

The Unsung Hymn *

by



I was just a kid, four or five,
in Grandma's church, and feeling very much alive.
We learned to sing one simple song—
Jesus loves us, every one of us children,
Red and yellow, black and white,
We all shine in Jesus' holy light,
(or something to that effect).

Someone thought I had a wee gift,
So plans were made
which gave my spirits a lift.
I'd sing this song at some big Church meet,
With grown-ups in full rows and in mostly every seat.

A chance had been given me, a song to share,
Before the congregation, in the church's spiritual aire.
With Grandma and her many church friends,
a practice run was run, and was so grand,
With a microphone, Oh joy,
held tightly in my still quite small hands.

Its cool metal touch, a power I embraced,
My voice, amplified, in that hallowed space.
Praise flowed freely, my heart swelled with pride,
Next, a full meeting to perform for,
and I presumed with all on my side.

And soon came that day, in my church-suit, so fine,
Sewn by Grandma's hand, with such loving design.
The Reverend spoke, of this and that "Church business"
long and real slow, so I waited, patiently,
for my moment to glow.

At last he called me to the podium,
And I stepped up all ready to sing,
"Jesus Loves the Little Children," usually
fills the room with light and vim.

He brought over his mic — still in his hand —
And held it out, something like we had planned.
Or so I thought — but when I tried
To take it fully, unto my side,
He kept such a firm grip, clearly not prepared to share.
And while I did try to give the mic a tug,
it still stayed with him,
just right over there.

Frustration bloomed, clouding my mind,
My singing faltered, my rhythm got left by the wayside.
The microphone, now a battleground and source of strife,
Confusing my young brain and at the moment it seemed,
seriously disrupting my young life.

Then suddenly, just all my tears burst forth,
spurting like a city water-main,
Oh yes, 'twas some kind of personal emergency,
but quite unintended; still sounding very much
like a child's sorrowful wail,
On such a public breakdown surely
must be woven exactly this kind
of heartbreaking tale.

So off the podium I was swiftly led,
and the Reverend moved easily on, leaving behind
just recent events so effortlessly unsaid.
Disappointment hung heavy, bitter and cold;
I'd failed them all.
Those words echoed in my head,
for all today and all tomorrow.

And that special disappointment for Grandma,
I avoided her eyes, sure to find them
filled with bemused sorrow.
That was Humiliation's sting that day,
and the bitter truth that rolled over me like a Truck.

No blame for the Reverend, his wisdom understood,
Protecting dear equipment, as any responsible man should.
But for years I've carried this childish story deep inside,
a burden on my soul, all from that moment's sudden unraveling,
just beyond my abilities to maintain control.

Some lessons come wrapped in shame
that takes decades to unwrap,
revealing not our failure
but our beautiful, fragile humanity —
even at the tender age of four or five ...
(well really, most especially then)

Years later, much solace has been found,
the weight of self-blame has long since began to evaporate,
leaving a relatively dry flat place
for relaxed, sweet release –
Having survived all that youthful disgrace,
when situations went astray,
While otherwise just trying to do my best,
On that long past, but still quite memorable day.

* More than a handful of poetic ideas were provided by Gemini and ChatGPT. Often I often had to change focus, direction, specifics of the chatbot text / offerings, in order to achieve the overall intent of my story -- (by ignoring their story if different from mine). So you can say that Chatbots/AI seriously influenced the content of this poem, but did not influence the poem's overall direction or intent of the message.