



Dance  
and Fellowship  
Musings

1978 - 2020

A book of poetry by Mary Jones

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# Preface

There is something powerful about the authenticity of truthful personal testimony, the sharing of lived experience which verifies the unique story of an individual human being. We can all identify with this power.

Agonies and ecstasies abound in the telling of these tales. Poetry is often a great way to connect disparate dots, pose vexing questions, provide mysterious answers, all the while gifting us insight, encouraging us toward wholeness when offended parts of us and the offending parties are partial to staying apart!

Mary Jones, in the following pages of poetry she has chosen to share with us, traces her unique and authentic story of giving life to, rearing, and in some ways, “letting go” of International Christian Dance Fellowship. Her dedicated labours and contributions have been well-deserved nationally and internationally recognised. Mary continues to pioneer, adding to her story; recent examples being her book on intercessory prayer journeys, and a growing library of booklets and DVDs for CaraMayan, her innovative practice of Christian Movement Meditation, projects which continue to make waves in the scape of all things dance.

Many thousands of people can testify of the gift that Mary herself, is, and of the blessing that this particular global community of dancing creatives has released into their personal lived experience. I am one of the many, grateful for vividly colourful memories, rich in friendships and the vicissitudes of ICDF life! Mary and her special delivery, the gift of ICDF to the Church and to the world to which Jesus gifted the Church, have not always been welcomed! However, it can be said that the gift goes on giving.

People, through Mary’s obedience and tenacity spanning several decades, have been, and continue to be given opportunity to find and refine their own stories, as they connect with others in the Great Story and glorious purposes of God, the ultimate author and inspiration of theopoetic creative expression.

In Mary’s gifting to us, of herself, and in this little anthology of poetic musings, we catch glimpses of our living, loving, moving Creator encouraging us, reshaping us, showing us The Way to the life of abunDANCE, the kind of life we were originally designed and created to enjoy in connection with the entire creation!



*Lucy Andrew-Park Jarasius (GD AppSocS Adult Ed, Cert IV Trainer, Adv Cert Creative Min)*

*ICDF Steering Committee and former ICDF Coordinator*

# Introduction

2020 in the time of the COVID-19 crisis has been a time of staying put and reflection for many of us – an in-between time. In the International Christian Dance Fellowship we are also between our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018 and the time of the anniversary of our first conference in 1991. Concurrently, this year, on May 31, marks my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday which offers me a time to look back with thankfulness for how God has been so present and faithful. May 31 happens to fall on Pentecost Sunday which encourages me to think that there is still work ahead to be done in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Now is a time for all of us to move forward in the new decade of 2020 – one we pray will be of clear vision.

This book of poetry is a very personal one spanning the years from the beginning of the Dance Fellowship. It is one of reaction and reflection on my experience of dance and relationship within ICDF. I have written poetry from my teenage years on and used it as a way to record deep impressions of events – usually just a few poems each year. It was only in the early 1970s as I was seeking the Lord for direction in my life that I had a calling into dance and dance ministry. I spent the next few years where we were living in the United States training in dance for the first time and then, on our return to Australia, starting the Christian Dance Fellowship of Australia in 1978. Ten years later, at an international conference planned by CDFA, the ICDF was initiated. I was in leadership in both organizations for over twenty years and since then have continued to be involved in various ways.

I have made a note at the beginning of several of the poems to explain why the poem was written or what its significance is.



Mary Jones OAM  
May 2020



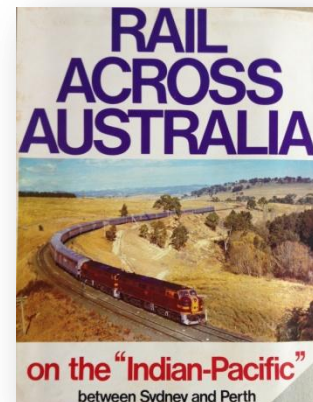
## Overland to INCEA

*Written about the train journey on the way to the International conference for Education through the Arts in Adelaide. I'd forgotten my camera so needed another way of remembering. At the conference I would get up at one of the dance meetings and announce a gathering for anyone interested in starting an organization for sacred dance. Amazingly, for a fairly non-religious country, seventeen came to the meeting and we started the Christian Dance Fellowship of Australia.*

It's red earth sprouting crowns of green grass,  
The green of recent rain against the red;  
Bushes and low scraggly trees lie  
Grey-green tired in the flat wide stretches of the centuries.

