

BEAUTIFUL HEARTS

By John F. Hall

It's Sunday morning, I observed a few flowers blooming by my mailbox. I walked out to my car and felt the warm breeze blowing from the South. The leave buds were blooming on the three ancient and tall maple trees in my front yard. Paula Simon wrote the song "The 59th Street Bridge Song (Feeling Groovy)" These are some of his lyrics: "Slow down, you move too fast. You got to make the morning last. Just kicking down the cobblestones. Looking for fun and feeling groovy...Hello lamppost, what'cha knowing? I've come to watch your flowers growin'. Ain't you got no rhymes for me?...feeling



groovy, feeling groovy. I got no deeds to do, no promises to keep. I'm dappled and drowsy and ready to sleep. Let the morning time drop all its pedals on me. Life, I love you, all is groovy...".

I released the tie downs, holding my front porch swing, from the two heavy metal milk cans that were securing it from hitting the front side of my house. I sat on the swing and looked out at the farmer's lush green fields of wheat. The wheat fields looked like yards that need to be mowed. The constant rain storms insure its rapid growth. It's 75 degrees today and unusually warm for the third week of March. This past Sunday, I was pleasantly surprised to see a young couple return to church. Her name is Ciera Crain. Ciera is a Celtic Irish name. His name is Kyler Bohn. I had previously written my first love story and my first love Song called "We Had It All." I wrote them for my wife, Paula. I gave the couple a copy of that story. They inspired me to write another love story that I wrote for them.

There is something that is special when you watch a young couple who are desperately in love. I called the story "Young and in Love." I will ask them Sunday to tell me what they thought about my story. In a surprise to me, my Christian Fraternity Brother, John Juneau, arranged my song to be played by guitar. I changed one word and added one word to John's modifications of my lyrics. Ciera told me that she plays the guitar. I told her that I would give her my song, and ask her to practice it. I would like to hear her sing that love song, one Sunday in the future.

I look forward to summer and to sitting on my front porch swing and writing another summer story or two. On Sundays, I serve as the usher at church. I open the main entrance door to the church and greet each member as they enter. There is a beautiful young heart name Jade Hakes, that once came to that church. I miss Jade, she sat next to me, as a child, at the church for over 10 years. She became my adopted granddaughter, not by a piece of legal paper, but by love and affection. She moved away with her parents to Russellville, Kentucky. I have not seen Jade since the Pandemic started.

Jade called me and told me that she will be coming to church this Sunday with her godmother, Trish Cunningham. Jade and Trish call me "Mr. John." When Jade was a little girl, she would come to church, and when I was not at the front door, and she saw me in the church, she would call out "John! John! John!" Trish told her that she needs to

be respectful and she should call me “Mr. John.” That is what these two call me. My family and friends call me “An-Father.” It will be a blessing to see them and hug them. I guess, in some ways, that the stories I write are my humble way to be a witness for Christ. I'm just an usher, nothing more, nothing less. He gives me the grace, the inspiration, and the talent to write my stories. He is the true power behind my pen.

I picked a hymn that is appropriate, as we are approaching Easter, by Mary Woolsey. The hymn is called “Springtime.” These are some of her lyrics: “You're the Resurrection that we waited for. You buried the night and came with the morning. You're the King of heaven. The praise is yours. The longer the quiet, the louder the chorus. We will sing a new song, 'cause death is dead and gone with winter. We will sing a new song. Let 'hallelujahs' flow like a river. We're coming back to life reaching towards the light. Your love is like springtime. You're the living water God, we search for You. The dry and the barren will flower and bloom. You're the sun that's shining. You restore my soul. The deeper You call us, oh, the deeper we'll go. Come tend the soul, come tend the soil of my soul. And like a garden. I will grow. Come tend the soil, come tend the soil of my soul...”.

The green wheat fields, in front of my old farm house, always makes me thankful to Jesus Christ for the bread that will be made from His bountiful generosity. Being happy about springtime is more than just enjoying the warmer weather. It's also about searching for happiness. The Declaration of Independence mentions several rights. One such right is the pursuit of happiness. The pursuit of happiness is defined as a fundamental right to freely pursue joy and live life in a way that makes you happy, as long as you don't do anything illegal or any thing that violates or infringes on the rights of others. My simple pursuit of happiness is found in writing stories. I believe that it might be one reason that Christ keeps me on the green side of the farmer's wheat fields.

