

# Poetry of Leland Gamson



Photo of Leland Gamson at Literature Show

## An Introduction

I am a Messianic Jew who accepted Jesus as my Messiah at age 18. I retired from the United States Army and worked as a VA social worker and therapist. I have written children's books, devotionals, poetry and wrote children's Sunday School curriculum for the Wesleyan Church, My writings have also been published in THE UPPER ROOM and HOPE IS NOW evangelical magazine, and in the PROCEEDINGS ON SCIENCE AND CHRISTIAN FAITH. I am a member of the Academy of American Poets, and a Certified Methodist Lay Minister. I enjoy teaching Sunday School, performing Bible characters and working out at the Y, walking my dogs and traveling.

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**Poetry**

## **WAS HE AN ANGEL OR A TRUCK DRIVER?**

When driving in a blizzard  
With fifty miles to go  
I feared I'd never make it  
Because of the ice and snow  
So, I prayed to our Good Shepard  
To safely home, arrive  
For it is His perfect will  
To Keep His sheep alive  
Then a slow-moving truck  
Appeared in front of me  
Now its lights and shielding  
Allowed me to finally see  
  
I followed behind him  
Gratefully wondering why  
The piece of road I drove on  
Was never slick, but dry

We drove to my exit

Where the roads were dry and clear

Then he honked when I left him

And he did disappear

Was the truck driven by an angel

God put for me, onboard

Or was the driver, a trucker

In service of our Lord?

Leland P. Gamson

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## **‘Twas the Night Before Christ’s Birth**

‘Twas the night before Christ’s birth and nearing the town

Rode three wise men all wearing a crown

They each bore a gift chosen with care

For Mary's baby when they arrived there  
They followed a star when they heard the good news  
Of the One to be born to be King of the Jews  
Gaspar, traveled from where we know as Iran  
With a gift of gold for the Son of Man  
Melchior came from much farther east  
Bearing incense for the new born High Priest  
Balthasar brought myrrh for God's Passover Lamb  
He knew he better not bring bacon or ham

Christ would die for us all as an atonement for sin  
Meanwhile, Mary and Joseph found no room at the inn  
For the innkeeper told Joseph his inn was all full  
The only place for his family had cows, lambs, and a bull  
The manger was not quiet, all was not still  
In fact, it was noisy, but this was God's will  
The room had no windows because it was a cave  
But God's Holy Spirit had all creatures behave  
Joseph's tired donkey, on which Mary road  
Found a place in the stable, a livestock abode  
Outside, the shepherds guarded their flock

From any predator hiding behind crevice or rock  
The next day they heard singing from on high  
A celestial choir sang from up in the sky  
“Glory to God in the highest, peace, good will to men”  
And the shepherds repeated “Halleluiah, Amen”  
When they peaked in the stable, what did they see  
Mary with child, Joseph bowed down on one knee  
For the Savior was born, to show us His Way  
To the world He was sent, for our sins He would pay  
He would not lead an army to free Jacob from Rome  
But came as a Shepard to lead His sheep to His home  
He came not to conquer, He came not to kill  
But He came to spread love, kindness, goodwill  
He would die on a cross as our Passover Lamb  
For God came down to earth, the Holy I AM

Now 2000 years later when Christmas Eve comes  
We can still have our trees and our sugar plums  
But let's remember Christ's birth in old Bethlehem  
And angels singing, “Glory to God, peace, good will to all men”

Written by Leland P. Gamson

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## **POEM TO MY FALLEN SON'S DOG**

Jake, what does an old dog dream about?  
Do you dream about when you and Nate  
Would play soldier in the nearby woods,  
Him wearing parts of my old Nam uniform  
Telling me you two were in the K-9 Corps  
And when he became 18 you would both  
Join up for real?

I could not explain to him that when he turned 18  
You would be too old for the K-9 Corps  
Just like I could not explain to a six year old  
What war is really like.

When his guard unit was called up  
I think he knew what to expect

When he gave you to me for safe keeping  
But that didn't stop him from being as eager  
To go kick butt  
As I was when going off to Nam.