A long spear handle of mist pierces the morning  
And spreads a soft shroud over the harshness;  
A kangaroo bounds silently from nowhere to nowhere...

Yet here is Katherina Loop –  
A narrow wooden platform,  
Grey weathered,  
A round-bellied water tank,  
A grey house and an old car  
All a few feet from the train window,  
Clinging to the train line –  
The time line from city to distant city.  
But the people have long gone, leaving the land to itself,  
To the slow rhythm of conversation between hot sun and red earth.



This is not my land but it speaks to me.  
The memory of it stays with me after I have long left it  
For the clatter-filled busyness of city buildings and people.  
As I sit in the covered confines of sophisticated concrete  
In this world of seats and stage and spotlight,  
The walls disappear,  
And the desert silently enters wide  
With the simple naked walk of an old black man.  
Wandjuk sits cross-legged on the empty stage,  
Hius ydaki intones the throb of ancient longings,  
The chanting of a people for their land.  
And I, too, can feel.

Mary Jones  
August 1978

## Cheryl

*Cheryl was one of the dancers in Prepare Dance Group that represented CDFA as we travelled around to different churches and conferences. She tragically took her own life.*

Pain pitches paradox,  
The prism breaks and scatters  
The light,  
To red and blue and purple.  
Her life,  
A dancing sunbeam  
Heavy with drops of rain  
Mingling to form a rainbow.  
That hope, that promise, that new start  
Given,  
But hard.  
Hard to see, to remember, to hold onto, to go through  
In the dark night of the soul.  
She let go.  
Pain to end pain,  
Darkness to end darkness,  
Death to end death.  
Hope hangs  
Hopeless.

But see –  
She is not here,  
The well of water  
Springs  
Into Eternal life.  
She dances now upon the mountain of the Lord  
And rests released, forgiven, in Everlasting arms,  
His love and comfort  
All she needs and wants.

Ours is the pain,  
The torment,  
The questioning.  
But  
Comes

The Living water  
Out of the rock struck in the wilderness,  
Seeping into,  
Soothing,  
Slowly filling the desert craxks of numbness.  
Out of the inmost being  
Will  
Flow  
Rivers of living water.

Mary Jones  
Sept 12 1982



Prepare Dance Group 1982: Back row from L to R - Jenay Witt, Mary Jones, Truda Gaunt

Front row – Lesley Woods, Jane Burton, Cheryl Collins, Roz Dearley , Melody Ruhrmond

# Death and Resurrection

*This was written at a CDFA dance workshop run by Pat Lewis where we were asked to choose one of the collection of objects on display then move to it and write a poem.*

The decrease

Hard hurts

In its seeding,

Breaking open and bursting,

Wrinkling the fruit

In its splitting,

Its dying to what it was

In its growing.

But in the dying,

The breaking open,

Are beginnings

Of new life,

Spreading the seed

Into new soil

To multiply

Many times over.



Mary Jones

April 1984



## The Two Miriams

*When I realised that Mary was the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name Miriam and Jesus' mother was therefore a Miriam, I became curious as to reflections that Mary might have had about the story of Miriam. As I was a Mary and my younger daughter a Miriam that also led to some interesting reflections. I danced this poem, speaking the words as I danced, in Israel at the first ICDF conference, on several occasions at the birth of CDFs around the world and in the desert for a Jewish professor at Beersheva University. You can see excerpts in the DVD of the 1991 conference Preparing the Way.*

We led the people out of Egypt Ex 13-15  
towards the Promised Land.

I was the eldest of the three,  
a woman, but a prophet, Ex 15:20  
used to speaking out God's word,  
singing and dancing it out.

Moses, saved as a baby Ex 2:4-10  
when I watched his basket drawn out of the river,  
now leading all of us through the water  
at God's command,  
through the tall towers of water  
walled up on either side in the darkness,  
fending and feeding our fears  
as the horses of Egypt pound in our ears;  
filling our awe  
as the waters part and pile up  
for us to pass through;  
exploding in praise,  
the Almighty's power and protection,  
dancing and singing his victory  
as the waves wash over our enemy.  
Saved again by the water of God.

