

Contemplating Life and God



Liberty Lake Washington 2018

Steve Dunn Hanson

CONTEMPLATING LIFE AND GOD

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Cape Cod Massachusetts 2009

AGENCY

I

I suck in power, praise
and all that pleasures me,
then shrink to pointless point
(like it was some black hole)
from narcissist gravity.

II

I see my nothingness,
yet offer it to Thee,
then feel my soul expand
(like heated by the Sun)
Thy Light infusing me

III

Or something in between

Baptism

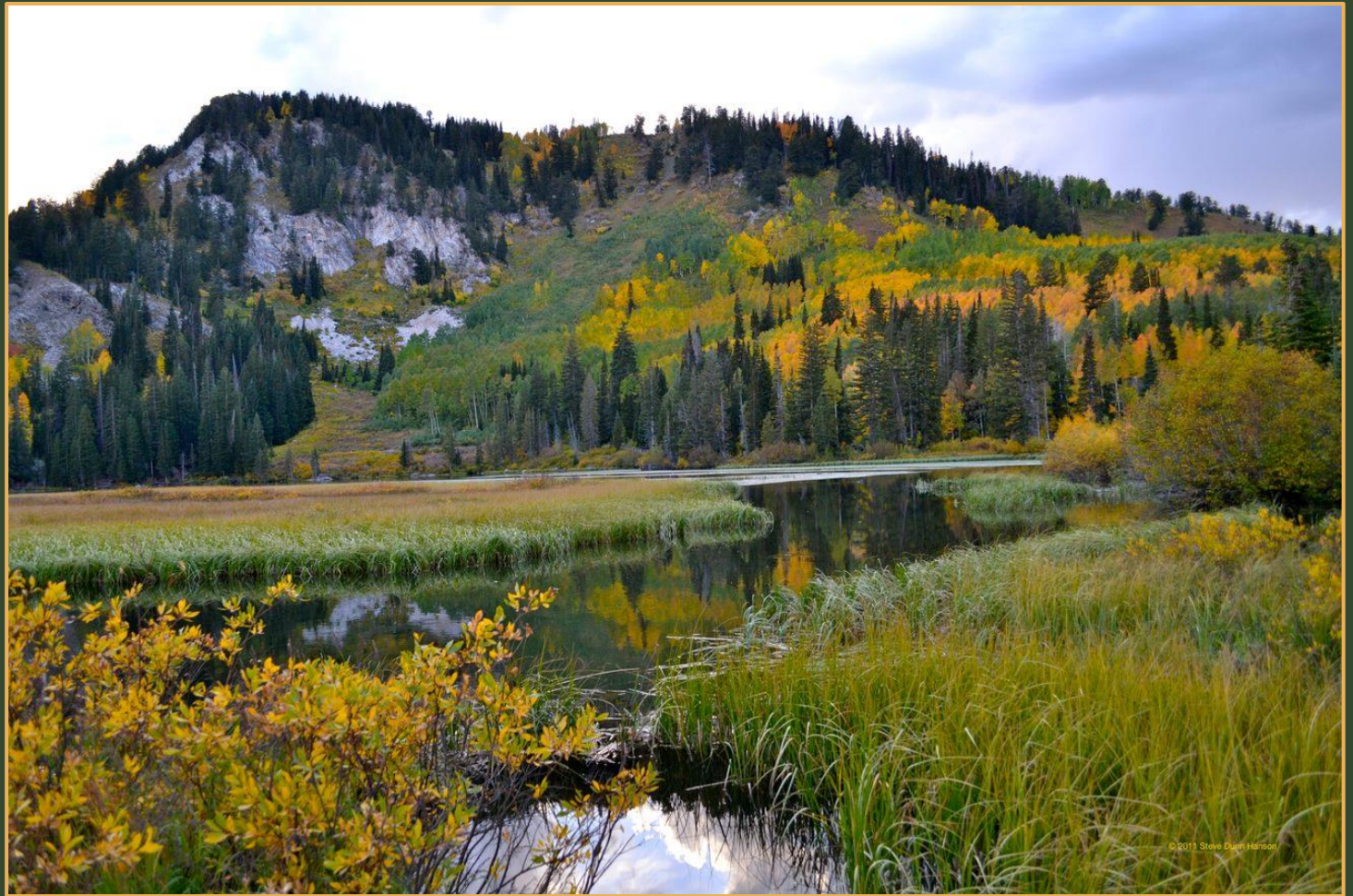
Water washes
telectual tarnish
from my soul.
I rise,
unburdened now
of weight
from sinful past.
And muscles,
strong
from carrying
my gross load,
are primed to
bear another's
pack.



