

## The Poem

By Alice Faulkner

When I was a child, I found a poem on a page that had been torn from a pamphlet someone had ripped apart and strewn on the sidewalk. I grew up in public housing projects and was a loner, but I had three escapes: books, Elvis Presley movies, and poetry. I loved poetry. It spoke to a part of me I could not identify. There seemed to be no word to describe it. Curious about the poem, I picked it up and took it home.

I read that poem every day, sometimes several times a day, in the years that followed. Sitting in class, walking the halls to and from classes, sitting alone at recess, I would find parts of that poem coming to my mind. I had never memorized a poem before, but this one was different. There was something in it that spoke to me and touched me.

*Oftimes a secret something  
Whispered, "You're a stranger here,"  
And I felt that I had wandered  
From a more exalted sphere.*

I always felt different from other children. I felt at times that there was

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another home somewhere, and if I really tried I could sort of remember it. The poem encouraged these feelings. From time to time I would remove it from my drawer and read it. I wondered how many people like me there were in the world and if I would ever meet any of them.

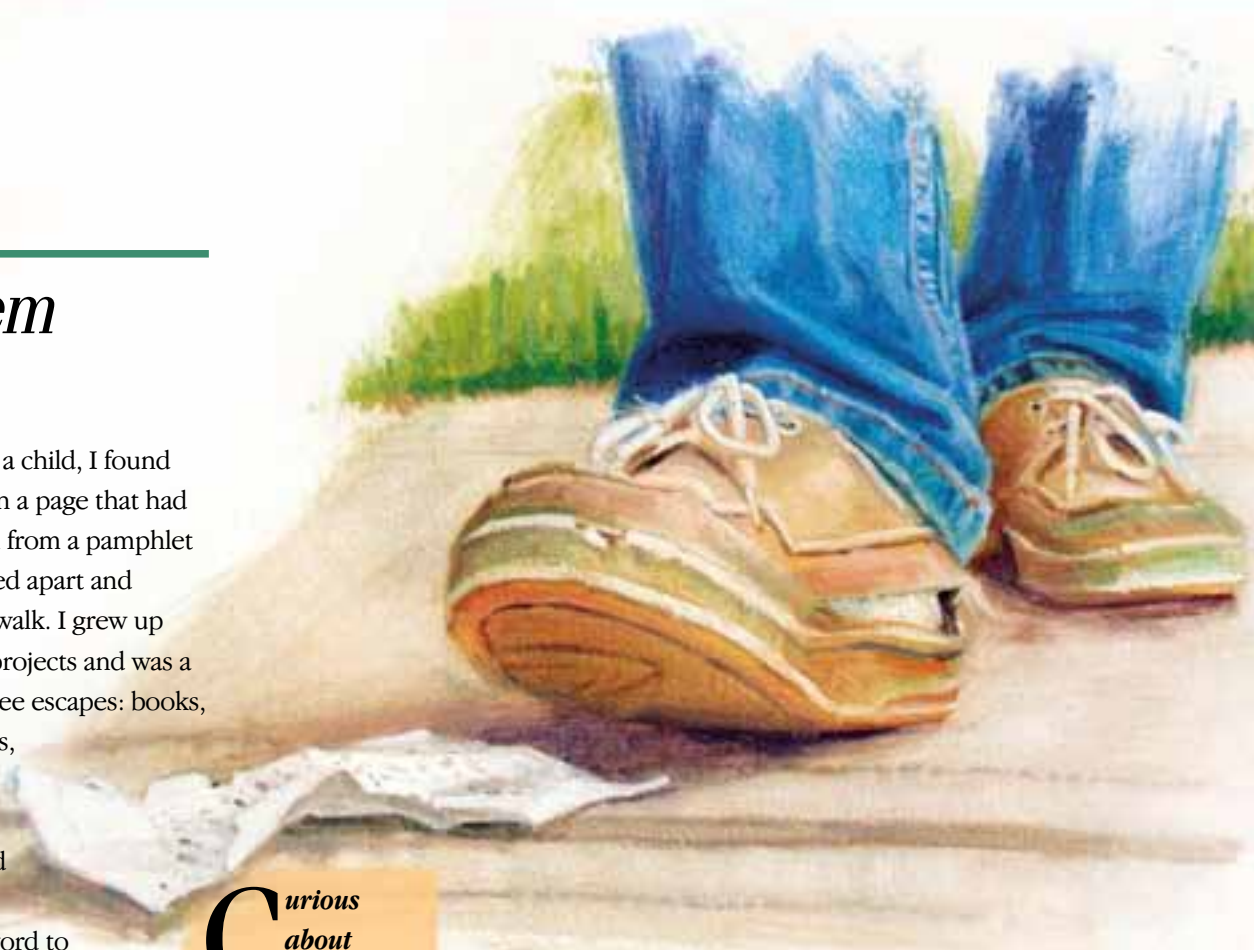
*For a wise and glorious purpose  
Thou hast placed me here on earth  
And withheld the recollection  
Of my former friends and birth.*

Imagine my surprise many years later when, as an investigator sitting in my first sacrament meeting, I

opened the hymnbook to the page indicated and saw the poem I had found all those years ago. The arrangement was different from the one I had sung aloud to myself when I couldn't sleep or when I would awaken in the middle of the night crying, but I recognized even the notes that sounded from the piano.

