right by my side,
Ever insufficient to save myself
But now, far too much in love
With my sweet Jesus,
To ever want to.

Incorruptible

What a blessed state!
Only Jesus,
Who held lepers
And overcame their uncleanness.
Would bother to cherish
Those who had become
Utterly Worthless-
Like a snotty tissue in the trash-
And valiantly redeem it, re-make it,
Place inestimable worth upon it,
Invest His life and treasure into it.
Make the Genesis process eternally go to war
With the active disease
Until Re-birth reigns victorious,
A Faberge Masterpiece!
And defilement gets no second chance
Because this Corruption had put It on.
The fixed certainty,
That we shall be changed.

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Off Center

I want to live in such a way
That people see something different.
I want to be an arrow that points people to Jesus,
But more often I fail.
I don't get to be a super hero
With an unwavering will to do good,
Or even get to be a faithful sidekick,
Like Samwise Gamgee.
What I get to do
Is tell everyone about the real super hero -
Jesus Christ,
Who runs into the train wreck of this world,
And rescues all who call to him.
I don't get to be the hope of the world anymore,
But when we look to Jesus,
We find the satisfaction of my souls.

Communion

Pursuing me for reconciliation,
Desiring Communion -
The joining of two hearts.
This is My body, broken for you.
This is My blood, poured out for you.
The Great Exchange
Such a life,
For such a life as mine?
"having loved His own...
He loved them to the end..."
(John 13:1)

And now,
I could never be satisfied,
With anything but You, Abba
Like a toddler,
Quietly,
My arms around your neck,
Feeling your heart,
Beat for me.
Surrounded by Seraphim,
With unveiled face and heart
You alone, my highest Heaven

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Kathy

Because of You
I learn to see what's unsaid,
 To be quiet
 And hear what was.
 That hearts are heavy
And a comforting word gives life
 To wounded spirits.
 Because of your hand in mine
Loneliness has forgotten my name,
 And every fleeting day,
 Is oh so Precious.
 You help me when I'm wrong,
Then, stand faithfully in my corner
 And help me rise again.
 In youth, I almost missed you -
 Might have lost you,
 Two birds passing in the blue
 Like so often, I was blind,
 Wooing, "Come fly with me,"
 Understanding now,
 None of this, ever had to be.

Look To Me

"Look to me,"
I cry in my pride,
"Exalt me to the Throne!"

But the One who made us commands,
"Look to Me,"
In his mercy,

"For I am zealous to glorify my Name."
Worthy.
Self-existent.

Overflowing with Love, Humility and Truth.
Just a glimpse,
And we are Free!

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Hurrying Home (A Dream)

Jumping from rock to rock,
In the midst of the torrent
Fighting my way up the slippery slope.
Do not tarry! Do not look back!
Between my shoulder blades,
I can almost feel,
The point of the knife,
Wielded by the man of lawlessness himself.

But the Way leads onto solid ground,
And the Wellspring gurgles beside me.
I make better time,
And somewhere, gain upon my enemy.
I meet another Pilgrim,
And a trail-side Prophet,
Who makes us burn for heaven!
A narrow trail races over ridge and vale.
Lean and stripped for action,
We quicken our pace,
Feeling like we could run forever in the Spirit.

Cruising through field and byway.
How wrong not to make every effort,
To hurry home!
An attack dog bars our way.
In my giddy haste,
I sacrifice my hand,
And the Spirit reprimands me
For my foolishness.

A.D. – Holding Still

We enter a wide building.
Inside, adjacent to the path,
We pause intrigued,
By a vast library of worldly knowledge.

What are we doing?
From the comfort of our chairs
We realize,
That we have lost sight of the Way!
Ensnared, lethargically, we rise.
Outside, a checkered hallway,
Of white and black tiles stretches on.
We press forward,
Sometimes on tiles of white,
Just as often on black.
But the Way is smooth and clear before us,
And we are smaller now in our own eyes,

Such glory calls us home!
The place of our soul's desire,
Where the mountains finally end.
And looking out,
The sea fills the infinite horizon.
The place where the Spirit is like a river.
That in eagerness,
Almost skips off the mountain.
Where we shall race across the shore,
And plunge headlong,
Into an endless ocean of sparkling, liquid love.
Breathing it deeply within,
Letting the refreshing waters,

By J. R. Schell

Course over us without,
Pressing further and further from shore,
Diving forever deeper into fathomless Love,
 Every longing fulfilled -
 Yet wanting ever more of You!

