



Of Seeds and Flowers

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AN ARMY IN HEAVEN

Simon is one story among many in an easy and inspiring, good for the heart read, entitled, "An Army in Heaven" by Kelley Jankowski. Kelley was a nurse who worked for 30 years in ICU and hospice care. I know you and I have heard stories like this before but this one is a transformer. Read with your heart wide open! I edit.

Simon came to the ICU unconscious and on a ventilator, having suffered a serious heart attack. He was 64, a soon-to-be retired college professor of economics. Kelley cared for him for the remainder of her night shift and when she returned the next night Simon was awake and off the ventilator. Introductions, explanations of what happened and light talk ensued. Simon spent the rest of the evening quietly recollected and occasionally teary. He spoke about his love of music and was a very accomplished violinist. They compared their favorite classic composers. He talked of all of his charity work and how his family always brought strangers home and cared for them.

Kelley continues: After some serious cajoling Simon began to tell

the silence of space, I heard the most beautiful music. It was a music I was unfamiliar with and it was so incredibly beautiful, beyond any me what was causing his tears. After dinner, I collapsed on the kitchen floor and I thought "This is it, I'm going to die." I heard my wife, Annie, frantically speaking with the 911 operator as the room began to spin and then everything went black. I woke up to find myself up near the ceiling, looking down at my body on the floor. I watched Annie shaking me and crying. I watched from above the ambulance as it sped away. Simon looked over at me and said, "And when I looked down at myself it didn't look like my regular body. I mean, it had form, but not exactly like normal skin and bones." "I can't seem to find the words for any of it."

After a slight pause Simon continued, "I kept going as a steady pace and was now at the tops of the telephone poles. When I was over the reservoir I could hear lapping water and frogs croaking and when over the city people talking. Gradually, I lifted higher and higher and then escalated at such an incredible speed I wondered why I wasn't burning up. But even at this

speed I felt no pain, no heat or discomfort, and no wind, only a light soothing breeze. I flew out of our atmosphere and into space, and, in composer I had ever heard.

I slowed down and looked at the earth. I was surprised at the enormity of it and wondered how something of such weight could just hang there, supported by nothing. "You understand I had no control over what was happening to me and yet I had no fear. I slowly turned away from the earth and quickly escalated to a speed that I knew was very near or surpassed the speed of light. I shot passed stars and planets, slowing down several times, as if God were allowing me to take in the beauty of His creation. I saw planets that are completely unknown to us, and when I drew near them I heard the most delicate music. I intuitively learned that what I was hearing was the music of that particular planet. It sounded something like Palestrina. I learned that everything God has created sings to Him—all of the planets, the stars, every galaxy-filling the universe with an immense orchestra of praise. WOW!! -and there are 1.2 million galaxies!!

I sped up faster and faster, and

found myself completely encased in darkness and propelling toward what I thought was a large star in the distance. As I came closer, the light of the star became brighter and brighter, and I was completely enveloped in this light. As I came closer, the more my desire to reach it intensified. I found myself in a room completely made of light from floor to ceiling, and then my mother and father appeared. They were young, very happy, and we were so excited to see each other again. I couldn't believe how much love flowed between us. My father took me by the hand and led me into a huge, rolling meadow. I knew instinctively we were on the outskirts of heaven. The place we were standing was immense and so beautiful. The scenery was indescribable. There were flowers, lakes and rivers, but on a scale that was incomparable to earthly size and beautiful beyond words and in colors that don't exist on earth. And the music-oh, the music! It permeated everything and it melted into a perfect harmony. It overwhelmed my soul. It was alive, if you can imagine that, and it passed through me and filled me up, quenching every desire, and I knew I was home."

"As I looked in absolute amazement, my mother came up from behind me and turned me to the right and there directly in front of me... Simon's chin quivered, and with a voice stifled with emotion, he said "Right there standing in front of

me, was Jesus." Wiping the tears away he continued, "I couldn't believe it was my Lord, my Savior. Jesus opened up His arms, and beaming from the holes in His hands and feet and side were rays of beautiful pulsating light that were so welcoming that I flew into His arms so hard I should have knocked Him over. Those feelings I had before, smiled, and immediately I was completely cleansed. All of my sins, my failures, my inability to be patient loving and caring-all my unworthiness and every stain of sin were completely gone."

"Come" Jesus said, "I want you to see." "We were immediately standing on the outskirts of an immense city that sparkled with light. The light of heaven surpasses millions of times the light of the sun but my eyes were never offended. Instantly, we were surrounded by people. They were all cheering and welcoming me so joyously. All of the people I had helped on earth were there."

Jesus placed His arm on my shoulder and said, "I want you to see what I have prepared for you from the moment you were created." Simon broke down and wept and then continued, "We were standing before a huge structure but not made of brick or stone because you could see through it. It was incredible beautiful and shone as the sun. This...this was my mansion!" As I stood in front of it, it was revealed to me that my life was the architect and

source of its construction and design. Everything I had done during my life that was good, kind, and directed toward the good of another human being, it was all there. Every bowl of soup, every blanket or encouraging word, every tender gesture done for the love of God built and engineered it all. He rewarded to the nth degree every single thing that I had done on earth that pleased Him. I was awestruck before such incredible magnificence and it was specific only to me. No others were the most ornate. Jesus beamed with such incredible happiness. I immediately felt how pleased He was at everything I had done for Him during my lifetime. He placed His arms around me and pulled me close to Him and into my soul I heard Him say, "I love you!" I melted in His embrace and was so overwhelmed with love for Him that my soul rejoiced in complete and utter praise. Spontaneous adoration sprung from my heart. WOW!!!

