

## FULL OF BREATH AT MY WRITING TABLE

By John F. Hall

In 1990, my wife, Paula, and I decided to have a new kitchen added to our old farm house. We used the kitchen porch area, and we added an extra six feet, to make the new kitchen. I removed the wooded kitchen porch and kitchen porch steps. We also added a one-car carport, and attached it to the new kitchen addition on the north side of the new kitchen, I had a three-foot wide by six-



foot tall window installed. I now draft my stories on our kitchen table. It is a six-chair table. We also had a four-chair kitchen island constructed. I sit in my wheelchair and I have a full view of the outside from that window. I can see the mail vehicle as it comes to deliver the mail to my mailbox. I have a partial view of Dyers Hill Road, and the cedar trees going down that one lane road. I have a full view of my great nephew, Corey Harrison's house, and barn, and his one acre fenced-in horse pen. His oldest daughter,

Katie has a horse in that horse pasture. Katie is 11 years old. She is a straight "A" student, and she is a track student. At the last competition, she came in 22 out of 200 competitors.

I moved my writing equipment from my second story bedroom. This was a medical necessity, as my doctors felt, that it was too risky for me to be climbing the staircase. The fatigue, and other issues, from the medications that I take, will, at times make me lose my balance. I cannot repeat enough, that one out of four people my age, will die from a fall. I use a stand-up rollator, as I go from room to room. I reserve a small section of my kitchen table for my meals. The remainder of the table has my desktop computer, my computer monitor, my Cannon printer/scanner, my laptop computer and printer. I also keep extra copy paper and other items on the kitchen table.

I find many advantages of staying in this old Antebellum farm house. Paula and I have lived here for the past 47 years. The main advantage is that it is one place where I feel at ease and comfortable. I lay down a lot, because of the pain from compression fractures in my spine, and from my spinal stenosis. I had been getting epidurals in my L5, but I had to stop, because of the blood thinner that I take. I use to wonder why old people liked to talk about their medical problems. I have scarred lungs caused by histoplasmosis, second hand cigarette smoke, and smoke from my days in the military. My pulmonologist told me that Medicare will not pay for me to be put on oxygen. Apparently, because I'm just slightly above the oxygen numbers, that qualify me to have the oxygen equipment.

I selected the following poem because it explains how I feel, after I walk the sixty plus feet, from my kitchen door to my mail box, and back. My lungs are screaming for air, and I'm breathless.

I credit song writers and poem writers, when I use their lyrics or words. I'm using a poem called, "Breathless." The poet writer goes by the name, "Poet From Another Planet." The way this poet explains, what it is like to be out of breath, makes me believe that this poet is writing from experience. These are that poet's words: "I am often told that love will leave me breathless, but I

hope I never know a love so greedy as to steal the breath from my chest, for I have memories of the times when my body was oxygen starved and my lungs unable to draw in breath, bogged down under soupy pneumonia that clung to my innards and vice like snotty grips. My mind is sometimes lost in the sensation of frantically drawing air inward, into my chest with great gasps, that never alleviated the burning of my lungs or the way the pins and needles tingle down my limbs. My brain cells were consumed with desire to force O<sub>2</sub> to bind with the red blood cells churning in my veins. The air surrounding me was dense with particles that refused to aid my survival, no matter how much effort I exerted to the contrary. Sweat dripped off my too thin form and skin as I drowned slowly from the inside out, in a room full of doctors until they finally placed the tube back into my throat, to breathe for me. The pain receded as oxygen raced back into my cells, and I marveled for a moment of the fact that I could not feel myself breathing, couldn't feel the rising and falling of my chest. The mark of my vitality was absent, and yet, I was very much alive. I remember what it was to be truly breathless, the blind panic that seized me before finally giving way to a wish for death. It's because of this hope love never empties my lungs. I want a love that makes breathing feel safe and exciting, a love that feels gloriously alive, that I am acutely aware of my chest rising. Love should always make breathing feel like a right and privilege. It is a privilege to love her and be in her presence. But I hope she never leaves me breathless."

Some young people in love, romance each breath they take. Laura Eggebech wrote the poem, "Every Breath That I Take." These are her words: "Every breath that I take is in hope for another tomorrow with you. Every breath that I take is thinking of you, you're my everything. Every breath that I take is a welcoming blessing from God above. For I never know what another tomorrow will bring. I'm just thankful for the joy you bring. Song in my heart, and a love I can't express. For my every breath that I take in hopes that one day — I one day will spend my life with you, because I love you." Mark Iteogge wrote the hymn, "As Long as I Have Breath. These are some of his lyrics: "How do I thank You, O Lord for taking my place on the cross? And how do I thank You, O Lord for all Your mercy and kindness, for calling me to You, for letting me hear You, for opening my heart to the gospel? As long as I have breath, I will praise You. As long as my heart beats, I will sing. As long as life flows in my veins, I will bless You. How do I thank You, O Lord, for all the love in Your eyes? And do I thank You, O Lord, for changing me forever. For giving me power, a hope and a future with and goodness and every good thing...".

Tina Groves wrote the poem, "I Breathe The Breath of God." These are her words: "I breathe the Breath of God, I am filled with life anew. I am unconditional love, I do what God will do. I breathe the breath of God, my heart is open and pure. I am aligned with God, now and forever more. I breathe the breath of God, I am a spark of the Divine. This earthly part of me, glows as God's essence is mine. I breathe of God, through all eternity. I know that I shall never die, my soul is God as me."

Clerick Alfa wrote a poem called, "Still I write." These are his words: "When no one reads, still I write. My voice will echo through the night. This vow I make from deep inside, no matter where my fate may glide. Though time may age my weary hand, and feet grow slow to walk the land.

My spirit will not fade for once or fall — as long as poems hurriedly heed my call. For when the stars forget to glean, I'll scribble light into the dream. In every sigh the world has known, I'll find a rhythm of my own."

There is a Christian hymn that I enjoy. It was written by Edwin Hatch, called "Breathe On Me, Breath of God. These are his lyrics: "Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure, until my will is one with Yours, to do and to endure. Breathe on me, Breath of God, so that I may be free to live with You, the perfect life for all eternity."

After supper, I will write for another hour or so, as I watch the sun set in the West. There is a young wild rabbit that loves to eat the grass in front of my kitchen window. It is a reminder, to me, that life is brief, as this rabbit is not safe from a hawk looking for its next meal. Once the sun goes down the security light, on the utility pole, in my drive way, comes on. Another rabbit joins this rabbit to chew some more grass, until they ran back to the safety of their hole in the ground. I save what I have written, and I close out this story. I'm thankful for all the blessings that, Jesus Christ, has given me today. It is, His Breath, that will allow me to live another day.

John F. Hall

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