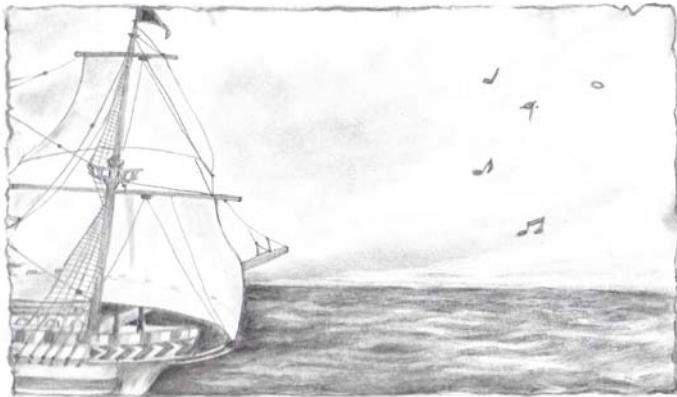


Song of the Troubadour

By Chris Madsen

*“An amazing love story
filled with beautiful truths,
spell binding from start to
finish”*



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~ Author's notes ~

Song of the Troubadour has many facets and layers within it. On the surface level it is an incredible love story. Beneath this love story is a vast wealth of guidance and truth for each aspect of our journeys. First read Song of the Troubadour simply as a love story. If any phrases or concepts appear unclear simply bypass them and continue reading. This manuscript is designed to touch lives in powerful ways in a myriad amount of circumstances. If something appears unclear it simply means it was meant for someone else at the time of your current reading. Perhaps a later reading will bring it more into focus.

At points during the first reading, concepts and truths beyond the love story may resonate in your heart. Deep truths touching your heart, and the spirit felt, are the real gift of Song of the Troubadour. Each of us is on a journey. Song of the Troubadour is a beautiful love story woven with words to be a pathway for our journeys. Song of the Troubadour was inspired by allowing Spirit to guide me through the creation process. Let's vision it touching many lives around the world for generations to come, starting with our own.

"May your heart only be guided by love and your songs be the echo of this same heart" Chris Madsen

~ Forward by Rev. Dale Jukes ~

Sometimes a fairytale is written just as a fairytale. It is an adventure that follows the basic needs of the human psyche providing an action between a protagonist and an antagonist which reveals moral value and direction. When it is well done it speaks a universal truth to the heart of the reader.

Age is irrelevant because it is speaking in images to the eternal feelings of all people young and old. It speaks the language of universal archetypes drawing upon the lasting urge to transcend the darkness. When all the ingredients come together in balance an enduring work of charm is created. We find the value of the lesson rivals the entertainment quality and the story is elevated in its reach to an audience simultaneously young and old. It finds durable value and ends up in storybook shelves through the ages.

Song of the Troubadour captures this balance of longevity. At once, sweetly and simply it touches the deepest chords of human longing endearing itself to the hearts of every age. More than simply a story of good triumphing over evil it acknowledges the power of divine love when humanly demonstrated. It shows a power for good, often unrecognized, in the universal urge conspiring with us to support an intention of purity, innocence and harmlessness.

Chris Madsen illustrates this power exquisitely in “Song of the Troubadour” because to him these are not just ideas; they are practical and practicable truths that he holds himself accountable to. He lives a simple and selfless life alive with passion; the passion to bring love and light out from the hearts of all people everywhere and into the world around them. It is this simple passion that has allowed this story to pour into being in all its gentle purity.

As the author intended, surely this wonderful fable will touch your heart and give you hope for the awakening of your own inner magnificence and for that awakening in your children and all you may share it with.

Rev. Dale Jukes (Science of Mind)

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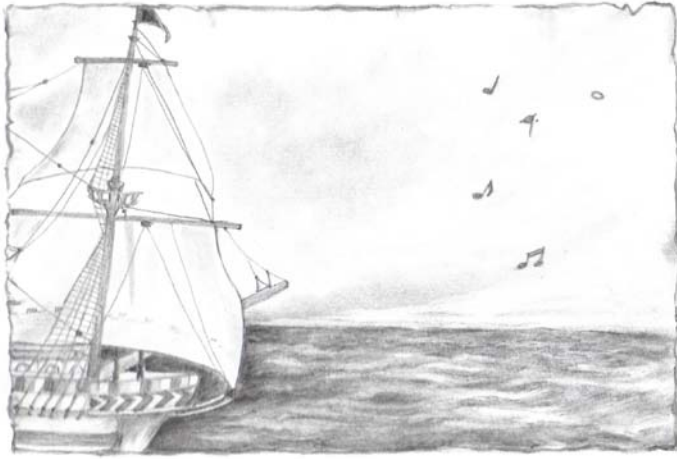
*As given through Spirit to the hands of Chris Madsen
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Song of the Troubadour

Turning to Sea

There is a season that mocks hope and faith, a season where the winter cloak is heavy with sadness, waking is a burden and sleep is a welcome reprieve. There is a season where to cry out in anguish is to echo into barren valleys where no soothing voice or

song replies with the promises love would vow to bring.

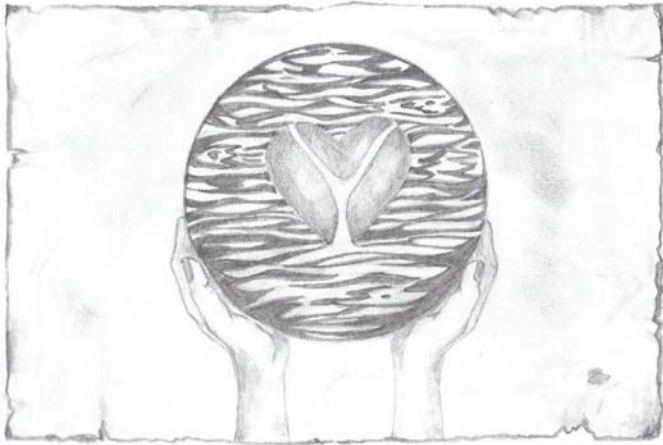
Such a season is the birth of new beginnings. To curse the dark is to curse the bed the Sun rises from. Yesterday lay on this very bed and gave itself to the dreams bringing tomorrow. In such a season the troubadour stood in the deep of night and turned towards the sea.

As one moment embracing true love is worth eons of searching, so is the wisdom of stepping foot on such a ship. Songs born on the shore of loneliness and grief can only find their counterpart if such shores are left to distant memories of a dream called the past. Yet, what songs would be played if cast from such a shore into the tempest of bitter winds, dark nights at sea, without compass or a homeland to sail towards? What song has not already been written by the wind itself in such a time?

There is a song the wind plays upon the sea, another through the winter trees, and yet another in golden fields of summer. The troubadour has heard such songs and played them on his instrument. There is a song the wind does not play, but only echoes and carries across the lands. This is the song of the troubadour. It is the heart reverberating through six strings the endless shoreline of inward and outward journeys. The practiced scales and arpeggios on his instrument were taught by such teachers as the wind. Songs yet born and forged in the morning of his life were soon to be sung.

A king will defend his kingdom against all intruders seeking harm. A soldier will defend his country to the death. A lover will stand against the fiercest of opponents to protect that which is loved. The troubadour is no less in his will. Yet, the kingdom

he seeks has yet to be stood upon; the love he sails towards has yet to be tasted. The seed buried cannot but reach for the Sun and sky. Thus the troubadour turned to sea.



The Homeland

The homeland is where love is both the life giving rains and the Sun dancing in perfect harmony with it. The lighthouse upon such a shore shines bright for the sailor coming to this place. Passing ships have told tales of a princess in a land where pure love is both the tax and the harvest. In such a land the

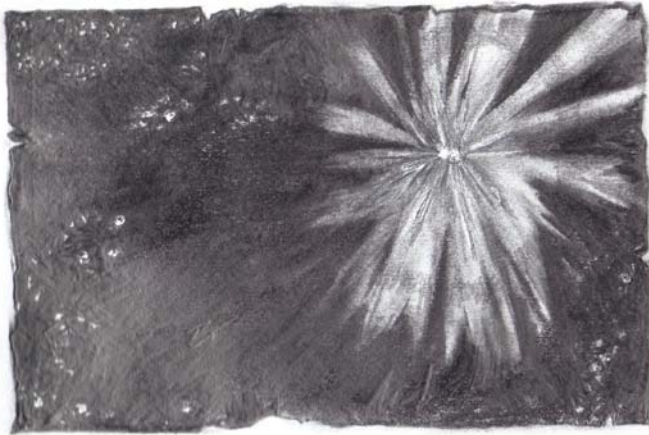
princess often looks out to sea, awaiting a song carried by the wind. A dream in youth that faded but still is listened for in the silence of night.

Those held captive learn to accept their fate. Slaves trained since birth accepts their masters dominion, as much as the wheat accepts the threshers in the Fall. The troubadour would neither be held captive nor bring another into captivity. To the captive he sings songs of freedom, to others the song of giving freedom. Yet Spirit has decreed that only such a princess could free his heart from longing. He is bound by the same force that brings life to the land.

Wealth is accepting what Spirit would give. The homeland is love given as two rivers becoming one. As one, these two souls are a river being given to the sea. The sea giving alms to the sky returns as rain bringing life to the fields of this homeland. The homeland is the full circle where love neither begins nor ends but has unfolded when lovers were first cast into this circle. Without such love or homeland we are broken wings on desert sands carried by time's lonely wind. The troubadour sang these lyrics of hope as a prayer for those with wings battered by such a time. Salted air carried this same wind and song:

*"Be a river and the ocean shall be given you
Fall on your knees and the earth shall be yours
Lift your hands to hold the sky, lift your heart to feel the
rain
That becomes the river, the fullness of life.*

*Feel the season that brings life to the land
Feel the Sun bathe the earth and dry its eyes
Lift your hands to hold the sky, lift your heart to feel the
Sun
That holds the rivers, the fullness of life."*



Soul of the Troubadour

To love and be loved is the greatest wealth, a treasure neither bought nor sold, only exchanged. Through the trials of life, love is a sturdy ship assuring safety in treacherous times. The tides of life are not governed by love, but the rudder changes course by the hand of love. The troubadour set sail in search of such wealth. The falling Sun would burn gold upon the bow of his ship, such gold reminding him of why the coming night was also the promise of the morning to follow. Songs poured from the ships bow at such times upon the sea.