Jake, you still get up when you think you hear Nate's truck  
Returning him from the Iraq War  
While in the closet, his dress uniform, not aging like you  
Stands ready for him to put on again.  
Just like you're ready to go trot off with him again into the woods.

Maybe if enough of Nate's body remained  
After the IED blew up his hummer  
We could have had an open casket funeral  
And you would have been able to sniff his remains  
And in your dog way of understanding  
Know that he was as dead as the squirrels  
That fell from your chase.

Jake, do you know that you are old

And you are only going to grow older  
And it is only going to get harder for you  
To get up, and harder for you to smell  
What is left of Nate's odor on his uniforms?

Do you know that you are going to die?  
And that I am going to die soon too  
Because the Agent Orange is aging me fast  
So we are the same age now?

Heaven is easy to describe to a dog.  
It is a land where you and Nate can run  
And explore together deep in lush woods  
Swim and climb and leap without pain.

Heaven is a place where you don't need a collar  
Or a leash and young men and women don't need dog tags,  
Because nothing is going to run you over or hurt you.  
In Heaven no one gets separated from their unit.  
Dogs don't lose their masters  
And parents don't lose their children.

LTC Leland Gamson (USAR Ret., IGR)

## **NATURALISM**

Here is the universe explained  
Without our Lord and King,  
Nothing times nothing  
Equals everything.

Concepts of right and wrong  
Can be explained this way,  
All life is but a struggle  
Between predator and prey.

A real conscious self  
In science has no room.  
Spirit's but an illusion  
Just don't ask to whom.

By Leland P. Gamson

## **I AM SURROUNDED BY SAINTS**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the Saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: Ephesians 1:1 (NIV)

To all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as Saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Romans 1:7 (NASB)

I ask God to Speak to me

As He did to Moses and Abraham

I ask God, for me to be visited by an angel

Like the Centurion, Cornelius was in Caesura.

So far, neither has happened.

What has happened is that

I am always running into Christ's Saints.

Saints in Walmart working as checkers

Greeting each customer, as Christ's ambassador

With love whether they be kind or grumpy.

Saints visiting those in prison

As Christ commanded us.

Saints incarcerated in prison

Striving to stay on the straight and narrow

Living with hardened fellow inmates,

While trying to show them a better way.

Saints extending their hands in love

To drug addicts, now under the Saints' care.

Saints driving cars lined up

In front of middle schools

To pick up the grandchildren

While their children work.

Nursing assistant Saints

Gently changing the attends

Of the frail, elderly who are hardly aware of their caregiver.

Saints staffing Christians missions

Who take Jesus at His word

To feed the hungry

And give water to the thirsty.

Saints driving ambulances

And without judgment

Reviving those who O.D.

Saints in church, the Body of Christ

Singing, praying, sharing each other's burdens

Studying His word

Inviting others to join

Their fellowship of Saints.

By Leland P. Gamson

@ 2020

**GUARDIAN BEAR**

I, guardian bear, sit by the grave  
Of a child whose stay here was brief  
His day of birth, was not one of joy  
Instead, it brought sorrow and grief

But were I, more than a stuffed bear  
I 'de show you the Kingdom above  
You'd see that our child is under God's care  
Embraced by His angels and love.

By Leland P. Gamson

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## **GIVE HIM YOUR HAND**

*Sung to the tune of "I Can't Help Falling in Love"*

Wise men came to a lonely inn

To see the One who was free of sin  
For all who knock  
Are let in  
For Jesus has shed His blood for you

Give Him your hand  
Give Him your whole life too  
For Jesus has shed His blood for you

**REFRAME:**

If it was just you  
In this world today  
He'd still shed His blood  
On Good Friday

He loves the poor, He loves the meek  
He loves the strong, He loves the weak  
For Jesus has shed His blood for you

Give Him your hand  
Give Him your whole life too  
For Jesus has shed His blood for you

By Leland P. Gamson

The four line reframe can be inserted between any of the verses.  
As in the original, the whole lyrics can be repeated.

