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Another Day

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The Sign Says “Not Wanted”
by Kara L. Guld

As someone who has always been entranced by the ability of writers to create images and invoke emotion in their readers, I have, of late, taken great interest in improving and publishing some of my own work. I am keenly aware that my writing is sorely amateur, and in my quest I am prepared to receive countless rejections. I have already braced myself against rejection of works that generate from my soul and expose my very being. However, upon embarking on this publishing mission, I am bombarded with what my mind pictures as a sign with a blinding white background and bold, red print warning, “CHRISTIANS NOT WANTED.”

I recall history classes where I learned of the days of the immigrant in which signs posted boldly declaring, “CHRISTIANS NOT WANTED.” Apparently, our celebration of diversity does not include the religious convictions of the Christian population.

Initially, I was enthusiastic at the prospect of setting out as an independent young writer of poetry. I sought journals and reference books providing information about the “how’s,” “where’s,” and “why’s” of being published. My blaze of excitement was quickly detected and extinguished by the publishing gods. My hopes were mercilessly ripped from my heart, sure to leave an uneven scar of battle. Most simply put, my writing is useless because I do not attribute life’s ups and downs to the hand of God. But it is not useless. It is needed to prove the point that not all Christians are mushy writers with sing-song, Brady Bunch lives, that we are capable of writing quality verse reflective of life as it is lived by countless persons.

For a short while, I was able to overlook the prejudice towards Christian writers because some Christian forums, although not all suited to my work, were available. However, I was entirely appalled upon discovering that a particular publication requested poetry portraying life’s “ups and downs” (a rather trite phrase, I might add), but that Christian poetry would not be accepted. I was suddenly enraged. A wave of disgust at such an arrogant display of intolerance swelled through my emotions, ruthlessly washing away my preconception that I live in a society accepting of religious diversity. I immediately thought, “My life has ups and downs. The lives of people in my congregation have ups and downs. They deal with death, divorce, teen pregnancy, abuse of all kinds, and all other of life’s aspects. Why should I and other Christians be excluded from submitting poetry to a publication desiring poetry reflecting exactly these topics?” Apparently, because I contemplate my creator rather than violence or death when I am faced with tumultuous times, my writing is unacceptable. Perhaps my writing is useless because I do not attribute life’s “ups” to my own effort, but to the hand of God. But it is not useless. It is needed to prove the point that not all Christians are mushy writers with sing-song, Brady Bunch lives, that we are capable of writing life’s ups and downs.

I want to shout to the literary world that my poetry speaks to the storms and sun breaks of daily living. It is crafted from experience, the experience that God has given expressly unto me. I refuse to write to the confines of writing created by those who condemn the belief that I chose and allow to guide my life. I will continue to write and to let my faith penetrate that writing, because I will know that it exceeds the worldly desires for fame and is composed with integrity in order to glorify God and what he has done for us.

Another Day

I sit surrounded by darkness.
Alone with my mind,
Alone with my thoughts
Watching ideas fall down like rain.
In the warm darkness I weep.
Weep for a better time,
Weep for a better life
The tears drain into the puddle of night,
Memories once held so pure
Gleam weakly in the starlight
dull and tarnished, remnants from a ruined house.

Tarnished by time,
by life,
by struggles,
by intelligence.
The darkness speaks,
whispering epics of dusty times past
the images reflected in the puddle.
Like quicksilver, memories flow
a motion picture of the past.

A crack appears in the puddle,
the silver drains away.
Daylight streams into the darkness.
Another day begins.

Tom Long