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# Letters inscribed upon His sacred scroll

An anthology of poetry by  
Australian Bahá'ís 1999

*Compiled by Belinda Belton*

*“Oh Friends! Be not careless of the virtues with which ye have been endowed, neither be neglectful of your high destiny... Ye are the stars in the heaven of understanding, the breeze that stirreth at the break of day, the soft-flowing waters upon which must depend the very life of all men, the letters inscribed upon His sacred scroll...”*

*Bahá'u'lláh*

## Call to the Youth

On God's Sacred Mountain,  
 from holy white steps  
 a trumpet was raised  
 and the clarion call sent forth  
   - high and sweet and clear -  
 into the stillness.

You, at your desk  
 paused until the last pure note had disappeared,  
 then putting your books aside,  
 went forth to discover  
   love and loneliness  
   laughter and tears  
   doubt and faith  
 and the knowledge of self.

And in the quiet I can hear  
 a nightingale singing in your heart.

*Belinda Belton*

“There are stars on the ground.”

*Three year old passenger, one evening, gazing on the city lights  
 of India far below.*

## Night flight over Sydney

Vast glittering net,  
   beaded, bejewelled  
 cast across the twisted depths of darkness.

## Autumn is falling...

*(for Terry, 1992)*

Autumn is falling  
 night comes early  
 and chill.  
 let me creep to your hearthstone-  
 let me warm myself by your heart

*Belinda Belton*

## I am the One...

I am the one you're persecuting  
 I am the one you've called  
 the killer of Christ then  
 the betrayer of Muhammad  
 I am the ugly, the crippled, the sad  
 the hungry, and the dispossessed.

I am the beggar on the corner  
 and the lonely king in the palace  
 I am the one you are persecuting  
 And the one whom you reject.  
 I am the poor, unfortunate child  
 whose house you've just wrecked.

I am the land you call occupied  
 The one whom you've kept captive  
 the one whose rights you have denied  
 I am the Ancient City of Peace...  
 I am the innocent babe on the bus  
 in your blind hatred you've just killed

I am the one you segregate  
 with contempt into ghettos in Africa,  
 I am the tin miner in Chile,  
 the cocaine grower, Columbia  
 I am Harlem, I am Redfern  
 and I am Fitzroy, Victoria.

I am the one you torture  
 for taking the "wrong view"  
 In your regime of terror  
 I get in your way as you're  
 squaring your circles and bashing  
 square pegs into round holes.

I am the bludger you resent  
 having to pay the dole to  
 The hopeless poor among the rich  
 A child who lives on the streets  
 a helpless mother in a home of want  
 The homeless drunk under a bridge.

You sneer at me for selling my blood  
 My body or bits of it to a surgeon  
 I live in the gutters of Pakistan  
 of Moscow, Lima or in India:  
 I am one of the ten percent planned  
 unemployed here in lucky Australia.

*Les Endrei*

# Come forth Beautiful Maiden...

Come forth beautiful maiden,  
 the time is here  
 For reunion with the world,  
 Awake  
 From your age long sleep  
 I am the Planet Earth.

Come forth, O Spotless  
 Maiden  
 Hold your kind,  
 cool, soothing hand  
 Over my burnt forests,  
 wipe from my brow  
 The acid rain  
 the radiation  
 And soothe the  
 smouldering deserts.

Stroke my white hair  
 with loving hands  
 Caress the azure blue  
 of my face,  
 Hold my hand and lead me  
 on my limitless Path  
 Through the star studded  
 mysteries of space.

How I long for  
 Your good pleasure,  
 The unseen miracles  
 of Your Essence,  
 How I desire Your Charm,  
 Your Fairness,  
 Your Chastity,  
 Your Innocence...

Heal me, O Holy Maiden,  
 of my passion for power  
 and for gold  
 The festering  
 cancer  
 of wars...

Here are my gifts:  
 of Tribes  
 The Sacred Sites,  
 The jewel of Krishna,  
 From David the King  
 The Golden Star  
  
 The Sacred Fire  
 of Zarahustra,  
 The Wheel of Buddha  
 the Glowing Cross  
 The Crescent of Islam  
 and the most precious jewel,  
 The Greatest Name!

