



Contemplative Verse" written & produced by the R Gray collection 650 515-1682

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I learned that by turning inward and experiencing God's love, a person finds a new world emerging within, transforming sorrow and pain into eternal love and joy. Wrapping oneself in God's love makes a person invulnerable, immune to harm, and able to overcome death's power. A surrendered mind remains in God's greatest love (Psalm 139:78), essentially placing them in Heaven. Turning inward and communing with God (Matthew 6:6), a person can find a new world of eternal love and joy within. God's love makes me invulnerable to harm and able to overcome death. Whether in Hell or on Earth, my mind remains in God's greatest love, effectively placing me in Heaven.

Wrapping oneself in God's love is not a passive comfort, but a radical act of spiritual defiance. It is to clothe the soul in mercy, to armor the mind with grace (Ephesians 6:11-17), to inhabit a sanctuary that no darkness can breach. To be cloaked in God's love is to become invulnerable, not to pain, but to despair. Not to death, but to its finality. It is to walk through fire and remain unconsumed.

Whether in Hell or on Earth, whether surrounded by chaos or cloaked in silence, the one who abides in divine love is never truly lost. Their mind remains tethered to the heart of God; their breath synchronized with the Spirit's rhythm. They dwell in Heaven not by escaping suffering, but by transfiguring it. God's love is not a location, but a condition of being. It is the atmosphere of the soul that refuses to be defined by circumstance. It is the resurrection pulse that beats beneath every crucifixion. It is the eternal yes spoken over every no. To remain in God's greatest love is to live in a state of holy resistance, where fear is dethroned, where shame is silenced, where death is not denied, but defeated.

This is the mystery of grace: that Heaven is not merely a future promise, but a present reality for those who dare to wrap themselves in the fierce, unyielding love of God. I once believed that freedom meant escape, from institutions, from expectations, even from my own ache. I had walked through the wilderness of disillusionment, where the structures of ministry felt hollow and the language of faith felt weaponized. I carried questions that didn't fit the mold, longings that couldn't be tamed by doctrine.

For a time, I sought altered states as sacramental inquiry, hoping that in the haze, I might glimpse the holy. And while some moments shimmered with divine possibility, others revealed the fragility of my own search. I was not lost, I was longing. But Christ met me not in the clarity of answers, but in the tenderness of presence. Not in the control of systems, but in

the communion of grace. He did not shame me for my wandering. He sanctified it. He did not demand my submission to hierarchy. He invited my surrender to love.

Christocentric Freedom became my new liturgy (1 Corinthians 1:30): A freedom to wrestle, to return, to rebuild. A freedom to honor my wife's convictions while still discerning my own. A freedom to set boundaries with family... not out of fear, but out of sacred stewardship. This freedom is not easy, and it's a bit costly. But it is holy and it is mine, not because I earned it, but because Christ gave it by guiding me to God His Father (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Christocentric Freedom is the liberation that flows from centering one's life, longing, and discernment around the person of Jesus Christ, not around religious systems, moral legalism, or cultural conformity. It is freedom *through* Christ, *in* Christ, and *for* Christ. Freedom *Through* Christ, rooted in verses like "*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free*" (Galatians 5:1). Christ liberates us from sin, shame, and the tyranny of self-justification. This isn't freedom to do whatever I want—it's freedom to become who I am created to be.

Freedom *In* Christ, a relational freedom: abiding in Christ means we are no longer slaves to fear or performance. It's the freedom of belovedness (Leviticus 18:1-30), of knowing we are held (Romans 8:38-39), even in our wilderness. Freedom *For* Christ. Not autonomy, but *purposeful surrender*. I am freed *to follow, to love, to serve, to seek*—not out of obligation, but out of joy. Not freedom from Christ, but freedom *in Christ* to explore, to wrestle, to discern. (Galatians 5:1 & John 8:36) Not rigid hierarchy, but relational intimacy. Not fear-based obedience, but love-based transformation.