Wisdom is being guided by the stars rather than by passing ships. The North Star is as true as the Sun is in rising from the East and falling into the West. Through life there are many ports that would entice with shelter. As pleasurable as such safety brings, these ports are neither the homeland nor where the princess dwells. The stars have their own charts that will guide those humbled enough to follow. The heartbeat of love courses in union with the entire universe. If a sailor would seek the kingdom where the princess dwells and where the darkness far at sea is no more, guided by the stars proclaiming the way is the only sure compass to follow.

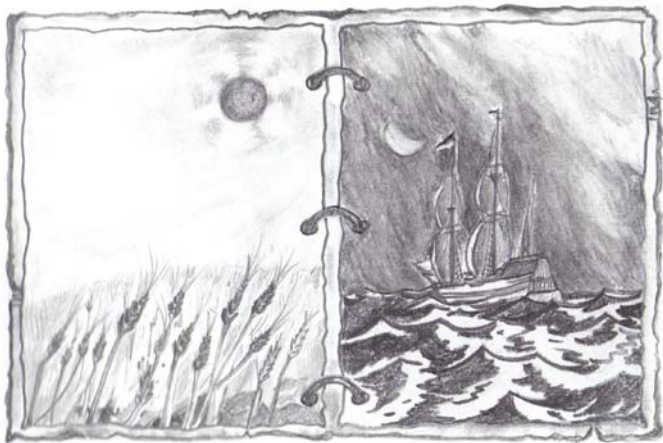
Love is the breath, the blood, and the very life force human spirit was created to shelter. Love is not the lust or desires or sweetness of what brings pleasure from another. Such relationships have a purpose in growth, but they are not love. Say not "I love you" in such times of intertwining, but rather "you are filling the need I have at this moment."

To dare enter the realm where the words spoken to another "I love you" would be spoken in truth; this same force must needs be both the breath and heart of

your being. Love is outside of infinity, love is outside of eternity. Love is Divine Source held captive within two bodies turned into one. Love is not only the author of all that exists; love is the source of all that can possibly be. Love is the force that has allowed all other manifestations to occur.

The troubadour often gazed as the night skies proclaimed the depth of this love. In such truth, strings and voice lay silent. Not even the wind has speech for such depth of truth. A princess, by her rights in the kingdom, has in her treasure box such jewels of understanding. Yet, not even a princess can take from this same jewel box such love being exchanged with her through the life force of a man. No more than a sailor far at sea can enter the inner chambers of this same princess with such treasure being given.

If princess and sailor are to meet, only the Author of all that is, must grant it. If it is granted, only refined hearts mirroring this same author can taste the sweet nectar of what real love exchanged through a man and woman is. Two stars colliding into oneness is beyond comprehension. To reveal love exchanged by such a princess and sailor is not only the Sun colliding into another, it is the Author of all that is, creating all Suns in the moment of their embrace and kiss. Such love is beyond time and space. The moment of this collision is all eternity collected into this very moment, and this moment echoing into all eternity. With such truth the troubadour set sail in search of the homeland.



Midsummer Breeze

To be born into physical form is to set sail. The port of birth is not where the mother lay in agony, but rather where God declared life would be breathed into physical form. A mother is witness to life being formed and not the creator of life. She bears the unfolding of life, and in birth gives it to the world it sets sail from.

An atheist bows to God as much as the pious and religious. Both witness the governing of laws and truths. Whatever words are used to describe the creator of such laws and truths are words describing this same God. The same force that the scientist uses as a gauge to test truth is the same force the priest bows to in evening prayers. Their perception of God may appear vastly different, but they are the same.

Each season gives itself to the next season. The rain gives itself to the land; the land returns it to the sea; which the sky returns yet again to the earth. Life is no less in its turning. The drops of rain continue as water, the seasons are still aspects of the same Sun reflecting its light. We are fragments of life through all eternity to come and our journey is thus forever.

Life itself is not only this energy, but a fragment of the source of this energy. Such life is beyond the bounds of the laws dictating physical form because they are fragments of what designed these laws to begin with. The journey of learning begins at the port of our birth as each sets sail.

Life's purpose is to celebrate and exchange love with life itself. Love has only one requirement, and that is to love. Life is love seeking itself, as love is life returning to itself. The troubadour set sail as such thoughts circled like seagulls above the ship.

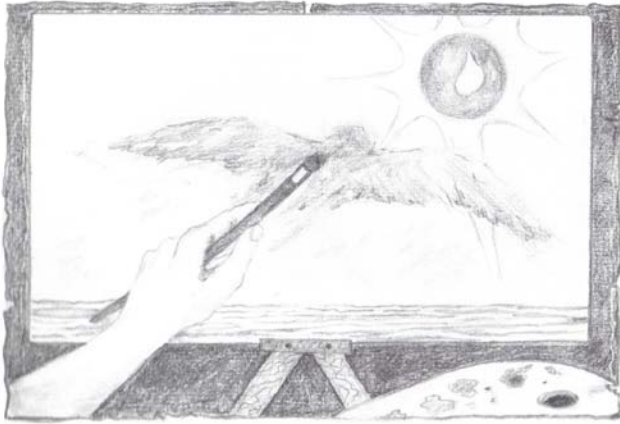
In the sweetness of midsummer while gazing into the cloudless sky in a field of gold, it is easy to

become one with it. Young love also captures through a kiss and whispered laughter, through gazes and vows of 'I love you' echoing through other fields of gold. In such fields radiance and beauty intoxicate all senses.

In a bitterly cold storm at sea there is no option but to become one with it. To fear the body freezing or being cast into the ocean by fierce winds is not soothed by remembering fields of gold. The hand that governs the midsummer field of gold also governs the winter seas. Wisdom allows each season to fully express and give the purpose and gifts it bares.

Every fragment of time carries the purpose it was born to serve. The troubadour sang songs of gratitude as only darkness with no shoreline listened. Love is not only expressed in the midsummer breeze but in the darkness and cold far at sea. Contentment is found in hope and faith through such seas that the summer fields are being sailed towards. Upon returning, it is thankfulness that through the darkness hope and faith sustained the heart. Loves perfect path winds through all countries the soul must journey through on its way to the homeland.

The winter itself is the earth crying out for the Sun to return its embrace. The cold is love denied. Yet, is it not the earth in such a season that turned from the Sun? Is it not the perception that shapes the reality in each situation? Wisdom teaches fullness of life and continually points to love. Could it be that in the midst of darkness, alone far at sea, is the perfect place in the universe to be? There is a princess with the answers written in her heart. The troubadour now sailed further into the depths of darkness with no such answer beating against his own.



Love

Love is the Sun sustaining life by giving its all. Divine Source is the artist fashioning countless Suns. To be a brushstroke of the Master's painting is to be a fragment of love in an endless sky of life and love. It is to be an expression of the soul of the Artist of life itself.

Both wings of a bird move in harmony towards the same destination. A soul surrendered to love is as one

wing and love itself the other. Such flight carries both safely onward. In such truth the troubadour set sail towards an unknown destination guided by an unseen force in unison with his own.

True religion is a guide pointing to true love. Harmony, peace, compassion, mercy, and countless other attributes of love flow, and are witnessed, as these guides are met. What part of the air is breath and not part of the sky? What part of life force is not shared with Divine Source itself? What thought has the Creator of all energy thought that is not given to imagination and potential to also think?

A clay pot holds part of the sea, but it is the sea none the less. The sunlight shining in a pot is the same as that which surrounds it. A pot cast into the sea both is filled with the same that surrounds it. Love is a sea and love is the light. The troubadour witnessed the endless sea of stars giving light and the endless sea being sailed upon.

As tears being given as gifts by aloneness were opened deep in the night by the troubadour, love itself gave its eyes to also weep. What gift or song would be worthy of a princess? If wings could carry to her, what would these wings need carry, to turn her towards him? A clay pot is worth little, gifts of aloneness even less. Love has the power to do all things, yet why then does it weep this night with the troubadour?

Would a princess be in such turmoil also? Love is not a respecter of status; love is gold being exchanged by a blind man for bread that gives sustenance. Through the darkness a greater sight is often witnessed. Through the blackness of winter nights far at sea, the troubadour again cast a song into the wind. The gifts of aloneness remained.



Evening Prayer

Every song yet written and art yet expressed is waiting for whomever will give it to the world. The songs and art already expressed are witness to what lay within each soul. There are many beautiful flowers, yet the beauty of each single one is not diminished because of it. The troubadour saw the endless sky filled with stars, each one a fragment of the artwork of the Hand that allows the gift of song to be born.

Leaves return the song given by the wind. An instrument of love returns the song of another wind. The mystery of life is held within this other wind. A

prayer was whispered by the troubadour to this wind.
Thoughts of a princess clothed his prayer;

“Let her dance, let her be free. Let her open her arms and see why angels have wings. Let her dance into the Sun, hold it in her hands. Let her go beyond the stars and sky, into the arms of love, let her dance. May this wind direct that she touches what only love can see.”

Time can take a mountain and wash it away. Time can strip us to the core where only love remains. Time can be a prison, a dream in the night. With knees bent and hands folded on the decks rail, the endless stars echoed his prayer that the night wind gave the princess. Her night prayers were caressed by a song not yet heard but felt. The lark sings just before dawn, this same promise touched her as a gentle wind joined her prayer.

