

RUF Bible Study – Songs of Ascents
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Psalm 126 – Joy

*When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.
2 Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then they said among the nations,
“The Lord has done great things for them.”
3 The Lord has done great things for us;
we are glad. 4 Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like streams in the Negeb!
5 Those who sow in tears
shall reap with shouts of joy!
6 He who goes out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
bringing his sheaves with him. (ESV)*

*It seemed like a dream, too good to be true, when GOD
returned Zion's exiles.
We laughed, we sang,
we couldn't believe our good fortune.
We were the talk of the nations—
"GOD was wonderful to them!"
GOD was wonderful to us;
we are one happy people.
And now, GOD, do it again—
bring rains to our drought-stricken lives
So those who planted their crops in despair
will shout hurrahs at the harvest,
So those who went off with heavy hearts
will come home laughing, with armloads of blessing.
The Message*

Do you remember singing the classic Vacation Bible School song, “I’ve Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy Down In My Heart”? You can keep it going, I’ll bet – Where? Down in my heart! Where? Down in my heart. I’ve got the peace that passes understanding down in my heart! And if the devil doesn’t like it he can sit on a tack – ouch!

If we’re going to read about, think about and even sing about joy, perhaps we should take a minute to define it. It’s one of those words we think we know what it means until we are forced to use words to make sense of it. I found 231 citations of “joy” or a variant (enjoy, joyful, etc) in the Bible. Joy is the second fruit in Paul’s list in Galatians. It is perhaps one of the distinguishing characteristics of Jesus’ first miracles, when he turned water into wine at the wedding in Canaan. The dictionary would say that joy is *intense and especially ecstatic or exultant happiness*. Some of you astute Presbyterians might know that we are told at the very first of the Westminster Shorter Catechism that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

Joy. Joy seems to go into the word mix of love, beauty, devotion and worship. Joy is noticing and reveling when things come together as they should be. You step outside of yourself and see things and are glad beyond belief. It’s a sunset across the lake at the end of the day of waterskiing, when you can smell the steaks on the grill and you know there is a red onion to put on that steak and a game of Uno to be played with your family. It’s Norman standing waiting for Jessie to come down the aisle – his bride in her whites. It’s your son unexpectedly making the game-winning double play. It’s the culmination of hard work and a job well done – your daughter is born and placed into your arms for the first time. It’s difficult to define, isn’t it?

We used to sing that song about joy, but I don’t think we do much anymore when we grow up. The joy joy joy down in our hearts fades out. We grasp at it, but just can’t seem to get it. Or else we get it for a moment and it fades away all too quickly.

Have you lost the joy in your heart? Do you have the peace that passes understanding? Or are you anxious about many things? Has the devil robbed your joy? Have you forgotten to tell him to sit on a tack? What happened?

Christians aren’t known particularly for joy. We can be a dour people. In her autobiography, Ellen Glasgow tells of her Presbyterian elder father, describing him as: “He was entirely unselfish, and in his long life he never committed a pleasure.”² The story is told of Martin Luther rebuking his friend Philip Melancthon about just this quality, telling him, “Why don’t you go out and sin a little – God deserve something to forgive you for.” The legalists among us shudder at such a quotation.

Psalm 126 is a psalm about joy. The people who walked from their homes to Jerusalem to worship needed joy. Just like you they dealt with children, with family expenses, with crazy in-laws, with inflation, with being teased by the neighbor kids. And yet they were walking to worship God, to reorient themselves to his truth in their lives. They were walking miles and miles in the hot sun, and they needed to hear about, be reminded of, joy.

So do we. As we listen to this psalm, may we allow it to say something to us about our joy.

This psalm puts joy into the context of a past, a present, and the future. Let’s use that as our outline.

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² Ellen Glasgow, *The Woman Within*, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1954), 15 – as found in Eugene Peterson’s *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*.