In addition to Jade Hakes, I give some of my time and presence to two other beautiful hearts, Skyler and Lexie Crisp. As a volunteer in the Heritage Christian Academy (HCA) lunchroom, I sat across the table from Skyler, for about 10 minutes each school day when she was in elementary school. Lexie, was always glad to see me. Their dad, Jason was deployed to Iraq, and I became their adopted grandfather, not by a piece of legal paper, but by love and affection.

The song, “Beautiful Hearts,” was written by Laura Hackett, Cassandra Campbell, and Adam Sniegowski. It is actually a hymn about Laura Hackett's faith and hope in Jesus Christ. These are some of their lyrics: “Beautiful heart with an artist soul, all you know is to paint your beautiful world. Feel so much you can't contain its flow. Reach for souls that would share and know what you know. Misunderstood almost all your life, yet you strive to remain all that you are. And just like your Father, you love the broken. Reach for the healing and believe in love. And you almost gave up the fight, when they broke your heart those nights. You cried so hard, you reached for the truth. You thought they might see it too, but most people don't. Oh, oh. And you almost gave up that bright twinkle sparkling in your eyes. But that song He placed inside of you, could not be silent. For the

world needs to hear the song of beauty. And the world needs to hear the song of your heart...”.

I look forward to listening to Ciera sing the song that I wrote from my heart. I look forward to being there for Jade and Lexie at their high school graduation in May. And I look forward to being there for Skyler at her wedding to Kendall Lancaster this Fall. I am grateful for all the beautiful hearts, young and old, that find some joy in reading my stories. More importantly, I am thankful to Jesus Christ for his grace upon grace upon grace and inspiration to write these stories. When I was dating Paula, I loved to listen to the song by The Righteous Brothers called “Soul‘ And Inspiration.” It was written by Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil. These are some of their lyrics:- ‘Girl, I can't let you do this, let you walk away. Girl, how can I live through this, when you're all I wake up for each day? Baby, you're my soul and my heart's inspiration. You're all I've got to get me by. You're my soul and my heart's inspiration. Without you baby, what good am I? I never had much goin', but at least I had you. How can you walk out knowin', I ain't got nothin' left if you do?...Without you baby, what good am I, oh, what good am I? Baby, I can't make it without 'cha. And I'm, I'm tellin' ya, honey, you're my reason for laughin', for cryin', for livin', and for dyin'.” I'm rock and roll by history, but country music holds me today. Song writers are the best story tellers because their lyrics come from their hearts.

Young people keep this 76 year old writer young at heart. Christ has blessed me more than I deserve. I put people that I love and care about in my stories. I believe that God's plan for me is to be a writer. Forty four years ago, Christ gave me the talent to become a nonfiction short story writer. It is with my upmost gratitude that, insufficient as it is, that I thank Jesus Christ for all the beautiful hearts, young and old, that he has blessed and put in my life.

John F. Hall

“We Had It All.”

Written by: Higgins/Limbo

Lyrics by: John F. Hall

Arranged by: John Juneau

Sing to the melody “Key Largo”

Key Largo's where I long to be
Largest of the Florida keys
We have been there a time or two
A place to see for all of you

There's a statue here of Jesus Christ
Down beneath the sea
His arms outstretched beckons us
To put our faith in His words

Paula we had it all
We were Bogie and Bacall
Sitting on the soft warm sand
Watching the sunset in Key Largo

Here's looking at you kid
Remembering what we did
With our faith in Jesus Christ
Falling in love in Key Largo

Now years have changed us
Yes we have grown old
A lifetime of our memories
Is etched into our souls

Back then I was your soldier boy
And you were my wife to be
Honey I was your only
Yes you were my leading lady

We had it all
With little money at all
Our trust in Jesus Christ, I know
Was in our hearts in Key Largo

We had it all
Just like Bogie and Bacall
Holding one another close
Beneath the palms in Key Largo

*Read other stories by John F. Hall and others at:
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