

PRAISE, MY SOUL

THE HYMNS
of
HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

 Selah Publishing Co.

 ABC Publishing
ANGELICAN BOOK CENTRE



Printed on recycled and acid-free paper

Praise, My Soul: The Hymns of Herbert O’Driscoll

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Co-published by ABC Publishing, Anglican Book Centre,

600 Jarvis St., Toronto, Ont., Canada M4Y 2J6

www.selahpub.com

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Typeset and printed in the United States of America.

First edition

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 09 08 07 06 05

Catalog no. 125-445

ISBN 0-9677408-7-8

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Dedication

For our children
and grandchildren,
who are the songs and music in our lives.

Introduction

Just like human beings, hymns come into the world at every conceivable hour and in every conceivable place. For curiosity I began to recall where and when some of the hymns in this collection came into being. First of all I know that every hour of day and night is somewhere on my list—including a number of occasions that involved rising from bed as the world slept and furiously scribbling some lines before they vanished with morning light.

It is impossible to do this particular exercise in the small hours without recalling the dreadful fate of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who dreamed the full text of *Kubla Khan*, woke some time later, tried desperately to get it all down and failed.

Likewise the locations of the arrival of a hymn are legion. On a train, at a lakeside cottage, in a traffic jam (particularly challenging for the scribbler), on planes, during sermons (a dreadful admission for one who himself must at times preach!), in airport lounges, by fires of a winter's evening—the list is endless.

And always there is the same excitement. It may be the sudden arrival of a first line, complete and ready to be added to—demanding to be added to! It may be the sudden arrival of the overall idea or plan for a hymn, this time demanding that work begin immediately on constructing the stanzas. But whatever the first moment of awareness may be, there is the thrill of a new hymn.

Sometimes—and this is to enter the confessional—when one finishes the process, the torn pages of rejected attempts piled beside one, the verses of the finished article set out upon the successful page, sometimes the wild thought comes that this particular hymn will take its place among the great hymns; that it will echo in vast places on great occasions down through the centuries! One imagines choristers of the far future wondering idly who this long dead person was who penned what they must sing.

Gentle reader, I am sure that you had no idea that hymn writers could be guilty of such vanities, but then, as the preacher wisely remarked in long ago Babylon, “all is vanity,” and we might as well be honest and admit it.

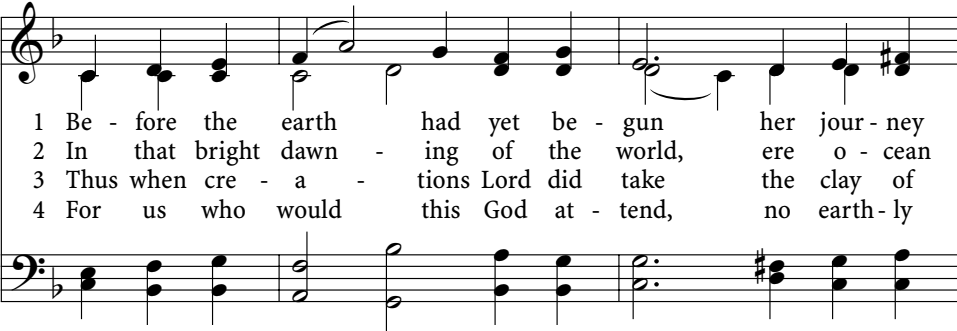
Nothing mitigates vanity like expressing gratitude to others without whose gifts this little collection would not be in your hand. My thanks to Robert MacLennan who gives firm advice in a most gentle way; to David Schaap who offered to give this collection his experience and professional resources; to those who composed tunes for my words—Patrick Wedd, Rupert Lang, David White, David Young, William Rowan, Frederick Clarke, Frederick Atkinson, Alfred Fedak, Calvin Hampton, John Wright (who contributed two arrangements), and my wife Paula O’Driscoll.

Let the above somewhat light hearted lines be testimony to the delight that these verses have given to me over the years, and let me indulge the hope that on some or other page, you the reader—dare I say singer—may also find some echo of that delight.