## **A GIFT TO A GENTILE LADY**

“Don’t bury your dog Liddy’s remains in the back yard.”  
Ruth was warned by her mother,  
“Because if you do, whenever you see her grave, you will feel sad.”  
But Ruth did bury Liddy in their back yard  
Not wanting her pals remains cremated then forgotten.  
And Ruth buried other treasurers  
Where she would keep running into them.

On her library shelf  
She buried her high school yearbook

With photos of boys  
Who didn't requite her crushes.  
In her closet  
She buried her ballet slippers  
She can still fit into.

She buried in her trunk  
Rejection letters from two  
Seven Sister colleges  
With letters from her boyfriend  
Who wouldn't marry her  
After she became pregnant.  
And she buried on the shelf  
A book of possible names  
For their baby  
She aborted.

Now thirty years later  
She listens to the King of the Jews saying,  
"My precious child take ballet lessons again.  
Attend your high school reunion and meet

A redeemed brother I have prepared  
To be your Boaz.  
And if you can see through the glass darkly  
You will see  
In my Father's Kingdom  
Your now named child  
Plays with Liddy.”

Leland P. Gamson  
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## **EMANUEL**

*(To the tune of “the Lion Sleeps Tonight”)*

*(Inspired from the words in Joel 3:16-18)*

Emanuel, Emanuel, Emanuel, Emanuel  
Emanuel, Emanuel, our Lord and Savior.

In a manger, a lonely manger

The Savior 's born tonight.

In a manger, a lonely manger

The Savior's born tonight.

Emanuel, Emanuel, Emanuel, Emanuel

Emanuel, Emanuel, our Lord and Savior.

From the tribe, from the tribe of Judah

The Savior's born tonight

From the tribe, from the tribe of Judah

Our Savior's born tonight.

Emanuel, Emanuel, Emanuel, Emanuel

Emanuel, Emanuel our Lord and Savior

On the mount, on the Mt. of Zion

Our Savior will alight

On the mount, on the Mt. of Zion

Our Savior will alight.

Emanuel, Emanuel, Emanuel, Emanuel  
Emanuel, Emanuel, our Lord and Savior

By Leland P. Gamson

**COME SEE GOD'S SON SHINE**

*(sung to the tune of "You Are My Sun Shine")*

Last night as I was praying  
I heard the Holy Spirit say,  
"Come see the Son shine  
Come see the Son shine  
For then you 'll know dear  
How much He loves us  
He washed our sins away.

Come see God's Son shine  
Come see God's Son shine  
He makes us joyful when skies are grey  
He's made it known dear how much He loves us

He has washed our sins away.”

Some day when we are dying  
And on this earth, we cannot stay  
We'll see God's Son shine  
And reign in Heaven  
He has washed our sins away.

Come see God's Son shine  
Come see God's Son shine  
He makes us joyful  
When skies are grey  
He's made it known dear  
How much He loves us  
He has washed our sins away.

One day He'll return in glory  
And come back here to stay.  
He'll bring with Him

The Saints in Heaven.

He has washed all our sins away.

Come see God's Son shine

Come see God's Son shine

He makes us joyful

When skies are grey

He's made it known dear

How much He loves us

He has washed our sins away.

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### **Invictus In Christ**

(with original Invictus poem)

**INVICTUS** (Latin for undefeated) Original version 1875 By atheist,  
William E. Henley

Out of the night that covers me,

Black as the pit from Pole to Pole

I thank whatever gods may be

For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud  
Under the bludgeoning's of chance  
My head is bloody but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the horror of the shade.  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how straight the gate  
How charged with punishment the scroll.  
I am the master of my fate  
I am the captain of my soul.

*Here is my Christian version of the poem.*

### **INVICTUS IN CHRIST**

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Out of the womb that sheltered me  
Following God's light from Pole to Pole

I thank the One who created me  
A child of His, an immortal soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have winced and cried out loud  
Under the bludgeoning's of chance  
My bloodied head to Christ is bowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms the comfort of His glade  
So, yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find me, unafraid

It matters not how narrow's the gate  
My name is written on God's scroll  
For He is the Master of my fate  
Christ is the Captain of my soul.

Leland P Gamson

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