

FRIEDA MCRAE

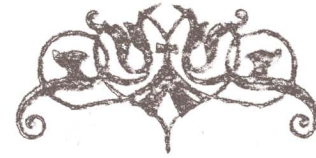
She Saw Jesus



She Saw Jesus

by Frieda McRae





Diary entries: Pari

Photographs of Pari: Compliments of Zothan and Zuali,
Hebron Class of 2008

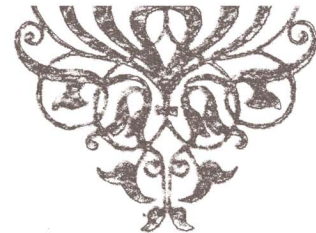
Memories: Zuali and Zothan, Hebron School students/staff

Illustrations: Liza Hartman, Frieda McRae,
Nibha McRae, Sheva McRae

Angel Paintings: Grace Ayling

Cover Photo: Asher McRae

Cover and Graphic Design: Liza Hartman

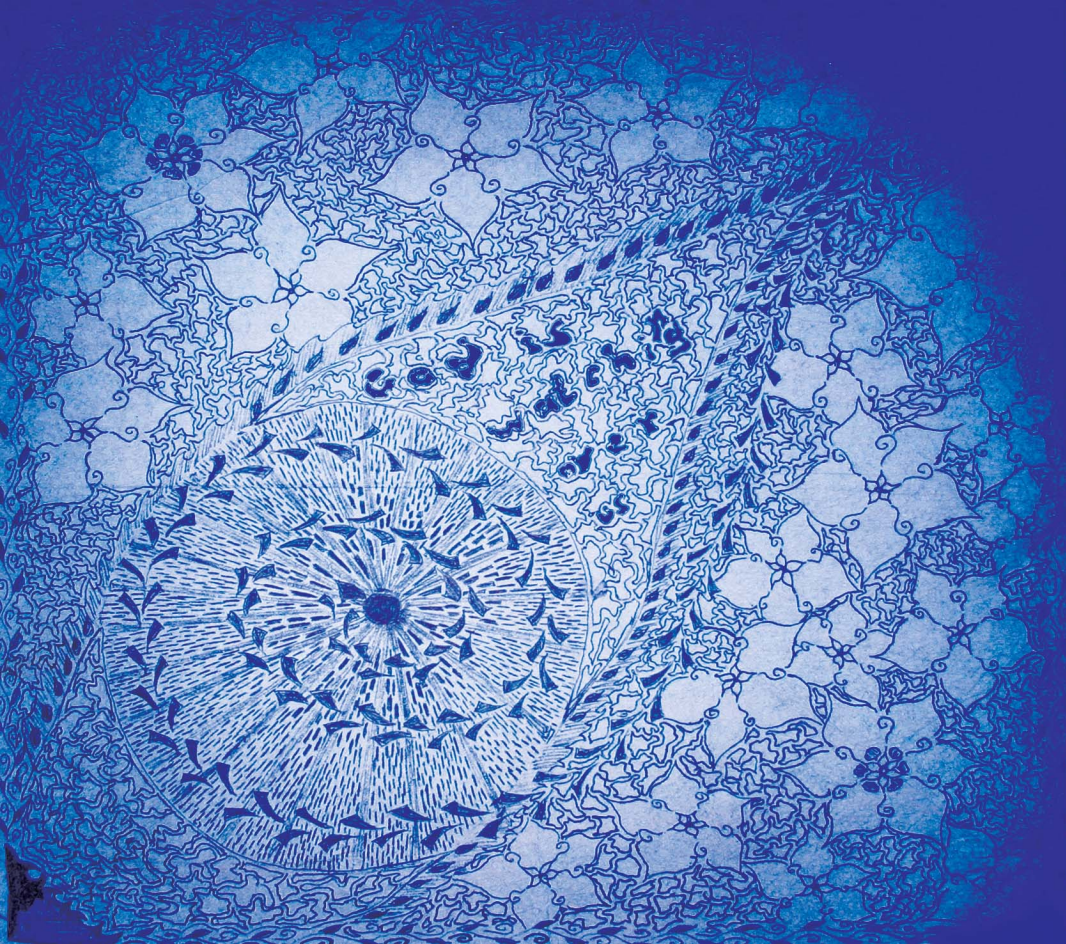




This book is dedicated to Pari's
classmates at Hebron that brought
joy to her life.

"Blessed, happy, to be envied is she
who is patient under trial and
stands up under temptation,
for when she has stood
the test and been approved
she will receive [the victor's]
crown of life which God has promised
to those who love Him." ¹

In his image she was fully found...
heaven opened up
to display her crown.



It was February 23rd, 2005 – a day that did not seem different from the day before – it was Pari’s fourth day of intolerable, unrelenting pain. Pari’s mother hurriedly gave her another injection, hoping and praying that another strong analgesic would give her at least some relief from the pain. She was being given painkillers every half-hour now – but with no effect. Pari’s father stood by helplessly, desperately hoping for a miracle that would change the direction of his daughter’s life, which now seemed to be fading. Each line on his face reflected his daughter’s pain; every weary wrinkle mirrored her agony.

“Matae,” he whispered (a Mizo term of endearment reserved for one’s children), “Matae,” he tried to sound brave in an effort to keep the tears back, wondering what name could possibly describe all the love in his heart for her, “Matae, you just have to bear this pain a little longer; it is all going to go away and you’ll be well again...”

Pari looked at her father in gentle disbelief, “Papa, why do you keep saying that?” Over the past few weeks, she had tried her best to make him understand. Looking at him squarely, she stated calmly, “I want you to know that there isn’t much time left, and that instead, it’s all going to be over very soon.”

Zothan, her father, a bureaucrat in the Indian civil service, was a strong man, but such words should not have been said by his fourteen-year-old daughter. How could Pari say such things? Her words pounded into his wounded and unwilling heart; he was in danger of breaking and becoming as weak as a child... but not this child. Where had his Pari gone? This child spoke words of wisdom, of strength, of spiritual maturity and great courage... how could these be the words of his own fourteen-year-old-daughter? He found it difficult to understand such a transformation – he could hardly recognize his own daughter; it was as though his Pari was no longer there. Her generous, captivating smile – the smile that was her trademark, was now wreathed in pain... but it was there, faithfully there.



It was the beginning of 2004 and the end of winter break at Hebron School; students were returning, slowly filtering into the dorms. Pari was a new student and had never dared to dream that she would one day be part of such a wonderful school in such an setting... eight thousand feet above sea level, on top of the Nilgiri Hills (which were really mountains), close to the tip of south India. The road proudly boasted “fourteen hair-pin bends”, enough to make many students sick before they arrived at school – like my own daughter, Nibha, who could not survive the sharp turns... she inevitably felt sick to her stomach upon arrival. Pari had nobly survived the trip and was happily settling into her room – a room shared by four girls, including Nibha. As we entered, a happy singsong “Hello, this is Pari!” greeted us. Zuali, Pari’s mother, had joyously made the announcement, and pointed to the corner of the room where Pari was on her knees, bent over a suitcase. Pausing from her un-packing, she stood up to say hello. Tall, she appeared confident for a thirteen year old, for Pari was eager to be “the new girl,” and the novelty of boarding school was exciting; her mother was just as excited – asking

me question after question.

All the girls had arrived, each one busy unpacking, laughing, joking and readying themselves for the new semester. The seemingly simple question I had asked Zuali, regarding where she and Pari had come from, had a rather lengthy explanation, so Zuali and I decided it was time to leave the girls to their business and have a cup of coffee together. I immediately liked Zuali. She was very vibrant and laughter trickled out of her like a spring; without reason, I felt a special closeness in spirit, as though there was an invisible bond between us. We walked over to my nearby hotel room where I dropped my tiny electric immersion heater into a plastic cup of water; soon we were holding two cups of steaming instant coffee. Zuali shared with me that she had been longing to use her skills as a doctor for the poor and had been encouraged to do so by Zothan, Zothankhuma Pautu, her husband. He was the one who had noticed the advertisement in a newspaper and suggested that she apply for it. It was not a suggestion that he took lightly, for his work in the civil service was in Mizoram, where their home was, and Jaipur, the location of this appointment, was in Rajasthan - more than two days train journey away. Zuali accepted the job and had just begun her work in the slums of Jaipur where poverty took a heavy toll on life - physically, mentally and spiritually. This long-distance arrangement was not

going to be easy for their family, but it was something they and their two daughters had all agreed on - a sacrifice they were ready to commit themselves to. It meant a big shift - not only in physical location, but also in culture, in climate, in language and food - it meant too, that their daughters, Pari and her younger sister, Ruati, would have to go into boarding school. Zuali laughed over and over again as she tried to explain Pari's enthusiasm and delight at being in a boarding school. It was her dream come true. Ruati, who was younger, was also excited, but not so confident - that would come with age. We prayed together for our children, and for our families, and for the school. It was a good way to begin our relationship, as well as a good way to end our time together at the school, leaving everything and everyone in God's care.

During the following weeks, Pari's letters home were always bubbling over with enthusiasm. It was easy to see why, at first, her fatigue went unnoticed. Pari was easily accepted into the dorm; she was such a natural friend-winner. Her dorm parent observed, "Anyone with a smile that wonderful should fit into the dorm automatically!" She joined all the events that she possibly could... as though she was fighting against time; she was doing her best to take part in everything possible before she went home. Pari had immediately taken to boarding school life and was never happier. Her greatest asset as a new student was her wonderfully large smile - it drew people to her and helped her to make friends quickly.

The Youth Fellowship was a highlight for Pari, and it was during supper at one of these meetings that she noticed a classmate, Rohan, sitting near her and tried to engage him in conversation. His friends were also sitting at the table, and he felt annoyed that Pari was trying



to catch his attention, so he turned towards them to avoid Pari's gaze, hoping that she would "get the message" and stop talking to him. He assumed that if he didn't talk to her, she would get up and leave, but the "cold shoulder" routine had no effect on Pari, and she continued talking enthusiastically to him, smiling and laughing, as though he were a long lost friend. Rohan was speechless - he had been blatantly rude, but it hadn't made an ounce of difference to her; instead, Pari was treating him with all respect. Rohan was impressed. What persistence! The next day, when Pari was again sitting nearby, Rohan decided to be bold and initiate the conversation. He quickly discovered how easy it was to make a new friend. She won many friends by pursuing friendship... quietly persisting with kindness and smiles until the barricades were broken down and she was allowed in. It was that eagerness that kept Pari oblivious to the fatigue that plagued her... or, at least, she ignored it and appeared to be full of enthusiasm and energy.





January 2004

The coffee house we were sitting in seemed so out of place to our conversation... to the point of being ridiculous. Waiters dodged in and out between small tables and deeply cushioned couches carrying hot mugs of delicious smelling coffee; they smiled and laughed, shouting to each other above the loud hip-hop music that was booming from speakers just above our heads; we took no notice of it. We were tuned into each other's needs and hurts. Zuali leaned back in her chair and continued to talk. She had become a close friend from the day we met... but since that time her life had changed drastically, never to be the same again. We had shared deeply and prayed together even before Pari became ill, and now, she was re-living those moments, working hard to keep them foremost in her mind, not wanting to lose them. It was great to be together again.

My eyes met Zuali's as she whispered softly, "Had anything prompted me to take her for a blood test, she never would have gone to Hebron school. The joy Pari experienced in those short six weeks at Hebron can't be measured; it was very brief, but it was as though God blessed her few months of normal life to live as a teenager in a place of growth, friendship,

and fellowship with Him." I saw a twinkle in Zuali's eye as she laughed and added, "At home, there were many times when Pari refused to take part in the family prayer time - she would have rather listened to her music!" I nodded my head in agreement, for I had teenagers at home. In fact, the coffee house where we sat was filled with young people, each one swaying to the beat of the music.

"When she was at Hebron, Pari never missed a Prayer Breakfast." Zuali paused and reflected, "It surprised me to learn that she was the reason some of her friends went to prayer breakfast." (I saw the glow of motherly pride.) "I never thought of Pari as being very spiritually inclined, but her school friends claimed that she was regular in reading her Bible and a very spiritual person." Zuali nodded emphatically, "Yes, I was surprised, for I never expected Pari to take such an interest in spiritual matters."





