



LORD OF THE DANCE

Story and Poem
by Anna Jensen

I live in Durban on the east coast of South Africa. My home overlooks the warm waters of the Indian Ocean where dolphins and whales play or yellow-billed kites swoop overhead. I enjoy the glistening beauty on a still, sunny day or the raw abandon of wildest nature on those days when the wind blows strong.

A little further along the coast from my village lies a thriving beach resort with chatter-filled restaurants and enticing holiday apartments. Across the front of this small town, along the edge of the beach, runs a brick-paved promenade. The 1.5 mile stretch of walking or jogging paradise is flanked on one side by time-share blocks and on the other by yellow beach sand, mussel-covered rocks and crashing ocean waves. A red-and-white striped lighthouse is further up the beach and a little further still is a pier that protrudes proudly out to sea while sporting a sculpted archway reminiscent of a blue whale's rib cage.

One morning a week, after dropping off my teenage kids at school, I take a detour on the way back home so I can enjoy a stroll here. I start out with my head full of the week already passing, of the upcoming day, of what distracts or frustrates me. At first, I barely notice the sparkle of the sun on the sea or the drama of the clouds forming overhead. Gradually, the noise in my head quiets, and I begin to surface, observing my surroundings and interacting with the other walkers. I start to converse with God, chatting with him about my previous pre-occupations. Scripture verses come to mind, and I know the Holy Spirit is engaging me in the delight of divine conversation.

At this point God often begins to whisper inspiration, revelation and encouragement. My attention may be drawn to a particular bird or insect or flower. As I take note, the Holy Spirit reminds me of a certain passage of the Bible I may have read or highlights an old truth to me in a new way. These moments inspire much of my poetry and writing.

A couple of weeks ago, during a particularly windy walk, I had one such moment. I had been mulling over a current work situation my husband was facing, wondering how it would all end. An exciting season seems to lie just ahead but exactly what it will look like is blurry and unclear. I found myself asking God for answers, asking him to show me the road ahead or at least the eventual destination.

Instead, he drew my attention to the waves whipping and swirling to my left. They piled up in white-topped curls from the wind before breaking onto the awaiting beach. As each wave peaked, the wind plucked the spray and foam off the top and flung it in the air. Each plume was blown in the same direction, driven by the persistent breeze.

And God began to speak. He reminded me that he is my good, good Father. That he has promised to prosper me and not to harm me, that he has a plan for a hope and a future. He declares that he will lead the blind along unfamiliar paths — a scary notion for the sighted, let alone those who cannot see — and ensure safe passage. And just like that blown froth carried by the wind, he knows exactly where I will be taken, where I will end up. All I need to do is enjoy the freedom of his love and the fun of his ways.

I sat on a nearby bench, staying a little longer to ensure I didn't miss a moment of what God was showing me. Then I rose and headed back to my car, finding a lightened heart my companion. No, I was no more able to see the future than I had been a few moments earlier, but I did have the assurance that God would take me wherever he needs at whatever speed and time he chooses. The future doesn't depend on me; my shoulders don't need to carry that burden. Rather I can get on with the stuff of today reinvigorated and reassured.

So often, during times of change and uncertainty, when we have many questions with seemingly so few answers, our energy and strength can become drained and diminished. Our minds become rabbit holes of possibilities and options, our thoughts constantly chasing down blind alleys and into dead-ends. It becomes an exhausting, impossible quest. Perhaps we need to still ourselves before the Lord, enjoying the wind that directs the spray or blows the leaves, the breeze on our faces and in our hearts. We receive the strength that comes from realizing that it doesn't all depend on us and our efforts.

Lord of the Dance

Unbending in my panic
 my seeking solutions
 my grasping at futures
Taut-wired
 Heart-tired
Jumbled, confused, conflicted.

Breeze gusting windy
 arrests my agitated musings
 slows my pounding steps
Stills
Captured attention.
Frothy fairy ballet pirouetting, leaping
 swirling, falling, soaring.
Whipped away to other stages
 joining different dances
 and new formations.
Inexorable momentum
Wind-blown out-of-control
 choreography.
And then the gentle whisper
“I have a dance, a ballet, a concert
 steps for you to follow.
A destiny, a purpose
 and a plan.
Be swept along in trusting fascination
Ordered though unfamiliar
Sheltered though unknown.
Faithfully held and free.”

~ Anna Jensen