Gomer (Hosea 3:1-3)

Hosea's successful,
And I'm quite a catch.
I never loved him,
But picket fences,
Look nice from the outside.
Do I still have it?
Can I still catch me one?
That fool's mad as hell,
Raising another man's child.

Playing the field.
A little wine, and the wear of time.
Beauty, fleeting as a flower.
I thought we were lovers,
But I was using you,
And you, me.
How did I get here?
Naked on the slave block,
Mockery cutting what's left of me.
I was a person once, a daughter of Eve.
What becomes of a whore they can't rent?
What happens to a slave they can't sell?

My final humiliation,
Do not look on me, Hosea.
Cruel justice, why did I spurn your love?
A trail of ruin behind me, a life of regret.
He bids for me?
A slave of the man I betrayed,

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Such grim justice for me.
He's strangely kind, what miracle of grace is this?
Everything's turning upside down.
To be his wife again? Hold my kids again?
A fairy tale ending for a villain like me?
Getting so much better than I deserve,
Because of a man
Sold out for his God.

Legion

In utter darkness,
Beleaguered,
A howling cacophony.
They promise me,
"Surrender, and we stop."
I stagger, I fall.
Get up, get up!
Stay down, stay down!
My foe -
Unresting, unyielding, inescapable.
A leaden comforter weighs me down.
Pinned, helpless, overthrown.
Madness.
Endless rage and inner torment.
A terror to others,
A terror to myself.
Bound by that which is so much greater
Than chains of iron.

Fools dare to pass.
The tempest of hate inside me
Roils toward them.
What's this?
The King of Glory,
Dressed as a peasant!
A master strategist,
Luring us into an ambush.
We writhe in horror,

By J. R. Schell

We turn to flee.
Cornered and snarling.
"We will never comply."
Power!
We grovel before him.
He commands,
And we must answer.
"Legion, we are Legion.
O God, the Son."
He speaks a word,
And like a torrent,
They are drawn from me.

Liquid light bathes me,
Purifying my halls,
Scouring my house.
Undone,
My kinsmen ask My Deliverer
To leave!
Gracious God, casting out demons,
Sinful people, casting out God.
What is Life apart from Him?
"Oh My Jesus," I cry
"I will follow you wherever you go!"
No?
He refuses me.
I am hurt, I don't understand,
Until He looks deep into my eyes.
"Go home to your people,
And tell them of the mercy

A.D. – Holding Still

God has had on you."
Jesus explains my part,
In His perfect plan,
And now joyfully,
I go.

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Worthy

Don't live for the approval of men,
Live for Jesus,
And please him by faithfulness.
Embrace trials,
A blessing from God,
That shrink our idol of ease.

Mephibosheth

Mephibosheth
Son of Jonathan,
Lame in so many ways.
Nothing to offer a King.
Dreading judgment,
But finding favor.
Blessed to the King's table,
Because of another's
Performance

Just like Christians,
Adopted and beloved,
Made rich through grace
Because of Jesus' perfect Life,
Imputed to all
Who believe.

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A Thief

A tortuous breath
Naked on my cross,
Condemned by my deeds,
To an awful death.

My schemes have all crumbled,
Getting my just desserts.

Labelled,
King of the Jews.
The Great Question:

Why are You here, Jesus?
"His soul makes an offering for guilt"
But we despised Him and esteemed Him not,
For making Himself equal to God
And bringing hope to the hopeless.

If God is just,
He will deliver His Son.
I would hope in him,
But have nothing to offer,
And faith without works is dead.

Isn't it?

Nailed to a cross...