The Joy of the Past

Look at the first lines of the psalm. *When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad.*

The Lord had restored the fortunes of his people over and over again. Each time, God led them out of sin and rebellion, out of captivity and slavery, out of confusion and bondage and he led them into himself, his land. We first think of the Exodus, of God miraculously saving of his people in ways that they could not comprehend. You can read about that history, and when you do, do you marvel at the unexpectedness of this? Can you sense the joy in their voices?: *"I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him."* (Ex. 15:1-2)

Do you recall David's story, how he wandered as a fugitive for so many years, afraid for his life, even though he had been anointed king over all of Israel? How, despite his many great triumphs, he bumbled time and again as king, anguishing over his adultery and murder, and ended his kingship with his own son deposing him? And yet we read: *"The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, 29 For you are my lamp, O Lord, and my God lightens my darkness. 30 For by you I can run against a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall.* (2 Samuel 22:2, 29-30)

You might remember the book of Isaiah, which sets the stage of Israel's Babylonian captivity, when it was forced from its land, from its temple, from all it held dear. When the worst kinds of social mayhem overtook God's people, and they were unmercifully taunted as nothingness. People were just trying to hold on, something we can barely imagine, except to recall places ravished by war, to force ourselves to look at the gruesome pictures of injustice. And yet, Isaiah gives comfort to God's people: *Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.... Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you.... 7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion.* (Isaiah 40:1-2, 43:2-5, 52:7-8).

Peterson puts it well in his translation/paraphrase: *It seemed like a dream, too good to be true, when GOD returned Zion's exiles. We laughed, we sang, we couldn't believe our good fortune.* It seemed like a dream, too good to be true.

One of the fun things we do when we get together for a man shower or when someone is graduating is we tell stories. We like to hear how the couple met and got together. Charles and Keely's story particularly stands out. When Charles told his story, it was all the better because we already knew it. We filled in the gaps he left out. We anticipated the sadness and the laughter. We rejoiced with him that he had found such an excellent wife. It was glorious.

Joy has a history. It has a story. What is your joy's history? Do you recount it? Do you sing about it, write poems about it? Do you know the dates of your joy? Do you have a joy foundation to build on? It's real, it's in some sense verifiable.

If you have lost your joy, you might consider starting with thinking about your past joys. When were they? How did they transpire? What did you think and feel about them when they happened?

The Joy of the Future

Look on the other side of verse four, the verse that says, "We are glad." What do you see? You see a joyful expectation, a joyful anticipation. *4 Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the Negeb! 5 Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! 6 He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.* Peterson translates this almost the same, but he helps make the leap for us in meaning: *And now, GOD, do it again— bring rains to our drought-stricken lives So those who planted their crops in despair will shout hurrahs at the harvest, So those who went off with heavy hearts will come home laughing, with armloads of blessing.*

The psalmist here helps the traveler fix his hope on what is yet to come. One image is that of the barren, droughty Negeb region. Picture the parched, dry earth with cracks thirsty for water. But every once in awhile, the rain comes and refreshes the countryside, bringing life. "Our lives are like that – drought-stricken – and then, suddenly, the long years of barren waiting are interrupted by God's grace."³

But the other image is that of farming, of sowing seed into the ground. Of opening a hole in the earth, bending over and placing a seed in it, of watering, pruning, protecting and finally, maybe, of harvesting.

That makes some amount of sense with farming, although most (if not all) of us are untouched by a farmer's work life. But if farming is the metaphor, what does it mean that we will sow in tears, and go out in weeping? It means that we're going to hurt, and we hate that. It means that life in this world involves a certain amount of death, and we hate that. It means that is pain and suffering, and we hate that. And here's the real kicker – it means that God allows a certain amount of that hurt, pain, suffering and death into our lives so that we will know and love him for *him*. Habbakuk 3 appears to have this in mind: *17 Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, 18 yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. 19 God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places.*