Lake Coeur d'Alene Idaho 2014

BE STILL AND KNOW

Sometimes, I cloud
tranquil now's with
musings about tomorrow.
But peace has not to do
with unseen fancies.
The stillness of this moment
is where His beauty lies.
His meat and drink
o'erflowing.
So why let nagging future
starve my soul,
when here,
I can partake?



Brighton Utah 2011



Brasov Romania 2009

Being Prepared

Crystal encased fruit
does not allay fear.
Calm comes
in counsel kept.
Peace,
in knowing
I will heed again.

Birth (or Death)

Enshrouded by some coarser stuff,
I slip from Light.
And find eternity obscured
by veil of time.



Otis Orchards Washington 2010

Book of Mormon

In desert trek,
or wilderness wander,
Liahona arrow points
straight, true, clear.
Except when murmur
or thankless heart
eclipse its Light.
Mormon's legacy
is my Liahona.
I will not allow a cloud
to veil its Beam.



Montana 2015

Born of God

Abysm walls pulse
forth,
pushing me to Light.
And in its Ray
I see,
both who I am
and who I am
to be.



Otis Orchards Washington 2023

By Example

I invite them
to follow Christ,
then
show them how.



New Zealand 2017



Spokane Valley Washington 2011

Can Ye Feel So Now?

I nonchalantly slide
the white-bright ember
from the fire and
watch it for a while.
It shines an
ever-reddening hue,
holding its glow while
I muse.
But unfocused stare
ignores its spectrum slip
to ruby-blood.
A chill,
from somewhere,
rouses me from
drowsy nod.
I quickly rise and
thrust the ember
to the fire,
before its light
goes out completely.

CHARITY

To love
with His pure love,
I learn
to love Him purely.



CLOUDS

I could not see the ship
that Grandma pointed to.
After all, it was just a cloud.
A shapeless mass
that crept across the sky.
But I kept looking.
At last my eye
began to trace
the sail and hull
of her celestial sloop.
She pointed upward
one more time
to lift my sight
to yet another.
And soon I saw them
come and go,
a chalky fleet
of billowed sails
to carry soul
beyond telestial view.
They had been there
all the while.
The only thing I had to do . . .
was look.



Spokane Washington 2010

Consecration

I was told that sweated brow
was payment for my daily bread,
my wealth a measure of
my industry.

As though I earned it and
could do with as I pleased.

It fit nicely with my pride.

So steward promise

to treat all as His

was set aside

until another day.

But that was then.

The prophets' call for

nothingness

now rings true, replacing

idol voice that shouted,

"Worship me!"

I box Christ's gifts

in grateful soul

and give them back to Him.



Hobbiton New Zealand 2017



St. Louis Missouri 2002

DEALING WITH AGE

I was useful then . . .
and used.
But now . . .
I sort my yesterdays
as cast-off clothes,
pretending
they are stylish,
then place them
in my trunk
to rummage through
tomorrow.
I think then, though,
I'll slip them on,
like worn-in boots,
and go help another.



New Hampshire 2009

Death (or Birth)

My eyes grow bleary,
milking out the now.
A gauzy drape
to close Telestial tour.
And voices,
as echoes in a dream,
slide through its folds.

"Don't leave!"
I remember—
has it been that long ago—
when childhood's carefree frolic
also beckoned me
to pause.
But I reluctantly moved on.

And will again,
though nothing's
clear beyond.
"Don't leave!"
Should I stay?
I think not.
I see Light ahead.



DOUBT

So many times
along
the
way,
doubt's
darkness
leads to
resurrection's
Ray.

Veradale Washington 2018

DREAMING

What was real
to me before,
became a dream.
Now, I've just
swapped
dreams again, it
seems.
So, what is real?
Does it matter
since I am changing?