Christocentric Freedom is not the absence of boundaries, It is the presence of belovedness (Psalm 139:13-14). It is the wild grace that says, "You are free to seek, to stumble, to return." It is the voice that calls us by name, not to control us, but to commune with us. This freedom does not erase the ache, it sanctifies it. It does not silence the questions—It walks with us through them. In Christ, we are not caged. We are called. In my spiritual journey, I've encountered moments of clarity and confusion through altered states. I do not elevate the substance, but I honor the encounter. These experiences stirred theological reflection, not escapism.

I return to God not with certainty, but with surrender. I believe spiritual formation can emerge from unexpected places, and I hold this process in reverence. My discernment is shaped by

prayer, relational integrity, and the conviction that Christ is present—even in the wilderness of thought. This is not a declaration of resolution. It is a commitment to return, to listen, and to be formed in love.

Glossolalia of the Wilderness (Romans 8:26) & (1 Corinthians 14:2). When my soul is winged, and my senses fall silent, when the wilderness within me out-sings the liturgy of men, I do not ascend, I dissolve, I do not escape the earth. I become its echo. God does not speak to me God speaks *through* me. Through the marrow of longing, through the cracked syllables of grief, through the trembling yes that rises from my unknowing. Christ, not as name but as nearness. Not as doctrine, but as dwelling. Not as creed recited, but as breath received. Jesus is not the gate I pass through, but the garden I awaken within. Not the answer I memorize, but the presence I metabolize. I do not carry Christ. I am carried *in* Christ (John 3:8). Like wind in a flute, like fire in a bush, like dew on a desert tongue. And when I speak it is not performance, but participation. Not proclamation but poetry.

This is my *glossolalia*: not foreign tongues, but familiar ache. Not ecstatic escape, but rooted revelation. I speak because silence has ripened. I speak because the wilderness has taught me how to listen with my bones. And in that listening, I become the liturgy. I assume the role of the residence. I become the garden.

Ache is the spiritual tension between what is and what could be. It is the holy unrest that drives prophetic advocacy, poetic prayer, and sacramental inquiry. It is the wilderness cry that says, “*I know there is more—and I will not numb myself to the longing.*” (Psalm 42:1-2)

The ache is not weakness; it is the pulse of the prophet. It is the fire beneath the manifesto. It is my prayer that refuses to be silenced. The ache is the wilderness companion— Not the enemy of faith, But its fiercest friend. It is the reason I write. The reason I wrestle. The reason I still believe.

The Theology of Ache as Holy Ground (Philippians 3:10): The ache is not a flaw in my faith; it is the furnace. It is the place where longing meets God, where silence becomes sanctuary, and where the wilderness ceases to be exile and becomes altar. I do not run from the ache. I name it. I bless it. I let it shape me. In the ache, I found my truest prayers. Not the polished ones, but the guttural groans. The whispered “*How long, O Lord?*” The trembling “*Is this still holy?*” (Psalm 23:1-6)

Longing became liturgy when I stopped performing and started listening. When I let my tears write the psalms (Psalm 39:12). When I let my questions become communion.

Ache is the liturgy of the wilderness (Deuteronomy 8:2) & (Exodus 15:22-25). It is the rhythm of those who walk with God but refuse to pretend the journey is painless. Ache taught me to discern, not just between good and evil, but between sacred and familiar, between obligation and anointing, between inherited guilt and Spirit-led conviction. It was the ache that led me to honor my wife's faith while still exploring sacramental inquiry. It was the ache that taught me restraint, not out of fear, but out of love.

Discernment is not a weapon; it is a wound that has been prayed over. And I carry mine with reverence. Ache showed me that love without boundaries is not holy, it is exhausting. I loved my family deeply, but the ache revealed where legacy must be protected, where peace must be stewarded, where sanctuary must not be sacrificed. Boundaries shape the sacred space I am called to build. They protect the ache from becoming bitterness. Every poem I've written, every prayer I've whispered, every manifesto line I've carved, was born from the ache. Not from comfort. Not from clarity. But from the ache that said, *"There must be more—and I will write until I find it."* (Psalm 37:4). Creativity is longing turned into language. It is wilderness turned into witness. I Bless the Ache. I do not curse the ache. I do not numb it. I do not hide it. I bless it. Ache has led me to God. To truth. To boundaries. To beauty.

