Remember and Celebrate
IAN SOWTON
1929-2021
Poems & Hymns from the Service

February 20, 2021  2PM
Online

Hosted by the Church of the Holy Trinity, Toronto
Song of Passage

As it rejoins the primal surge
Of forever dancing elements
My body shall learn the steps
For meadow grass and flowers
under sun and gracious showers.

My soul, that spark of living light
from Life of life's creating forge,
shall glint in children's children,
stir in hopeful urgent loins
where mortal with immortal joins.

Bless the friends on pilgrim paths!
Bless roads not taken on my way!
Bless that legion whose labours
Answered to my various needs!
Bless each soul that cradles seeds!

Ian Sowton
Walking in Harbour One Day, 2020
Listen Up

If you listen carefully enough words will canter for you as you ride an idea.

If you listen carefully, sometimes you can hear them jostling – usually discretely— to be rhymed.

You can hear them smack their lips at the prospect of a *tintinnabulation* or a *chirring*; or rise to the gymnastics of rhyming (sort of) *lozenge* with *orange*.

If you listen carefully you’ll hear them whispering that dictionaries are only half the story.

And it’s well known that in the barn dance of the brain words can go to it with the best to the call of a billion electric guitars; but that there’s always that one who won’t take the floor with you, who plays the wall-flower, being coy.

So: you can abandon her to her game and proposition another word, or: If you’re patient and listen carefully the right one might come round and take your hand – so that beneath the calling beat of a billion electric guitars you will hear the chime of a YES chord.

Ian Sowton
Walking in Harbour One Day, 2020
3 Wisdom Led the New Stars Burning

Ian Sowton, 1991

Wisdom (Sandra Sears, 1991)
alt tune: Beecher

Wisdom led the new stars burning in the first steps of their dance,
Cherished darling of God's bosom, bright Sophia pleads our case;
Those who join the Jesus movement hear in Christ Sophia's call:
From the breast of Christ Sophia a milk of justice kindly flows,
and she smiled to see earth blushing at the sun's warm primal glance.
we are creatures she delights in, Wisdom will not leave our race.
"I decline your ritual offerings, give me equity for all.
feeds our will to love creation, grace to live in hope bestows.

Joyous firstling of God's action, sign of heaven's inventiveness,
Still she cries in streets and gateways, raising her prophetic fuss;
When will you admit my outcasts, dignify my dispossessed?
Kingdom come is what we look for, easy yoked and burdened light;

Wisdom plays with clearest pleasure in creation's lavishness,
though we snub her she refuses ever to despair of us.
Never mind your solemn gatherings: do the gospel you've professed.
one day all shall join with Wisdom carefree, playing in delight.
10 The Midwife's Carol

Ian Sowton, 1994
Midwife's Carol
(Becca Whitla, 1994)

1. The birth it-self was not too hard, good presentation, fine strong mum.

But my dear it was a circus, I thought that half the town had come.

Chorus

2. There were these shepherds who burst in, my dear they said a talking light told them to come and pay respects, kneeling they were to that wee mite.

Chorus

3. He's breathing well, the cord's tied off, her afterbirth's come free my dear when three fine scholar blokes squeeze in saying a star has brought them here.

Wash him...

4. "You selling tickets then?" I said, "Buzz off you lot and let her rest." And they did too, leaving presents, rich stuff my dear, the very best.

Wash him...

5. All that public to and fro-ing, she watches as it comes and goes, with him tucked, dear, in a manger pulled from under the donkey's nose.

Wash him...

6. Winter solstice 'twas my dear, shivery damp and animal stink, Worship, palaver, gifts and all - what was going on do you think?

Wash him...
Deep Life All Abounding (melody)

Ian Sowton, 1985

Deep Life (Sandra Sear, 1993)
alt tune: Olwen

Deep life all abounding whose voice goes on sounding the word of creation through space; Your love still is schooling prime stars in their moving, justice and cure. But foul runs our error of waste, hurt, and terror, and new worlds unfurl in Your grace. We hear tell the story and racket our use of the poor; we structure their lacking of Your ample glory from creatures that roll off Your tongue: then blame them for slacking and leave them despair's putrid crust.

The swimmers, the flyers, all diggers and sliders, the brood that You return us to sharing that talent for caring You gave us which rear us among. So praise to You, Maker, our Father and Mother we have let rust. Forgive us, Provider, our Mother and Father and Child whom so loving You send in fondness to nurse us, and Child whom so loving You send in justice to bend us, in love to immerse us, already and always our friend, in mercy to mend us, already and always our friend.
Lovingly your stars and planets tread the blissful reach of space,
Ceaselessly, without conditions, you have put the lover’s case,
Loving trust is strong and gentle, beautiful as ancient lace.

where in their stupendous singing they return you grace for grace.
while we spend our time inventing limits to our love’s embrace.
In your Christ is beauty showing that Love has a human face.

Though we are a small creature slight jewel in your crown of lights
From all fraudulent exclusions save us, teach us neighbours’ rights:
Christ among us weaves strong unions that outweigh all doubts and slights.

You have made us too for learning Love’s demands and Love’s delights.
liturgies of human loving have been set to various rites.
Bless us fragile partners learning Love’s demands and Love’s delights.
14 We'll Sing in the Morning

Ian Sowton, 1977

Morning, Noon and Evening (Sandra Sears, 1990)

alt tune: Bells of St. Mary’s, refrain

We'll sing in the morning a song of creation of
We'll sing in the noon-time a song of redemption:
How Naaman was cleansed in the flow of Your grace;
And here at the rivers that gladden the City of God;
And when we were fount of Christ’s mercy we join You, co-heirs of heaven and
sick in our sin You released us to laugh in health and
rive on the back of our Jordan You’ll help us through its
stewards of Your gracious earth.
dance in love before Your face.
cold by fords Your saints have trod.