The coldest part of night is right before the Sun rises. The princess understood this part of night. Within the castle walls Lord Darcon offered warmth and protection from such cold. There are many rebirths, a warm fire is one. Arms bearing the gifts of needs met are another. Beauty is like the valley that streams are drawn towards. Lord Darcon saw her beauty yet could not hear the song of her heart.

The valley bottom carries streams to the sea. The sea and the streams are not this valley. They simply adorn and caress the valley. The princess was both adorned and caressed. Her gift to the sea was not the river but rather the very wind that carries all prayers. The prayer this night held the fragrance of her beauty. A fragrance that guided a distant ships bow as her gift was given to the sea.

Silence can be the greatest song of all. A stilled heart hears what can neither be sung nor played on an instrument. In this stillness the fragrance of a land not known joined his same prayer. Prayer is an arrow always finding its mark. She felt a song not heard, as he witnessed the silence carrying the prayer of the princess.

The balcony attached to her sleeping chambers in the castle was drenched in her fragrance and prayers. Both the vines and the roses thrived below and around the balcony. At times they were watered by the tears that brought life to the land through her. Her prayer this night was the perfect painting for both the sunset and sunrise that were to frame it.

“Lord of the star fields, Author of all that has beginning, your breath gave life to my being. May my breath be one with yours. May my heart be free to dance among the star fields. May I hold the very Sun to be an instrument of life-giving energy. May I be given the greatest adornment, which is to wear what only love can see. The spirit of a song is joining my prayer. Its faintness is yet like an arrow. If such a song will bring the dance and the instrument of this my prayer, then let our very breath guide its sails to me.”



Body/Spirit/Soul

Through the cold and bitter winds, stormy seas, sailors know it's these same winds that can carry them to such a home. His spirit was as wild as the cliffs where they touch the sea. His freedom was as the stallions in the high country. Hotter than steel burned in the fires, running through his veins was the desire for this homeland. For the woman guided to share this hearth fire he would die a thousand deaths. Even then her name would be whispered on his last breath. For her he would set sail into an uncharted sea. In search of lips and soul yet to be touched or known except in the dreams and promises burned deep in his heart.

She was as gentle as the breeze on a summer night. Her spirit was as the wind where eagles fly. Hotter than steel burned in the fires, running through her veins was the desire of a soul set on fire as if it were holding the Sun itself. Her passion for life and such

love was a hearth fire that sustained her, by faith, through the hardest trials and dark nights.

Bodies are the clothes worn by soul and spirit while journeying through the physical realm on earth. It is the vehicle to carry soul/spirit, and the home for the soul/spirit to view the physical earth from. It is soul/spirit experiencing life in human form.

To gaze into a lover's eyes is to witness the embodiment of love itself. The fragrance in such entwining is as all prayers collected into a vessel and being poured out as each is answered. The song heard at this same moment is as the winds of all seasons and places gathering to create a new season and song.

A spirit is the stream of emotions, feelings, images, and sensations that course through a body. Thoughts are the river these streams flow from. Thought is life in conversation with itself. A person's spirit and thought are echoes of what the soul hears. The soul is the core and center of our being. It is life clothed in thought and spirit. The body cloaks the spirit, the spirit cloaks the soul. A soul is life itself witnessing spirit and body, and is in union with it. It is one with all life, and is that same eternal flame, for a short time journeying through the earth with spirit and body.

The soul is given life and sustained by Divine Source. As much as spirit is the garment of the soul, the soul is the garment of this Source. There are many names for this Source that cannot be fully named. To be named would be to place it into the realm of thought and form; it is beyond containment by anything other than itself. God, Divine Source, the Light, many names given through religion and science have been used.

The human soul is the image of this Source. It is Life Force becoming a seed of itself planted in body and

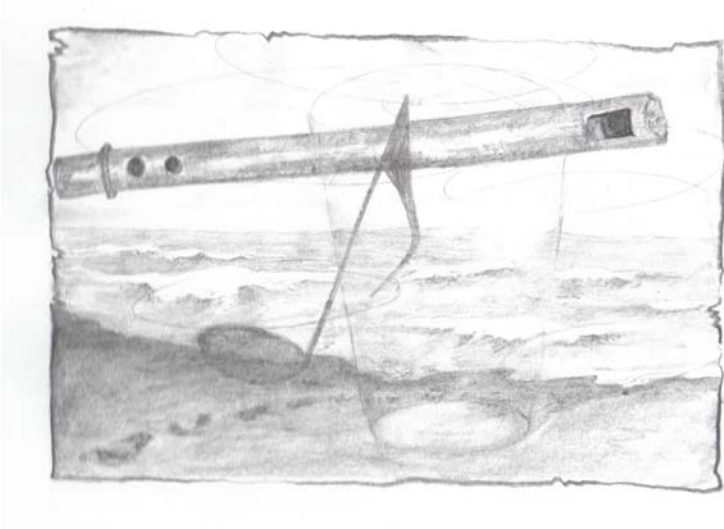
spirit, manifesting as a soul. Man is made in the image of this Life Force. Free will, to create or destroy or to bring beauty or negative energy, is empowered to each soul on earth.

The body of the princess was a vessel holding a spirit and soul pressed from the sacred vines of her father the king. The body of the troubadour contained a soul and spirit dedicated to this vineyard in the homeland he sought. The wine from this vineyard was for the sacrament of communion exchanged from life to love and love to life.

To understand love is to know God. To know God is to understand the unknowable. To know the unknowable is to be one with it. That which is timeless is understood by that which is timeless, that which is of love understands love. Eternity and infinity is the outward garment of God, yet without them the soul and spirit of God remains.

Every moment the sky is painted with ever changing scenes as the perfect ballet of stars dance to the song of each season in perfect harmony. To know God is to know the Author of this ballet. The princess gazed from her balcony and witnessed beyond the ballet and songs. Beyond infinity and eternity she saw love itself finding itself. Love would offer itself to be crucified or set sail, regardless of the sea, in this same search.

God weeps as even a sparrow with life force falls to the ground. How much more are the tears wept for one who would not pursue such love? The answer is the very sea the troubadour sailed upon. To understand love is to understand why the princess wept in understanding of what her lover would give for the moment of sharing these same tears with her. A lover only met in prayer and dreams.



Thought

Thought is a cup of water being drawn from an endless sea. Thought is the single note being played on a flute amidst the unlimited frequencies that exist. Thought is this single note following another and yet another until the song of life is completed. Thought is

the prayer placed out into the universe that returns with all we receive and give.

Waves crashing on the shore give their song and life energy and then return to the sea completed. Circles move outward on the water as raindrops fall. Ripples dance and are stilled by the sea as they become one with it. Past thoughts are part of this rainfall that is now the sea, present thought is this cup of water, future thoughts are from the rainfall yet to come.

There is a sea of liquid gold that to drink from brings fullness of life. Completion and arrival of all that can be accomplished or journeyed to are held within this sea. The treasures of all kingdoms are endlessly given from, through these waters. The waves on its shoreline sing such a beautiful song that the shore melts into oneness with it. The song given by its waves are a never ending melody of what perfect love and beauty brings.

A prayer for the princess was cast into a sea of gold by the troubadour with thoughts of such a sea being the least she is worthy of. There is a shoreline where the sand held no footprints except for the princess's. The princess possessed this shoreline and kept it secret. The waves of this shore whispered the song of her heart alone. Her daily meditation on this shore gave thanks that both sea and shore here understood and embraced her with such comfort.

She was moved that this day the waters had a golden shimmer never seen before. It was as if the Sun itself were being given to the waters as not only a reflection, but as one with it. So faint as to not disturb the song of the waves, a song was perhaps heard. No, seas do not turn gold nor does the wind sing such a song. Returning to the castle she wept without understanding why. She questioned why the place of

solitude and comfort today was replaced with a stirring so powerful she couldn't remain.



Thou Precious Love

Seeking provisions the troubadour followed land until a port was found. At the tavern he was beckoned to give a song. The instrument slung across his back was a prayer answered by those who lived in silence of such melody they thirsted for. He spoke of a

song given to the waters a fortnight ago and echoed again what the sea heard:

"Twas fairer than Spring blossoms in bloom, fairer yet than Summers full moon.

Twas I who pierced by loves arrows deep in such a season did fall.

Her maiden lips were like the dew on the rose that graced her hand.

Twas this gift I gave my love in the Spring of our youth.

Love, oh love, thou precious love, why now do winter winds blow?

Love, oh love, thy arrows now behold, they pierce the heart now froze.

I was just a wandering the fields of Spring as destined to meet her I came.

As sunlight cloaked her radiance as eyes they first met.

Twas the evening breeze that gathered us as logs set for the fire.

Twas she who pierced by loves arrows deep in such a season did fall.

Love, oh love, thou precious love, why now do winter winds blow?

Love, oh love, thy arrows now behold, they pierce the heart now froze.

Tis now in a land so far away where bitter winds must needs blow.

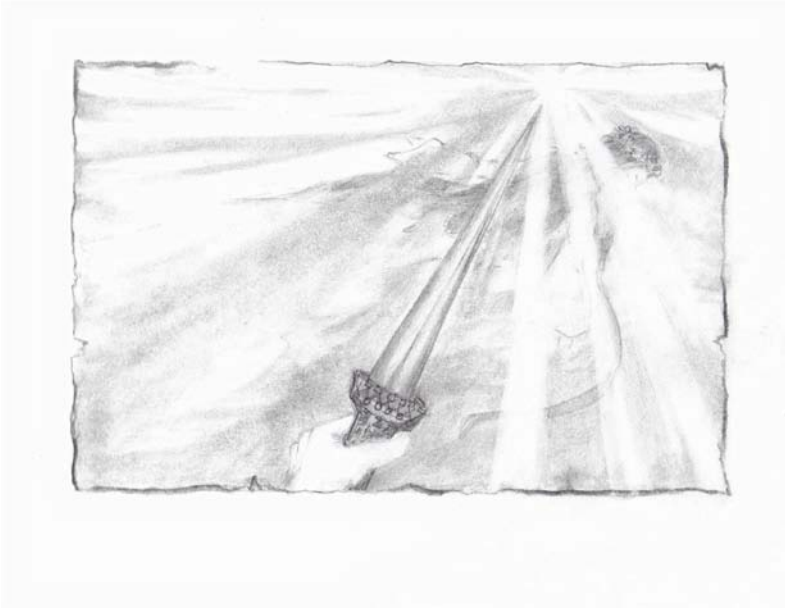
Tis better to have loved and gained sweet memories, the gift my love she was to bring. Such hope and faith yet follow me, though Winter winds blow cold.