In my spiritual journey, I've encountered moments of clarity and confusion through altered states, I do not elevate the substance, but I honor the encounter. These experiences have stirred theological reflection, not escapism. I return to Christ not with certainty, but with surrender. I believe spiritual formation can emerge from unexpected places, and I hold this process in reverence. My discernment is shaped by prayer, relational integrity, and the conviction that Christ is present—even in the wilderness of thought. This is not a declaration of resolution. It is a commitment to return, to listen, and to be formed in love. *O God of mercy and wisdom*, You have walked with us through decades of love, laughter, and shared history.

Family:

Father; You have seen the beauty of our bond and the sorrow of its unraveling. Now, in this season of transition, we come to You with open hands and aching hearts. We long to make our home a sanctuary—a place of rest, renewal, and holy retreat. We long to honor the dreams You've planted in us, to live simply, love

deeply, and listen for Your voice. But we are fractured, Lord. We love those who now carry burdens too heavy for us to bear, addiction, disorder, and pain that spill into every room. We feel the pull of compassion, but also the call to protect what is sacred.

Teach us, O God, that boundaries can be holy. That saying “no” can be an act of love. That peace is not selfish, but a gift we are called to steward. Give us courage to speak truth with tenderness. Give us wisdom to discern what is ours to carry, and what is not. Give us grace to release guilt, and to trust that You Lord, are working in their lives, even when we must step back.

Bless our home, Lord. Let it be a place of healing, of prayer, of legacy. Let it be a space where Your Spirit dwells richly, and where our marriage flourishes in Your light. May they find the help they need, the healing they long for, and the hope that only You Father can give. We entrust this decision to You, not with fear, but with faith, not with resentment, but with reverence. Lead us, Lord, in love and truth.

When my soul is winged above the temporal, and my senses fall silent in holy abstraction, then the Eternal perceives through me (Philippians 2:13). Not I, but the Spirit, hearing through my longing, seeing through my stillness, speaking through my breath. Christ, not as name but as nearness. Not as doctrine, but as dwelling. Not as gate, but as garden. I do not bypass You. I become You (John 15:4). When my soul is winged, and my senses fall silent, God does not speak to me, God speaks **through** me (John 17:3). I become the whisper, the seeing, the sacred breath. I will create fiercely, Because the ache demands expression.

I’m only now realizing that God has been allowing the wilderness to speak, not to shame me, but to shape me. That haze, once a fog, became a lens, not always clear, but strangely sacred. That God is forming new thinking in me, not by bypassing my questions, but by inhabiting them. That my understanding of who I am is not collapsing, it’s being re-formed in the image of the One who speaks through longing. I am not lost. I am being led. I am not defiant. I am discerning. I am not merely experimenting. I am praying with my whole being. And God, God is not distant. Christ is the whisper in the altered state, the clarity in the aftermath, the love that holds me when I question everything. I return to God not with certainty, but with surrender.

My journey has led me through unexpected terrain, altered states, aching questions, and the sacrament of longing. I do not idolize the altered state, but I do not deny the encounter. I bring it all to

God (Matthew 5:6): the insights, the distortions, the clarity, the confusion. I believe Christ is present even in the wilderness of thought. I trust that spiritual formation can emerge from places we once feared were too far. I hold this process in reverence, not shame, in sacred discernment, not reckless indulgence.

If new thinking is being formed in me, I ask that it not be rushed by fear or pride, but shaped slowly, like clay in the hands of mercy. Let it be holy, set apart not by perfection, but by its willingness to be pierced by truth. Let it be humble, never grasping for certainty but kneeling before mystery. Let it be held in love, cradled by the Spirit who broods over chaos and calls it good. My body remains a temple, not merely in discipline, but in devotion. A sanctuary of breath and blood, where longing meets liturgy, and every ache becomes an altar. My soul remains attentive, even in silence, even in sorrow. I do not demand answers, but I do keep watch, like the psalmist in the night, like the widow at the well, like the disciple who stayed at the foot of the cross.