But then came the thirst and grumbling in the desert; Ex  
15:22 – 17:7

the hot sun seeping and sifting our spirits.  
Things were different,  
difficult,  
monotonous in the desert.  
We wanted the food,  
the fertility,  
the fantasy of what we had left in Egypt,  
not the promise,

the protection,  
the provision of God in the desert  
with water and manna,  
or in a new land –  
even if it was flowing with milk and honey.  
We wanted our way,  
our leadership  
or lack of it.  
And why should I, the eldest,  
be ruled by the youngest,  
even if he did  
Speak with God face to face.  
Hadn't God spoken also to me?  
I was jealous of his place with God,  
of his power with the people;  
silt was eating up like leprosy,  
sand-sweeping my spirit barren.

Nu 12

So in our rebellion and unbelief  
We were struck down in the sandy wastes,  
Bones buried in the deseret,  
And the promise given to our children.

Deut 1:26-36  
Deut 2:14-15

The promise came as a seed down the years  
To another Miriam  
By a well in Nazareth  
Whose heart pleased the Lord.

My life is cluttered with bits and pieces  
That scatter me on the surface of life.  
The well deep within me  
Longs to flow in a clear, strong stream  
Bringing life in the dead and desert places,  
A cup of water for the thirsty,  
For the wounded.  
Lord, God, I want to move with you,  
To dance your dance with you,  
Close to your heart-beat for the world,  
Dancing your pain  
And your joy  
As my sister Miriam did by the desert sea.

An angel speaking to me?     Luke 1:26-38  
Do not be afraid, Mary, he said,  
I will conceive and bear



The  
Saviour of the world  
“How will this be?”  
The Holy Spirit will come upon me,  
And the power of the Most High will overshadow me.  
I am the Lord’s servant,  
May it be to me as you have said”.

My soul glories in the Lord,  
My spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour;  
He has heard my prayer.

Luke 1:46

Why is it so difficult?  
Things seemed so clear,  
But now I have so many doubts.  
My family, my friends don’t understand.  
They whisper behind hands at the well;  
They have eaten my joy and spat it out.  
The water is dirty.  
I feel so lost, so lonely.

O Lord, be my helper, my strength,  
On this journey.  
Take my sackcloth and clothe me with joy;  
Take my wailing and turn it to dancing  
That my heart may again sing to you.  
Spring up, O well, in the barren desert of my soul  
And make it a place of springs.

Jer 31:13

Ps 30:11

Nu 21:17

Ps 84:6

Yes, Lord, I do believe.  
Move with me and I’ll follow  
Through the joy and through the pain.

Mary Jones  
1990

# Grace

for a wedding

O God of love,  
we thank you for  
love  
as wide and high  
as the sky,  
as strong and deep  
as the sea;  
as countless  
as sand on the beach.  
We thank you  
for marriage and home,  
for friends and family,  
for food and fellowship;  
for all that is good  
has its source in you.  
In Jesus' name,  
Amen.



Mary Jones

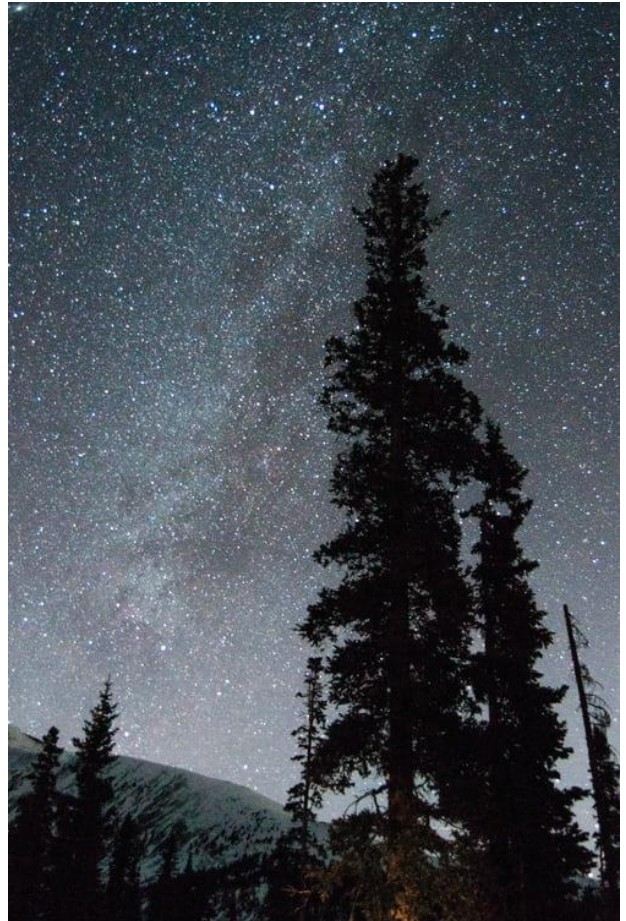
Dec 1992

# Psalm of Delight

*The two psalms below were written in a workshop led by sacred dance pioneer Carla de Sola at the 1996 Sacred Dance Guild Festival held in California. Carla asked us to write the psalms and then choreograph them.*