# The Suns Of The Seasons

Come forth, Beautiful,  
 Holy Maiden,  
 The time is now  
 for your union  
 with the Earth,  
 Awake from your  
 age long sleep,  
 This is the life giving Kiss  
 Of the Prince of Peace,  
 the Redeemer of the world...

Come forth, Beautiful.  
 Holy  
 Maiden  
 The time is here  
 for your marriage  
 with the world,  
 Make your home  
 forever  
 with me,  
 I am the Planet Earth!

*Les Endrei*

Do you deny  
 that the sun exists,  
 Because the night  
 is dark?  
 Do you see  
 in the winter's lifelessness,  
 The end, forever,  
 of summer?

And believe that if the moon  
 is sometimes slim  
 It will never again  
 shine full at night?  
 That the harvest  
 of autumn leaves  
 Forbids the new  
 spring's blooms?

That, if love grows dim  
 in the clouds of life,  
 It will never, as the sun,  
 blaze again in the summer sky?

Day after night  
 each next month  
 merges into seasons  
 and mounting years;

Life flows on  
 by invisible law  
 and as certain as its presence,  
 is the promise of its continuance.

Love, like the suns of the seasons,  
 will return.

*Jane Hunt*

## The Hope Of The City

Just below the surface  
Of the near millennial city  
Lies a world of lush green pastures,  
Of clean air, soft breezes  
And heady, sunny days.

Just below the surface  
Of the stony-faced city-dwellers;  
Below the hard self-centredness  
Of the carefully-clocked, crisply dressed,  
Androids of the city:

Just below the surface  
Of the glazed eyes of the masses,  
Lies the intuitive care of countless mothers,  
The loyalty and devotion of fathers and brothers,  
The tender affection of new brides.

Just below the surface  
Of this society so driven by money  
Lies a subterranean stream of kindliness,  
Of thoughtful consideration  
For the personal impact of life.

Just below the surface  
Of this angst-ridden metropolis,  
Lies the wistful hope of an aching multitude  
Who long for the end of care and trouble;  
The cessation of violence; the beginning of peace.

Just below the surface  
Of this confident young city,  
Astride its harbour, through which  
Have entered myriad different races,  
Lies a new world of unity of love.

*Jane Hunt*

## Neighbourhood Watching

They do not miss Sunday services.  
Conservatively attired, Bible wielding,  
the clan gathers across from our house  
for the weekly drive down to their hall.  
The kids are clad as adult miniatures,  
little guys in ties, girls in pretty dresses  
and patent leather shoes. Sometimes  
while waiting the younger ones stray  
across the street to ride on our tireswing  
before they are recalled and rebuckled  
into a van or sedan by vigilant mothers.  
My neighbours are certain that the return  
of Christ is imminent – signs abound,  
study confirms and every professional  
prophet they attract cites further evidence.  
These are decent people who live about as  
well as Christians can in the last year of  
the 20<sup>th</sup> century of their Christian calendar.  
They like animals, keep watch on our  
house when we're away, notice things  
like left-on headlights. Good neighbours.

As their shining vehicles move out at the  
appointed hour, their slow procession  
passes a migrant youth roller-blading in  
the opposite direction. His baggy jeans,  
baseball cap and flowing T-shirt emblazoned  
with a star and the word UNITY do not  
attract their eyes for more than the moment  
it takes to file a quick description just in  
case. They would not consider that such  
an exotic might know their Lord's current  
name and address. Their slow convoy  
winds down towards a red brick hall.

Oh, how the youth flies to meet mates  
who create new dances to hip hop  
soul plus rap.

*Allan Lake*

## Poems are like trees

I think that poems grow like trees,  
 subject to whim and sun,  
 object of moon and stares.  
 Something wakes the one  
 with ear to the breeze –  
 perhaps it's W.B.,  
 T.S. or dear Emily  
 throwing a line from just over (t)here.

Poems are strange as this day  
 when I can lose or gain faith,  
 fall in the river or love, rhyme  
 or write against the current.  
 Shall I decide me or  
 let the spirit guide me?

