

Preface

This collection gathers together the hymn texts, anthems, and lyric poems I have written since *Above the Moon Earth Rises* (Oxford University Press, 2002). All of the hymns and anthems are written to regular meters, while the lyric poems are in free verse.

The poems are related to the hymns and anthems. Sometimes writing a hymn inspired a poem. Compare, for example, “All things of dust to dust return” and “Not all beauty succumbs to time.” This dialogical process between the hymns and poems flows from my effort to write hymns that have the emotional force and imaginative engagement that we associate with poetry, and to write poems that sound with overtones of transcendence. The interrelationship between hymns and poems expresses my conviction that the theological truths we boldly sing through hymns are manifest in subtler and more fleeting ways in everyday human relationships. Compare, for example, the sacrament of holy communion in “Rising water always flowing” and the communion of lovers in “Soon enough comes the time of final parting.”

As in my previous collections, there is a section of notes on each poem that gives the meter, scriptural reference, and occasion for which it might be used. I have also provided indexes according to meter, theme and image, scripture, and first lines.

I offer these texts with the hope that they will enrich the work of preachers, liturgists, and church musicians, and that they will inspire composers to create new settings to the glory of God who makes all things for singing.

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