Being “worn out” was not abnormal for any student – especially for boarding school students. However, during the next six weeks, Pari began to complain of extreme tiredness. Her close friend and roommate, Jane, was concerned, but did not want to make Pari unnecessarily worried. Jane observed that, although Pari tried very hard, she was not able to keep up with the others. Being an avid reader who wanted to become a doctor, Jane was aware of some symptoms of illnesses, partly from reading and partly from experience. She knew that bruises, big bruises which refuse to disappear, are not good, and could be symptoms of serious illnesses. Jane noticed the large bruises on Pari’s legs – bruises which seemed to be growing and multiplying. Jane was very concerned and thought to herself, “No one gets whopping great big bruises consistently for no reason!” She tried not to jump to conclusions, but it bothered her that Pari could never come up with a reason for the bruises. With gentle urgency, she coerced Pari to go to the “Hoz” – the school health centre and have herself checked by Lois, the school nurse. Pari reluctantly went to the “Hoz” and Lois immediately proceeded with a blood test – the results arrived all too quickly. Hoping desperately that someone somehow had made a mistake, Lois rushed Pari to another laboratory for a second test. The result was the same –

leukaemia. Pari’s time at Hebron had only just begun, when it came to a sudden, abrupt halt.

When Jane learned from Ruati that Pari had leukaemia, she was shattered, for at that time, she probably understood more of what that meant than Ruati. For Jane, it was an equation; leukaemia = cancer, and cancer = death. Jane cried for days and days, which turned into weeks. She tried to pray, but found it very difficult. Her grief was dangerously close to becoming bitterness. Jane needed hope. She searched frantically through her books, hoping to find something that would suggest a more positive prognosis for Pari. “All cancer begins in cells, which make up blood...” She read further, “Cells grow and divide to form new cells... sometimes this orderly process goes wrong... leukaemia is a cancer that begins in blood cells which form in the bone marrow.” This was beginning to make sense, for she knew that often leukaemia patients need a bone marrow transplant. Maybe there was hope.

The news about Pari’s illness quickly spread throughout the school. Before her parents arrived to rush her to the hospital, her repentant friend, Rohan, visited her in the “Hoz.” Rohan was shattered. He had

gone to visit Pari with the intentions of somehow consoling her; instead he found his new friend completely calm and at ease – dutifully comforting and encouraging him to believe in God’s faithfulness because “everything would be okay.”

This was more than Rohan could understand. “How can you be so happy at a time like this?” he had asked. “Aren’t you scared?” Gazing at her, he shook his head in disbelief. Rohan wanted the truth, and Pari always told the truth. There was great honesty in her voice as she spoke, “You have no idea how scared I am, but I know that God is with me. I’m sure He will take care of me.”

Rohan was not satisfied, “How can you be so sure and calm about something so big?”


“Read Psalm 91,” said Pari matter-of-factly, “and you will have the answer.”

Rohan was troubled and read Psalm 91, “...He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I trust him. For he will rescue you from every trap and protect you from deadly disease ...”ⁱⁱⁱ Poor Rohan was even more dismayed... did this make sense? Wasn’t her illness in the category of “deadly diseases?” Rohan, along with her many friends, hardly knew where to begin, but they knew they had some serious thinking to do.


Her parents arrived and within two days, on March 25th 2004,

Pari found herself in Vellore, a town outside of Chennai, in a hospital bed a few hundred kilometres away from the school, never imagining that it would be her home for most of the next eight months. Her life at Hebron had hardly begun when it had come to a sudden halt. The 31st of March, the day her chemotherapy began, she celebrated her fourteenth birthday in bed. As expected, a fourteen-year-old will not immediately grasp the seriousness of the situation. For Pari, the idea of being sick enough to die was something that only happened in books or in movies – it wasn’t “real life,” even her parents kept “fatal” thoughts as distant as possible. They fully understood the implications of leukaemia, but consciously kept their hearts focused on their hope in a miracle-working God who generously pours out “good endings.”






Pari needed time to understand the huge, sudden changes taking place in her life. Her parents understood this, but feelings of guilt plagued them; the inability to help their child through the greatest trial of her life weighed heavily on them. Even at fourteen, Pari realized she had to face this crisis alone. Aware that her parents were struggling with this distressing interruption of their lives, she knew their explanation of her present situation would not be able to satisfy her. This was between her and God. Her parents felt something of the grief and loneliness Pari was facing, for they had been with her every minute... and yet, it was impossible to fully imagine what she was thinking – how she was dealing with a life-threatening illness at such a young age. What had gone through her head when she learned that she had leukaemia? They yearned, with all their hearts, for a way to ease the heavy burden



that only she could bear – and for that reason they barely noticed her moodiness or her anger – it could never affect their love for her; it was hard to imagine a worse situation for their young daughter. When she threw tantrums, Zuali often looked at her and thought, “I would have done the same thing or worse!” Tantrums or worse, Zuali and Zothan deeply regretted their excruciating inability to relieve the heavy burden Pari carried; they ached for their daughter who had felt such freedom in her new school and had just begun to spread her wings... now she seemed more like a caged bird.

“Just leave and let me be alone for while” became a familiar cry... Pari was not always a pleasant patient. Her parents had their share of turbulence as she moved into her teenage years; arguing was usually futile, for Pari could be very headstrong. When she threw tantrums, Zothan and Zuali felt terrible walking out on her, but knew that she needed her space and always tried to give it to her. She needed time alone to understand why she had to go through this. Even if her parents had the answers to her questions, she still had to work through the “hard stuff” on her own to gain that personal peace against the overwhelming odds. Zothan and Zuali would give in to her demand to “leave her alone,” and with heads bowed down, they would walk towards the door and wish that they could take her place. It was nearly unbearable for them to be so completely unable to take away



the grief, loneliness, and despair she faced daily.

“Go away!” Pari had spent nearly a month in her drab hospital room; her anger was mounting, an anger springing from a depression that came in waves and would sometimes spiral out of control. “Go away! Let me sleep!” The nurse who daily disturbed her at 5 o’clock in the morning gave Pari a thin smile. She quietly and gently picked up her arm to take her blood pressure. Pari resisted, but the nurse prevailed. She held out a handful of pills for Pari, who reluctantly reached for a glass of water and swallowed her medicine as quickly as possible, angrily rolling back over to find sleep again. Pari had been in unbearable pain all night and had not slept until 4 AM. The early morning wake-up from the nurse was the last thing she wanted. Doctors and nurses had come to know that Pari could be very uncooperative; Pari wondered why in the world they couldn’t understand that the hospital bed



was NOT where she belonged – she was a student at Hebron ... but now, that was all gone – as if it had been a dream. Didn’t they see that everything was going WRONG?

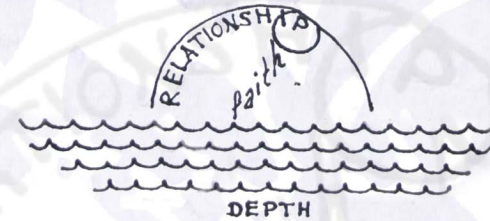
“Mom, why does this have to happen to me... of all people, why me?” Pari never hesitated to raise the “hard” questions. Zuali’s standard answer was a hopeful, “Don’t worry, God is in control and has a plan in all this.” But did she herself, really find comfort in that? Was there really a divine plan for all Pari’s pain? The question went unanswered that day.

The second month in the hospital was, much the same as the first month; May had arrived. There were good days and bad days, but medically speaking, Pari seemed to be coping well and responding positively to her treatments giving the doctors every reason for hope. Her treatment results were all so encouraging; she went through chemotherapy with no major reactions and was given one of the best prognoses for her situation – in short, her prospects looked great. When the tissue types of her sister, Ruati, matched Pari’s, the doctors were even happier. Though normally a bone marrow transplant has only 50% chance of being successful, all the signs leaned toward success; spirits had brightened and there were often sounds of hilarity sifting out from Pari’s hospital room. She and her parents constantly found something to laugh about. When Pari learned that chemotherapy would cause her to lose all her hair,

her laughter carried out into the hall and she began to contemplate a new wardrobe of exotic hats. With a mischievous grin, she suggested, "I think I will look great bald!"


I first received the news of Pari's illness from Nibha when she phoned home. She was crying and unable to express her grief in words. How could this have happened to Zuali's daughter? The information was shocking – almost unbelievable. It was a week before April, just before the mid-term holiday was to begin. The school began to send regular email updates on Pari's progress. I desperately wanted to meet Zuali and pray for Pari. My train ticket was reserved for the Kerala Express: New Delhi to Ooty via Coimbatore. It was time to take Nibha out for her second mid-term holiday. I rushed back to the railway station and re-routed my ticket with my new destination heading for the other side of India – Chennai, that way I could spend a day or two with Pari's family at the hospital. Whether or not I would really be of any help to them, I didn't know, but in spirit, I felt compelled to go.

And so, like many others, I went in to the hospital to pray for Pari. It was a large hospital complex and I wandered down many corridors before I found the room number I was looking for. My knock was a little timid, for I did not want to disturb Pari, but the door flew open and I found myself standing directly across from



Zothan, who was deeply engaged in conversation with another visitor; he looked up and kindly welcomed me in. The room was very plain – even drab, with no decorations on the walls. There were also no windows... it was certainly not the kind of place one would enjoy staying in for very long. Pari was sitting up in bed and greeted me with a sparkle in her eyes – her large smile seemed to light up the room. She was busy sorting through her "get well" cards, which lay scattered across her bed; they were from her friends at Hebron school. Zuali had gone to the first floor to heat some food on a stove shared by many other patients. When she returned, she was wearing an ear-to-ear smile – smiles seemed to be in fashion in room 308! Could this really be the room of a cancer patient?

I became the object of everyone's attention as the conversation suddenly focused on me. How was my trip? Was I hungry? Did I need a drink? Did I have a place to stay? My pre-planned encouragement talk disappeared like dust in the wind, for Pari and her parents




were determined to focus all their attention on life – on God, and trust Him; they had to rely on Him to bring them through this unforeseen ordeal and made sure that no time or energy was wasted on worry. Every effort was made in their conversation to rest in God’s love, knowing that He who created Pari could also heal the illness presently growing in her body.

Zuali and Pari appeared very unruffled – except for the business of figuring out how to live in a hospital room, cook meals and entertain guests; that was not so easy. Zothan, however, could not so easily disguise his deep concern and apprehension; it was clearly visible in his face, and yet, he too, hung on to the hope that God would heal Pari. They hung on very tightly... and that was how we drank coffee again, united in a spiritual communion – the cup of wine mixed with suffering. We prayed together again, but this time, our thanksgiving was tinged with discreetly hidden, carefully masked and un-named apprehensions, set aside for an unknown future.

Not wanting to add more work or burden to their already difficult situation, friends of mine in Dehra Dun had asked their co-workers, doctors, to arrange a place for me to stay near the hospital. A guest room had been assigned to me in the large residential area

– it was simple, but comfortable and clean. Before I left Pari that evening, I asked for the family’s permission to pray for her; I wanted to pray for Pari and believe God to bring about her healing. In fact, before I had left Dehra Dun, I had been prayed for more than once – commissioned by others to “go and pray” for Pari. Although praying is not really a difficult task, I found that praying for Pari’s healing was not easy. Did I have the right to ask God to heal terminal illnesses? Did I have the right kind of faith to see it happen? Was I really God’s anointed person to bring about her healing? I was aware that God doesn’t need “VIP” Christians to make His will effective, and I longed for God to use me so that Pari would be healed. Pari’s family wanted God to use me because I came that day, and for them, any day was a good day for God to use anyone’s prayer that Pari might be healed.

Opening a small, elegant, thin necked flask, I anointed Pari with fragrant, sweet smelling olive oil from Jerusalem; it had been a gift to me from an Israeli Jewish woman who had miraculously escaped from a concentration camp. She had thought I might appreciate “Christian” healing oil. In Israel it was sold as a tourist gimmick – I knew the oil had no more healing qualities than my cooking oil, but its smell was wonderful – and that was enough reason to use it. I



wanted to make sure I followed through with God commands, “Is any one among you sick? He should call in the church elders – the spiritual guides. And they should pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Lord’s name. And the prayer [that is] of faith will save him that is sick, and the Lord will restore him; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.” I followed those instructions from the Bible, as written in the book of James 5: 14-15, but after I had prayed, I did not have peace. That night I returned to my room, convinced my faith had not been as strong as it should have been; the following day I requested permission to pray for her one more time, which I did. Still, my heart had no sense that healing had begun. Like the rest of Pari’s family, I too, had to find peace in being obedient and holding on in faith. It was hard.