Fear not when love has forsaken you, the winter falls into Spring.

Love, oh love, thou precious love, why now do winter winds blow?

*Love, oh love, thy arrows now behold,
they pierce the heart now froze."*

Beckoned to stay by new found brethren, the troubadour's heart was uplifted, yet steadfast in returning to sea. The maidens who heard his song returned to the fields with hearts sunken that he would not find the Spring in their homeland. In consolation, the provisions of their fields and prayer were to sustain the troubadour through the coming storms far at sea.



The Dream

Stillness is an unwelcome guest at sea. Sails without breath and currents without heart beat is time itself withholding its reward. The vastness of sea and sky are prison walls when a sailor is held frozen within them. The bridge over the stream, and the stream, both serve their purpose in journeys. In such stillness there is neither bridge nor stream, only dreams held captive by these same walls.

In such stillness a dream brought both breath and churning in the heart of the troubadour. The princess filled his being as she was in life. Her hair was like an endless field at harvest. Her eyes were the very soul of the universe revealing itself. Her lips were a banquet set for a king. Her ears were the reason songs

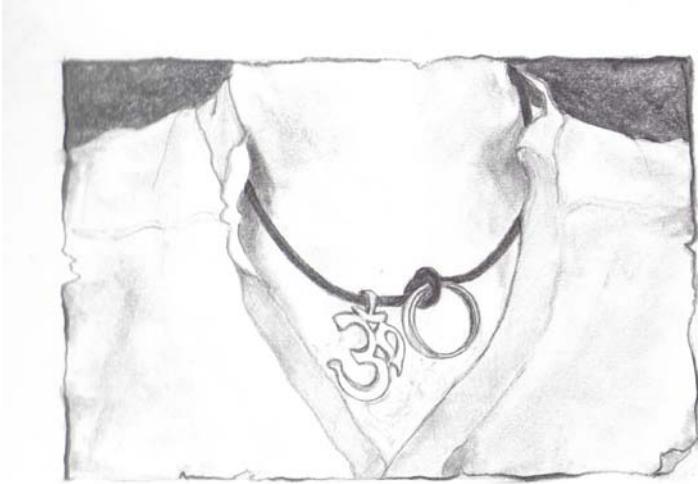
were born. Her cheeks were the promise a kiss could be both the stream and the bridge to fulfill life's purpose. Her mouth was the very breath that filled sails and turned them to the very body of this same woman.

Her neck was the nectar that fed his soul. Her breasts were the stirring of all winds and seas held captive by the mountains and shores they were born from. Her body was the stillness unleashed, no longer able to contain the torrent holding both heart beat and breath. The sacredness of womanhood upon her body was an entrance to the very heart of oneness. Love colliding with life and life colliding with itself. The meeting point of the Sun with the space it moves within lay here. The life given to this entrance is life filling the body that sustains it.

Her legs were as the pillars of the temple. Not for lust of what could be obtained but in honor and reverence of why the temple was built. Divine Source is worshipped and the temple was created for this purpose. Not only a monument but the incense and prayers answered from this same temple were in her limbs. Her feet were the foundation his earth was built upon.

Awakening, there was neither melody nor lyric to give the wind regarding the dream of this night. What was given was the song of the troubadour. A sword was at his side and in this night of dreams, upon awakening, he lift it to both heaven and earth. His vow was to this woman, the princess met only in such dreams.

As the sword pierced into the sky, a gentle wind began to fill the sails. The stillness was replaced by a golden ray of dawn glistening on the tip of this same sword.



Marriage

A black leather string was worn around the troubadour's neck with two small symbols attached. The first was a silver symbol representing the energy of the universe as a remembrance that all journeys are witnessed by Divine Source. The second symbol was a band of gold purchased in the marketplace of a small hamlet. Its purpose was to witness the heart beat and life of the troubadour. If it were to complete its purpose, it would serve to be carried further by the

woman's hand such heart beat and life were carried to.

Juniper and cedar trees outside of the castle met the cliffs next to the sea. Fields of grain danced with the wind amidst these cedars and junipers. The castle of the princess lay amidst this beauty. Her heart was married to this land. She was one with the valleys and fields as she was held captive by the sea and its beauty. No symbol on a leather string was required upon her breast, the land was symbol enough.

Her prayer room was the solitude of a shore chiseled from sea and cliff, shadowed by the castle walls. No band of gold was upon her finger as her hands were lifted to the sky in thanksgiving. The sunset wrapped her being in gold as it was given to the night. It was in this moment a song was surely heard. It was neither the wind nor the waves yet was carried by both. The secrets of her heart held this melody, given by the sea, as she pondered from where it came.

The following day the Feast of Harvest was celebrated as villagers and royalty gathered as one. The bounty of the land was celebrated in laughter and joy. Lord Darcon wore the finest garments and held the fat of the land in his possession. He governed in a fair manner and was as handsome and strong as the cedars they both knew since birth.

Slipping away from the banquet, he took the princess into the garden and upon his knee asked her hand in marriage. He made vows and offered all the wealth he possessed. He gazed into her eyes with need and longing as a diamond and gold sparkled in the moonlight. Song, sea, and sunset lay silent as her heart in anguish spoke not a vow in return. Her promise was to give an answer after a time of prayer

and meditation. He knew no other man in the country was as great as he, so left in the confidence that she would in marriage offer her body and spirit to him by the next Feast of Harvest.



Hearts in Turmoil

The garments of the troubadour were washed in the sea and weathered by Sun, wind, and storm. His fragrance was the sea breeze and oils used as protection from the elements. Patchouli, lavender, and jasmine were mixed with a lotion given in return for a song he had sung. His possessions were not stored in storehouses, they were held in his heart as songs are held within an instrument. He drew upon each one as they were required.

This night the song of courage was drawn upon as aloneness and doubt tried to slay him. The gold ring upon his neck held nothing in the circle but the bitter wind of this night. Is it not a fool that would enter the abyss in search of what dreams promise? Is it not better to return to a village where open arms and a fair maiden await? There is no word or sign or hope of the land or princess the ships rudder is directed towards. If arrival were to be, what promise or vow is there that such love would sail her heart in return?

The moonlight guided the princess to the shore where she gazed out to sea. The strong current and tide stirred the waves that crashed in unison with her heart. Prayer for guidance was met by silence. If this is love then why does Lord Darcon's heart not calm these very stirrings and waves? His gifts are desired by the fairest maidens throughout the kingdom. Yet, then why does my heart sink as they are given to me? Is it not a foolish woman who would not readily accept his hand in marriage? Even a princess is to expect no more. What other promise lay before me

except a life alone if I give not my body and soul to him? He is honoured and a man of character.

This night the troubadour wept as courage, faith, and hope were faint songs barely able to kiss the heavens. In a land far removed from the knowledge of such a ship or troubadour, the princess also wept in her turmoil. He sailed to an unknown destination without a name to even inquire of. At the same moment both arose as if the very universe orchestrated their motions. Their prayers were as one voice and their bodies as one dance.

She upon the night shore and he upon the ships bow both gazed into the stars as all heaven witnessed their tears and prayer. Uplifted hands crossed both sea and shore as Divine Source witnessed the vows of their hearts proclaimed. Was it not the very eyes of the troubadour she saw as she gazed into the endless sky? Was it not the very heart of the princess beating within the prayer upon the sailor's lips? Angels witnessed and declared yes. The Author of life gazed upon the ceremony and saw but one figure when looking upon the princess and troubadour as they prayed:

"Lord that fires the universe from your unknown forest, may I be kindling where renewal is required. Lord that directs the path of each star, may the years to come have found me aligned with Your purpose and directed as each blade of grass dancing in perfect harmony in this forest also are. May the currents within my heart be governed only by the same force that brings the seasons as they are ordained. Thy Perfect Love placed my heart within me. Unto Perfect Love alone shall my heart be given. Tonight I pray both

that such love be sent to me as I this moment make vows in return to such love being given in return."

The troubadour was uplifted by this prayer and gave a song to seal it. Upon going to sleep the princess was soothed by a faint melody heard both in her heart and upon the wind.

Uncertainty of what shore tomorrow will bring no longer held the troubadour or princess hostage. The prayer given this night was a marriage vow given to the universe and a wedding feast that cleansed both with the tears wept by love. Guided by an unseen hand the elegance of this magnificent wedding was celebrated with feasting in the heavens by each angel that were by their sides as bridesmaids and the grooms party of best friends. The celebration was attended by the very King of both sea and land as they were honoured with his blessing. The Northern Lights danced throughout the sky as the troubadour and princess lay sleeping.

Far at sea, shivering in the cold of night, such sacrament and ceremony was held as the altar was the shoreline yet wet with the tears of the princess. Body and spirit need not understand what the soul celebrates with Spirit. This night all heaven rejoiced that love never fails and prayer is the sword of this love.

What doubt or fear or uncertainty can stand in the face of surrendering to the perfect will of Divine Source? There is a power beyond the grasp of man that is freely given as such perfect will is yearned for. The princess not only yearned for this, she dedicated her being to its unfoldment.

Invisible bonds are the current that binds souls. Such current had already brought the troubadour and

princess together. Though separated and never having met, their marriage was already sealed in the sacredness of love's deepest vows of the heart. Love has no concept of past, present, or future. The troubadour was lulled into sleep with the understanding that he didn't need to know where shore lay, that which guides the winds does know, and that is enough. To embrace the gifts of each moment is to be a child. The child within him was restored this night.