*O my Father, thou that dwellest  
In the high and glorious place,  
When shall I regain thy presence  
And again behold thy face?*

While everyone else sang "O My Father" (Hymns, no. 292), I could only sit and cry, knowing that God had placed that song in my path as a child.



*In thy holy habitation,  
Did my spirit once reside?  
In my first primeval childhood,  
Was I nurtured near thy side?*

As I sat in that sacrament meeting, listening to my poem being sung by the congregation, I knew I was on the right path. I knew that what the missionaries were teaching me was true. I knew that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was the only true Church of God on earth. So when I knelt and asked God if it was right before Him that I be baptized and confirmed into the Church, I wasn't surprised when the answer was yes.

After three weeks of lessons by Elder Walker and Elder Whittaker, I was lowered into the waters of baptism. I was washed clean, cleaner than I had ever felt and could ever imagine being. Accompanying these elders in the circle of priesthood holders who participated in confirming me a member was my first bishop, the man who answered the phone the day I called requesting that missionaries visit me.

I could hear the words of my beloved poem like a sweet refrain floating above and weaving itself between each person I met and each act that brought me into the Church—words that had touched an

aching heart yearning to know once more its Eternal Father.

*I had learned to call thee Father,  
Thru thy Spirit from on high,  
But, until the key of knowledge  
Was restored, I knew not why. ■*

## *My Son Also Lives*

By Brenda Hunt

**A** woman in my ward taught me a priceless lesson about the sweet peace that comes from a sure faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement.

**F**inally, the couple's prayers were answered. They bought furniture, clothes, and other baby supplies.

This woman's patriarchal blessing promised her the joys of motherhood. But years passed while she and her husband prayed and waited for children. Finally, their prayers were answered. For nine months their lives were filled with joyous preparations. They painted a special room; bought furniture, clothes, and other baby supplies; and offered many prayers. The doctors said she would never be able to have another baby after this one, so her dreams were wrapped up in this child.

The day came when this sister gave birth and heard the cry of her baby.

"It's a beautiful boy," the nurse said.



The mother closed her eyes and offered a prayer of thanksgiving. Four minutes later, the baby was dead.

I saw her in sacrament meeting two weeks afterward. As the music director, she walked to the front of the chapel and took her seat beside the organ. Under her direction we sang “I Know That My Redeemer Lives” (*Hymns*, no. 136). She stood straight and tall, her face bright, her testimony radiating. At times the words came with great difficulty for her. She swallowed and pressed her lips together. Then she stopped singing, but her arm continued to move, conducting us as we sang.

Later, with tears coursing down her cheeks, this sister bore her testimony in these simple words: “I know that my Redeemer lives. I know that He is just and that He loves us. And because He lives, my son also lives.”

In her faith I saw an assurance of the reality of our Redeemer, whose Atonement for us makes immortality and eternal life possible. Her son had been taken, but she knew that he would be restored to her someday. ■

## Why Was the Spirit Telling Me?

By Roger B. Woolstenhulme

**I**n the summer of 1980, I was nearing the end of my service in the Massachusetts Boston Mission. One evening we had an appointment to teach a promising young college student about the plan of salvation.

Several times during the course of the lesson, I was almost overwhelmed as the Holy Ghost repeatedly witnessed to me that the principles we were teaching were true. I remember praying

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almost out loud: “I already know this. I have taught this lesson numerous times these past two years. I am grateful to feel thy Spirit, but please witness to our investigator as well!”

A short time after this evening, I met with my mission president, and he informed me that my mother had been killed in a tragic automobile accident. Naturally, this sudden loss came as a tremendous shock to my family and our entire community. But once the emotions of the moment passed and I had occasion to reflect, I recalled with perfect clarity the powerful witness of the Spirit I’d received during that plan of salvation lesson. I knew that this was the work of a loving Heavenly Father preparing me for the loss that was to come.





**I called the missionary back and asked him what he needed. He was surprised and replied that he had not called me.**

A day never passes that I do not miss the teaching and companionship of my mother. But a day also never passes that I am not reminded of how a loving Heavenly Father carefully prepared me for that loss. ■

## The Unexplainable Call

By Claudio Zivic

Saturday, February 7, 2004, found my wife and me in a hotel in Gijón in northern Spain, where I was serving as president of the Spain Bilbao Mission. As we finished our evening meal, I checked my cellular phone for any messages I had not heard. It did indeed indicate that a missionary had

called. I noted who it was and pushed the appropriate button to call him back.

The missionary answered the phone, and after a brief greeting, I asked him what he needed. He was surprised and replied that he had not called me. I insisted that my phone had registered a call from him, but he repeated that he had not called.

We ended our conversation, but five minutes later he called me back and said, “President, I have a problem that is really making me feel uncomfortable, and I’m beside myself over it. I prayed and asked the Lord for help to know what I should do. I didn’t feel like calling you, but while I was asking the Lord what to do, you called. I was surprised because I had not called you. I knew the Lord was telling

me I needed to talk to you immediately.”

We talked for a time, and his problem was solved.

When I spoke with him two days later, I asked the elder again if he had called me. “No, President,” he replied, “that was the work of the Lord.” He verified that his telephone showed he had not dialed my number, even by accident.

The Lord said, “Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers” (D&C 112:10). Alma, teaching his son Helaman, said, “Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good” (Alma 37:37). We must do what our Heavenly Father desires in order to feel the peace we constantly need. That unexplainable call was undoubtedly an answer to a young missionary’s prayer. ■