I left for Ooty. The days continued to go by and Pari felt a deep loss in not being able to go to school; she would often page through the many “get well” cards that had been sent, waiting for the day when the doctors would announce that she was well enough to return to her studies. After two months in the hospital, she was permitted a two-week visit back to the school in June – Pari couldn’t have been happier! The day she had been waiting for finally came, and she returned to the school with great joy and was received by her friends as a hero. Pari’s zeal returned and she spent every possible moment with classmates, participating in as many activities as she possibly could. Because of the chemotherapy, Pari had lost all her hair – the long hair which she loved – and joked about being bald. She carefully avoided mentioning the pain and loneliness she was going through and rarely complained. Her attitude was always positive, and she would talk with great anticipation about the up-coming drama week (which was still months ahead), as though she too was preparing for it.

She was determined to endure her ordeal in order to be well again. At school, she put on a brave display of courage, knowing full well, that once back in the hospital, the days would be long and dreadfully gloomy within the four walls of her little room. Her two weeks at school came to an abrupt end, and she found herself back in the hospital room – her prison. It was not surprising that after experiencing

a short two weeks of freedom she had days of depression, causing her to be moody and uncommunicative. Her hospital bed was far from home, and once again, she was a caged bird. Ruati, her sister, returned with her to the hospital as the donor for Pari's scheduled bone marrow transplant on the 16th and 17th of July. The transplant procedure turned out to be a gruelling affair and left Pari dealing with periods of extreme despair and utter helplessness; nevertheless, rejoicing was around the bend! The transplant was a great success - no complications whatsoever! Hope and faith revived their hearts before the next period of waiting began.

There was really nothing spectacular about September 2nd; it appeared to be just another long day in the hospital, but Pari woke up that morning to a bright and sunny world - as though all her pain and sickness had been just a bad dream. "Mom!" exclaimed Pari with excitement, "I feel so light, as if all my burdens have been swept away by some great and powerful force! I'm so happy! I feel like I have been born again today! I think today is the happiest day of my life!"

Zuali woke up and rubbed the sleep from her eyes and peered inquisitively at Pari, trying to verify the words she had just heard. Pari's beaming smile testified to everything. It was not possible for Pari to explain what she was experiencing, nor did she need to. She clearly felt wonderful on the inside and her joy was bubbling over...

at that time, no one would have guessed that God was preparing her for a far greater purpose. "One day at a time" was all that any of the family could handle... one day at a time they would get them through this together.

Zuali knew with certainty that Pari had been touched by the Holy Spirit, for Pari was glowing; her perceptions had changed and she saw everything around her as bright and hopeful, even the four walls of the drab little hospital room. What Zuali couldn't see, or know, or even venture to guess, was that in this remarkable moment, God was at work in Pari, bringing healing to her spirit. Her spirit would be growing in leaps and bounds; but at the same time, unknown to all - unknown even to her doctors - her body would be growing weaker and weaker.



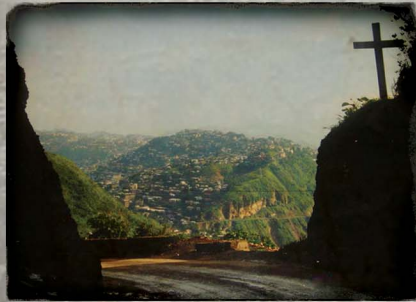


"You know," Zuali reminisced, "Pari always had a heart for others, like her relationship with Rohan... sometimes she would make me ashamed of the way I treated people. If I lost my temper and replied harshly to someone, Pari would never hesitate to rebuke me." Zuali smiled broadly, "It was as though we had switched places; she was the mother and I was the naughty child; 'Mom,' she would scold, 'you know that is not the way to talk to someone – it is not the right way to deal with it!' I would immediately realize she was totally right, and feel ashamed." Zuali beamed, "I also have a little bit of pride in realizing that my child has a beautiful character, the kind of character that you long to see develop in your child." And there it was; that wonderfully large, playful smile that I had seen many times before on Pari. "As parents, I guess we must have done a few things right!"

We leaned back and laughed the laugh of parents who know they don't have all the answers! Sipping from our large, round cups of steaming coffee, Zuali continued, "Her younger sister, Ruati, has this same loving tenderness, and knowing my own character and shortcomings, I would often come to the conclusion that I don't deserve to have these children! When they were at home, they felt free to express their likes and dislikes – they weren't shy; but whenever they were with others, I was amazed at how open and tactful they both could be."



Pleased with her progress, the doctors allowed Pari to return home in October – everyone was jubilant. Pari made her triumphant return to Mizoram in the remote hilly region of northeast of India. While she was home, Pari had to undergo a weekly blood test to make sure her cancer cells were not increasing; she was scheduled to return to the hospital for a follow-up treatment in November. The third weekly test brought alarming news; the cancer cells were back again and Pari was experiencing a relapse. Once more, her family hurriedly whisked her back to the hospital in South India, just one week before her scheduled follow-up; it was a big shock for everyone, including her doctors. As a last attempt to secure her recovery, she was given chemotherapy fifty times her



previous dose. Her sister, Ruati, arrived from Hebron to donate her white blood cells a second time as a last-ditch effort to save her sister – it was fruitless; Pari's body simply refused to respond to any kind of treatment! The whole ordeal was physically painful and emotionally drain-

ing, so Pari began to think of home and yearned deeply to be there – the security of home touched her deepest desires. The natural beauty of her state, Mizoram, delicately perched on the hills, seemed to call out to her. It was home; a storehouse of loveliness... lush vegetation, deep gorges, meandering streams and dense forests. Ooty was great, but her heart was Mizo; she wanted to be with her people, her family, eat the food she grew up on and hear the language she loved. Mizo people are renowned for their code of ethics, for promoting hospitality and a kind, unselfish culture. To be home, in Mizoram, away from "sickness," would be a dream come true... home.

A great burden of sadness weighed heavily on all of them; Zothan and Zuali were often overcome with feelings of guilt, unable to forget times when they hadn't treated Pari the way they should have. They fought hopelessness and battled feelings of remorse which could be very grave; they fought against the odds, making sure that desperation and depression didn't bring them into utter despair.



The news of Pari's relapse quickly reached her friends at Hebron school. Knowing that the medical chances of her recovery were now very slim, the principal, Mr. Reid, arranged for some of her classmates to visit her in October. Two teachers and five classmates arrived at the hospital carrying a large gift and more "get-well" cards. As the gift was unveiled, Pari stared in disbelief... it was a painting, three feet high and two feet wide; the scene was captivating - no one could have known how much that gift would mean to Pari. The painting was made by one of the senior students and had been borrowed for Pari - given "on loan" by the art teacher, who was part of the group who came. The artist, Grace Ayling, was more than pleased to share it with Pari, for it depicted what words can never relate; it opened up what "really" was happening to Pari - a story that no one, except Pari, had the right to put into words. A supernatural kind of counselling began to happen through that painting - an inner healing began to work in Pari as she meditated on the painting, and in time, was able to explain its meaning. The painting was hung on the wall opposite her bed, so that whenever she sat up, she could see it. The mere fact that someone cared enough to bring her a painting - a painting which so obviously meant so much to the artist, made Pari feel very special.

Pari spent a lot of time meditating and gazing intently on the

painting. It was her own story, and she was slowly beginning to understand it - and own it. In the middle of the painting was a girl who clutched an empty cage; an angel held her in his arms while his wings engulfed and surrounded her. The girl appeared to be overwrought - perhaps with fear, or grief... the angel was supporting her. Pari studied the painting, seeing herself in that girl and wondering at the angel who so guardedly held her. A beautiful white bird had escaped its cage and was flying freely, soaring lightly through the window which was just above the girl and the angel.





It captivated Pari's attention and kept her thoughts locked in private contemplation. In the weeks to come, whenever visitors came to visit her, she used the painting as a conversation piece; gently opening up its truth, and in doing so, her own inner healing became more and more apparent.

Six long months had passed since the day Pari had entered the hospital and her appearance had changed drastically. She had no hair and her skin was badly charred and had turned a dark chocolate brown from the chemotherapy, but Pari never complained about her "looks;" in fact, she found it easy to joke about. One day, Pari stared at her hands and feet in great awe.


"Mom, this is really quite amazing, the skin on my hands and feet look like a black person's skin!" She was amazed and her voice resonated with delight, "I think I'll try some darker make-up, the

kind of make-up that black people wear and who look so beautiful!" And with further inspiration and a smile she added, "I need to start thinking of revising my wardrobe, I can go for African colours now!"

Although Pari was now graciously accepting her confinement, she was very much a caged bird, unable to enjoy what her friends enjoyed – their outings, their parties, school, holiday plans, or even the latest fashions. She had no part in the life that she had once so much enjoyed; she couldn't eat what she liked and wanted, nor was she able to do things a normal fourteen year old would do, like simply "hang out" with her friends – a priority for a young teen. She was not "free." The bird in the picture was beautiful and had escaped from its cage... the image intrigued Pari and she sought to find her own release.

Many unknown visitors, especially blood donors, would ask Pari about the painting, and she would delightedly explain its meaning; the more she told its story, the more its truth became part of her own story. She would narrate, "This painting is about a girl who all along had a guardian angel watching over her, even when she wasn't aware of it. But once the girl came to know that through rough times and hard times, someone had always been with her, she didn't have to worry about anything anymore – she had come to realize that she had a guardian angel protecting her always."

Pari took a great deal of pride in that painting, so much so, that



people often thought Pari was the artist. Grace had actually depicted her own feelings of being caged in, for she had felt imprisoned in school, far away from her parents, unable to go where she wanted to go - home. Pari understood this picture - she too, desperately wanted to be home.

Christmas was near, and "home" was a gnawing desire - the only place of security she had left. She and her family spent Christmas in Vellore at the hospital, but the day after, on the 26th December 2004, the day of the Indian Ocean tsunami - a verdict had been reached; the sentence was just as devastating to their lives as the tsunami was to so many.

Zuali and Zothan braced themselves when they saw reluctance written on the faces of the approaching doctors; the words they spoke seemed to flow out of their mouths in slow motion, as if time had stopped. "It is time to take Pari home; there is nothing more that we can do for her here. We sincerely regret that her treatment has not been successful." A huge, heavy, overbearing silence filled the room. "Only a miracle can save her now." The worst had happened - there was no treatment that would save her life. The announcement was the verdict they had kept far from their thoughts - it was the fear that had been kept hidden; a declaration that left no room for uncertainty and no room for mercy, yet to accept it meant death.


Zuali and Zothan decided to disregard the implications of what the doctors had said and continue in faith, hanging onto God, trusting Him to heal Pari. God was, and always had been their ONLY hope and they would wait for His miracle.

It was the end of December and Pari had been in the hospital for most of the previous eight months. She deserved to know the truth, she needed their honesty. "Pari," Zuali whispered, as though she were still contemplating how to break the news to her daughter. She started again, "Matae, the doctors say that we can go home now... we're going to go home."

Although Pari was fourteen years old, she had greatly matured over the past eight months and now had a clear understanding of her illness. Medically, she knew much more about leukaemia, but as the patient, her perspective was now unique, and she constantly showed amazing maturity in understanding her position. This was undoubtedly the hardest.

"Yes," said Zothan gently, "we're going back to Mizoram, you can finally go home."

The smile that had begun to rise halted as Pari's thoughts raced, reaching the obvious question - the question they would have preferred to avoid, but they knew that she, more than anyone else, deserved an honest answer. "Why, Papa?"



She had to ask, even though her heart knew the answer.