I climbed out of the window  
onto the moonlit roof,  
carefully treading the rusted ripples  
to my alone-place.  
I sat hugging my knees,  
gazing into the star-filled space of sky  
that filled my vision -  
dark sparkling  
blazing points of light.  
The night breathed quietness,  
and my spirit reached out to touch  
infinity.  
The speaking silence  
entered,  
enfolding my soul  
with delight.  
O praise you!

Years later  
in another place,  
I walked a path in darkness  
in the fresh warmth of a mountain summer,  
pine trees, path at evening  
with the sharp smell of bordering pine trees.  
The path and the way seemed narrow,  
the tall pines hedging me in.  
I remembered the words he spoke  
of the small door and narrow way  
leading to life,  
but felt troubled.  
I lay back on the road  
in surrender.  
In a moment,  
the wide sky  
opened high above me,  
darkness pierced  
by a thousand points of light.  
I stayed stretched out





in the vastness of the singing silence,  
my whole being in wonder  
alive.  
O praise you!

## Psalm of the New Name

Rev.2: 17

My stone  
lay white on the sea dyed cloth  
at the mouth of an open shell.  
Is there a new name  
written there for me,  
revealed  
in the silent movement  
of my body rock  
searching  
the wind and waves of the Spirit

washing the shore line  
of my soul?

My arms float,  
water-supported,  
out and in,  
anchored in the being  
of my centre,  
rooted in the sea bed  
of belonging.  
I fly with the  
cry of seagulls  
on wings of the wind,  
calling to the Holy One,  
who makes a way in the sea,  
a path in mighty waters.  
What is the new thing  
being birthed -  
the way in the wilderness  
of the desert tide?  
Bringer of water  
for thirsty people,



we are sucked aside dry,  
drowning in the pull  
and push  
of clutching tide.

My breath  
moves in and out,  
quiet in the gentle rock  
of my body;  
listening  
for the next reach;  
waiting  
for the new name  
on my white stone.

Mary Jones  
July 1996



## The Poet

*This was written for Pat Lewis on her unmentionable birthday Oct.10, 1998. This was the same Pat mentioned in Death and Resurrection and The Healing Tree. She was also in the first dance group I led in Australia and danced at the first CDFA conference in 1978.*

She sits  
stilling her soul  
listening  
to the breath of wind  
silently whispering  
filling the space  
inside out,  
outside in.  
She sings inside herself,  
Sensing  
the rise  
the flow  
of running water.

The light  
is poised ready  
sunning the waiting paper.  
A magpie's song  
wakes the silence.  
To be or not to be?  
The question  
lies idle,  
silently gliding.  
Without warning  
the word  
breaks the surface.  
The I am.  
Light  
moving on the water  
running free.

Mary Jones October 1998



# The Breakthrough

*Written at a significant time of leadership decisions.*

It was spoken clear and strong,  
mind made up, face set firm:  
“No, I will not send the letter.”  
The end of the road had come  
with another No to a request.  
The unanswered questions,  
tangled in a knotted mess  
of seeming unjust holes  
stopped still and waited,  
watching silently,  
web stretched  
strained.

And it was over.  
I let go  
and turned my back,  
embracing as we left.  
It was a  
Breaking through:  
left grey, unmoulded,  
lost,  
but beginning to smell  
the new freshness  
of ground after heavy rain,  
waterdrops shining spots of light  
on the web;  
greening,  
growing plants in their yielding,  
letting the Spirit move  
to renew the face of the earth.

I walked away wondering,  
not knowing where,  
but sensing the freedom -  
free float in the air,  
joy rising in the down dive  
fall into freedom,



following the Spirit moving,  
caught -  
held in the arms of God.

Two things I have heard,  
two things at least I know -  
that you, O God, are strong,  
that you, O God, are loving.

Pentecost comes,  
surrounding birthday 61  
with wind and fire;  
Spirit language opening out  
to a room of faces  
watching,  
waiting,  
walking forward to  
where the candle burns  
and flag floating touches them with fire.

