Famous in Russia

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Famous in Russia
Jillian Meredith Olsen

On March 30, 1997, I embarked on a journey to another country to host an English Camp. I taught in classrooms and spread the word of God to people who had never been exposed to the writings or teachings of Jesus Christ. The months of learning a religious performance and vari­ous words and phrases in Russian did not nearly prepare me for the effect this trip had on my faith, my outlook on life, and my heart. I realized how sacrificing my time and anything I possibly hold onto the bar and manage to stand; the dark/half light, half good/half evil, and that our posture here is to differentiate between the two, and then to choose the light, and to fight for it, knowing that darkness will always follow in our wake. When Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan," what did he mean? Was it, perhaps, I cannot eliminate you from the world, Satan, but I can choose not to make you my focus. I can choose hope over despair, good over evil, heroes over villains. Get thee behind us, Satan. Get thee behind us, Hitler, Stalin, Slobovan Milosevic. As the old spiritual says, "I ain't gonna study war no more."

And now, Vaclav Havel, Raoul Wallenberg, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Joan of Arc, Elizabeth Fry, get thee where I can see you, know you, be inspired by you, believe once again in the human race, believe in myself, believe that life is meant to be beautiful, and that it is not absurd, but, on the contrary, rich with meaning and with promise.

Another Stubby Bomar
Christine Weiler

My hands are wide at the bottom
And narrow at the top.
"Musically inclined" is what my palmistry book says.
But small, chubby hands
That barely span the octave
And short, stubby fingers
Not willing to move through Mozart's trills
Make me wonder.
After thirteen years, the left hand (traitor)
Still refuses to play viola with vibrato
Or shift to third position with any grace
And the fingers will not reach
Across the guitar's five strings.
My mother must have known.
She taught me to sing.

Over and Under
Michael Schultz

Over the lips, under the table,
I'm not able,
To speak a decent sentence,
To be a fool's apprentice,
I just lie here in a stupor,
Feeling kind of low.
Am I here at all?
If I feel like I'm small
Am I here at all?
Or someone soiled in vomit?
I just don't know.