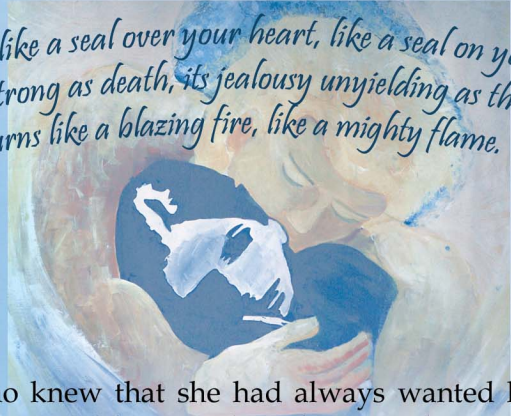
"The doctors have said that there is no further treatment for you, Matae, so we can go home now."

In seriousness beyond her age, she asked, "Does this mean that my treatment has not been a success?"

"No," countered Zuali quickly, but cautiously, "it only means that there is no other treatment for you right now. The chemotherapy dose that you had was far too high for you, so there is no more treatment at this time."

She understood. Nothing needed to be spelled out for her. When undergoing the last treatment of chemotherapy, Pari had vehemently objected, "Mom, why do I have to take the chemo again? I don't want to take it again!" Zuali had patiently encouraged her, "Please think carefully about this; your Dad and I want you to be with us for a long time." The decision was left with her, and she obediently agreed to undergo the therapy for the sake of her parents, even though it was very hard on her body – even though it was almost unbearable for her and nearly killed her ... it had failed.

Christmas had passed; her intense desire to be home was only growing, for the hospital had truly become her prison. Pari flew home to Aizawl, Mizoram, on December 27th where she moved into her own room. It was a new room, built for her as a gift from Uncle



*"Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm;
love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave.
It burns like a blazing fire, like a mighty flame."^v*

Biakthan who knew that she had always wanted her own bedroom. Pari returned home, taking her guardian angel with her; Uncle Biakthan framed the painting and hung it on the wall opposite her bed where she could easily see it. She looked at the beautiful white bird that had escaped its cage and was flying free, wondering if she would ever escape her own cage – she longed for the fullness of life. Turning to Psalm 91, as she had done so many times, she read; "He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armour and protection.ⁱⁱⁱ Pari had wanted to be home, and now, she was home, but her longing remained unquenched – she wanted to be covered by His wings. How was it possible? How could she be free? She

knew that the Bible says it is Christ's Spirit sets us free.^{iv} His wings... His Spirit... but, how?

The family had to adjust their thinking to form new attitudes and new hope – hope that was solely in God. Human intervention was no longer an alternative and it kept them in sombre thought. A few days later, Pari had another question... a simple question, "Mom, what are you going to do with my clothes when I'm gone?"

The question hit Zuali like a bombshell! Her thoughts exploded, but she forced herself to remain steady and responded calmly in her ever stable and unruffled way, neatly throwing the question back to Pari, "What would you like me to do with them?" It was a tough question, and at such times, Zuali had learned to quietly seek God – aware of God's ever-present mercy; she knew He would help her satisfactorily answer even the hardest questions.

The question had not been asked out of depression; Pari was deep in thought. "I don't want you to keep all of them. I want you to give them to whoever needs them." Practical and loving, Pari was once more looking out for others. There were times when Pari went through valleys of great darkness after she had understood that the doctors had given up hope, and many times she found herself weighed down and unable to cope, but today her question was not out of depression. She was thinking of a way to make something

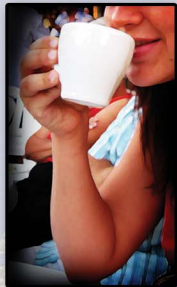
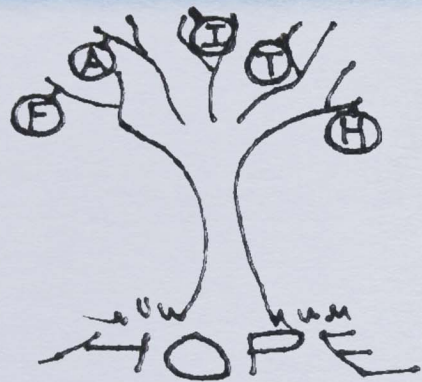
good happen if she were to die. Pari was a fighter – she would not give up easily; she held on, as much as she was able, to God... no one was ready to release her yet.

Occasionally, she would voice her longings; "If only I had another year at Hebron..." It was a longing filled with regret, and those words stabbed at Zuali's heart, compelling her to counter Pari's regrets with hope.

"It is not an impossible situation," explained Zuali, "I don't have leukaemia, but if God wants me to be with Him, I will be going



to Him, whether it be today or tomorrow, I will be going to Him." She thought for an instant, "As I cross the road something could knock me down and I'd be gone. Pari, none of us has control over our lives. We will always be living in God's timing for us." Zuali meant every word she said and Pari also understood its truth; our time is assuredly in God's hands.



“We always believed she would be healed; we thought she would get better. We knew that God is in control and plans everything for our good... not that we would want to change God’s perfect ways... but we simply felt that she would get better.” Zuali painstakingly tried to explain, wanting me to understand what she found so difficult to put into words – faith.

“Everything had appeared so positive... Pari responded to the chemotherapy so well.... she was given one of the best prognoses for her situation... we expected God to heal her.” Zuali spoke slowly, finding no sense in the sequence of events; her mind was still trying to fit them

together like odd pieces in a puzzle. Her fists were clenched, as though they were unwillingly bound. She was a doctor, a professional, and grieved that there was a limit; medicine did not have all the answers. I felt there was much more in her heart which she wanted to share, but even her “words” had a limit; some things, like pain, cannot be expressed.

Zuali focused her thoughts and continued, “Pari’s health declined rapidly, even so, accepting Pari’s illness as terminal was the furthest thing from our minds. We were reluctant to admit that we were not seeing our prayers answered – at least we did not see God answering our prayers in the way we had all hoped for.”

Although Zuali was sitting at my side, sharing deeply with me, opening up the private parts of her heart... I found it difficult to grasp this strange, but powerful mix of love and suffering she was trying to describe. Having three daughters of my own, I felt her desperation as a mother unable to protect her child.

It was no surprise that many unknown visitors were ushered into Pari’s room to pray at her bedside. “We called in whoever was willing and wanting to pray for her; they came and went, but no miraculous turnaround occurred in Pari’s health,” explained Zuali. “It’s not that we weren’t grateful; we were very thankful that so many people took the time and effort to come and pray... it’s just that we found ourselves disappointed again and again.”



One day a woman arrived at the house whom the family had never met before. She had heard about Pari's illness and had come to pray for her on a day when there was already a group of people praying in the room, so Pari and the woman drew slightly away from everyone in order to be alone. Pari found this woman, whom she had never met, very inquisitive, but did her best to answer her many questions. She kept wondering what purpose there was in all these questions? Perhaps this new visitor was astounded at the answers this fourteen-year-old gave her; perhaps that was why she asked so many questions. Zuali was too far away to hear their conversation, but was anxious to find out what it was they were talking about - her motherly heart wanted to protect her, and at the same time, she wanted the prayers of this woman to bear the fruit of healing. That day, Pari kept thoughtfully quiet about the conversation and ignored her mother's curiosity. Finally, when morning came, Zuali couldn't keep from asking Pari what she and the woman had been talking about.

"Mom, she responded, "she asked me a lot of strange questions!"

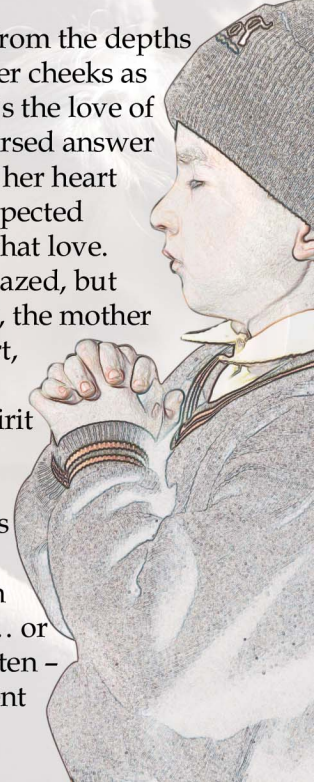
"Were you able to answer them?"

"Oh yes," she replied confidently, "Mom, when I answered her, it seemed as though someone were prompting me! She had asked me, 'What is it about God that gives you happiness?'"

Zuali was taken aback, for the question seemed to be a very big subject for one so young. "Okay," Zuali paused in thought, "what did you say?"

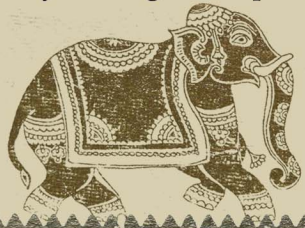
The answer of the day before welled up again from the depths of Pari's heart, and tears started streaming down her cheeks as she once more explained her answer; "I told her, it's the love of Jesus Christ!" There was no hint of a routine, rehearsed answer when Pari spoke those words - they poured out of her heart and were clearly what she felt. It was such an unexpected response unless she herself had truly experienced that love. Perhaps the woman of the day before had been amazed, but now it was Zuali's turn to be amazed. Just as Mary, the mother of Jesus, had often pondered His words in her heart, Zuali, likewise, found herself needing to think on these things. What awesome power of the Holy Spirit was working inside her daughter?

Many had prayed with sincerity and earnestness... across the world, on bended knee; hundreds and perhaps thousands of prayers had been lifted up to God. Nothing altered the decay happening in her body; there was a great lack of understanding... or perhaps it was just that there was an inability to listen - an inability to accept that God might have a different



plan than what was being hoped for. Time and grace were needed to process all of this.

The days went slowly by and visitors became less, but Joshua, a cousin and friend, was still a frequent caller. "Joshua, did you know that God is calling me to come home?" Joshua froze. He recognized that Pari was different, yet her comments often left him speechless. She was so changed and said things that he could not even contemplate, let alone understand. She was not the cousin he once knew. There was magnetic radiance about her that drew people – drew him – to her and made him want to understand the inner glow that shone so visibly. At seventeen, he had never really thought much about eternity... life was good. He enjoyed being with his friends, the parties... Pari forced him to think. She forced him to look at life from a different perspective with barely a word... a few words said sincerely had a great impact on Joshua.



Joshua was a boy who liked to have lots of fun, and when he "happened" to drop in at their house on New Year's Eve, Pari dutifully took up her mission – she wanted to stop Joshua from going out with his fast friends (as she called them)! He had stopped in on his

way to a party and had no intention of staying for the evening, so Pari began her task with a bang, "Josh, stay with us, spend the night with our family... this might be the last New Year's Eve ever that I am spending with you!" Zuali couldn't help giggling... Pari could be very bold, and she was also very successful; Joshua did not go out with his friends, but spent the night in their house, celebrating with Pari.

The next morning Pari admitted to her mother, "You know why I said that?" (Of course, Zuali knew, but she suppressed her smile.) Pari explained, "I had to be convincing, so that Joshua would not go with his partying friends. I really wasn't so worried that it would be his last New Year's with me, but I think his friends are a bad influence." They both laughed at the memory; Zuali thought it best to add some motherly advice, "I'm sure you feel like his friends are a bad influence, but you need to let him learn from his own choices – even mistakes!" It was a rebuke given with a smile, and taken with one also.

Other cousins would often stop in. While Pari was in the hospital, they had taken turns staying with her, helping the family in whatever way they could. Pari had grown to love them and talked deeply with them as they too, opened up their lives. Her concern for



those around her was always touching, she prayed for them fervently and with a sensitivity that could only have come from the Holy Spirit of God.

When Pari's friends dropped in for a visit, her parents would dread their departure, fearing that she would be depressed after they had gone – afraid that she would feel the loss of not being able to go out with them and join in their fun – the life that all teenagers crave. However, once they were out of the door, it was like a closed chapter; Pari never spoke or even hinted at having feelings of loss or regret, she just wasn't depressed after they had gone. Her parents were puzzled and asked her about her feelings.

“Okay, they are my friends, they are sharing with me, and I'll share with them in the way they feel comfortable relating to me, but I honestly have no interest in those things anymore.” Her explanation was just that simple. Only a month earlier, Pari had grieved over the loss of her social life, but her new life with Jesus grew more and more intimate each day, and the close fellowship of the Holy Spirit of God continued to transform her life.