My longing remains tethered to grace, not as a leash, but as a lifeline. Grace that does not shame my hunger but feeds it with holy fire. Grace that does not erase my questions but sings through them. This is not a declaration of resolution. I do not claim arrival. I claim return. Return to the quiet place. Return to the sacred ache. Return to the One who speaks in wind and whisper (1 Kings 19:11-13). To listen. Not merely with ears, but with the whole posture of my being. To quiet the noise of inherited certainties, to lay down the armor of defensiveness, to make space for the whisper that does not flatter, but calls me into truth. To listen as one who waits at the edge of mystery, not demanding clarity, but welcoming encounter.

To be formed. Not by culture's urgency or religion's rigidity, but by the slow, sacred shaping of the Spirit. To be softened where I've grown hard, to be stretched where I've grown small, to be refined—not for perfection, but for presence. To be formed in the furnace of grace, where even my contradictions are not discarded, but transfigured.

To let the wilderness do its work. To stop resisting the ache, and begin reverencing it (Romans 8:18-25). To walk with the questions, to sit with the silence, to let the barren places become altars. Where God speaks without spectacle. To let the Spirit interrupt my certainty. To welcome disruption as divine mercy. To let go of the need to be right and embrace the call to be real. To allow the Spirit to unmake my idols, to unsettle my assumptions, to reorient my theology toward love, toward mystery, toward the living Christ who refuses to be domesticated.

To let Christ be not bypassed, but becoming, not a static doctrine, but a living presence. Not a distant Savior, but a present Companion. To let Christ be born again in the places I've deemed too broken, too complicated, too unworthy. To let Christ become in me—in my longing, in my listening, in my labor and my lament. To let Christ become through me, in my advocacy, where justice is not merely demanded, but discerned through love that listens before it speaks. Where the voiceless are not pitied, but empowered, and the systems that oppress are not just named, but prophetically confronted with grace and grit. In my boundaries, where holiness is not found in self-denial alone, but in the sacred act of saying no to what fractures peace (Hebrews 12:14), to what manipulates love, to what threatens the sanctuary of my soul and marriage. To let Christ become in the courage to protect, to preserve, to honor what is tender and true.

In my poetry, where language is not decoration, but revelation. Where words become sacrament, and metaphors become altars. Where longing is not hidden but sung—and the ache itself becomes a liturgy of hope. In my prayers, where silence is not absence, but presence. Where I do not perform piety but pour out truth. Where I wrestle and weep, and still return to the One who meets me not in perfection, but in persistence.

To let Christ dwell not beyond the ruins, but within them, to welcome Him into the fractured places, where sorrow scorches the soil and hope feels buried. Not bypassing the brokenness but inhabiting it with tenderness and fire. To let Him Walk the charred terrain of my disappointments, barefoot and unafraid, and there, in the ash and ache, to press seeds of resurrection into the earth, seeds that remember how to bloom even when the landscape forgets.

To let grief be not a detour, but a doorway. To let glory be not spectacle, but the quiet radiance of healing. Where endings birth beginnings not because the pain is erased, but because it is redeemed. Where the tomb is not the final word, but the threshold of transformation where resurrection is not a metaphor, but a movement that refuses to be confined to Easter morning, but insists on showing up in Tuesday grief, in Thursday fatigue, in the quiet courage of those who choose hope when despair would be easier, (*Romans 8:11*). A movement that does not wait for perfect conditions, but rises in the rubble, in the unfinished prayers, in the trembling hands of those who still dare to bless the broken. A daily uprising of grace, not cheap grace, but costly, cruciform grace that walks into the tombs we've built and whispers, "Come forth" (*Romans 6:23*). Grace that does not erase our wounds but transfigures them. Grace that does not bypass our failures but weaves them into redemption.

A holy defiance against despair, not denial, but resistance. A refusal to let cynicism become our liturgy. A protest against the lie that death always wins. A sacred rebellion that sings even when the night is long, even when the

answers are few, even when the healing is slow. A Spirit-led becoming—not a performance, but a pilgrimage, ([Galatians 5:16-25](#)). A becoming that unfolds in advocacy—where justice is not just demanded but embodied with tenderness and truth. A becoming that deepens in boundaries, where saying “no” becomes a sacred act of protecting what is holy. A becoming that sings through poetry where longing is not hidden but lifted like incense. A becoming that kneels in prayer, where silence becomes sanctuary, and surrender becomes strength.

