

A Psalm Of Gratitude

on being raised from the depths
of despair to joy and from dark-
ness to light.

O God, I am amazed at Thy most awesome ways!

I cannot fathom all the wonders that have now
been shown to me.

When I was a child I saw the beauty of each
blade of grass

And hugged the warm earth, loving Thee

And Thou wast everywhere, —

In the voices of my parents at dawn

In the silent whiteness of the snow

In my dreams and in my waking I clung to Thee

But as I grew to youth the Tree of Knowledge beckoned

And I sought it with such eagerness

That my daily prayer to Thee became a habit

And Thy Book a friendly volume to be opened at
infrequent intervals

Unless reminded by my learned father

For comfort's harbor I sought mother;

For poetry — my father

And Thee I took for granted as one takes the landscape

With scarce half a glance.

Thus all unknowing I shut out the light,

For Thou alone art the sole source of light,

And lamps of levity are often darker than the night
they would illumine

And darkness came upon me

More deadly than the plague of Egypt

I prayed to cease, — to be no more,

And in my anguish, cried:

"O God, take me hence

Lest I become a burden to my wife and children

And, by my sadness and despair, darken the lives
of others!"

I did not know how much the human heart can bear.

And yet there was no reasoned cause for all the
nameless fears

That filled my soul with panic

For Thou hadst heaped on me so many Blessings.

I was ashamed of my great fear and of my weakness

And stalked like an automaton about my duties

Twisting my face into a smile —

Seeking by day and night and vainly, — the
oblivion of sleep or death

But stretching not my hand against my life

For then I would endorse complete surrender

To all my pupils, children, and their children

And so I lived throughout a thousand hells of
my own building

With one dim spark of hope —

That just as night had come so suddenly upon my
hitherto rejoicing soul

The dawn would break as suddenly

If only I would bear and struggle on.

The long long months — and still no light,

And then a morning came that sang to me "Arise!"

I stared all unbelieving at the skies

AND FROM MY HEART I LONGED TO POUR
AND FROM MY HEART I LONGED TO POUR

All of the Psalms of David — those and more!
The night is over and the day is radiant
Each ordinary thing glows with a holy fire
Again I work — but joyously, —
Again create, — aspire.
I do not know the reason or the cause
Of all that happened to this battered soul of mine
Perhaps — to know compassion better
Perhaps to cheer another and to hearten him with
the firm knowledge
That all dark plagues and fears and agony
Will end, and leave a soul reborn
More gloriously awake to life and love,
Awake to Thee!

Ben Aronin