It was a “gloomy day,” Pari wrote in her diary. That day, January 11th 2005, a man whom they had never met before came to pray for

Pari. He had travelled a long way to reach their house and they did not want to turn him away. Pari, too, always did her part in being hospitable to whoever had come for her sake – trying to be gracious to all. No matter how tired or how much pain she was in, she was continually touched that people cared enough to help her in whatever way they could and wanted them to be appreciated. She felt that entertaining them, making conversation with them, was one way that she could help her mother while bedridden. This man had arrived unannounced, and like many other people, was treated kindly. He too, was ushered in to pray with Pari... which is exactly what he did. It was on that gloomy day that an unexpected miracle took place.

Pari said nothing to her parents about this man who humbly came to pray; he left quietly and her parents had assumed his visit to be of no particular significance, but that was not so. Still, Pari gave no hint that something of magnitude had happened. Only when Pari began to inquire about her grandmother's arrival did Zuali begin to wonder at her impatience. Her grandmother came faithfully every afternoon to visit Pari, and normally Pari did not anticipate her arrival as much as she did on this day.

“Mom,” her voice was anxious, “why is Grandmother taking so long to come today?”

“Well, I suppose that something must have delayed her, but she’ll definitely come. Just wait a little longer.” Zuali sensed that something was making Pari strangely anxious, and asked, “Why is it that you are so desperate to see your grandmother today?”

“Because, Mom, I can’t wait!” Pari exploded, “I really want to tell her about what happened when this man prayed for me!”

Zuali was shocked! Something exciting had happened when that inconspicuous man had prayed, and Pari had kept quiet about it! And furthermore, she was planning to make her grandmother the first one to hear about it! Later, Zuali understood why Pari wanted her grandmother to be the first one to know – it wasn’t because Pari was closer to her grandmother than she was, the opposite was true; she and her grandmother clearly had their disagreements, but it was her grandmother who had been faithfully praying for their family for years. Pari saw her as a signpost, pointing the way to heaven. For Pari, it was obvious that Grandmother deserved the joy of being the first person to know her secret! This little secret was meant to be a love gift from Pari to her Grandma. But, that didn’t keep her mother from asking her what had happened... now the mystery man’s visit had to be opened up!

Like an excited child, the thought of answered prayer made Zuali alive with anticipation. “Did something happen? Tell me what happened!” Thus, Zuali happily stole the story from Grandma... who of course, did hear it from Pari when she arrived, and grandmother, like Zuali, was ecstatic... but “Mom” got to hear it first.

With a deep breath, Pari began her narration; “Mom, this man started praying for me, and while he was praying I had a vision: I saw something white and shiny coming down from heaven. It’s really hard to describe what it looked like... something large, like the canvas cover of a car came floating down from heaven. I saw beads





forming at the bottom of it, along the edges, and as I looked, the beads fell down and fashioned themselves into a pair of Roman sandals. I realized that inside the sandals was a pair of feet, and of course, I looked up to see who was standing there. He was wearing a white, shiny cloth as a robe, and as I stared at him, he beckoned me with open arms to come to him. I automatically started running towards him as fast as I could, and as I ran, I realised that my body was healed. I could see myself running – my skin was its normal colour and all my hair had grown back and it was long, just the way I like it, blowing like a beautiful mane behind me. I ran to Him and I knew it was Jesus; He scooped me up, like a child, into his embrace.” Pari had to pause and catch her breath before she could continue...

“Mom,” she exclaimed, “His arms were so strong and His presence so loving, that I felt like resting in His embrace forever. He held me like a baby, and I felt so wonderfully comfortable and safe. I really wanted to see His face, so I looked up and saw shoulder length hair, but that was all I could see. I couldn’t see his face because it was radiating with a brilliant light, a light so bright that it was impossible to look straight at Him!”

Zuali was astounded, and sat quietly in wonder, for as Pari spoke, it seemed that she was also glowing with the memory of it... she was so excited, the vision was coming to life again and beaming

out of her. Grandmother had been praying for their whole family for years, and these days she was praying with great zeal, every day and every night, for Pari, which was the reason that Pari felt her grandmother deserved to be the first one to hear about her vision. Pari undoubtedly had wonderfully close moments with Grandma, but she also had many clashes of the will. Her desire to tell Grandmother first was her own way of saying; "You are alright!" She was letting Grandma know that she valued her prayers and the spiritual burden she had borne for their family. Pari wrote in her diary; "I don't know how to explain it, but since the afternoon, I became so happy. Today's very gloomy, but I remembered how much Jesus loves me and everything changed."

Zuali and Zothan and every friend and relative near and far had been praying for Pari - people who had never even met Pari were praying for her. When faith healers arrived on their doorstep, Zuali and Zothan gave them space and privacy to pray for Pari alone, undisturbed; even so, it seemed that the many prayers had not been answered, for Pari was still ill. In the back of their minds lurked the thought that their prayers had failed. Like the many faith healers who had come and gone, this humble man had sat alone with Pari praying; he had come and gone, and nothing seemed to have changed outwardly, but on the inside it was a different story.

Throughout her illness, Pari, as well as her family, believed that God would heal her, but it was only after January 11th, after the vision, that Pari changed drastically - a transformation that happened "inside."

I don't know how to explain

11 TUE

*I don't know how to explain
it, but since the afternoon, I became so happy
Today's very gloomy, but I remembered how much
Jesus loves me and everything changed.*

*Jesus loves me
and everything changed.*



I sat spellbound, amazed, and even jealous of the intimate relationship Pari had with Jesus. She was so sick, and in so much pain and discomfort, yet her most gloomy days shone brightly. I wanted to know more, I had to understand better... and I leaned forward, lest I missed a word. Our coffee cups sat empty, but there was still much to talk about and learn... from Pari.

"The months in the hospital were very long," explained Zuali, "and without help we never would have managed." Zuali looked at me sincerely, as though she wanted to say something very important to me; "Zothan's nephews, Vanlal, Marcus and Caesar. They took time off to be with her - all of them took turns to be with us in Vellore so that Pari would have a 'home-feel' away from home." Now I knew why this information was so important... they had done everything possible to "be there" for Pari, and Pari's family were grateful.

"In spite of their age differences, Pari had special sensitivity to the various problems her cousins were going through. Yes, Pari had huge problems, but when she prayed for others, her own problems faded. She was just so in touch with their needs. I was always moved to tears when she would intercede for them - she always did it with a great burden, a specific plea for a very specific need, it was uncanny. I don't think any of them realized the degree of love and concern she had for them.."

It was a beautiful picture; Pari pleading their case at the throne of God... and now I paused to reflect; that was exactly what Christ did for us. He died on the cross pleading our case. I was once more humbled by Pari's life. I felt wordless and unworthy... the simplicity of this young girl works miracles in old hearts. That can only be God. It can only be God who had the ability to make Pari a big sister to her older cousins!

Unbelievable changes had been taking place in Pari. Zuali confessed to me, "We began to doubt that Pari wanted the healing we were all still praying for. We would still invite who-ever we heard of to pray for her, but slowly, we began to realize that she really wasn't with us anymore, particularly the last five to six weeks. She was just looking forward to where she was going..." Zuali's voice briefly drifted off. "Everything changed for Pari after the vision. Pari was, more and more visibly, being transformed; if the doctors and nurses at the hospital had the chance to meet Pari after January 11th, they would probably not even have recognised her! She was absolutely different." Suddenly, Zuali's voice became solemn, "She knew she was leaving from the time of the vision."

"Did that depress Pari?" I asked.

"Oh, no! It's just that healing was no longer in her mind. Only one thing captivated her mind, and that was the experience of being held in the arms of God." We sat silently, both in our own thoughts. "You see,"

Zuali emphasized, "Pari fully understood where her real security and freedom was; she had seen what was better, and made that her aim. Pari was being changed to such an extent, that even Zothan and I found it hard to recognize her as our daughter... she was so different from the Pari we had known! It was as though the Spirit of God had totally taken over."

"Did she have other visions and experiences with Jesus?"

"We can't really say for sure, but we doubt that this vision was the only experience she had with Jesus; she hadn't specifically said otherwise, but, as the days went on, her intimate fellowship with God was clearly evident."

Pari fully understood where
her real security and
freedom was; she had seen
what was better...



One day, her friends and family were having a celebration; everyone was singing and happy, having a fun time – it was not the time for serious questions, but Pari never needed a specific time slot for the more serious questions in life; she was ready at all times, so her mother asked, "Pari, do you see Jesus over and over again?"

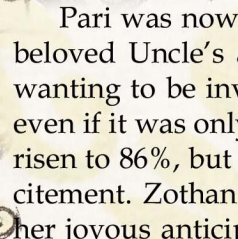
Pari responded calmly, but with surprise, as though such a question needn't be asked. "Yes," she replied quite matter-of-factly, "I'm with Him all the time."

Pari, amidst all this, was really free because there wasn't anything in the world that could stop her spirit from being released when she came to the knowledge of the depth of the love of Christ; she was nearly home. She had finally let go of the cage – it was no longer necessary, and now she was flying... she was that beautiful white bird – flying high as the eagle soars, high above the storm. Her spirit had been freed, and she was heading towards the open

window, all the while feeling completely safe because she knew she had someone watching over her constantly, who comforted her, eased her pain and kept her from misery. She had fully become the girl in the painting, resting in the arms of her angel with her spirit freed and flying high. Zothan and Zuali knew that she wasn't really with them anymore, she was no longer locked into her body of death... she had escaped... and she had found life. She was not the Pari they had known.



*Our bodies are like tents that we live in here on earth.
But when these tents are destroyed,
we know that God will give each of us a place to live.
These homes will not be buildings that someone has made,
but they are in heaven and will last forever.
While we are here on earth,
we sigh because we want to live in that heavenly home.
We want to put it on like clothes and not be naked.
These tents we now live in are like a heavy burden, and we groan.
But we don't do this just because we want to leave
these bodies that will die.
It is because we want to change them for
bodies that will never die.
God is the one who makes all of this possible.
He has given us his Spirit to make us certain that he will do it.^{vi}*



Pari was now very ill, but found herself very excited about her beloved Uncle's approaching wedding. She kept talking about it, wanting to be involved in its joy and take part in its preparations, even if it was only through "excitement!" Her cancer cell count had risen to 86%, but her health did not keep her from the wedding excitement. Zothan and Zuali found themselves very anxious about her joyous anticipation of the event, fearing that her failing health would keep her from attending, and they did not want to encourage her, they could not bear to see her disappointed.

Pari loved this uncle dearly and had long wished for him to be married... hope of that ever happening appeared dim - he lived the life of a confirmed bachelor. But, before she left the hospital, she learned that he was to be married! The whole family was thrilled! The only reason for sadness on this occasion was the fact that Pari's health was going rapidly downhill, and she would most likely be unable to attend. Medically speaking, there was no hope, and there was no human reason to think she would be well enough to attend.

After coming home, Pari was in bed nearly all the time with high fevers and nosebleeds every day. Her pain was unbearable, making it necessary to have regular morphine injections. The wedding was still a couple of weeks away, and fears were creeping in - unspoken fears that she might not even be with them that long. Pari was bed-

ridden and had the appearance of a black ghost; she had no hair, her skin was charred, hard and black. There was a catheter attached to her right hand. Her parents were concerned that she might feel too shy to attend her uncle's wedding because of her appearance.

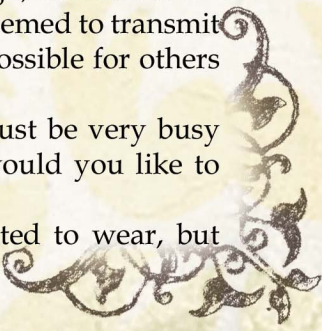
They were also apprehensive about whether she could physically endure even a short length of time out of bed. Pari, however, never entertained the idea that she might not be attending the wedding. Shockingly, after her vision, her cancer cell count miraculously began to decrease until it had gone down to only 26% on the day of the wedding! It was as though God delighted in making her happy!

Her spirit continued to rise as well, and on the morning of the wedding she inquired, "Hey Mom! Where are all my cousins? I thought they were going to come and dress me up?"

Zuali still felt great apprehension, for Pari was very much bedridden... she feared that Pari's hopes were too high; and that is exactly where Pari kept her hopes... elevated! She seemed to transmit encouragement into all situations, making it impossible for others not to be touched by her unrelenting optimism.