Poems, I see now, know  
 where they need to grow  
 to find a path to the light.

*Allan Lake*

## Children

Precious gift of life  
 All dreams.  
 No evil thoughts.  
 Just hope,  
 And Love,  
 And eagerness,  
 To be  
 And to become.

*Ray Meyer*



## The Language Of The Soul

What language does the soul speak?  
 English, French, Swahili, Urdu?  
 Oft-times silence!  
 The knower knows without words.  
 Two souls understand, and nothing is said.  
 Waves communicate: no word restricts.  
 Rainforests, silent: wonder filled.  
 Mists form and disperse without sound.  
 Vast sweeps of earth  
 Knarled rocks  
 Wind  
 Leaves stir  
 Flowers open  
 Hearts pound  
 Eyes well with tears,  
 Or sparkle with laughter,  
 Lovers touch.  
 Where are the words to limit life's experiences?  
 The language of the soul  
 is empathy,  
 One with another.  
 Harmony,  
 Vibrating together;  
 Love,  
 Fulfilment,  
 Silence.

*Ray Meyer*

## Life Lines

imagine you gone  
     no you to share this life  
     spread out in the palm of  
     our tiny son's hand  
 no life lines  
     leading me to see the world  
     in his grasp which comes so easily  
     to trust us  
 each finger folds  
     you and me  
     in a single stroke  
     he leads us to guide him  
 he touches our cheeks  
     and leaves his affinity deep  
     within our grasp  
 our heartlines joined  
     have caused him to appear  
     as if he has always been  
     the answer which we sought  
 he recreates our fortunes  
     in curtain fig trees  
     stretched along the strand  
 as we read the stretch of lines in  
     each other's hands  
     & hold this phenomenon  
     so dear  
     so fragile  
 one day to be a strong spiritual warrior  
     grasping the fate of the world  
     with his love for the Eternal Beloved  
 the palmistry  
     of this beloved  
     unfurls  
     the universe

*June Perkins*

## One Colour

One day death will make  
the final adjustment,  
after years and years of changes  
along the way.

Dynasties and systems,  
defined and redefined,  
lives sown and resown  
with different colours.

Death, at last, will yield  
one colour, unheralded,  
mixed with joy  
and this old body  
will make its final move  
into that hole for those  
who speak no more.\*

*Ron Price*

(\*expression used by the Báb in *Selections of the Writings of the Báb.*)

## Beyond Last Gasp

*One life* of so much Consequence!

— —

*One pearl* -to me-so signal-

— — to take it-

Would cost me-*just a life!*

-Emily Dickinson, Poem Number 270

One can not measure consequence  
on this earthly side,  
except through hints.

There are strong hints, too,  
in His Word  
about the other side.

It would seem the soul  
needs this life  
to define *that* consequence.

Gem or pearl or monarch  
need time to shape their form  
and you never know  
until beyond last gasp  
just what shape  
you've taken  
that befits  
immortal clasp.

*Ron Price*

## Flying

Children often dream of skies,  
of wingless soaring, a gasping swoop  
through cold cloud into the eye-aching  
sun, warm in the bright play

Of air; or long to see clear,  
released from the clattering sway  
of Times railed carriage, and from  
those nervous plans which should defend

Us from the thing that waits  
around the next blind bend;  
and they wish that images seen  
vivid in the mind might glow

Clean from the world's dust  
in the wordless speech that spirits know.  
I still dream, as caged birds do,  
who with each song affirm

That such dreams of skies are only  
dreams of going home.

*Shirin Sabri*

## Hunters

We all hunt happiness, as well we might  
with any bait that comes to hand, trying  
to coax it nearer, forever buying  
things we hope will cage up light

and love and flight. Hopeless,  
we chase on, lunge, grab and miss,  
fingertips brushing the feathers of bliss.  
Blinded by tears, we fail to notice

that happiness is the hunter, setting snares –  
perhaps what we need to master  
is not the task of running faster  
but the art of being taken unawares.

*Shirin Sabri*