³ Peterson, 99

And this is something the psalm writer seems to expect, to account for. It's one of, as Peterson puts it, the strangest things to learn in the Christian life – that laughter doesn't exclude weeping. "Christian joy is not an escape from sorrow. Pain and hardship still come, but they are unable to drive out the happiness of the redeemed. A common but futile strategy for achieving joy is trying to eliminate things that hurt: get rid of pain by numbing the nerve ends, get rid of insecurity by eliminating risks, get rid of disappointment by depersonalizing your relationships. And then try to lighten the boredom of life by buying joy in the form of vacations and entertainment. There isn't a hint of that in Psalm 126."⁴

Indeed, but we do everything to do just that. Get rid of pain. Get rid of insecurity. Get rid of disappointment. Lighten boredom. I think I've mentioned this before, but I'm trying to own and admit my hurt more. To feel it. To express it.

But then to allow God to heal it instead of burying it and managing it myself. "Enjoyment is not an escape from boredom but a plunge by faith into God's work. There is plenty of suffering on both sides, past and future, The joy comes because God knows how to wipe away tears, and, in his resurrection work, create the smile of new life. Joy is what God gives, not what we work up.

In thinking about the future joy of God's people, I couldn't help but think of the book of Isaiah. All throughout the book, you read of God's judgment, and then his promise of future comfort. You read of the infidelity and hardship of God's people, and then the restoration and glory of their future worship of him. This is supposed to be a real hope for God's people, a future to look forward to, something that sets our agenda in the here and now. Otherwise I don't think God would bother with it. There is a future of joy - Isaiah 55:12 *"For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. 13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the LORD, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."*

The psalmist expects this sort of future; he prays for it. In fact, he almost even prophesies a time of joy to follow sorrow. The Christian message is that there is a time coming where all will be set right, all will work in perfect order and you will be perfectly satisfied in every one of your deepest needs. I can't hardly imagine a world like that, can you? Where cars will work? What would that be like?

It is coming, and it is filled with joy and laughter, and overflow of feeling good about God.

The Joy of the Present

Okay, great. So there is a joy in the past. And there is a joy coming in the future. But where is the joy, joy, joy down in my heart now? The psalmist says, "We are glad" or "We are one happy people."

What robs us of our joy?⁵

Many of us can remember the joy we had when we first came to know the Lord. We were filled with zeal, with vim and vigor. We couldn't stop talking about Jesus; we invited every person we saw to church. CS Lewis' book about his conversion is entitled *Surprised by Joy*. In it, he recounts his pursuit of Joy, which ultimately led to not Joy at all, but to God. But... we grew discouraged instead of stronger. We started doubting. We – lost it. Not salvation, but the joy of our salvation. John Wesley wrote a hymn that contained the line: "Where is the joy I knew when once I saw the Lord?"⁶

Some of us have experienced the joy of a significant spiritual victory. We struggle with something for a long time and finally saw a breakthrough. It was marvelous in our eyes. It might have been a fear, or a grudge, or an addiction, or a pattern – and something unexplainable happened and we were delivered from this. God broke in, like rain to the Negeb. We saw him work! Ah, but soon we found another besetting sin where he hadn't yet begun to help, and we forget. And we lose that joy we had. We wonder if we'll ever truly be happy ever again. Or is this really all there is?

Another joy we experience is that of true Christian fellowship and community. To be known and loved is a powerful thing. But people move away. Sin runs a ravishing course through lives. Friends even die. Somehow the hope of a future restoration doesn't quite cut it when we experience deep pain of loss and hurt in this life.

One other joy we might speak of is that of the joy of beginning a new work for God. There is something exciting in the new challenges of starting a church, a college ministry, a school, a WIC (Women in the Church) group, a knitting club, a prayer team – anything – that soon fades in the boring details of following through after years and years of slugging away.

These thieves of joy lead to the opposite of joy. I tried to think of what that is and wonder what you'd come up with? What is the reverse of joy? I think it's depression. The numbing of the self in order to deal with the disappointment of life.