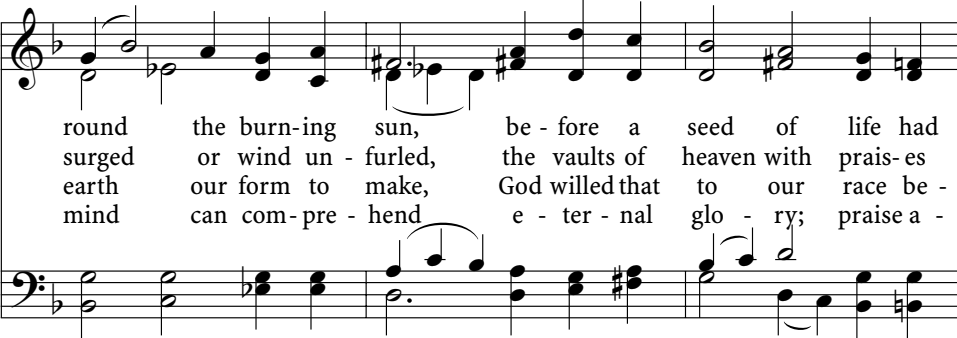
Herbert O’Driscoll
Victoria, British Columbia

SONGS
of
CREATION

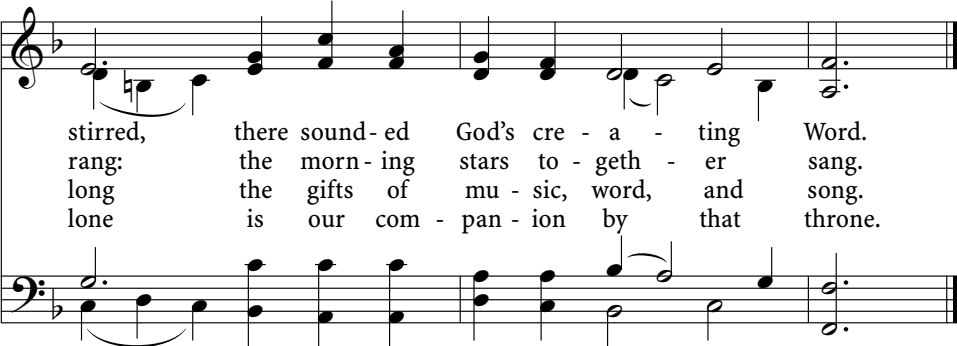
1 Before the Earth Had Yet Begun



1 Be - fore the earth had yet be - gun her jour - ny
 2 In that bright dawn - ing of the world, ere o - cean
 3 Thus when cre - a - tions Lord did take the clay of
 4 For us who would this God at - tend, no earth - ly



round the burn - ing sun, be - fore a seed of life had
 surged or wind un - furled, the vaults of heaven with prais - es
 earth our form to make, God willed that to our race be -
 mind can com - pre - hend e - ter - nal glo - ry; praise a -



stirred, there sound - ed God's cre - a - ting Word.
 rang: the morn - ing stars to - geth - er sang.
 long the gifts of mu - sic, word, and song.
 lone is our com - pan - ion by that throne.

Before the Earth Had Yet Begun 2

1 Be - fore the world had yet be - gun her
 2 In that bright dawn - ing of the world, be -
 3 Thus, when cre - a - tion's Lord did take the
 4 For us, who would this God at - tend, no

jour - ney round the burn - ing sun, be - fore a seed of
 fore sea surged or wind un - furled, the vaults of heaven with
 clay of earth our form to make, God willed that to our
 earth - ly mind can com - pre - hend e - ter - nal glo - ry;

life had stirred, there sound - ed God's cre - a - ting Word.
 prais - es rang, the morn - ing stars to - geth - er sang.
 race be - long the gifts of mu - sic, word, and song.
 praise a - lone is our com - pan - ion on that throne.

3 The Lord of All Creation

1 The Lord of all cre - a - tion moved o'er earth's pri -
 2 The love of God all pas - sion - ate en - folds the
 3 The Lord of time brought forth a race to roam the
 4 O God, who in this land has forged a power be -

me - val fire, and from a flam - ing plan - et
 preg - nant earth, and in that year - ly ec - sta -
 end - less plain, and led a pil - grim peo - ple
 fore un - known, yet who did mount on Cal - va -

formed a con - ti - nent en - tire. God mold - ed
 cy gives seed and sea - son birth. That flam - ing
 to for - sake an old world's pain. The God of
 ry a sac - ri - fi - cial throne: so min - gle

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THANKSGIVING

its mag-ni - fi - cence with ar - tis - try sub - lime,
 love has pierced in - to the world's a - wait - ing womb,
 lib - er - a - tion led the slave to free - doms hill,
 peace and jus - tice that a peo - ple's soul may flower,

and gild - ed it with glo - ry through the ma -
 and scat - tered rich re - sour - ces in the sub -
 that all may walk a way of peace and do
 and hold us hos - tage in your love that we

1-3 | 4

- jes - ty of time.
 - ter - ran - ean gloom.
 God's sov - ereign will.
 may know your power.

rit. *a tempo*