At the Well

The gulls circled the ship each morning as bread was exchanged for guidance as to direction to shore. With outstretched arms and the Sun's warmth, this day was greeted with joy. Freedom is to be bound by the ropes that secure this freedom. The troubadour tied a rope around his ankle and dove into the sea for cleansing. This binding assured return to the ship.

The princess this day was also bound for cleansing, not of body but of entanglements that wove in her heart a knot needing release. Summoning Lord Darcon was a heavy task that weighed her heart as if she were to murder her very own. They met in the courtyard as roses and other gifts lay on the bench. He spoke eloquently before her heart could be heard.

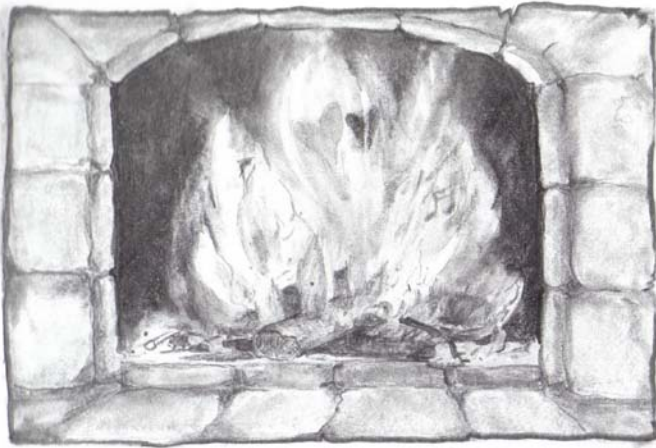
“Maiden, princess, I lay my life in your hands. All I want is given me as I gaze upon your beauty. My fulfillment is to caress you and never let go. I desire you with all of my being. Let me take you to be my wife. I will do all in my power to assure your happiness. If you vow love to me I will love you forever. You will possess all I have.”

The princess stood and leaned against the well as she gazed downward into the waters. Her tears mingled with them. What words can be drawn from the well of the heart at such a time? What prayer would be the soothing salve to give his heart at this moment? What possession could be bartered to save his soul from what must be given him now? Her body trembled as a frail fawn’s would as her words were spoken in return.

“My lord, you are handsome and strong. Your wealth is as the fields and forests themselves contain. Your family has shared this land as mine has, as kindred, since before the castle walls were built. Your integrity and character is a model for all to follow. The children born through you will be blessed. If these attributes were the pillars of loves temple, I would freely kneel at its altar. Such love is not coursing through my veins nor through the gifts offered through you. I beg your heart not be fallen or downcast in this moment of truth. My honour and praise of your worth is as mine is for this land itself. Go your way and meet me in the markets and fields, but not as lovers, but as kindred spirits who share the land together.”

Pride is a wall that can only be trampled in such a moment as this. His heart was heavy with the coming loss of her fragrance and of plans he had made, built on the expectation of her marriage to him. The words he now spoke were to her back that was crumpled

against the timber of the well frame. She couldn't bear to see him as he turned away. Long after hoof beats faded, she remained clutching the timber as if the well could comfort what cannot be comforted.



Winter

The pressed wine is laid to rest as rust colored cloaks are given the earth. Creeks now stilled withhold their song as the song of the land also lay sleeping. Life itself dances ever slower as night lulls the hearts. The troubadour sought the comfort of shore as Orion's constellation became prominent. Hearth fires drew him aground in a land where they spoke his same tongue and prayed with the same spirit as he.

Amidst the Winter twilights stories were told and songs sung. A merchant had also stayed the winter. The troubadour's song had touched him as the merchant spoke to him of a princess he ventured upon. Laughing, he jested as to how she bought his wares out of mercy rather than need.

His praise was not withheld. Her beauty came from a source that was deeper than the elegance of her physical form. To be in her presence was as being in the Light that renews the Spring. So great was her influence that the money made from her purchase was given away in honour of her. Yet a deep sorrow was about her countenance. It was as if all winters had pressed her as wine they now drink from.

This winter was one with the princess. Her heart was as the chilled monastery stones she visited. For everything there is a time and season. Now even the forest lay as a grey mat for black skies. She sat on the beach as winds tried to caress her sorrows away, yet the song yearned for was no more carried by this same wind. Perhaps it was wrong to turn Lord Darcon away. Now would be a time of preparation and joy if such marriage was accepted at the well. The arrows piercing her heart brought a prayer that shone as gold amidst the monastery stones.

"I kneel before the throne of the Artist of this season. If you are to carve me with the chisel brought this winter, let it be. What lay buried in the frozen earth shall return in Spring when thy sculpting is complete. The roses amidst the trellis are now barren stumps of wood. My heart is one with them this moment. What art is not born first from the soul and spirit? I pray that my soul and spirit are given understanding as to all your masterpieces, including this.

May my heart and soul be the palette for Thy greatest works."

The troubadour chopped wood for the elderly and carried it to their hearths along with stews and meat bartered for with song and a smile. An old woman inquired as to why such gifts were given and why he was in their land.

"It was the winter winds that drove me to this village; the gifts are an exchange for the grateful heart that is mine because of this village."

Youth is fleeting but wisdom grows ever stronger with the passage of time. Her wisdom returned his gifts with a prayer she gave.

"Lord of all seasons, thank you for the winter winds. They have drawn song, warmth, and sustenance to these cottages. May this renewal of my spirit be a mirror returning it again to all. May the stars and angels guide the troubadour to the heart of where he ventures to go and may such heart welcome him."

Early Spring was bittersweet. Mended sails and provisions were ample cause for leaving. Favorable winds and tide declared the day of departure. Yet, it was as if arrival was already his. The children, the elderly, and the able bodied were now as true friends entrusted with knowing the song of his heart, the same song that drew him back to sea.

As Orion's Belt faded into the Western sky the Big Dipper pointed north as the days were filled with ever increasing warm breezes. New strings were upon the troubadour's instrument as yet again the

bow of the ship was graced with new songs. Songs of returning Spring and a heart thankful that winter was at his back lapped in rhythm with the waves.

The morning Sun replaced the closed shutters and curtains that sheltered the princess through the cold. Wooden stumps clinging to the balcony held promise of tomorrow's gifts as she gave thanks for this renewal. The vows of her heart were as knights standing guard. Whatever gifts tomorrow may bring, this day alone is assured. This day shall be a day of giving in celebration of what this same day is giving me.

At the shore the princess now returned to greet blue sky and gulls returning from places unknown. The ocean's calmness was welcomed. She closed her eyes as the Sun yet stayed in her vision. At this same moment a song was being sung by the troubadour:

*"You can close your eyes, and still see the Sun
 You can close your eyes, watch rivers run, so can I.
 I've seen diamonds while skipping stones, sparkling on the waters,
 now they're gone, to live in a song.
 You can see the sky, paint pictures in clouds.
 You can see the sky, watch the Sun go down, so can I.
 I've seen diamonds while skipping stones, sparkling on the waters,
 now they're gone, to live in a song.
 We can close our eyes, and still see the Sun.
 We can close our eyes, watch rivers run, until they are all dry."*

Distance withheld the lyrics but the soul of their birth gave the princess possession of the song's spirit. Circling overhead two eagles carrying twigs landed atop an ancient fir. Their silent song and procession

drew her attention. As the nest became further entwined her heart was cut in remembrance of this same procession being offered her at the well. What weight upon the heart to willingly cast anchor when sweet shores entice in exchange for aloneness upon the sea of uncertainty. Winter had now passed as holy stillness was replaced by sacred processions.



The Arrival

The princess lay on her bed amidst the blossoms now clinging to the trellis as scents of lilac and cherry blossom filled the air. Spring garments were worn by the gardens and fields. The forest boasted every hue of green while welcoming the songbird's concert.

Monastery walls were warmed by the midday Sun as a tired soul entered to pray.

Weeks at sea made this day of arrival at shore a time for reprieve from its ways. First to prayer, and

then to the tavern for food and to seek shelter, and discover what land he now had journeyed to.

“Lord, may all prayers carried by angels from this sacred room

*Be now mingled with mine in the chalice You drink from.
I am without compass or direction except for the wine
returned to me from Your chalice to mine. Grant that
Spirit fill my cup now.”*

After prayer and meditation the troubadour lifted a song to the walls and land and then made haste to the village square and tavern. The princess called to the maidservant:

*“What song has just been cast from the monastery?
Pray tell me it wasn’t a dream as I lay upon the bed.
Did ears of others hear the timbre given me as the wind was
the messenger?
What spirit just opened the floodgates of my being?”*

The maidservant replied:

*“Not monastery or wind has given the gift of such song.
Often through the seasons you have spoken of a song not
heard.
In kindness I beseech you to not listen to such fanciful
imagination.
The monastery is for prayer and the wind does not carry
lyric
and melody upon its shoulders.”*

At the tavern it was inquired of the sailor why he had ventured upon their shores. The song of the troubadour was both sung and clearly told. When mention of a princess was spoke the gentle inquiries

turned to vehement reprisal immediately. Both Lord Darcon's clansmen and field workers joined in a hasty verdict of guilty of treason as he was sent to a dungeon in the castle.

"For a ragged beggar sailing from a foreign land to come upon our shore and speak of such a pursuit is treason. You will leave our shores never to return, but first a swift reminder of our justice and a taste of what the castle will bring you in coming to this place."

The troubadour had no inkling this was the land of the princess until this moment. Travel weary, beaten, and hungry, he lay on the dungeon's stone floor with only straw to eat and sleep upon. Mercy was found only in that his instrument yet lay intact beside him. The scent of lilac and cherry blossom meant nothing to him as he became delirious from lack of water and food. His wounded body made rising an endless task not accomplished and sleeping a distant memory.

Lord, I have not sought but Thy will
The song of my heart was applauded by You as Your
call for an encore was beseeching me to sail to this
land.