When I was first writing this sermon, I had in two pages about depression. I could tell you that 16% of the population experiences depression at least once in their lives. I can tell you about the signs of depression and the possible causes of depression. My friend, who is a pastor and counselor, summarizes depression this way: "The AMA and APA would 'mark' clinical depression as being down, blue, sad, etc. for more than two weeks and such a person would also be marked with such things as over or under sleeping, lost appetite or overeating, having a hard time concentrating, feeling hopeless about the future. If the depression is bad the questions becomes, 'are they suicidal?' If so, then the next question is 'do they have a plan?' Being down or sad or blue is part of normal life; it becomes depression if it is longer than two weeks! There is no pure science on that diagnosis. If you look at the DSM-4 it would say you have to have four of these seven things over a two-week period in order to be diagnosed with depression."

But you can look all of that up yourself. And I'd encourage you to. You should talk about it. Make an appointment with the session, or with a good counselor, or with me, and let's begin talking about your blahness.

⁴ Peterson, 100

⁵ What follows is adapted from Boice

⁶ According to Boice, 1111

But I thought it better to talk about how God uses someone, *even in depression*. How God uses someone who is frail and weak.

Turn in your hymnals to *There is a Fountain Filled with Blood*. Who wrote that hymn? William Cowper (1731-1800) (pronounced “Cooper”) did. Do you know anything about him?⁷

He was a tortured and tormented man. He attempted suicide no less than four times. He battled what we would know diagnose as chronic and manic depression and perhaps even schizophrenia. He spent months and years in an insane asylum. He was told he could not marry the woman he loved by her father, who feared his daughter’s marriage to this man. His story doesn’t have a shining ending. We don’t know of his spiritual condition at the end of his life. Though he had been rescued by the church and pastor John Newton, at one point in his life, in the midst of his despair, he decided never to go to church again.

At the end of his life, Cowper wrote “The Castaway,” a poem about a man adrift with nothingness all around. It says:

*No voice divine the storm allay'd, // No light propitious shone;
When, snatch'd from all effectual aid, // We perish'd, each alone;
But I beneath a rougher sea, // And whelmed in deeper gulphs than he.*

“The Castaway” (1799), lines 61-66

And yet. And yet in the midst of this darkness, this overwhelming loneliness, he clung to something. He clung to light and to blood.

Oh! for a closer walk with GOD, // A calm and heav'nly frame;

A light to shine upon the road // That leads me to the Lamb!

Olney Hymns (1779) —“Walking with God”

*There is a fountain fill'd with blood // Drawn from EMMANUEL's veins;
And sinners, plung'd beneath that flood, // Lose all their guilty stains.*

There is a fountain filled with blood? Think about that. Really, that is gross. If you saw that in a movie, it would be a picture of terror. That much blood is disturbing. But Cowper knew that that was his only hope. That only if a sinner such as he were plunged beneath the flood could he be washed of all his guilty stains.

John Newton tried to help Cowper by putting him to church work. He put him in charge of the hymn sing, and there he found Cowper’s genius. He started writing hymns. And then Newton joined him. What resulted was the Olney Hymnbook, a compilation of 360 hymns. Newton’s contributions were very good, but also very simple. Amazing Grace is a good example. Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.

Cowper’s hymns were different. They showed two things. The first was his brilliant mind at work. His hymns show a theological grasp of concepts, an ability to turn a phrase, and a competency in language to bring these together. And yet, the parishioners in Olney were a poor, uneducated people. Cowper’s friends would have laughed at them. But Cowper had found a place among them; he’d been accepted in all of his frailty. He thus wrote for them in a way that they could understand and appreciate all the depths of his theological mind. It is an amazing thing.

What would I have told William Cowper? What should we say about his depression?

I asked my counselor friend him how someone gets out of depression. He writes, “We need to view depression (along with all of life) that people ought to be seen through three lenses 1. Physical/ chemical/ biological, 2. Emotional/ relational, and 3. Spiritual. Therefore, to properly address depression, I think all three areas must be addressed.”⁸

How are your three areas robbing you of joy?