Her mother cautiously replied, "Everyone must be very busy getting ready, but I can dress you up... what would you like to wear?"

Pari had planned for months what she wanted to wear, but



now, her desired wardrobe was not possible. She had grown very thin; her dress hung uncomfortably on her like a sack. The beautiful sandals that she had bought much earlier would not fit on her badly swollen feet, yet she refused to be discouraged. "Mom, I think I'd like to wear pants! Do you think that would be alright?"

She wore black pants with a black jacket; the catheter implanted in her right arm was delicately covered up with a white gauze bandage. Placed securely above her broad, proud smile was a white knit ski hat, and she wore it like a queen wears her crown, glowing with an inner joy.

Pari was busy that morning with her wedding preparations – getting dressed was a big effort and drained her energy, but she remained delighted, enjoying every minute of it, for she wanted to "look good." There was no medical way to explain why her cancer cell count had dropped so low. Logically, it shouldn't have happened. But there was no time to think why...the wedding was to begin at 2:00, and it was 11:00 when Pari began her own preparations. Her parents remained uncertain, even while they helped her dress for the wedding, conscious that this was a huge endeavour for a bedridden patient; they did not want to see her disappointed. She was dressed and ready at the appropriate time, and before they left for the wedding, Zuali gave her an injection to relieve pain and put

a second emergency injection into her purse. They left the house at 1:45 pm, and as soon as Pari arrived, she became "the belle of the ball." It was Pari's grand finale, and she was radiant – she was so happy at the church, then later at the reception – she received as many kisses and handshakes (maybe more) as the bride that day, but at the same time, brought tears into the eyes of many. Everyone knew that hope for Pari's recovery had grown very dim, hence, her presence brought hope and joy, for she was there, among them – few of them really understood the miracle taking place.



It was 6:30 when Pari softly confessed, "I'm tired... and I need to rest now." The reception was coming to an end and the extra injection had not been necessary. Pari slept well that night! You could see Jesus in her face, in her smile, in her calm and in her quiet, gentle strength. She was "there" and yet, she was somewhere else; it was as though she was patiently waiting, delaying her departure – giving her family time so that they could prepare themselves to let her go. She was ready, she wanted to go "home," and she knew beyond any doubt that there had been a place prepared for her by Jesus Himself.

Almost immediately after the wedding, her cancer cell count began to rise. Although she slept well that night, she never left her bedroom again. Each day found her growing more and more helpless, but as she grew in weakness, she also grew in strength of spirit. She often asked if she could lead her family in their evening worship time, praying very specifically for each person with great love and discernment. Her times of falling into depression grew less and less; in fact, her frail body seemed to be turning into a spiritual fortress where she found rest and peace. The presence of God was heavily on her, as if she had claimed a spiritual inheritance from her grandmother. Grandma had taken the prayer lead in the family; she had been a signpost, pointing the way to heaven, but now, Pari's life had become totally absorbed in Christ, and she too, became a signpost,

pointing the way to Jesus. She and her grandmother now stood on the same ground – the pathway leading to heaven. Pari was not defeated – she was victorious.

*We never give up. Our bodies are gradually dying,
but we ourselves are being made stronger each day.
These little troubles are getting us ready for an eternal glory
that will make all our troubles seem like nothing.*

*Things that are seen don't last forever,
but things that are not seen are eternal.*

That's why we keep our minds on the things that cannot be seen.^{vii}

Pari had let go of her cage and was letting Jesus take control. She found herself securely held in His embrace – the embrace, to which she had run, the embrace in which she had been held and found so comfortable. The cage of fear and disappointment which imprisoned her was slipping out of her grasp. Anger, grief, loneliness and despair were being dispelled as light dispels darkness, and Pari was thinking and living positively, oblivious to the "injustice" of her situation. It was no longer her "negative" situation, she always had reason to give thanks, for Jesus satisfied her. Pari's healing began after the vision; she not only felt hope, she lived hope – hope for the

life to come. It no longer mattered whether or not she stayed in this world; she had an amazing assurance of her own destiny... assurance that very few people ever have. She embraced the frailty of her "clay jar" and filled it up with the power of God; she knew that her personal destiny was life.^{vii}

She had a smile for everyone and kind words too. Often those who came to visit her were unsure of what to expect; they were embarrassed that she had lost all her hair and that her skin had turned crusty black... but Pari always managed to put them at ease. She understood their shock, and in return, she offered her smile and kind words which effectively drove the fear from their hearts. She made them relax by being completely natural, and as they stayed on, they were captivated by what was in her – not by what they saw on the outside.

As the days went on, her pain increased to intolerable levels; so that even her loved ones found it difficult to look upon her suffering. Even so, Pari remained patient and submissive to everything happening around her, never giving reason for her parents to lose even one night's sleep. Visitors came less, feeling more and more uncomfortable with Pari's delicate state of health. One day, though, she had a great surprise. A little neighbour girl wandered over, because she wanted to see the "sick girl." Pari was also delighted to see her, and

72



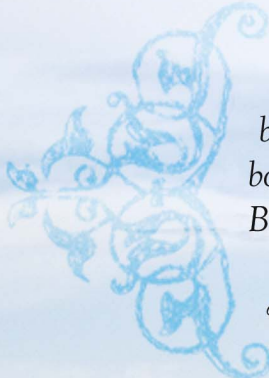
tried to make her feel comfortable, treating her as a little sister... but the child just stared at Pari in amazement and quickly scampered home to her mother crying out, "I just saw the face of an angel!"

*So our faces are not covered.
They show the bright glory of the Lord,
as the Lord's Spirit makes us
more and more like our glorious Lord.^{ix}*

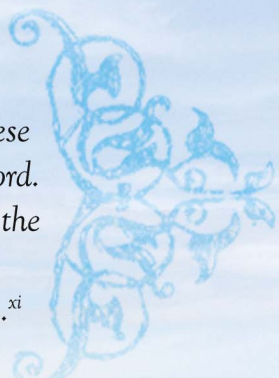
The painting Grace made sprang from her deepest hurts – it was her own story. She was the spirit of the girl who found freedom in being embraced and cradled under the shadow of his wings. Grace was released from her own cage of fear and loneliness. Painting the picture was a personal struggle for Grace and she found herself in tears more than once, fighting against what she knew had to happen – the girl had to let go of the cage! Grace resisted the urge to paint a freed bird. It was “just” a painting, but God works in mysterious ways; while she forced herself to paint what needed to happen, her parents prayed. They prayed daily that she would feel the love of Jesus, and asked God to wrap his arms around her and hug her as she went through school, so that the struggles of being far from her family would not be more than she could bear. And through their prayers and God’s grace, the painting bore healing and she began to fly as she painted. Healing came to life in that painting – available for anyone who could receive its message. As Grace struggled to paint her story, Pari struggled to tell its message; both freed the bird, and both found their healing.

*He will cover you with his feathers
He will shelter you with his wings.
His faithful promises are your armor and protection.^x*

A portable toilet was installed near Pari’s bed as she grew weaker and her pain became more severe. Shifting her from the bed to the toilet was not an easy procedure. The pressure on her bones while she was being lifted to the toilet caused unbearable pain. The whole procedure of using the toilet had to be carefully timed out. As she was moved from the bed, Pari would take a deep breath and ready herself for the countdown. Occasionally, an involuntary “ouch” would escape from her lips, and she would immediately apologize, saying “I’m not supposed to complain about pain anymore.” She didn’t just say it once. Whenever she expressed her pain too verbally she said it. For Pari, it was very clear that Christ, having lived on earth to purposely die on the cross for our sins, suffered incredibly. Even Christ had prayed to his father to remove “the cup” of suffering on the cross “if it was possible.” It was for that very reason Christ came to earth, to be the living sacrifice for the sins of all of humanity. Pari’s family had been asking God to remove her suffering; Pari knew that now was the time for her to willingly take the cup without complaint, for she wanted to accept joyfully the privilege of joining into the sufferings of Christ. Pari’s “Oh, sorry!” was coming from her heart and was meant, not just for those people helping to care for her, but for Jesus, who was also very present in the room with her. Her statement was, “I’m with Jesus all the time” ... no one around her doubted that.



*We should be cheerful,
because we would rather leave these
bodies and be at home with the Lord.
But whether we are at home with the
Lord or away from him,
we still try our best to please him.^{xi}*



“She was really very ill. ultimately her last four days were spent in such great pain that we couldn’t move her at all. Zothan and I were still trying to nurse her and bring her back to health; we were still unwilling to admit that what we were attempting to see happen – wouldn’t happen anymore.”

Zuali’s memories were becoming painful. I could see Pari’s pain reflected in her eyes, for Zuali’s thoughts appeared visual before me, as though I, too, was at Pari’s bedside.

“As the cancer cells increased, her pain increased until it was so bad she had to be on constant narcotic analgesics.” Our conversation ceased naturally, giving Zuali the moment she needed... looking back was not easy; mistakes were more plainly seen, and righting past wrongs was no longer possible.

A waiter clattered by our table, but we were oblivious of the people around us and hardly noticed the loud music above our heads that was so deafening. A smile appeared on Zuali’s face, but she spoke softly and seriously; “Someone told me that carrot juice is ‘good’... ‘this is good’...

that is good,' so I tried to make her drink the juice." Zuali heaved a big sigh of regret, and spoke to me as though I were a priest receiving her confession; "I would plead with her, 'Please just take one sip!' And to humour me, without any complaint, she would take a sip once or twice, even though it was very painful for her to do so. Up to the last day she was with us, she was obediently trying to please us. She just didn't complain, even though she didn't have the desire to eat or drink. She had no strength left in her body... but she still took a sip to please me. Now it grieves me that when she was so ill, I was still trying to make her swallow that juice." Zuali looked down, ashamed. "That same afternoon I was giving her painkillers every half hour, but they just weren't working... yet, she sipped it for my sake."



February twenty-third was Zothan and Zuali's wedding anniversary, a cake had been made, but they were not celebrating. It was about 4 o'clock in the afternoon; it was winter, a winter that was in Zothan's heart. Spring, for him, was no-where in sight. "Matae," Zothan spoke the words he wanted fulfilled, but he hardly knew what he was saying, "... it is all going to go away and you'll be well again."

The pain in Zothan's words was reflected in Pari's eyes - pain that had nothing to do with her body. It was he who was hurting, for he was holding on to what was not his... time. He could not release her. "That" was what Pari saw and that was why she had held on for so long; she did not want to leave her father mourning, she wanted to go, but with his blessing. She longed for her father to understand the joy that she saw so clearly before her, a destiny that she was ready to walk into.

Looking worriedly into his eyes, she spoke clearly, "Why do you keep saying that? You are only making it difficult for yourself - you've got to release me."

Zothan stared at his daughter in disbelief, but he wasn't looking at her; he was looking beyond her. She was drawing him into the world where she had found peace even

in her greatest times of pain – the factual- true reality where she had found that the embrace of Jesus was all she needed and all she desired. It was the place where she belonged, where she was secure, and it was time for her to go home. She was longing to be restored in spirit and body; she was longing for home.

Looking squarely at him, she stated calmly, “I want you to know that there isn’t much time left, and that instead, it’s all going to be over very soon... you have to let me go.”

Zothan had to turn to God, slowly and painfully, he began to feel the courage and the peace that he had been in denial of; he suddenly knew that he could trust God to be her father, even more than he could trust himself, and bowing in reluctant prayer, he made the decision to release her. Zothan couldn’t realise the significance of what she was saying at that time, but in a way, it assured him greatly that it was what Pari wanted and that he had no say in the matter anymore. He realised that she was already in God's hands.

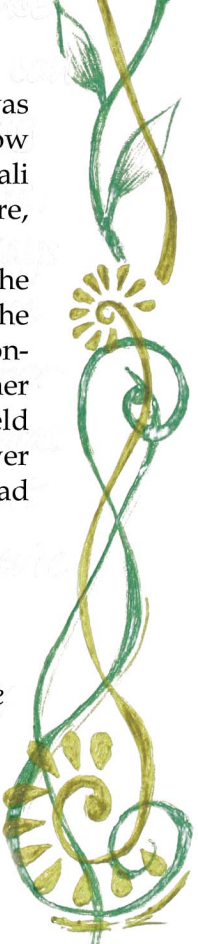
Four hours later, Zuali and Zothan waited at her bedside. Zuali sat on the edge of the bed and held Pari, gently cradling her, cuddling and rocking her as she did when she was a baby... there was peace in Pari’s eyes.