"What must we do to do the works God requires?
Jesus answered, 'The work of God is this:
To believe in the One He has sent.' "

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Unrepentant,
My brother rails
"Are you not the Christ?
Save yourself and us!"
Brokenly, I gasp,
"Jesus,
Remember me when you come into your kingdom!"
Using one of his last breaths,
Jesus breathes new life into me,
"Truly, I say to you,
Today you will be with me in Paradise."

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Psalm 6

Life made meaningless in light of death.
Made meaningful by resurrection.
Jesus! God's answer to our weeping.
Jesus Forsaken,
The cry of the Damned,
In my place.

Communion

What if the point
Of Communion,
Is to take some time
And commune?
With our Savior,
Father,
Brother,
Friend?

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Bittersweet

The Father,
With our creation,
Chose a path of sorrow,
Binding His happiness
To ours.

Embracing short term hardship
For greater eternal joy.

"I have come that they might have life,
and have it to the full."

Martha, Martha

Martha, Martha

If you love me, you will obey my commands,

Martha, Martha

It is to my Fathers' glory that you bear much fruit

Martha, Martha

Concerned about so many things,

Us doers, always doing

With ever more to do

Working ourselves into dry bones

Discovering, it's never enough

As if the kingdom hangs upon us

And not on Jesus

Until we wonder

What happened to my joy?

Yet, if I give everything to the poor

And sacrifice all to the flames

And I have not love,

I am nothing?

Meanwhile Mary

Whose sins were many

Forgiven so much,

And thus loving much

Hanging on every word

In earnest Communion

As she looks into the eyes of her Redeemer

And it will never be taken from her.

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Fear & Weakness

Feel so scared, the future bleak,
I fear my day, I fear my week.
I hate weakness, afraid of fear,
I would be strong, impress my peers.

Fear and weakness to embrace,
Upon my knees, upon my face.
No skirting fear, surrounds my way,
Press on in weakness day by day.

Slowly fear, isn't so fearsome;
Until my weakness isn't so wearisome.
The fear was lies and largely illusion,
But truly I'm weak and that's the conclusion.

Fear will fail if I but wait,
But weakness is our truest state

“Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed,
for the LORD your God is with you wherever you
go.” - Joshua 1:9

Before Time

Once upon a time-
before there was Time

The Almighty!
had Always known –
(when Always, was all that there Was)

that it was time to create Time.

And do He spoke and invented
the Beginning, the Middle and the End.

Bang! what Was, from what Wasn't.
He then took some of what Now Was
and made beings immersed in Time
who imagined that their imaginations

were Infinite!

But who couldn't imagine
a time before Time.

And so they foolishly asked,
"When did God Begin?"

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Pondering The Godhead

Me times three is not so much,
While Me in three is hard to see.
But God above, is not like me,
For I am finite, while He's Infinity.
And Infinity multiplied times three –
Is never going to grow, you see?
Divide this Boundlessness in Three
And what remains? One Trinity

One Infinite Substance, One Unified Will
Three Persons revealed, with Never-Learned Skill
It's hard to fathom or make sense of this task,
My little brain stumbles, while juggling the math.
What fool would speak of such staggering Wonder
The Wise would keep silent, but poets will ponder,
For His folly surpasses the wisdom of Men.
As this mind-boggling God is a tale without end,
He is born in the Middle, without a Beginning,
Cut off in his prime, uses dying for winning!

For God the Father, Boundless above
Sends God the Son to earth in Love,
Omnipresent Maker of Space and Time
Somehow beyond them, 'til born in the grime.
Embracing a Body as one of our race
Limiting himself to a Moment and Place
Taking on Flesh, with Heavenly Will
Such a Life to live, with a Body to kill.
Father in Heaven, Maker of Darkest Day