Do you need to see a doctor? You may need to consider a short time with a prescription in order to dislodge your current state and get to a new place. Does depression run in your family? Are you getting enough sleep, rest, good food and exercise? Your body affects your spirit.

How are you doing emotionally and relationally? Is there something eating you up inside? Are you disappointed with an aspect of your life, or with the way your life is going in total? Do you feel guilty? Do you feel ashamed? Your spirit affects your body.

How are you doing spiritually? Are you forgiven? Are you a Christian? Are you mired in guilt and sin? Have you turned yet to Psalm 42 and sung these words: *Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?*

Depression is a real thing, a robber stealing our joy. It tricks us into focusing on our needs and our wants, on setting eternity around our expectations.

But there is hope. Psalm 42 doesn’t end with the depression question. It continues - *Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.*

Hope in God. God will show up. Perhaps suddenly. Perhaps after tons of hard work. But he is coming. He may not act as you expect. He may not fulfill your expectations exactly. He may not work according to your timetable. But Christianity, the Biblical God says that God is at work, and that he is working for the good of his people. It says that he does not give his children bad gifts. It says that he will set right ALL the wrongs in the world. Frankly, to believe that takes faith. We might get small glimpses of it, short tastes of it, but we most often feel let down.

⁷ What follows comes from a lecture on Cowper by Dr. Bryan Chapell, found at www.covenantseminary.edu

⁸ An email conversation with PCA TE Matt Uldrich, assistant pastor of Catalina Foothills Presbyterian Church

But that is not the true condition of things. There is hope. There is joy. There is truth. There is shalom, the working together of all things, the perfect harmony of every condition. That shalom has been broken and marred by sin, but it will be restored someday. What we have now are beams of heaven breaking through.

In his latest Indelible Grace album, Kevin Twit has included the song, *Beams of Heaven*, written by Charles Tindley, a former slave.

*Beams of heaven, as I go, / Through this wilderness below / Guide my feet in peaceful ways /
Turn my midnights into days / When in the darkness I would grope / Faith always sees a star
of hope / And soon from all life's grief and danger / I shall be free some day*

*I don't know how long 'twill be / Nor for what the future olds for me / But this I know, if
Jesus leads me / I shall get a home some day*

*Often times my sky is clear / Joy abounds without a tear / Though a day so bright begun /
Clouds may hide tomorrow's sun / There'll be a day that's always bright / A day that never
yields to night / And in its light the streets of glory / I shall behold some day*

*Harder yet may be the fight / Right may often yield to might / Wickedness awhile may reign /
Satan's cause may seem to gain / There is a God that rules above / With hand of power and
heart of love / If I am right, He'll fight my battle / I shall have peace some day*

*Burdens now may crush me down / Disappointments all around / Troubles speak in mournful
sigh / Sorrow through a tear stained eye / There is a world where pleasure reigns / No
mourning soul shall roam its plains / And to that land of peace and glory / I want to go some day*

I don't think I can do better than the words to this song. Each phrase is profound and filled with a real heart. Read the lines aloud and see if you see the same thing.

Eugene Peterson summarizes the message of Psalm 146 this way: "The psalm does not give us this joy as a package or as a formula, but there are some things it does do. It shows us the tinniness of the world's joy and affirms the solidity of God's joy. It reminds us of the accelerating costs and diminishing returns of those who pursue pleasure as a path towards joy. It introduces us to the way of discipleship, which has consequences in joy. It encourages us in the way of faith to both experience and share joy. It tells the story of God's acts, which put laughter into people's mouths and shouts on their tongues. It repeats the promises of a God who accompanies his wandering, weeping children until they arrive home, exuberant, 'with armloads of blessing.' It announces the existence of a people who assemble to worship God and disperse to live to God's glory, whose lives are bordered on one side by a memory of God's acts and the other by hope in God's promises, and who along with whatever else is happening are able to say, at the center, 'We are one happy people.'"⁹

So there are two things to say. The first is that God uses us, as crazy as that sounds. You don't have to get your life together in order to be used by God. If God can use someone as frail, as broken, as messed up as William Cowper, then maybe God can use me. The book *Your Best Life Now* seems to insinuate that until you get your life together, you will not be used by God. But that is a lie. Because you cannot work up enough joy in your life to make even a drop of difference. JOY is not what we get and then we get God. JOY is not what we're after. God can use a sinner such as I, such as you.