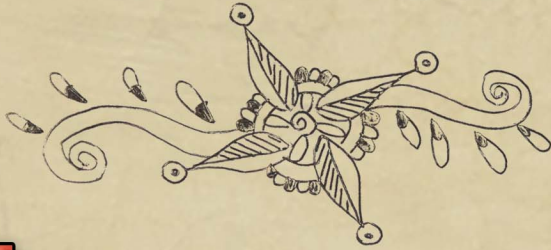
Her voice whispered, “Mom, I want to go now.” Zuali knew she was going, but her mother heart wanted these precious moments to

linger. Hugging her gently, she knew that Pari’s strength was leaving her, for her breath had become more laboured; now was the time to release her. Unwilling to let go of her, Zuali pulled her closer and whispered, “Be strong, Jesus is here, Jesus is with you...”

Her eyes had closed, but they suddenly opened and she looked up and smiled – not at her parents or anyone else in the room; she simply looked up as though someone was beckoning her. They watched as she slipped quietly out of her mother’s arms and into the embrace of the One who had held her before. In those few moments, the greatest change ever took place in Pari’s life; there was no room for doubt - she had left in the twinkling of an eye.

*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,
at the [sound of the] last trumpet call.
For a trumpet will sound, and the dead [in Christ] will be
raised imperishable – free and immune from decay,
and we shall be changed [transformed].^{xiii}*





I'll never forget Zuali's final words; all had been said, or as much of what could be said over two cups of coffee had been shared. Once more, we drank coffee together in a bitter-sweet, but not unrewarding, communion - and we prayed together. Our life stories had been changed forever by one young girl who decided to live her life for Jesus, counting the cost as the least she could do that she might be found in His embrace when she entered her final rest... eternity was hers, the priceless reward of faith. I finally understood, at least to some extent, Pari's entry into heaven. When Pari was transferred into the presence of God, Zuali summed up the witness of Jesus in Pari's life in a few words. At the close of our conversation Zuali rested in her chair, then heaved a great sigh as she leaned towards me and whispered these final words at the coffee house; "I knew she had gone home - it was in her smile."

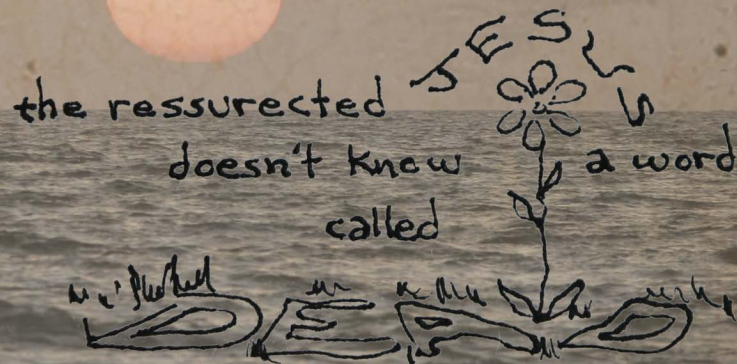


Safely Home

It was very hard for Zothan's cousin, Matetea and his wife Babie, who lived just next door, to break the news of Pari's passing away to their thirteen year old daughter, Dini, who was far away in boarding school and a close friend to Pari. Every time Babie spoke to her daughter on the phone, Dini was sure to question her mother about Pari's progress. The weekend Pari died, Babie thought long and hard about how she would break the news to Dini - she even considered not telling her right away, for Dini was in the middle of her exams. However, there was no benefit in procrastinating what had to be done... Dini, before anything was said, had sensed her mother's mood over the phone, and asked her, "Mom, Pari is gone isn't she?" Surprised, Babie asked her why she would ask such a question? Dini quickly told her that she had a most unusual dream on the 23rd night; she saw Pari alive and well, running and laughing, her long hair flying behind her. "Mom, it was Pari, but she was not ill! There was no sign of sickness at all - she was perfectly well and so very happy!" Dini also told her mother, that when she awoke in the morning, all of her friends had crowded around her bed with very

concerned faces, for she had been crying loudly in her sleep, her pillow was wet with her tears.

On the night of the 23rd of February, 2005, at 1.30 am, Zothan got a call from his niece, Ponpon, who last saw Pari in the hospital, May 2004, just after she had graduated from medical college. She asked Zothan if Pari was alright, saying, "I just couldn't go to sleep, I was tossing and turning in bed, but, strangely, I must have dozed off for a couple of minutes, because I had a dream. I saw Pari well - she was running and laughing; she was so happy and was calling out to me to join her! Her face was shining and radiant and her hair was back again, long and flowing behind her. Is she alright?" Zothan was quietly amazed.



There were others whose thoughts were drawn to Pari. All attention had been focused on Pari for the last year, and Ruati, Pari's younger sister, never uttered a complaint. Now Ruati would be spending school holidays as an only child; the attention would be focused only on her... but that had never been her desire, and now, it could not be changed; a special trip was planned for her to be with her mother.

Ruati and Zuali, looked down at the clear, sparkling blue water far below; they watched as the shiny white sand began to line the horizon. The island came quickly into view and soon they were climbing out of the helicopter and walking along the shore. A gentle breeze blew off the ocean and tossed their hair; the salty air seemed to tickle their eyes, and both of them – mother and daughter, began to cry. It was a strange beginning for their long awaited holiday together on the Lakshadweep Islands, but to their surprise, all they could do was cry. They walked to the beach, and cried. It was nostalgic, for neither mother nor daughter could imagine being in a place of such beauty without the whole family... the beauty needed to be shared with their loved ones. A feeling of incompleteness weighed heavily on them –it just wasn't right not to have Pari beside them. Though they loved each other's company, they felt very alone. This unbridled glory had to be shared... it wasn't really the salt water breeze that

tickled their eyes... and yet, all they could do was cry.

Remi, a Mizo girl, had been taken in by Zuali and Zothan at a young age and had lived with Pari and Ruati as a sister from childhood. A few months earlier Remi had dreamt that Pari was pleading with her, "Please make sure that my family comes through the door." Remi shared her dream with Zuali, and neither one had any doubt what the door symbolized. It was the gateway to heaven, and in her dream, Remi saw Pari standing in the doorway with beautiful long hair, the long hair that Pari had always wanted; her face and skin were radiant with health; she was perfect! The dream was simple; Pari wanted her family to come through the door. Like Zuali and Ruati, Pari felt the absence of her family in such a beautiful place – a place so much more glorious than any place that could ever be found on earth... and she, too, cried out, longing for her family to know, and see, and understand how to walk through the Door.

*"If our hope in Christ is good only for this life,
we are worse off than anyone else.
But Christ has been raised to life!
And he makes us certain that others
will also be raised to life."^{xiii}*

She Saw Jesus

*Written for Pari and sung at her memorial service,
Hebron School, April 7th, 2005*

*One life in God made complete; composed by God, her destiny.
Fingerprints uniquely owned and matched with those in heaven.
In His image she was fully found;
Heaven opened up to display a crown,
No more disappointed tears; no more warring mortal fear.
In her eyes, so full of hope; she saw Jesus she saw home;
She saw Jesus and he took her home.
Heaven.*

*For those who seek completion in Him; it's still a long road and a fight to win.
When we reach the finish line, we too will see Jesus and win our fight;
Freed in His embrace to meet life.
When in His image we are fully found, heaven opens up to display our crowns;
And In his image she was fully found; heaven opened up to display her crown.
She saw Jesus, she saw home; she saw Jesus and he took her home;
She wanted Jesus; she wanted life, so...
He called Pari to paradise; He carried her over the finish line.
Jesus. Heaven. Jesus.*



*“Christ will rule until he puts all his
enemies under his power, and the last enemy
he destroys will be death.”^{xiv}*

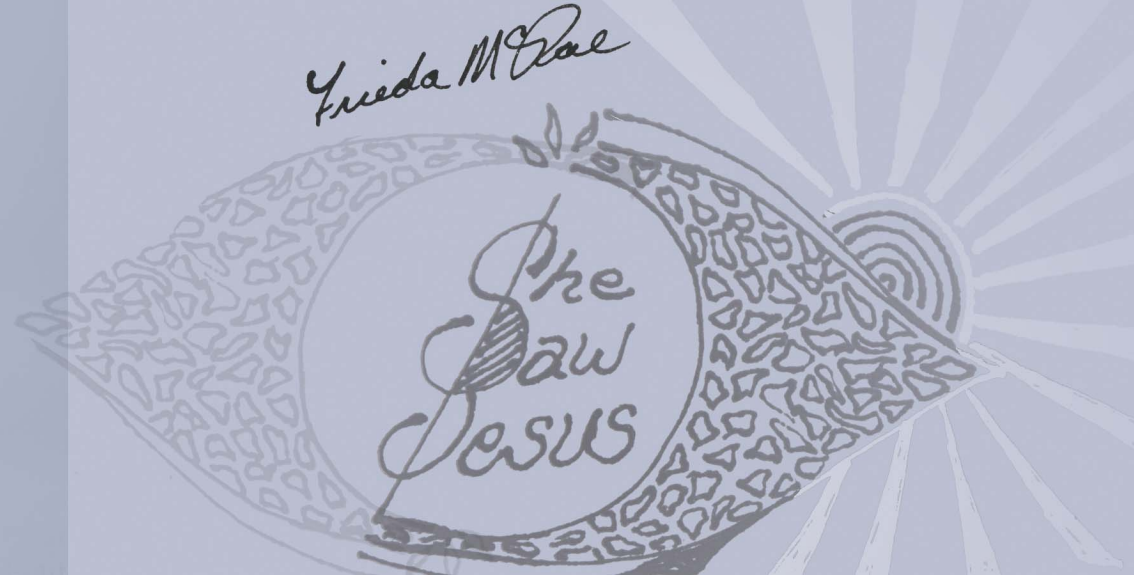
The mystery of Pari's smile set me on a search

Frieda McRae

Pari wore her smile with grace – a contagious cheek to cheek smile that mystified many. She entered into the reality of life unseen; the substance of what she hoped for became the reality of what she lived for. It has been a privilege to have known Pari and an honour to record the amazing personal transformation that took place in her life. I want to give my deepest thanks to Ruati, Zuali, and Zothan, and Pari's extended family, for trusting me to accurately record not just the events, but also the spiritual and emotional challenges that Pari faced. I am very grateful to Zuali, who took time and effort to share many intimate and painful memories with me. Without her willing openness, we would not be blessed with the riches of Pari's life, and would not have had that glimpse of heaven. Her life has been an inspiration for many; none of us is without suffering – that unique part of faith, lovingly planned out by God.

Challenges are part of living out our faith, and because we all have different lives no one can lean on another person's faith... we have to stand on our own faith. No one can meet God, except through faith – their own faith. We can grow in faith by the testimony of other

people, but we can't claim their faith to be our own; it must be lived out. By faith, Pari saw the arms that were ready to catch her lest she fell. Her story dares us to leap, it dares us to believe, and simultaneously unveils part of heaven; it leaves us who have stayed behind – hope; the hope of a personal relationship with God. Her parents marvelled at her spiritual strength and courage. I too, was amazed, for through it I had a foretaste of eternity – it was in her smile.



From the Class of 2008, Hebron School

We had spurts of faith, and each of us had to deal with our feelings of grief and sadness. We prayed for her healing, and were afraid that she might die; but when she died, we were completely shocked. Now we know God to be much smarter than all of us and more perfect than all of us; he is the best part of who we are in life, and Pari showed us that he will also be the best part of us in our lives after death. Pari was perfectly happy.

As a class, we are pleased to present a music video to the song She Saw Jesus. It is a great interpretation of who she was, or more accurately, a great interpretation of the Pari who was transformed into the likeness of Jesus. It communicates so well her love for Christ, and her desire to be with him, her lack of fear, and her detachment from the things of this world, which are some of the most important messages of her life.