I fall back into the ready arms of God.  
Entering a large room with many doors,  
I pause,  
wondering.  
“You can choose”, the Spirit says.  
“Loved one, you are free to choose.  
Go through with blessing.”

Mary Jones  
June 2001

References:  
Psalm 92: 13-14  
Psalm 104:30  
Psalm 62: 11-12



# The Healing Dance

Ruth

*Jane Farelly has a gift for healing dance and for getting others to do the same. We were teaching together in the Dance Department at Wesley Institute and she encouraged me to do one for my own situation.*

It came as a challenge -  
“You need to make a dance for healing”, she said.  
How could I have known  
that the night I finished it  
and danced it several times as prayer  
was the fateful morning of September 11  
in downtown New York.  
As I danced out the grief and mourning  
For my own still painful loss,  
suicide planes  
slashed headstrong into two tall towers  
exploding fireballs  
shattering the confident control  
that named  
the World Trade Centre.

The image still haunts -  
watched over and over in mesmerized  
on a billion television sets around the world.  
Slow motion fall,  
sinking straight down  
floor on floor  
into the ground;  
bodies pitching,  
falling silently through suspended space  
to certain death below.  
Dust and ashes -  
fragments of crushed bodies, buildings,  
fill the air  
pilling high the ground  
where moments ago  
stood a thousand busy offices and shops.  
Now -  
just smoking rubble.

Two weeks later  
I was in New York -  
a planned vacation  
to visit family.  
Everywhere were memories  
of the missing -  
presumed dead.  
The photograph and candle  
in the window of the house next door;  
the flowers and verses tied around a lamp-post  
or covering the ground by a by a monument.  
I asked if I could dance my prayer  
in a service of healing  
at St. Mark's-in-the-Bowery.  
This was the church my son attended  
and where so many dancers  
had performed down the years.  
Thye service was more crowded than usual  
and people were weeping.



Two months later  
the year is ending  
and we hope that the rumble of thunder  
we hear over the water  
will bring rain.  
We have been through  
the bombing of Afghanistan,  
thousands fleeing,  
while near our own shores  
boats bearing rufugees  
were turned away  
no room at the inn this Christmas.  
And then the fires started.  
As people sat down to Christmas dinners  
Infernos roared their way through bush and  
paddock -  
160 houses left just smoking cinders  
of family treasures and hard-earned comforts.  
“Twenty years to get it just the way I wanted -  
and now there’s nothing”, the paper quoted.  
Even here, three hours drive away,  
smoke clouds the horizon  
and dead cicadas line the high tide mark  
along the beach.



I danced the prayer again in November  
to open an end of the year Showing at College.  
“You need to give it away”, she challenged.  
“Reach up as if your life depended on it;  
feel your feet dig into the earth.  
Now take that precious seed, that gift,  
and share it”.  
Yes!  
There it was.  
I had been searching for the end,  
never feeling it quite right.  
There was still uncertainty and loss.  
But here was joy at a fresh start,  
confidence in something to give,  
a new seed sprouting.

The rain came,  
sweeping across the water,  
suddenly hitting our beach house  
with wind and hail.  
Soon the blackened stubble of burnt out bush  
will sprout green shoots.  
The piles of rubble will be gone  
and the city slowly move on.  
Memories  
seared, sealed,  
sort through meaning,  
healing  
feeding on shared moments  
of understanding.  
I remember the dance;  
and my arms making the shelter overhead  
become a door of hope  
for the new year.

Mary Jones  
January 02



## TWO CAMPS

Genesis 32 - 33

*The poem was written after an experience of being bathed and washed in the blood of Christ followed by intercession. Our daily readings had been on this part of the story of Jacob. I knew, as I wrote the poem after this experience in the middle of the night, that the story was significant in my own story, particularly as far as ICDF was concerned.*

The angels of God  
came to meet him,  
camping beside him.  
“This is the camp of God”, Jacob said.  
He was coming home,  
surrounded by all God had given him  
through his years of hard labour and humbling –  
his wives and children, servants and animals.  
Mahanaim.

But now by the brook Jabbok  
he was alone,  
afraid in the dark  
of the night before  
he would face his brother-  
the twin whose heel he had held  
in the birthing;  
the rival he had robbed and cheated  
of the blessing;  
big, strong, hairy Red,  
Esau, the hunter.

“O God, save me”, he prayed.  
And a man  
met him in the darkness,  
wrestled with him till daybreak.  
Jacob kept holding him, pleading  
“I won’t let you go till you bless me.”