New Zealand 2017

Faith

What good
is hope
if I won't
look with
eyes of faith?



Honokaa-Waipii'o Hawaii



FIRST BABY

As tiny hand
wraps my finger,
I marvel that this flesh,
with feel like
warm silk,
came from her . . .
and him.
But eye-light speaks
the greater miracle.
You are you!
Descended
from unseen realm,
to bond with their creation,
you bless their lives . . .
and mine.

Judy & Jacob Hanson 2009



GIVING AWAY PEACE

Butchart Gardens 2017

Hatred snatches peace
from my weak grasp
and tosses it
with spiteful nonchalance

into the hands of him
whom I perceive to be
my enemy.

Why I would give away
my soul's control
so readily,
is beyond me.

GRACE FOR GRACE

As I reach down
to raise another,
Thy hand takes mine
to lift me higher.
And soul-strength
that had ebbed from me,
floods back.
A surge of Light
from Thee.



Montana 2013

Grace—After All I Can Do

On desolate ocean
far from shore,
I find myself becalmed.
I do not sleep

but set the sail,
then plead
for wind
to bring me home.



Huntington Beach, CA 2006



Sighișoara, Romania 2009

Growing Up

I do not like doors
that close behind then lock.
And me without the key
to go back through.
So, I pause
before I turn the handle.



North Central Washington 2010

Home

It's always day for me.
When shadows slide together
from a drooping sun,
I head for home.
There are no shadows there.

Humility

When I think
that it is me,
I find
my glint
is hard to see.
As I lose
myself in Him,
His Beam
bursts forth
where e'er
I am.



Hilo Hawaii 2023

IMPARTING

In giving bread and wine
to succor all who sit at meat
with Him,
He goes without.

I take His offering
and feebly try to do the same.
But find, no matter what I give,
my plate and cup
stay brim.



Homeless Woman Ploiesti Romania 2007

Judging

I used to judge another among others,
by his child. and their struggles
A handy yardstick. with sons and daughters.
But I forgot about Then my own reminded me.
Adam and Lehi,



Liberty Lake Washington 2018

MY WIFE

A well that succored countless
might now be dry.
At least its water
vapid, sullied, useless.
You would think.
But yours gives constant place
to purer still.
A draught
that seeps through sands of time
to cool in sorrows depths.
Then quenches thirst
for broken-hearted,
refreshes, soothes,
discouraged brow,
and cleanses,
with its flood of righteous love,
the sin soiled soul.
This water you so freely give
goes ebbless its eternal way.
A stream of Light
that widens with the years
and carries those
who ride upon its wave
to its Source—
and End.



Joyce Hanson and Kate Lee 2014

Obedience

I follow Him
not knowing where,
but where He is
I want to be.



OPPOSITION IN ALL THINGS

Sometimes
eternal tug-match
tires me.
A pull on left.
A pull on right.
Will I split apart?
Of course not!
And because I feel,
I know
I AM.



Veradale Washington 2019

Pain

I've learned that pain does not require a volunteer. Although, I must admit, there have been times when my behavior summoned it.



Kohala-Kapa Hawaii 2023



Hawaii Island Puna-Panauinui 2023

PATIENCE

When floods of turmoil
'round me rage
like some Satanic sea,
and toss my soul
with angry wave
so uncontrollably,

like oil upon the water,
the Master's words console:
"My child, in your patience,
possess ye your soul."
O help me, Lord, to understand,
if I'm to be like Thee,

I too must bear the cross of life,
and do it patiently.
No matter what the forces be,
I must have control.
For thus I learn to overcome—
to possess my soul.



Prayer

My mouth forms
heart-words that
speak of weakness
as they drop
upon the altar
with my tears.
Then, Ray seeps
through my
veil of pride
to warm my soul.
It is enough
for now.

Veradale Washington 2015

Prosper in the Land

Nephi's virtue measure
is not
gold tape
I now see.

But prosper promise
concerns Eternal cache.
Confirmed by heart glow,
not vault gleam.



Czech Republic 2009



Râşnov, Romania 2008

Questions

Two questions now
define this life for me:
How near am I to Light?
Am I where I want to be?