A.D. – Holding Still

Now turning his Sovereign Face away
Killing God the Son, that Men might live?
How Precious a Sacrifice to give!
But Life can't Die! Jesus won't stay dead!
The only Sin is *our* Sin, on His innocent head
His sacrifice cleanses, the victory won!
The All-Forgiving Blood of Great God the Son.
To each that repents of saving himself
Looking only to Jesus for spiritual health.
But how can Two Hands, ever do enough deeds?
Heal billions of souls, meet a world full of needs?
His mission completed, He ascends through the sky
Again with his Father, 'til Judgement draws nigh
Will God in Heaven now leave us again?
Thus Great God the Spirit, through Time descends
Giving life to breasts that were deader than stone
His Wind fills our sails, and carries us home
Everywhere working, yet unseen by Men
Omnipotent Power, bringing Fellowship again

When God enters Time, we are tempted to feel.
The math makes no sense as our little minds reel
But all will be fine, He remembers we're dust
If we look to the Cross, as the source of our trust.
God the Father is reigning, beyond all Creation
The God-Man of Nazareth has won our Salvation.
God the Spirit guiding through darkness in Space.
More revelation required for our Time-blinded Race
Surely God is One, in Persons named Three
Too big for our brains, a Vast Trinity

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And This Is Love

Because Jesus did good,
Why would God impute that
 To a sinner like me?
How does one lead to the other?
 Christlikeness, adoption,
Incorruptibility, eternal friendship?
Why would the Father crush his Son,
Go to infinite trouble and forsake Him,
For a vomit-returning wretch like me?
 It makes no sense.
Because it flows from a love so deep
 I can't even fathom it.

Vanity

Solomon,
Impressive by our standards,
Had it All.
Too bad, that
All was meaningless.

Until Jesus changed the world,
And made everything in Him,
Fruitful labor.

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Hosea 11:9

Jesus
In the claws of the Lion Rome.
The Almighty
Submitting to infinite injustice
And our hate filled cries,
"Anyone but Jesus!"
"Anything but Jesus!"
Driving his brutalized body
To embrace Crucifixion.
"For this I have come..."
Absorbing my punishment,
Determined to pay my massive debt.
Though He sweat blood at the thought.

My greatest command-
My greatest sin-
"To love Me most,
With all my heart and soul and strength."
Truly, I was guilty
But Jesus paid it all.
"For I am God and not a man,
the Holy One in your midst,
and I will not come in wrath."

How now can I resist?
When he says,
"Follow Me"

Hell

Parasites crawling,
under their hide.
Millions of larvae,
Hungry inside.

Crackling skin,
A drop, their desire.
The fiery furnace,
The Agony of Fire.

Bitterness and hate,
Envy and woe.
Alone in the crowd,
In Darkness of soul.

Gnashing and weeping,
For Eternity ahead.
Oh, how they long to die,
But they're already dead!

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Oh To Be A Man Like Nehemiah!

Oh to be a man like Nehemiah!
Full of faith and the fear of the Lord
Who trusts in prayer... and then his efforts.

Not me.

I set my hand to the plow
And maybe I remember to pray.
The fear of man overshadows my days.

But my hope is in the Lord
Who calls what is not,
As if it were!

Therefore, my hope is in prayer and then my efforts.
Weak.

Deliver me and mortify my self-reliance.
Oh my only Hope, my Captain, my King.

Kings

Herod the Great
Killed children,
To preserve his kingdom.

But Jesus reigns forever,
Because He surrendered
All

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Church Life

When I was a rolling stone
Footloose in the great alone,
Looking down from the wintry heights
Bumping up but briefly
Against others,
Before I was on my way again
So that I came
Full of zeal and little sense
Jagged as broken glass
Into the alpine thaw of koinonia
Where together
With endless need of forbearance
A stony cascade of believers
Washed loose by swollen streams
Were tumbling clumsily off the mountain
Chipping and grinding our rough edges away
Heading for the fertile valleys of humility
One day to arrive, smooth as marbles
In peaceful rivers of grace.

Spring Cleaning

Spring cleaning the flower beds,
Buds explode into leaf,
Seeds unfurl & rise to new life –
Every spring is a glorious miracle.

Someday, the Creator will clean out
The winter debris of this life,
And I will unfurl
And rise again into an eternal Spring.
Lord, hurry the day,
Oh my sweet Jesus!

The End

(For Now)