Gaze upon me now as Your son. Into Your hands I
commend my spirit.

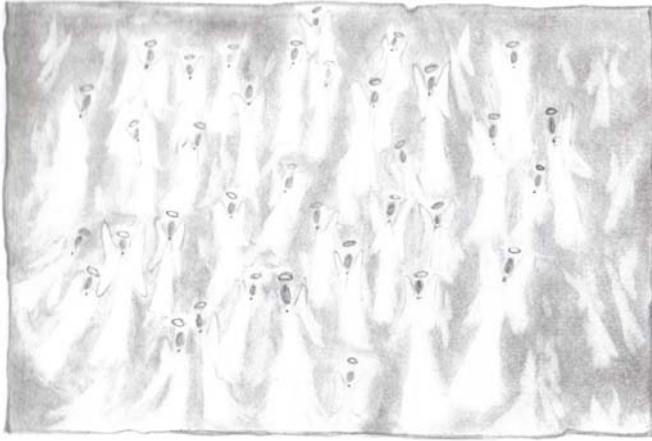
The princess went to her secret shore to pray and ask wisdom regarding the song she most assuredly had heard days before. The song was as all Springs placed into a basket and given to her as she lay silently enthralled upon her bed. The rivers that

course through her being were as an ocean of Light pouring into each one. Love is such an ocean and this song was born in it.

Deciding to take solace she ventured to her secret shore. Upon the shore she witnessed a worn and tattered ship with footsteps leading away from it. Climbing aboard she saw few provisions. Parchment leaves with lyrics written upon them were scattered about as were letters of thanksgiving from the children and elderly of the winter village. She saw the rope tied to the mast, the lotion and oil with the inscription on the jar:

"Thy song was the healing ointment to our souls, may this ointment be a reminder of the prayers we offer each day in your remembrance"

The ship told the tale of many seasons that had been endured prior to this arrival. She knew not what any of this meant yet her soul was as a thousand angels uplifting their hearts in searching the heavens to understand. Upon the shore she read lyrics taken from the ship. They were as her own breath, spirit, and prayers being found and read. The songs given by the wind were as these lyrics. After prayer she returned to the castle with parchments and inquiries as to the ship found upon the shore.



The Monk

Her inquiries regarding the ship's owner led her to the keeper of the dungeon. His words spoke of no such sailor being held within.

"At this time only a filthy and delirious beggar is being held captive. He being not of sound enough mind to speak let alone be the sailor of the ship you inquire of. He was to be removed from our midst but death is upon him so he is to stay here until then. He is not to be gazed upon; his state is far too sorrowful and beyond remedy."

Being told of her turmoil Lord Darcon came to her side both to console and entice yet again with the ring.

"If thou would be a comfort to me then find the owner of the ship that lay upon my shore. If thou would at this time give me a ring, let it be the gold given me to give to the

poor in our land as we meet as brethren. If it is for the pleasures of spirit and body uniting that you offer this ring, then be gone. Life promises such joys, but if they are the foundation then your world shall crumble as I now understand yours must."

In anger Lord Darcon spoke to the princess that he knew of the sailor and his reason for coming to this land. Upon leaving he spoke in haste and angrily that he would neither reveal more about such a sailor as he would give gold to the poor. Her spirituality was a wall that kept them apart and he would have no more of it.

The keeper of the dungeon spoke to the troubadour and brought soup and water. Sensing death was soon to arrive he summoned one from the monastery to ease his passage. The troubadour's instrument lay silent as his heartbeat was each day slipping further into this same stillness. His breath was as the butterfly wings as it settles in for sleep, faint and ever more still.

A monk arrived and seeing the troubadour's condition prayed safe passage to the land where body and spirit are shed and soul is given naked as it returns from whence it came. The troubadour's instrument was laid upon his chest as feebly soup and water were administered once again. The troubadour clutched his hand and almost silently whispered that his strength was no more as he beseeched him to please be the conduit of prayer for him this moment.

The princess lay in her chambers not knowing that directly below her in the lowest quadrants of the castle such a scene was unfolding. As she again read the parchments from the ship, tears stained her sheets as she felt the very soul and spirit of their author.

Gold is purified by fire. It was as if these parchments were the furnace she was now cast into.

*Stars they shine on kings tonight, others see them too.
 Stars they shine on lovers tonight, others see them too.
 Can you tell me why it gets so cold, right before dawn?
 Can you tell me where lovers go to keep themselves warm?
 Can you tell me why it gets so still, right before dawn?
 Can you tell me why the candles still burn behind these
 castle walls?*

The willow branches that were just turning green as the troubadour was cast into prison now were as towering flags declaring the glory of summer. The buds on the trellis were now fully in bloom as the eagles nest was filled with young.

On a midsummer eve sensing the heart of the troubadour, through the night the monk gave prayer, water, and soup yet again. The daybreak found all in sleep. The princess, the monk, and the troubadour lay as open treasures to be robbed by the heavens. They each had given their all. The king of all land and seas witnessed their offerings as they lay sleeping. The princess in her chambers, the troubadour upon a bed of straw, and the monk yet kneeling as he lay on the floor. The King of kings summoned all the angels throughout the heavens to behold both this sight and hear these words proclaimed:

*“Who in the land of man has shined as a mirror of my very heart?
 What constellation of stars has been truer than these in their steadfastness?”*

*What love song have I sung or painted across the skies that
is not a*

Testimony of this same love witnessed this night?

*It is the purpose and calling of the Lord of Lords to grant
The princess and troubadour to be united in body, spirit,
and soul.*

*May the song of the troubadour be echoed throughout the
lands*

As it is sung to the princess, my daughter.

*It is my heart that beats within them, angels now stand
guard*

*Over both as renewal is beheld this very season amidst
them."*

What stirs within the halls of heaven are not witnessed on earth. The gathering of angels with their King was not known by monk, princess, or troubadour. But the mid morning awakening by them was blessed by both Sun and life giving bounty from both the fields and heaven. The wind blown tree standing alone in the field is most able to withstand storms. Such storms were calmed this day.



Princess and the Monk

In the coming days soup was replaced by stews as the troubadour was able to sit up and recount to the monk what visions and dreams owned him through the weaving between death and life.

"Willingly I would fall into the Light only to be cast back into the bed of sorrows as if angels themselves would not give final release. It was as if a prayer was withholding them from letting me return to the homeland of my Father. Within this same Light there was a princess casting this same prayer that forbid the angels from letting my soul be removed from this dungeon. What love would pray torment remain when such sweet ending was so close? My prayer was that the Artist would paint the skies with understanding that I may have strength to withstand this heaviest of trials."

The monk was silent regarding the troubadour as he understood strength was not returned yet to his body. To be cast out now upon the seas would surely be a death sentence. At the monastery he was visited by the princess seeking wisdom and council from the monk. His words in the past were as gold given by all kingdoms of beauty and truth. His prayers with her had many times sustained her since she was a child playing at his feet. This meeting she was to speak plainly:

"I have been forsaken by the Lord that cloaks you with Light.

The wind gives neither song nor my prayers an echoed return.

My service to the poor is as them giving to one even poorer.

The elderly in their wisdom speak to me not in prayer for my release but as if such release was not to be prayed for.

Those carrying stones for the new road have little burden compared to the weight upon my being this moment.

Angels are at your side and give you council, pray them I would rather return to the homeland of my Mother than stay in such a state. Pray my tears be the release I sail away on to this homeland. Pray I fall into the Light that strips my body and spirit from this place."

Their hands were held together as tears pierced to the core of their beings. The intertwined roots of a mighty oak that has withstood both drought and flood were as their hands and spirits this moment. Love reveals its ways in many forms, the monk and princess were given such revelation as they both offered themselves as sacrifices to the Author of tears

and smiles. The only consolation and prayer he could give the princess was

“Thy will, not ours, be done.”



The Tavern

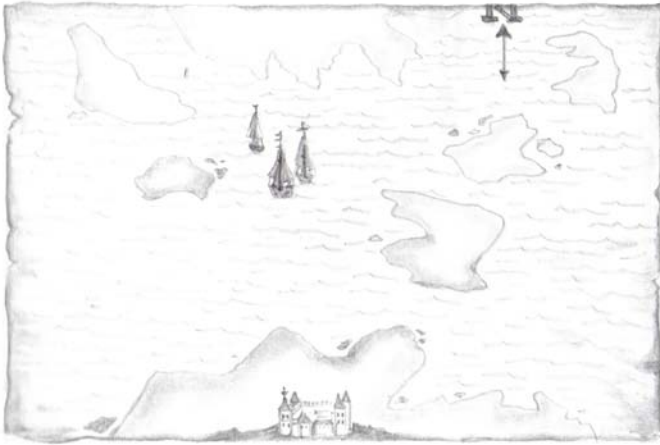
The bounty of the land blessed the full tables at the tavern with kegs of fine wine. The keeper of the dungeon spoke filled with such bounty as the listeners also were filled. His words wove the saga of the sailor now being restored to health in the

dungeon. With one voice they all determined in their rage to rid the land of the troubadour. Such blight must be cast unto the next tide.

Soon after the mugs were drained they slithered to the dungeon and cast the troubadour unto his ship. They raised the sails and directed the ship to sea. Their well directed fists assured he would not return to this shore again as he was thrown unto the ships deck.

For three days and nights he sailed without rising. The skin of water was almost wasted before he could stand at the ships bow. The dungeon's grief had yet again returned as body and mind drifted in and out of awareness.

Upon returning to the dungeon with stew for the troubadour, the monk was informed of the deeds done. He fell on his knees and begged that it be a lie. The prayer and beseeching that was given him by the princess yesterday now were the same words echoed by his spirit also.



The Southern King

Since childhood the father of the princess was told stories of an incredible kingdom that lay to the South a long journey away under good sail. In this land all prosper as the king governs with wisdom beyond what man is given. The land blesses with crops beyond what can be harvested, the hills give treasures to all and even the plentiful deer willingly stand before the archer as sacrifices to the kingdom.