REMEMBERING LIGHT

Life did not begin.

Life will not end.

To remember who I am

is to remember Light.

To become who I can become

is to be filled with Light.

First, I must remember.

First, I must *want* to remember.



Revelation

Perhaps Christ paused
as Spirit led Him
to harsh wilderness,
but He followed.

And I am learning
not to question
the beginning
before I see the end.



Joseph Smith's Birthplace 2009



Liberty Lake Washington 2019

Searching for Light

Life is a scavenger hunt.
Our list of things to find
is etched in our souls,
not our minds.
We have forgotten
what they are.
Or where to find them.
We only know
we will recognize them
when we see them.
If we want to.
The wanting is
everything.
When our bag is full,
we come back to Light.
And that is the prize.



Maya & Jacob Hanson 2012

THE SECOND BABY

My heart's a balloon
not a paper bag.
But I didn't know that
until you came.
It was brim with love before . . .
no room to include another.
Not without tearing apart.

That's what I thought.
But there was no rending
with expansive heave
when I first held you.
My heart
was simply bigger.
And it will grow again.

SERVING

What makes
my mite
acceptable?
It contains
my soul.



Bucharest Romania 2009

SUFFICIENT GRACE

It doesn't come too early.
It doesn't come too late.
It never is too little.
It never is too great.





Symbols

With cursory glance
I saw a wall.
But focused soul
pierced through
to Light.

Bran Castle Romania 2007

First Experience in the Temple

A sea of white,
an undulating wave
from front to back.

I feel so strange.
It is not what I had thought!
And yet—have I seen this before?

I don't know, but something
makes me want to weep—
like coming home.



Spokane Washington Temple 2012

THE COVENANT

I give all I have.
He does the same.
My gift is my life.
His is His name.



Near Brasov Romania 2008



Pitesti Romania 2008

The Detour

I took a detour once.
A rude road I'd not seen.
Each rut, each rock,
brought longing
for the path I had to leave.

I stumbled on and on
but reached my journey's end.
Refreshed, content,
I gazed around.
No paved road entered in!



Spokane Valley Washington 2012

The Family Reunion

He sprints across
sunlit, grassy sweep,
while under sycamore shade
I close my eyes . . .
and see me.

Father's hand reaches out,
touching mine.
He sighs . . .
"That used to be me!"
Grandpa smiles, frail fingers
clutching Father's arm.
"And me!"

My son runs winded to my side
and takes my hand.



The Gospel

To partake
with Him
from
Lehi's tree . . .
I descend
with Him
to Calvary.

Spokane Valley Washington 2009

THE HOLY SPIRIT

When soundless air surrounds,
I hear.

I close my eyes,
and see

In darkness,
there is Light.

In silence,
is The Word.



Island Park Idaho 2009



Time

When I was a kid,
my grandpa asked,
"Ya' wanna nickel today
or a dime tomorrow?"
I took the nickel,
I remember,
and bought a rose
for Mom.
The rose'd be gone
when I had the dime.
I'm thinking, now,
it's the same thing
with time.

Manito Park Spokane Washington 2010

TRUTH

If first,
I'll seek the truth in me,
then,
I'll find truth where ere it be.



WHEN I LISTEN

Quiescent seed
set in heart loam
surges forth.
Heaving.
Throbbing.
Swelling.
Searing bosom
with its fire.
My hand is loosed
to write this marvel,
and His Word
shoots forth
with power.
Piercing.
Rousing.
Lifting.
Changing
all who read . . .
including me.



Yellowstone Park 2009



New Zealand Black Sand Beach 2017

WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

At darkest hour,
I long for Light,
but often feel alone.
And sometimes doubt
that He is there.

Forgetting that my own son
learned to walk,
because I took
his hand to steady
then let it go.

WORKING ON HOPE

Soil-strips that framed his plot
are gone.
And ocher cloak that
spoke of death
has long since come alive
in shamrock green.

The same as grass along its sides
that never was disturbed.
I wouldn't know,
to see this now,
that death was real.
Had ever been.

Except for
weathered headstone.
A memory cut off
with jagged edge
right in the middle
of everything.



Joyce Hanson 2004