Who are you, Jacob?  
Your name, Jacob,  
What is it?  
Jacob, the cheat?  
Now you will have a new name -  
Israel,



for you have wrestled with God  
and won,  
limping but alive.  
You have seen God face to face  
and survived  
with a new name  
and a blessing.  
Peniel.

Now you are ready to meet your brother.  
Behind your wives and children,  
servants and animals,  
behind the gifts you prepared so carefully  
to soften him,  
you come bowing.  
But see, he runs towards you on the road,  
throws his arms around your neck and kisses you.  
You weep together.  
His face is like the face of God to you  
as he receives you with love.  
Now there can be two camps  
side by side in the Promised Land.  
You can return in peace,  
settle and be fruitful  
in the House of God.  
Bethel.

Mary Jones  
February 2003



# The Answer

The flower!

It was completely unexpected.

Suddenly - a flower spike

stood there

white

against blue sky

steeping the green spray of leaves

growing from straight stem

tall on bulbous trunk.

I was puzzling over a decision

that was waiting to be made,

talking to my husband,

committing it to prayer.

I turned –

and there it was through the open door -

An exclamation!

Seeming

to shout YES from the Almighty.

Could it be?

A flower spike

speaking for the Creator?

And then I remembered Jeremiah –

The Word of the Lord came to me, he said,

“What do you see, Jeremiah?”

“ I see the branch of an almond tree,”

I replied.

The Lord said “You have seen correctly,

for I’m watching to see that my word is fulfilled”.

There was a “yes” in my spirit

and a joy inside.

I sat down

to finish the form on the table.



Mary Jones     March 7, 2013

# CaraMayan

(Hebrew: Cara - bow ; Mayan - well, spring, fountain)

A flowing of water  
deep down,  
bowing and rising,  
moving through body and soul  
Up to the Creator.  
Tumbling out  
to touch the other,  
restoring, refreshing,  
Spirit renewing.

A word of God  
Planted in the heart,  
Starting to dwell  
In the cells  
of mind and marrow -  
soul cleansing,  
muscles and sinews  
stretching,  
Faith founding,

Music  
moving  
the movement;  
the rhythm,  
swirling around the word  
to plant it in time,  
to order it in freedom,  
awaking eternity  
around word and action.  
Joy rising.

Breath  
rising and falling,  
in and out,  
marking the rhythm  
of movement,  
bringing life  
and quiet  
to body and spirit.  
Selah,  
Peace settling.



Mary Jones May 9 2014

# The Broach

Luke 1:28,38  
Esther 4:14, 5:16

*On the broach –  
scrolls on sides – the word of God  
purple jewels in heart and wings of butterfly  
cross pattern with wings  
sword into the heart  
“And a sword will pierce your heart.”*



It was spring in the mountains  
Our first Celtic retreat,  
Inspired by an ancient way of faith  
of those who saw in nature  
and the heart of anam cara  
the face of God.

In one of the times together  
each of us received a gift  
for reflection.  
Mine was a broach  
with a three and a four -  
Jewels,  
royal purple,  
Esther jewels.  
Three through the centre  
Outstretched arms from the heart of God;  
four smaller stones at each corner –  
tabernacle of the Presence.  
There were scrolls at each side  
Holding the word,  
the Torah word of God.  
Down the centre  
A sword thrust straight through the heart –  
making a cross with the line of three.  
“And a sword will pierce your heart also”,  
Simeon prophesied to Mary.

Surrounding,  
over and under,

were wings –  
An angel? A butterfly?  
Light and shadow,  
pain and joy,  
delicate curves of golden metal  
interweaving, holding together,  
shaping the circles of purple.  
This coming together of Esther and Mary  
moved me.  
“You have found favour with God”  
the angel said to Mary.  
you were born for such a time as this.  
No one else can do what He has called  
you alone to do.  
“Who knows but you, Esther, have come to a royal position  
for such a time as this.”

Time sits silently  
waiting a response....  
“And if I perish, I perish”.  
But I will follow the call,  
Interwoven, overwinged,  
held by the word  
and the heart  
of God.  
“May it be to me as you have said”.

Mary Jones  
2008, 2014



# The Bleeding Tree

For a friend

Wounded at the hip  
Not only out of joint  
inside  
like Jacob,  
but wound bleeding  
on the surface,  
searching  
the seemingly  
unanswered  
unrelieved  
pain.  
Reaching up  
open-armed seeking  
to the empty sky.