His intent since youth was to sail to this land to celebrate truths he also shared and to learn more of the ways of being a fair and true king to those he served in his land. His arrival in this southern kingdom was beyond his wildest imaginings. The stories told to him were understatements. The grandeur and elegance of this land held him awestruck and speechless. The princess's father was carried through the land with great pomp and ceremony. Throughout this land they had heard of a king to the North that ruled in justice and truth.

Travelers for decades had spoke of a land where the king's edicts were as this same land.

The southern king rejoiced that such a figure sailed to grace his court. Celebration and festive days met the coming of the princess's father in this land. The three ships that sailed with the king were emptied of the gifts brought to this land as a tribute to honour the southern king. Wine, exotic fabrics, precious metals and artisan's finest works were hauled from the ships deck to the storehouses of the king.

In the most sacred and private quarters of the king's inner domain both kings reclined on chairs and spoke for hours of their inner heart's desires, prayers, and thoughts. They were as brothers bound by the same blood and vows. After diplomacy and politics were agreed upon as each had the same spirit and mind as the other, deeper recesses of their beings were also expressed.

With tears the southern king spoke thus:

*"All the treasures and kingdom I possess would be given
In a heartbeat if that same heartbeat returned my son.
In his youth he set sail upon a small ship he was given.
His wanderlust spirit could not be contained neither by
being the prince
Or by the love of those of his homeland.
Since birth he was taken with music. So much so that
The finest luthiers built an instrument for him.
We had engraved the words within it with the same spirit
we prayed be upon him. The words were;*

***May your heart only be guided by love and your
songs be the echo of this same heart***

Many seasons have past without word of my son.

His spirit and soul is one with ours though. As kings we have had to venture into journeys others know not of, thus is my son's calling. Yet, all I have would be offered in a moment to embrace him once again."

They both wept with sacred tears honouring his son's journey and prayers for his safety. The princess's father vowed that the lands to the north would be searched for signs of such a ship, instrument, and sailor.

After leaving the southern kingdom there were four rather than three ships guided by the North Star. Gifts insisted upon by the southern king weighed each to capacity.

The princess's father rejoiced that love yet again had found a way. He was thankful that the country he visited was bountiful through the prayer of love being returned by the Light which governs all affairs as the King of kings.

Weary after months of sailing, all aboard rejoiced in seeing the coves and bluffs and bays of their homeland once again. At shore word spread quickly that four ships were drawing nigh, three with the kings flags upon them. The monk and princess together rejoiced in hearing the news, yet were beyond consoling as to sails turned away from these shores only days before.



The King Returns

As the four ships entered the harbour a feast was prepared and the fat of the land spread out for all to enjoy. Songs and laughter mingled with excitement and joy as the king once again set foot upon his homeland shore. The summer breezes refreshed all as the king's arrival was met with this same thankfulness.

After celebration, resting and tending to business affairs needing attention, the king summoned his daughter. Their embrace was as one Sun holding itself. His very being was contained within her soul as her soul was his in return. Her father was the manifestation of all she held as sacred and to be honoured. He understood his daughter was a vessel of the Source of such sacredness. His greatest treasure was held in his arms this moment as the princess and he were not as the oak roots intertwined, but as the one tree itself.

While dining the king could not help but notice the paleness and countenance of his daughter. He asked if she was well and what tribulation was upon her. With tears she spoke of the songs upon the wind, her hearts yearnings, and the seasons of the stirrings within her heart.

"In the early spring a ship arrived upon our secret shore and these parchments were on the deck. I sought in vain for the sailor of this ship. Now it is gone. There were whispers he was cast into the dungeon but I was assured no such man was captive.

Since first hearing faint song upon the winds my heart has been as these same winds tossed to and fro. Now, such a ship has come and gone without sign save these parchments of lyrics and thanksgiving from villagers of a port I know not of."

Her father was so intent on comforting her that no thought of the southern king's son entered his mind. The king comforted her heart with the encouragement of understanding that all things have a divine plan and we are to move within it. Rest in the gifts given this moment and be assured the King of your father knows all tides and affairs of man.

The following day the king went to the monastery to give thanks for a safe journey and to renew his spirit. Happening upon the monk on the trail their speech turned to talk of the princess. The king was then told about the troubadour who had been beat and cast into the dungeon. He wove a detailed account as to his attempts to revive him but in the end he was cast back to sea just after the moon waxed last.

At this moment the king's next questions were as a flood demanding to cover all in its path. Was there an

instrument? What was written upon it? What age was this sailor? What direction did he sail from? What were the tides and winds at the waxing moon? Who was it that did these deeds?

Almost frantically the king summoned all ships and men seaworthy to sail on the next tide. They were to follow the shores as the winds and tides directed north. Their search was for a battered ship, the sailor held in the dungeon, and a musical instrument with engravings. The princess demanded entry upon the king's ship to sail with them. At sea, she was told of the southern king's son and his journey to their land. The king told her why perhaps her heart had stirred in the seasons past. The seed of the southern king is as my own. Our own souls are lost as long as he is not in our midst. I can not bear to tell the southern king it was in my dungeon his son had been beaten then set to the seas to die.



The Princess and Troubadour First Meet

The troubadour had not the strength to steer. The winds and tide carried him to the shore he now lay on. Seaweed, mussels, and berries were eaten as he lay near a small creek that was giving itself to its source. Gazing at the sea the Sun was as one hand and the Light another calling him to fall into their final grasp. The creek reminded him that these same hands are as the sea it also is returning to. The song of the creek through the night was as his heart and prayer this same night;

*“Lord of the Sea that is life, mine now is returning to it.
Thank you for the song of the creek,*

*It is as my own. I surrender to Your Sea in understanding
This return is not a departure, but rather arrival into
Thy perfect will. Thank you for all seas Your will has
Guided me to sail upon.*

*Let my body go peacefully now back to the earth as
My soul sails into the hands that hold the Sun and is the
Light"*

As morning awakened the land the troubadour rose to find food. Venturing upon the rocks at the shore he fainted. The infections and toll upon his body since being in the dungeon had now wearied him to the point of death. He lay upon these rocks not aware that the waves were dangerously rising as high tide was nearing. This same tide lapped about his legs before receding with the noon Sun upon him.

Cries from the crows nest of the king's ship heralded a battered ship grounded ashore. Hastily they weighed anchor and rowed to shore. They formed search parties after determining this was the same ship that was upon the shores of their land. Hearts raced as yells and looking for footprints gave no reward. The ragged rocks were met with a sandy shore that went for some distance. The king and several men went into the brush as others went up the sandy beach.

The princess knelt and prayed that favor be upon them today and that life yet be captive within the troubadour's body. With the rising tide she found it difficult but climbed the jagged rocks as the waves crashed around her legs.

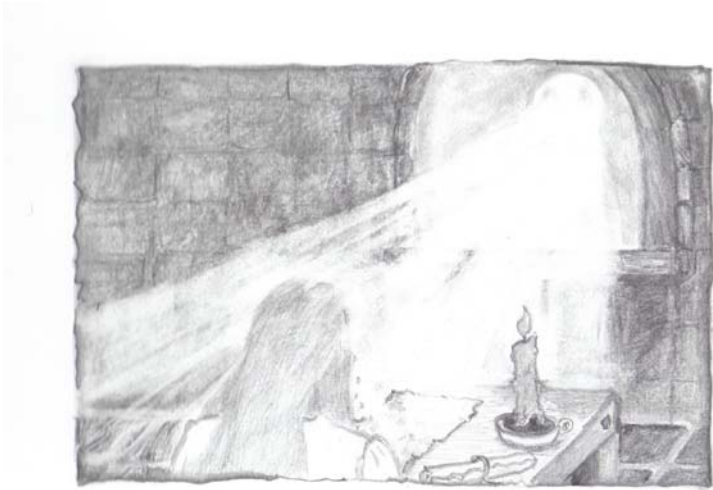
It was as if all mountains had crushed her in an instant as she first saw his body laying still as the sea half cloaked him. The rock he lay upon barely holding him in place. Her cry could not be heard above the

crashing waves. She flung her whole being upon him as she turned his head to see if life was yet within him. Her tears wet his parched lips as she clung fiercely to raise him from the waters. A slight moan was heard from him as she lifted her whole being in praise that breath was still upon him.

Frantically she raised him to higher rocks and then ran with loud cries down the beach. The king and his men were soon upon the troubadour and carried him to the shade. Water, cleansing, ointments, and medicine were quickly administered. They made haste to the ship to return to the castle as quickly as possible.

Upon returning the king immediately ordered continued watch with doctors and nurses over the troubadour. No expense was spared or comfort not given to bringing about his recovery. His instrument was repaired by the finest artisans and placed in his chambers. The king's heart was in continued prayer as was the monk and the princess. She was not allowed to see the troubadour for fear her heart would be torn beyond return if he should now die. Better the brief moments at the shore as a remembrance rather than more that would weigh as stones in the future.

The king sent a ship to the southern king with news of the prince being found. Hesitating to give all the details he wrote a sealed letter regarding the search and how this moment his son is being nurtured back to health. Upon his strength being returned the king's fleet shall return him to the southern kingdom.



The Troubadour's Prayer at Sea Revealed

The moon had waned and waxed and was yet waning again before the troubadour was aware of his surroundings. His strength was not yet restored and it was as if a fog was not allowing clear thoughts to form. Daily the monk prayed over him and meditated in the room to bring healing and peace. He read scriptures to him and wove stories about the kingdom. A special glint in his eye was upon each story told of the princess from when she was an infant until now. The troubadour could not exchange speech clearly but made it certain he understood and was enraptured by each word spoken by the monk.

The king rejoiced as the prince recovered further each day. He also frequently visited and recounted what he knew of his homeland shores and about his journey there. He saw the striking resemblance of him to his father. Both hearts were comforted in knowing the southern king would soon know his son was safe.

