

LEAVING MY STORIES BEHIND ME

By John F. Hall

What I started out to do, 45 years ago, was to write nonfiction stories based on my experiences and my observations. The purpose has not changed, that one of my stories



might help just one person. I wrote my first story in 1977, when I was living in the parsonage in Fancy Farm, Kentucky. A little girl came ringing the doorbell around 3:00 am. She told the Pastor that her uncle was shooting a gun at her daddy. The Pastor woke me up and I got into my State Police uniform and drove to the house where the shooting had occurred. I was faced with an option to shoot or to tackle the shooter. I made the decision to tackle the shooter. A Graves County Deputy Sheriff drove up and took the shooter to jail. The folks in the town were happy. But I wonder if I had to shoot the man, would they be happy at me? That incident launched the beginning of my becoming a writer.

I've known people that seem to be stuck in their past. Mahfooz Ali wrote the poem, "Leaving The Past Behind." These are his words: "Looking to the future is like suture, closing the wounds of time; that we receive while on this mountain of life that we climb. They say never look down, if you did you would be a fool. For you would be looking into your past, and will make you fall real fast, into the depths of self pity. That makes you feel real crappy. It there is one thing I can teach from this poem, or maybe you will learn on your own; is that life can be harsh and unkind. But it's not half as bad, when you leave the past behind." The young adults, that receive my stories in the mail, are enjoying the gifts of my stories. The older adults, that receive them, can relate to things that they have experienced.

Ilene Bauer wrote the poem, "What We Leave Behind." These are her words: "I think of those I knew who've passed and what they've left behind, impressions that remain engraved in the caverns of my mind. Perhaps, just an expression, or some laughter we once shared, or reaching-out connection where our truest selves were bared. I conjured up some habits that endeared or else annoyed which, for reasons I don't know, have yet to vanish in the void. We write our wills, bequeathing what we treasure to our kin, but the best of us we leave behind is what resides within."

Sean Rowe wrote the song, "To Leave Something Behind." I know that my life stories are what I am leaving behind, to those that found some comfort in some of my written lines. These are some of Sean Rowe's lyrics: "I cannot say that I know you well. But you can't lie to me with all these books that you sell. I'm not trying to follow you to the end of the world. I'm just trying to leave something behind. Words have come from men and mouse. Oh, but I can't help thinking that I have heard the wrong crowd. When all the water is gone my job will be too. So I'm trying to leave something behind... This whole world is a foreign land, we swallow the moon, but we do not know our own hand. Oh, we're running with the case, but we ain't got the gold. Yet we're trying to leave something behind. My friends, I believe we are at the wrong fight..." Continued next page

“And I can not read what I did not write... Now there is a beast who has taken my brain. You can put me to bed, but you can't feel my pain. When the machine has taken the soul from man, it's time to leave something behind... Now I've got this feeling that I'm still at the shore. And pockets don't know what it means to be poor. I can get through the wall if you give me a door, so I can leave something behind. Oh, wisdom is lost in the trees somewhere. Oh, you're gonna find it in some mental gray hair. It's locked up from those who hurry ahead, and it's time to leave something behind. Oh, money is free but love costs more than our bread, and the ceiling is hard to reach. When my son is a man, he will know what I meant. When I was just trying to leave something behind, and I'm trying to leave something behind...”.

We never know when we will give up everything and leave it all behind. Time marches on as we watch as many have passed on. Robert Amen wrote a short piece called, “Thank You For The Time.” These are his words: “The hour is drawing near when I'll stand before You, Lord. It's the time I've spent here that I want to thank You for. On Earth, You gave me choice to believe in You or not. I've never heard Your voice; Your presence I have not forgot. I know not where else I've been; I know not whence I go. But God, that You're my Friend I learned many years ago. Thank You for my time on earth; for good companions of my stay, for days of happy mirth, and troubled days of gray. Happiness is, to me, a sign of Heaven's promised scene. Troubles that come at times are tests of my faith in Thee. If Heaven be an empty space, there, gladly, I'll be with Thee. If You have in mind another place, I know it will be right for me. The hour is growing near, my Lord, when Your judgment will be heard. Before that moment comes, Dear Lord, I thank You for my time on earth.”

C. David Hay wrote a short piece called, “Life's Journey.” These are his words: “The road of life is a journey, the distance is much the same; it isn't a race for the fastest pace but how we play the game. Some choose the road less traveled, others take the one most trod, but who's to say the better way if we follow the path of God? The valleys are dark and fearsome, the summits have views sublime; all it takes to reach the top is faith to make the climb. Let the past lessons learned, keep the moral course in sight, and know that when at journey's end - the road we chose was right.”

I'll end this story with a song written by Harvey Schmidt and Tom Jones called, “My Cup Runneth Over With Love.” These are their lyrics: “Sometimes in the morning when shadows are deep, I lie here besides you, just watching you sleep. And sometimes I whisper, what I'm thinking of, my cup runneth over with love. Sometimes in the evening when you do not see, I study the small things you do constantly. I memorize moments that I'm fondest of, my cup runneth over with love. In only a moment we both will be old. We won't even notice the world turning cold. And so, in these moments with sunlight above, my cup runneth over with love. My cup runneth over with love.”

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