Jacob in his flight  
had been met on his way  
by the angels of God.  
He called the place  
Mahanaim, two camps -  
his camp and  
the camp of God.  
But he was still  
in fear and distress -  
afraid of the soon  
meeting with his brother.  
He stayed behind  
alone,  
and a man wrestled with him  
till daybreak  
when the man wanted to go.  
But Jacob held him -  
held onto God,  
and refused to let Him go  
until He blessed him.  
"Your name is now Israel,"  
the Man said.  
"You have struggled  
with God and men  
and have overcome".  
Jacob named the place  
Peniel—  
For he saw God face to face  
but his life was spared.





The tree still bleeds  
And I am bleeding  
with the tree,  
unmet.  
I wait  
in pain  
for the face of God.  
I hold on  
empty,  
waiting  
for Him to reach out  
and touch my wound  
in healing;  
hoping,  
and not hoping,  
to hear Him speak  
a new name -  
to have struggled with God  
like Jacob  
and overcome.

Mary Jones  
August 17 2014

Jacob's story: Genesis 32

*Peniel* means *face of  
God*



## The Dancing Teapot

I saw it the other day  
in a chance visit  
to an antique shop  
after our dance and meditation class.  
It leaped out at me,  
sitting there comfortably  
on the shelf -  
a round-faced, gilded  
teapot,  
dancers on both sides,  
and a golden bow on top.  
On one side  
a ballet pas de deux,  
the girl, in tutu, touching her lover's  
face,  
leg lifted behind  
as she balanced en pointe.  
On the other side  
another ballerina  
in long white gown  
but by herself with flowers in her hands,  
a small church, lake and gum trees  
in the background.

I buy it  
with delight,  
no hesitation,  
I have never seen one like it.  
It will be the centrepiece  
of my small collection.  
On the bottom of the pot  
I see stamped  
Pates Potteries,  
Sydney, Australia,  
and the internet  
tells me 1950s.

This is the time  
when we first came to Sydney,



immigrants from England -  
post war pommies.  
Dance was not something  
encouraged in our house -  
my father, an evangelical  
member of the clergy.  
But I danced anyway  
my version of the sugar plum fairy  
with my parents as audience,  
remembering the time in England  
when I  
led the fairies in a line  
for our school's performance  
of The Frog Prince.  
Then later  
in Australia  
we were trolls in the  
Hall of the Mountain King,  
taught by a student teacher;  
and years after  
part of a folk dance presentation.  
At University, a favourable review -  
"The only one in the opera who can dance"-  
encouraged me to try a proper class  
I found too difficult.  
But dance appeared again  
through my children  
and I felt the call of God  
to dance for Him.

Now, 44 years later,  
in the year I am awarded  
an Order of Australia Medal  
for *service*  
*to the Performing Arts*  
*through dance,*  
I celebrate,  
and thank my God,  
pouring a cup of tea  
from the dancing teapot.

Mary Jones  
Aug 17 2014

# The Gold Hairclips

I was late  
as usual  
even though I'd been determined  
to be early  
for this special day.  
Dora, eight months pregnant  
in December,  
was to dance as Mary.

I entered the church  
all flustered  
with her costume  
but no clips -  
(couldn't find them anywhere)  
essential to keep the covering  
from slipping off her long, black hair.

I dropped the costume,  
apologetic for the lateness,  
left her for a dash to nearby shops,  
looking everywhere  
for white hairclips,  
Finding every other colour  
but no white.  
Gold – maybe gold would do -  
with the cream of the head covering  
and the gold of the cord  
tied awkwardly above her waist  
over the rounded belly  
of baby within.  
Yes, gold was right –  
He was the King  
And given gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.  
Her gold would announce His.

And so she danced -  
a simple country girl,  
amazed,  
afraid at the angel's message,  
but willing to receive  
the gift of God  
within.

"Be born in me".      Mary Jones, Dec 14, 2014

# Pandora's Box Revisited

*Written at the time of the closing down of CDFA*

Twelve of us  
sat around the table;  
all past leaders,  
now elders  
in the Fellowship.  
We shared  
how much it had meant -  
to us, to others,  
to our children.  
We talked about it  
as family,  
friendship,  
church;  
unity in diversity;  
a place to grow,  
to be challenged, expanded -  
freed to Be.