There is a certain amount of peace in recounting Cowper's life and ministry. Though we don't know his spiritual state at the end, we know he did confess Christ in his life, and that God says he delights in using the weak and lowly among us. That the foolish are close to him, near to his heart.

The second thing is that if we do pursue God in this way, we really may find real joy. I think. But I'm not sure how much I can tell you about it.

I can talk about joy; I can describe joy; I can tell you of the opposite joy, but if I'm honest, I don't know that much about joy myself. I too see glimpses and am trying to recover this aspect of my life.

I think joy is oneness and rest. Joy is fulfilling your purpose. Joy is being truly known. Joy is seeing your old friend after being away for many years. Joy is being accepted by your spouse despite your flaws. Joy is your mom and dad coming home from a trip. Joy is getting a huge trophy just for being on the team. Joy is seeing the majesty of something as it truly is, created by God in glory.

That's about as close as I can get. That, and something else – there is something childlike in joy. Children seem to experience joy more often and more quickly. They haven't had it stamped out of them yet. They will more easily express both their hurt and their joy, and those seem to be wrapped together. And somehow we teach them, because we have learned ourselves, that these expressions of hurt and joy need to be rationalized, modified and marginalized. And we're pretty successful. But we're wrong.¹⁰

⁹ Peterson, 101-102

¹⁰ From conversations with Bruce Engstrom, counselor in Dallas

I do know that the devil seeks to take our joy. He wants us to be unhappy Presbyterians as it were. He doesn't want joy, joy, joy down in our hearts.

But Jesus, weeping, laughing Jesus, he says in John 15:11 that he came that we might have joy. And that our joy may be made complete.

The one who took darkness and separation, has made a way for joy for us. By his blood, we are healed.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad.4 Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the Negeb!
Joy to the word, the king is come!

COWPER'S GRAVE, by Elizabeth Browning

It is a place where poets crowned may feel the heart's decaying;
It is a place where happy saints may weep amid their praying;
Yet let the grief and humbleness as low as silence can languish:
Earth surely now may give her calm to whom she gave her anguish.

O poets from a maniac's tongue was poured the deathless singing!
O Christians, at your cross of hope a hopeless hand was clinging!
O men, this man in brotherhood your weary paths beguiling,
Groaned inly while he taught you peace, and died while ye were smiling!

And now, what time ye all may read through dimming tears his story,
How discord on the music fell and darkness on the glory,
And how when, one by one, sweet sounds and wandering lights departed,
He wore no less a loving face because so broken-hearted.

With quiet sadness and no gloom, I learn to think upon him,
With meekness that is gratefulness to God whose Heaven hath won him,
Who suffered once the madness-cloud to His own love to blind him,
But gently led the blind along where breath and bird could find him;

And wrought within his shattered brain such quick poetic senses
As hills have language for, and stars, harmonious influences:
The pulse of dew upon the grass kept his within its number,
And silent shadows from the trees refreshed him like a slumber.

Wild timid hares were drawn from woods to share his home-caresses,
Uplooking to his human eyes with sylvan tenderesses,
The very world, by God's constraining, from falsehood's ways removing,
Its women and its men became, beside him, true and loving.

And though, in blindness, he remained unconscious of that guiding,
And things provided came without the sweet sense of providing,
He testified this solemn truth, while phrensy desolated,—
Nor man nor nature satisfied whom only God created.