"Jesus makes you feel that everything He went through on earth - His life, His death, the enormity of His wounds- it was all done just for YOU, and He would do it again that you could be with Him for all eternity."

In the course of his story, Simon said that he became a father when he saw and spoke with his two beautiful girls that his wife lost in miscarriages.

Then, that awful moment came

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Vision and Reality

THE TRUTH WAS RIGHT THERE IN FIRST GRADE.

On August 10th, I became 79 years old. 73 years ago, I was about to enter first grade at Saints, Simon and Jude Grade School, Bethlehem, PA. There were 62 students in our class and this included 28 second graders. Can you imagine what the Teacher's Union would say today? -and we really learned because we were DISCIPLINED. I received my first Baltimore Catechism. -a question and answer format to the early learning of religion.

The first question in my catechism was: Who made you? Answer: *God made me.*

The second question was: Why did God make you? Answer: *God made me to know him, to love him and to serve Him in this world and to be happy with Him forever in Heaven.*

SIMPLE, CLEAR AND RIGHT TO THE POINT. And the logic that follows is:

If God made me, then I am a creature, not the Creator. Therefore, to be TOTALLY IN TOUCH with reality, the truth about myself and to correctly interpret the world in which I live and move and have my being, I have to think and act like a creature and not the Creator. One of the great and peace-giving moments in life is when we discover and accept our creatureliness, our mediocrity and dependence.

Remember, your present situation is not your final destination. It is safe to be humble. It is good to accept our smallness, our dependence. Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was not embarrassed to need a Savior and neither should we. Always act without ever losing AN AWARENESS OF YOUR SOURCE. Only God can satisfy your deepest longing for happiness.

Pray as if God is present and touching you RIGHT NOW. HE IS: "Father, help me be a son or daughter to you with some of the love and generosity with which you are a Father to me. And Jesus, help me to be a sister or brother to you with some of the love and generosity with which you are a Brother to me." Amen.

I TOOK A DNA TEST AND FOUND THAT GOD IS MY FATHER.

WHICH WAY DO I VOTE? is a very interesting article in "Psychology Today", Jan. 5, 2016 issue, by clinical Psychologist John D. Gartner. His study shows that what we want in a president and what we need are two different things.

Gartner sums up his study with the words, "In 2016, with political and economic difficulties afflicting the world and America's well-being linked to global forces, whoever has the strength to win needs, more than ever, the wisdom to govern as well. And as much as that makes demands on the candidates, it requires something from us too. We members of the electorate have the obligation to summon our own wisdom (not knee jerk, non thinking group loyalty etc.) . *It is our task to choose the president we need, not just the one we want*, someone who can **harness the dynamism of our lower-order attributes** to the **acumen of higher-order skills**. Will we rise to the occasion? Emphasis mine.

Mr. Gartner is asking us not to listen to our feelings, or group identity but to make our decision with our intellect. The last election was won because of millions of "non-informational" voters, votes. Was that what the founding fathers wanted? We can't afford this in the most critical election in my lifetime.

It was so refreshing to hear Dr. Ben Carson (50 doctorate Degrees) to begin his convention speech with a plea to recognize that the most dangerous reality afflicting our country at present is "POLITICAL CORRECTNESS" (Used to be called LYING.)

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when Jesus told me I had to go back, "I have more for you to do." Six months later his wife, Annie, suffered a massive stroke. Simon never left her side. He often stroked her face and told her, "Wait until you see it Annie, it's so beautiful. You go on ahead and save me a spot, I'll see you again very soon."

"An Army In Heaven", a great read. Puts our ordinary, over and over daily life, in TRUE PERSPECTIVE. There is one story of a life after death experience of "one bad man" that will raise the hair on your neck.

In the light of all the craziness going on in this election year, when I finished reading this, I, crazily, wondered what would Simon say to thinking I was complete, paled in comparison to what overwhelmed me in His embrace. Every molecule of my soul was exhilarated

beyond human imagination. Every wave of love that poured out of Him flew into every tiny, minute recess of my soul to the point that I felt like I would explode should it continue. Love, forgiveness, acceptance pulsated into me, and I was left with a complete and perfect knowledge and understanding of myself.

"Every fault and failing filled me with such remorse that I fell on my knees at His feet. I clung to His feet and kissed His wounds as He continued to fill my soul, wave after wave-ever increasing love. It was such tender and compassionate love that I had to beg Him to stop." Simon paused pressing a tissue to his eyes.

"Jesus reached down, took me by the hands and stood me up in front of Him. He looked at me, through me, and then other structure looked like mine because every soul's experience is

unique. Your life, your gifts and graces are different than mine and vice versa. Prayers of praise and thanksgiving, and petition were there adorning it with such beauty. The prayers I said for Hillary and Bill Clinton. Perhaps: "Please, please look into your hearts and souls. Discover what is most important. Maybe, the best decision at this moment in your lives would be to buy a ranch somewhere in the mid-west, retire, find a wise, holy, firm, loving person to spiritually guide your lives and discover the glory of character, humility, simplicity, truth, love and ride a chariot into the Kingdom of God. You can't believe how much He loves YOU and wants to be WITH YOU!!" "I'm praying for you." Simon. "What does it matter if you gain the whole world and lose your immortal soul?" "If only you recognized God's gift." Jesus. - *John 4:10*