Was this an end  
Or a new beginning?  
Sharon had spoken over many years -  
the need  
to lay down the old  
so the new could arise.  
And now  
We had done it.

After the meeting  
we gathered in the kitchen  
to toast the past  
with a bottle of wine -  
"Pandora's Box Adelaide 14" -  
chosen randomly,  
but prophetically  
some thought.

The label suggested  
delicious fragrances were there  
to be released;  
and the logo was a keyhole



surrounded by three-leafed clovers -  
kept by the Trinity on all sides -  
four  
in Hebrew, 'the door'.

We had opened the box  
and shared the fragrance.  
The bottle was all but empty -  
only Hope remained  
awaiting the New.

Mary Jones Oct 30 2016



## Evening Presence

Father,  
as the day closes  
and evening draws in,  
I sit in your presence,  
in the quiet,  
drinking in peace.  
I open my heart to you .

The sky glows red and the sun sinks.  
Birds give their evening calls  
as they gather and settle.

Thank you for the day,  
both the ups and the downs,  
I give them all to you.

I light the candle.  
Jesus, you said you were the light of the world  
and that I am too.  
Your light, your glory,  
reflected in me  
as I gaze into your face.

I take the bread and wine -  
Communion.  
You said these were your body and blood -  
forgiveness and healing,  
fellowship and unity  
in your Body, the Church.

I breathe in your presence,  
deep and quiet in the stillness  
as evening settles.

Mary Jones  
June 2019



# Time Stopped

A week ago  
my watch stopped.  
It didn't slow down and give me notice –  
It just stopped.

Yesterday, I passed the table  
where the vase was centred.  
It was showing off the sunlight  
shining through the blue and green  
of its elegant Venetian glass  
and lighting up the one, white, dying  
flower  
it was holding close.

Then I saw it –  
a pool of water that was whitening the  
table  
and a crack from top to bottom,  
front and back,  
a broken vase,  
yet standing still in beauty.

The watchmaker said  
the watch was finished.  
“Better spend your money  
on a new one”.  
But the vase  
I lifted carefully  
and placed it on a shelf:  
still beautiful,  
a work of art  
with added interest.

Today it feels that time has stopped -  
this time of the Coronavirus;  
so much shut up,  
so many empty places  
with people isolated  
and at home  
or keeping distance.  
The world has cracked and leaked;  
so much has spoiled, died and wasted.



And yet –  
there's something that is showing gain:  
broken but holding  
through the crisis;  
finding closeness  
in the pain.

Mary Jones  
May 3 2020

# Mary's Vase

*Written in response to preparing a May 31 2020 dance and devotional for ICDF*

It was a precious vase of sweet smelling ointment,  
costing a year's wages,  
saved for burial wrappings.  
She broke the neck of the Alabaster jar  
and poured it out  
on his head  
on his feet;  
drying his feet with her hair  
that she let down and exposed  
like a loose woman,  
allowing herself to be despised  
and criticized  
by the men at the table.

This was a story  
I had been given,  
I felt ,by the Lord,  
at the beginning  
when I wondered if I were wasting my time  
with dance.  
Shouldn't I be doing something practical  
with my life  
to help the world's needy?  
Then I heard Jesus' words:  
"Why are you bothering this woman?  
She has done a beautiful thing for me."

To dance as worship,  
I found,  
meant exposing my soul  
and my body;  
not always understood  
or appreciated.  
There was the time  
I was told  
to get off the stage  
in a gathering of hundreds;  
another, when I heard  
church leaders disappointed  
I was wasting my time in dance.  
But then there were others  
people were moved  
the atmosphere changed  
God's presence felt.



Now 40 years later and turning 80  
I want to remember  
and give thanks  
with a dance.  
I've taken the costume  
out of the cupboard  
I wore in the desert  
and Galilee  
years ago  
when I danced "The two Miriams"  
or in Greek -  
the two Marys.

I hesitate -  
holding my precious vase -  
long necked and full bellied,  
pottery white,  
the only one I could find  
that would do.  
How can I break it?  
But if not -  
how can I glimpse  
what it must have cost  
Mary -  
her savings,  
her reputation  
in the presence  
of family  
and Pharisees.

It is a way  
to declare  
again  
my heart's devotion  
to the one  
who has loved

and forgiven me,

giving his life,  
declaring my worth.

Yes,  
I will break it with joy  
as I kneel at his feet -  
sweet fragrance  
releasing.

Mary Jones  
May 21, 2020