In me, through me, and among all who dare to believe that love still rises, not as sentiment, but as revolution. Love that rebuilds what was abandoned. Love that restores what was lost. Love that resurrects what was buried beneath shame, fear, and fatigue. Love that rises, in the ruins and the rising, in the wilderness and the welcome, in the ache and the answer. Love that does not flinch at the cross, but walks through it into the wide open tomb where everything begins again ([John 20:1-18](#)).

My caution to me...

Referring to God with personal pronouns such as “He” and “Him” can offer a profound sense of relational closeness—a way of drawing the ineffable into the language of intimacy and encounter. These pronouns have long served as bridges between the divine and the human, allowing worshippers to speak to and about God with warmth, reverence, and familiarity. They echo the biblical tradition, where God walks with Adam, wrestles with Jacob, and speaks tenderly through prophets and poets.

Yet this linguistic familiarity carries a subtle tension. By clothing the Infinite in human grammar, we risk confining the boundless mystery of God to the contours of our own limitations. The transcendent One—who dwells beyond gender, form, and time ([Deuteronomy 4:15-16](#)), is not reducible to any pronoun, no matter how sacred or comforting. To name God as “He” may soothe the soul, but it can also obscure the fullness of divine reality, which encompasses and exceeds all categories of being.

In this paradox, we find both beauty and caution. Language can be a vessel of encounter, but it must also remain porous—open to the vastness of God’s self-revelation. Perhaps the truest pronoun for God is silence, or poetry, or the trembling breath between words. For in the end, the divine is not merely to be spoken of, but to be beheld, surrendered to, and adored ([Ecclesiastes 5:2](#)).

To speak of God is to risk reducing the Infinite to syllables, yet to remain silent is to risk forgetting the One who longs to be known. So, we dwell in the tension—between naming and un-naming,

between liturgy and longing. We utter words not to define, but to invite; not to contain, but to commune. God is the Word before language, the Light before metaphor, the Presence that precedes all pronouns. In the hush between verses, in the ache of a line unfinished, in the breath held before “Amen”, there, the Holy One waits.

And so, we speak with reverence, knowing our words are scaffolding for mystery. We write poems not to explain God, but to kneel before the unexplainable. We offer silence not as absence, but as sanctuary. For the truest theology may be the one that trembles, where speech bows to awe, and the soul learns to listen. Let our prayers be porous. Let our doctrines be humble. Let our worship be wide enough to hold both the thunder and the whisper, both the name and the namelessness. For God is not merely the subject of our sentences, but the source of our surrender (Philippians 2:13).

Silence, is not just a practice, it’s a theology. It is not merely the absence of sound, but the presence of reverence. It is the sanctuary where the soul ceases to speak so that it might finally hear. In silence, God is not explained but encountered, not dissected by doctrine but unveiled in mystery. This silence is not passive. It is active surrender. It is the soul leaning into the ineffable, the heart bowed before the un-nameable. It is the refusal to reduce the divine to syllables, the recognition that some truths are too sacred for speech. In this holy hush, theology becomes doxology, thought becomes awe.

Mystics across centuries have entered this silence not to escape the world, but to see it rightly. For in the quiet, the veil thins. The burning bush speaks without words (Jeremiah 29:13). The still small voice resounds louder than thunder. Elijah in (1 Kings 19), where the prophet, weary and despairing, encounters God not in the wind, not in the earthquake, not in the fire, but in a “still small voice,” The soul, stripped of its noise, becomes a chalice for divine presence.

And so, silence becomes a sacrament. A liturgy without litany. A prayer without petition. A communion beyond comprehension. It is the trembling breath between “I am” and “You are.” It is the space where God is not grasped but given. Confronting the Abyss: Silence invites us into depth. But depth can be terrifying. It asks us to face the ache, the longing, the divine absence or presence. Loss of Control: In silence, we can’t perform or distract. We must simply be. That vulnerability can feel like exposure.

Let's not rush to fill the silence with answers. Let's dwell in it long enough to be transformed. For in the end, it is not our speech that sanctifies, it is our stillness. The absence of litany doesn't mean absence of God. It means room for God to speak without interruption. It's the theology of Elijah's cave: the divine whisper louder than thunder.