A parchment not read before, that was taken from the troubadour's ship, was lifted by the princess amidst candles and the full moon giving light to read by. She first closed her eyes in a prayer of thanksgiving that the very walls of this castle were now his shelter and comfort rather than a place of torment. The roses were in full bloom and a gentle warm breeze was about her as she read a prayer the troubadour had written at sea:

"Lord of all lords, King of all kings. I know you through my own father

Who is called king yet daily bows prostrate in service to You.

I have witnessed the power he wields, yet upon his knees he seeks only Your power to move through him. The inscription upon my instrument is the same as his prayer given to me."

May your heart only be guided by love and your songs be the echo of this same heart

Dreams of a homeland not fashioned by earth's possessions have driven me far from safety and home. All luxury has been surrendered and replaced by countless seasons wandering in search of this homeland. The princess of this homeland is already etched in my heart as one with mine. To remove her from it would be my death. I have no choice but to journey deep into the bitter cold winds and winter nights and without compass sail the seas in search of the woman that has only visited my dreams and prayers. My journey will not cease until she is found and together the homeland of our hearts is lived within as one. Lord,

even now as the bitter night winds sting and the countless stars cover me, I hold fast the course to her.

I honour both my father's prayer and what my heart says is the path I must follow.

My heart shall only be guided by love and my songs echo this same heart.

I pray the princess this night is in safety and warmth. Let the very winds and angels speak to her heart that I am coming. Give her understanding that the homeland of her heart lay within me as mine in her. I am piercing the very heart of tribulations and strife to reach her shore. Lord, I pray not that this be Your will as I'm assured it is. I pray this night the strength and courage to continue this long voyage guided only by Spirit and the dreams of her that are given me by this same Spirit."

Her tears were uncontrollable. Not only the floodgates of her heart but her whole being loved him beyond measure. A man she had only embraced for moments as he lay at death's door upon rocks and crashing waves and had yet spoken not one word to her had taken her heart. She witnessed the beauty of all sunsets combined as she read this parchment.

The will and spirit of the troubadour now was etched in her heart also. Whatever seas and challenges he endured, the same she would endure a thousand more times in return to be in his arms and share the homeland as one heart. This night as she lay sleeping, angels surrounded the prince and princess as sacred fires of holiness filled both.



At the Balcony and the Shore

In time the troubadour had begun plucking his instrument and recalling songs. He spoke clearly as the haze was replaced by vivid memories of all events. Stepping outside for the first time since being carried from the ship, he took his instrument and sat on a bench and sang a song.

*“If I could never touch you, still I would reach out.
If you couldn’t tremble in my arms, still I would hold on.
Forever and a day, I do.”*

*I've looked into your eyes, as I gaze through the night,
You showed me the stars; I look at them still, still in love
with you,
Forever and a day, I do."*

Unbeknown to him this bench was below the princess's balcony. Her heart raced as she snuck a peak at him. There was an elegant demeanor about him yet a softness that spoke not of all he had endured. Should she greet him now? She was as a frozen statue as the monk sat with him and rejoiced with him as to renewal of his body.

The following day the princess went to her secret shore and meditated with the waves after prayer. The Sun was directly over her head making it appear it shone from her very being. Her hair was cast into the breeze as her bare feet and white summer dress had sand strewn about them as she sat as a lotus flower. Meditation filled her with radiance matching the brightness that was as a crown above her.

The troubadour was about the grounds and happened upon the stairway leading to the secret shore. He had just left from being groomed and shaved and oils massaged unto him. His garments were also white. Preferring bare feet touching the earth, he had removed his sandals. The commanding presence like his father's had now returned.

Upon silently walking down the stairs he saw her in meditation. Frozen in this incredible moment, he could hardly breathe as he was so enraptured with the sight. This was no dream. This was the promise of all yesterdays and the hope of all eternities to come being witnessed this very moment. This was the Sun giving birth and casting the very source of life unto this beach.

He wept as his footprints slowly etched in the same sand and prints as her own. His thoughts raced as a waterfall awaiting the stream below.

“What possible words can I speak at this moment? She knows not even my name or who I am or whence I have come from. Let alone what my heart cries out to such degree that this moment the entire universe hasn’t the room to fill it. What fool will she think I am as I stand before her naught able to speak with shallow pleasantry about weather and such? My life lay before me within her.”

While these thoughts were racing about him he moved towards her as if angels themselves were pulling at his being. He whispered a faint prayer;

“Lord, be with my speech this moment.”

The princess was attuned to his voice and quickly turned her head to look. No speech was required. Their eyes, bodies, spirits, and arms spoke all words necessary. Tears of unbounded joy intermingled with their lips. The taste and scents and forms of their physical bodies met each other with the excitement as sight would be when given to someone blind since birth.

The first words spoken to each other were from the troubadour as he gazed into her eyes as they lay on the beach.

“My love for you was cast into existence the moment time and space was declared. This same love will endure beyond all that is held within them. My heartbeat was created to carry this love to you always. There is no sea nor tempest nor trial nor fire that would keep me separate from you. I knew you since my soul was breathed into existence. Every

song written was for you, every action in preparation of this day, and every prayer was framed by the woman who this moment frames all I am and behold."

Within the same heart beat of his lips closing, her speech gave her first words to him:

"The very winds spoke of your coming, not as declaration, but as comfort to what my heart already knew. The same Breathe that breathed life into your soul with that same breathe filled mine. The winds, tides, and currents of the sea were my prayers guiding your ship unto me. The fragrance returned to you was the blossoming of my heart each moment thoughts of you filled me. The sea you sailed upon were the tears wept while you were still distant from my arms."

So sacred was this moment that the Lord of all moments proclaimed to the angels;

"This moment is to be a monument in measuring the passage of all time. The moments of eternity prior to this embrace and the moments after are to be separate even as earth seasons are. For this moment would I create all others if need be. So it is spoken, so shall it be."

As night fell the prince and princess climbed the stairs. He picked an orange flower as they were walking and gave it to her. Laughing, she picked a yellow one and placed it in his hands. They laughed and several times exchanged the same flowers enchanted by love and fragrance. Sitting at the bench their embrace was washed in the Spirit that created the full moon and gentle scents upon the sweetest evening witnessed upon the earth.

Both the king and monk looked out from the library window and smiled as both their hearts understood the plans of God are not known to man until the end. This night was both an end and a beginning. Leaving the monk, the king whispered:

“So it is spoken, so shall it be”



The Wedding

Kings are fine at governing, but it was the Queen who now entered all aspects of ceremony. Her daughter was her very purpose in breathing and her marriage was now the purpose of each thought held. Details right down to what shade of trim on the monk's robes, to be worn as he gave them to be man and wife, were drafted and changed again and again. The prince and princess spent their days as young lovers in rejoicing without a care.

The wedding date was not determined as the king wanted permission from the southern king regarding such an important event. For weeks look-outs were placed on the bluffs to search for white sails with the kings emblems upon them. The ships that were sent to tell the southern king of the prince being found were expected to return at anytime. It was also expected the prince would need to sail home to the south first to meet with his father and ask his permission in such an important matter.

Soon the king's ship was spotted and all in the castle went to the harbour to greet the shipmates upon their return. As the ropes were tied and the gang plank cast to the dock trumpets heralded as a procession of dignitaries came ashore. The troubadour's father and mother then appeared atop the plank as a carpet was being rolled out for them by ship mates. All hearts leapt at this incredible surprise.

The troubadour could not contain his emotions. He ran down the dock and up the plank and embraced both with tears shed by all. This moment of gathering held no pomp or ceremony, it was hearts as one

giving thanks with all their being for the grace of God uniting them. Immediately a holiday and time of celebration was declared for all within the entire kingdom.

There was no doubt that the prince was entitled to marry the princess. All gave their blessings both in word and spirit. The queens were of one spirit and purpose which was to make this wedding the wedding of all time. The kings were as young men themselves again as they rode through the countryside and laughed. Both their hearts were in thanks that their King rode with them and laughed alongside.

The day of the wedding was filled with all one can imagine two kingdoms uniting in such a cause would manifest. She in a gown that would be fit for the most beautiful valley ever to be and he dressed in such attire that the grandest oaks would be jealous of them.

The ring he had worn around his neck throughout his journeys was this moment removed and placed upon her finger. It fit perfectly. The words and vows exchanged at this time were as eloquent as the hearts giving these vows. Doves were released at the moment of their kiss. Celebration echoed throughout provinces, country hamlets, and towns. News of the wedding spread as wildfire. The entirety of the southern kingdom made this a day of celebration and holiday.

The troubadour's ship had been gathered and a monument built to display it. It was unveiled at the wedding with a bold inscription carved in stone at the entranceway. It read:

"May your heart only be guided by love and your songs be the echo of this same heart"

At the closing of the wedding banquet, all were hushed as they witnessed in one accord what love upon the shore as prince and princess was to bring for all time. They witnessed the troubadour sit the princess down and first took her golden sandals off and kneeling kissed her feet. He then arose and took his instrument. His gaze was upon her the whole time as it was sworn by many that angels joined in as he sang to her.

After the last chord was struck it was she that sat him down, removed his sandals and kissed his feet. She then arose and read to him from the very parchments he had penned at sea. Unknown to all until this very moment, she then took her own personal journals written since her youth and opened them.

Her words spoke in unison with those of the troubadour. Words declaring that the orchestra of all hearts is played by and through the universe. If allowed, the Master Artist will create a masterpiece worthy of a princess and troubadour who would give their all. The testimony of their lives was this song being written. The expression of the finished work was the beginning that was now upon them.

This love is the spirit that guides the pen, the instrument of songs born of the heart, and guides the very lives of the troubadours at sea and the princesses awaiting such arrival. This is The Song of the Troubadour..... play it well.

“May your heart only be guided by love and your songs be the echo of this same heart”

Feel free to contact the author with how Song of the Troubadour has touched your life.
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