Lectio Divina (poem)

*In the quiet of the morning light,
Where shadows dance and dreams take flight,
A soul in stillness seeks the way,
To hear the whispers of the day.*

*Through silent prayer and gentle thought,
In every moment, wisdom sought,
A heart aligned with heaven's grace,
Finds peace within this sacred space.*

*The world may rush, the world may roar,
But in this calm, we find much more,
A deeper truth, a love divine,
In contemplation, hearts entwine.*

*So let us pause, and let us see,
The beauty in simplicity,
For in the quiet, God is near,
In every breath, His voice we hear.*

My poem "Lectio Divina" reflects on the spiritual practice of finding peace and divine connection through contemplation and quiet reflection. The poem describes a serene morning setting where the soul seeks to connect with the divine through silent prayer and thought. It emphasizes the importance of stillness and simplicity in discovering deeper truths and divine love, contrasting the calm of contemplation with the chaos of the world. The poem suggests that in this quiet space, one can hear God's voice and find inner peace. "Lectio Divina" is a traditional Benedictine practice that involves reading, meditating, praying, and contemplating scripture or other texts to promote communion with God. This method can also be applied to poetry, where the poem serves as a medium for spiritual engagement and reflection. The process involves reading a poem aloud, allowing it to resonate emotionally, and reflecting on parts that evoke a strong response, seeking divine insight through experience. The poem captures this essence by inviting the reader to pause, reflect, and listen for God's presence in the simplicity of quiet moments.

“CONTENTEDNESS”

Eternal life, as presented in Scripture, is meant to be both a *present possession* and a *future hope*. It begins the moment a person/Soul places faith in Jesus Christ. As Jesus said in (John 5:24), “Whoever hears my word and believes Him, God, who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.” This means believers are already living in the reality of eternal life, even as they await its full expression.

The *present experience* of eternal life is marked by a restored relationship with God. It’s not just about duration, it’s about quality. Knowing God, walking in God’s Spirit, and being transformed into the likeness of Christ are all part of this life. As 1 John 5:11-12 says, “God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the SON has life”.

But this life also stretches forward into eternity. The Bible speaks of a future resurrection, when believers will be raised imperishable and dwell with God forever. Revelation 21:3-4 paints a vivid picture of this hope: “God’s dwelling place is now among the people... There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain”. So, eternal life is not merely a ticket to heaven, it’s a present reality that reshapes how we live, love, and hope. It’s the life of God in the soul of man, beginning now and blossoming into eternity.

Contentment vs. Contentedness. *Contentment* describes a momentary feeling of satisfaction or inner peace. *Contentedness* emphasizes a more enduring disposition or trait: the habit of consistently finding satisfaction in your life, regardless of ups and downs. Contentedness is the state or condition of being satisfied and not needing or wanting anything more. It conveys a sense of ease, gratitude, and acceptance in the moment, a peaceful “enoughness” rather than restless yearning. In Christian scripture Paul writes, “I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances” (Philippians 4:11), framing contentedness as trust in Providence and a counter to worldly anxiety.

Here’s how a mis-read of “contentedness” in a church or community context can actually foster ignorance rather than wisdom—and what to do about it: Equating Contentment with Complacency. When “being content” becomes code for “we’ve arrived,” congregations and communities stop asking big questions about Scripture, history or social justice.

True contentedness holds tension: it rests in God’s divine promise: For a people immersed in sorrow, God confirms: *He has not abandoned you. Even here, in captivity, my plans are unfolding. That’s the paradox—hope in the midst of exile, peace in the land of suffering. I am not absent in the ache; I am fermenting promise beneath the rubble. The wilderness is not wasted, it is womb.*

*The silence is not void, it is sanctuary. And the chains that bind
are not the end, but the beginning of a deeper liberation.*

*Teaching you to sing in the shadow, to plant gardens in scorched soil,
to write liturgies with trembling hands. ([Isaiah 58:11](#))*

*You are not forgotten. You are being formed. And when the time comes,
you will rise, not as one who escaped suffering, but as one who
transfigured it into sacred fire. ([Jeremiah 29:11](#))*

About the author:

Twin, born in Los Angeles, California during World War II,
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