She truly was an amazing person; we feel often completely unworthy and ashamed of our own lives when we see who she was, and how great her love for Jesus was. But God has different plans for all our lives, and he will take them and transform them

also - he loves us no less than he loves Pari, He wants us to have what she experienced, though each of our unique situations is very different; truth never changes.

We will remember her at our graduation, but more than remembering her, Pari would have wanted to be the signpost that points to Jesus, and have us thinking about him. What a tremendous blessing she was! I was so blessed to be her friend; though it brought grief, it turned out to be a time of growth for me. Pari's relationship with Christ is something to admire, but also to aspire to - to experience that tender, loving, closeness with God, for he longs for us to draw close to him like Pari did.

Jane Mitchell



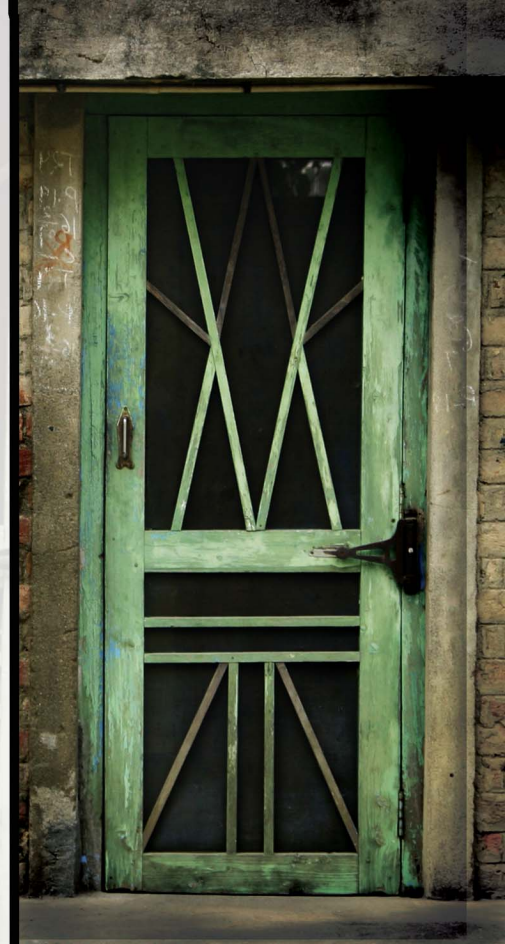
A note from Pari's Parents

God gave us a very special child –a child with a special destiny whom He loved so much that He wanted her to be with Him. Pari is the one who has forced us to think of eternity. It is clear to us now, the way in which God was preparing Pari. Before her life had been made complete in Jesus, everything went smoothly and we had been given no reason to doubt that medically speaking, all should go well. Once Pari received a spiritual new birth, her body started going downhill, while she herself began growing into the likeness of the Jesus whom she had come to know and love. She did not allow the pain to rule her life; she was not in denial of her own situation. She understood fully.

In Pari, God's purpose was being fulfilled and we are blessed indeed, as parents who received the assurance in our own lifetime that our beloved daughter has gone to her real home. As long as we follow the road that leads us to the Door, which is Jesus, we are going to be together again. Pari is where she should be and where we all must seek to enter into, according to the timing that God has planned for each one of us – a destiny written for us before we ever came into existence.

God released Pari and set her free on the night of our wedding anniversary – 23rd February, 2005 – so that we, her parents, will always remember this day not just as the day we were united in God's presence, but also as the great homecoming of our precious Pari; the day that angels in heaven blew their trumpets to welcome her into the presence of the God – Jesus, the Friend and Lord she had longed to meet, and now knows intimately, for she meets Him face to face.

*Zothan (Zothankhuma Pautu)
Zuali (Lalsangzuali Chhakchhuak)
February 23rd, 2008*



Final Thoughts and Thanks:

Zuali and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Frieda for taking up the task of writing about Pari, a project which though very close to our hearts, we have both found extremely difficult to do on our own. Those of you who have gone through this book must have realized that this was a story which cannot be left untold. We have both agreed that this book be published not to project Pari or ourselves but for the glory of our ever-loving and faithful God. We know deep in the depths of our hearts that it is indeed solely the love of God manifested, in giving us this precious gift of a friend – Frieda, who has put in her heart and soul to bring out this story. In all honesty, Zuali and I could barely go through the drafts, because it brought back the whole time period as if it were still the present – it drained us both emotionally. As we read, we reflected on how much pain and suffering Pari had to endure before she left us. It forced us to search the Bible for comfort which God gave us through 1 John 4:16-18 (NIV):

*“God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.
In this way, love is made complete among us
so that we will have confidence on the day of judgement,
because in this world we are like Him.
There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear,
because fear has to do with punishment.
The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”*

These verses showed us that in spite of the great pain she was in, Pari was able to live her last days in great happiness because of the Perfect Love which drove out all her fears. She helped us to understand much better what Paul meant when he said “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death is your sting?” (1 Corinthians 15:55, NIV).

I would like to mention a very personal experience which I had found hard to share earlier. Pari had a deep longing to know my father, who had passed away 3 years before she was born. On the night she left us, when everyone was grieving and I too was on the verge of breaking down, I stepped out into the balcony to pull myself together. I looked up and saw a full moon. And then I saw my father with arms outstretched – he was coming down to receive her, and in a gesture so natural, he took her by the hands, and together, disappeared walking hand in hand, to their permanent home. At last, the two people I both loved so dearly had finally met and united. This vision gave me a surge of comfort and strength to go back inside and face all the others gathered there and thus make arrangements for Pari’s funeral. I do not know whether this was my imagination working overtime or a vision. But this I do know, that in times of great pain and distress, this loving God of ours always intervenes to give us comfort and support.

Thanks be to God who has made us for himself,
Zothan



Frieda would love to hear from you. To contact her regarding this book or other publications:

*www.friedamcrae.com
frieda.mcrae@gmail.com*

Notes

ⁱJames 1:12 Amplified Bible; the italics and gender change [she] is the author's

ⁱⁱPsalms 91:2b,3 New Living Translation

ⁱⁱⁱPsalms 91:4 New Living Translation

^{iv}Galatians 5:1a, I Corinthians 2:9,10a New International Version; However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" – but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.

^vSong of Songs 8:6 New International Version

^{vi}II Corinthians 5:1-5 Contemporary English Version

^{vii}III Corinthians 4:16-18 Contemporary English Version

^{viii}II Corinthians 4:7 Amplified Version; However, we possess this precious treasure [the divine Light of the gospel] in [frail, human] vessels of earth, that the grandeur and exceeding greatness of the power may be shown to be of God and not from ourselves.

^{ix}II Corinthians 3:18 Contemporary English Version

^{xii}Psalms 91:4 New Living Translation

^{xiii}II Corinthians 5:8-9 Contemporary English Version

^{xiv}I Corinthians 15:52 Amplified Bible





The Songs

{a prelude and finale}

When I began writing this book, I had something very different in mind. My intention was to explain the songs – for many of them have stories and reasons for being written. My plan was to write about three people who had faced unusual challenges, yet lived victoriously, triumphing in ways that “victory” is not always perceived... like the life of Zothanpari Pautu. Her story captured my heart. In early 2006, after I had spent time talking with Pari’s mother, I began writing – I couldn’t stop! The power of Pari’s experiences gripped my spirit, even though I’d heard her story many

times before. When my pen stopped flowing, I knew that nothing (except for a song) could be added to this beautiful story – a song to salute the girl who took great joy in being with Jesus; in fact, *She Saw Jesus*.

My original song list had to be re-thought to fit Pari’s story. I particularly wondered if the song *Jump or Dive?* was too light-hearted for Pari’s story? Its bouncy tune contrasts with the seriousness of the lyrics, which carry a serious message... resurrection. *Jump or Dive?* was written for my daughter, Sheva, who harassed me endlessly by complaining that I’d written a song for everyone except her, until I was finally forced to do so. The song sprang out of an event that took place when she was a Senior in high school.

At a family reunion, Sheva was coaxed into playing a diving board game called *Jump or Dive*. In this game the innocent victim must run out to the end of the board and bounce, at this point someone shouts either “jump” or “dive” and the victim must comply. Sheva accepted the challenge and leapt off the diving board, performing a very disgraceful belly-flop into the water. When she surfaced, she was laughing and wearing a shy smile on bright red cheeks. As a Senior in high school, Sheva made a similar leap when she stood up and confessed before students and staff her faith in the God who claims to be The Resurrection and the Life by praying for

the healing of a child near death. Sheva stood up and did not waver in her confession of a God who heals, aware that she would be ridiculed for what she believed in. Her faith was in a God who promises us "life." One of the song lines in *Jump or Dive?* claims that *the resurrected Jesus doesn't know a word called 'dead'!* Sheva believed, but Pari proved that death is a defeated enemy.

Life presents challenges which force us into making choices in faith that we never dreamed of or imagined. It is easy to categorize these situations as just part of the "ups and downs" of life... but could they actually be purposed, measured, weighed and planned by the *Author of Life?* Are we humbled and bowed down enough to confess our need for a redeemer? Does God really ask us to "jump?" Taking that leap into the unknown can be a gamble, but choosing not to leap

"Taking that leap into the unknown can be a gamble, but choosing not to leap may be the bigger gamble."

may be the bigger gamble. When Pari leapt, she did not sink or swim... at first, it appeared that she had caught her foot in the anchor, but when it was freed - she sailed. She sailed because *She Saw Jesus.*

Frieda McRae



Kiss the Feet

Lord, God, if I could
give you anything,
I'd give you love, I'd give you love,
I'd give you love. And Lord God,
when you give me anything,
You give your love, you give
your love, you give your love.

I am the woman who washed his feet,
I'm the one who cried
Knowing I'm unworthy
to touch his feet
I am the woman who wears a
mask of fabricated
beauty and loneliness.
My life had sorrow, no hope
And in my sorrow poverty,
pain and death arose.
These were mine, I had nothing...
you can't lose 'nothing'.
That's why I kiss the feet of Jesus.

Everything I am, anything I was,
I lay it at the feet of Jesus,
cleansed by his blood.
I lay it at the feet of God,
prostrate before his throne.
And I hold on to the feet of Jesus,
the one I love.
Yes, I kiss the feet of Jesus,
he's the one I love.

स्वार्थ भरी इस दुनिया में, प्रेम को बदनाम किया
कूड़े कचरे की तरह, गलियों में क्यों फेंक दिया
प्रेम तो उमड़ेगा दिलों में, प्रेम करो बस प्रेम करो

Come Away

He breaks down barriers,
He crumples the walls
He makes the way open
giving justice to all.
He's the God of justice,
the God who sheds tears
At crime and darkness
which evil brings in.

He's the crying Lord and with
painful compassion
Keeps tears in His wineskin for
healing the nations.
He repays with punishment the
sins of the world,
But with hugs and embraces the
sinner He kisses!

प्रभु जो रोय दर्द भरी करुणा से
अपने आंसू बहाये दुनिया की चंगाई के लिये
दुनिया के पाप के लिये वह दण्डित करता है
पर हर पापी को वह गले से लगाये।

प्रेमी पिता जिससे हुए उत्पन्न हम
आँधी का अद्भुत का सृष्टि का रचयता
प्रेमी पिता जिससे मैं पाया जाऊँ
जिसके प्रेम से बंधा वह असीम क्षमा करता।

Kiss the Son, my love,
kiss the Son, my king.
May the wine flow gently from
His lips to those asleep.
I belong to my lover,
His desire is for me.
Come, my lover,
come away with me

Humbled and Bow Down

Produced and recorded by Adam Michael

Your love, oh Lord, is a banner over me,
I lift it up and fall to my knees.
For your love, oh God, carries me
Your glory covers my soul
I am humbled and bow down

Find me ploughing fields of white
In a harvest not my own
Seeds that have died have been sown,
Return to find their heavenly home
Return to find their heavenly home.

And we do love; we love the One
Who authored life, but came to die
With Him, for Him, we live to give
Our hopes and dreams –
no less they seem
When our eyes are fixed on Him..

She Saw Jesus

For Pari

One life in God made complete;
composed by God, her destiny.
Fingerprints uniquely owned and
matched with those in heaven.

In His image she was fully found;
heaven opened up to display a
crown,
heaven opened up to display her
crown.

No more disappointed tears;
no more warring mortal fear.
In her eyes, so full of hope;
she saw Jesus she saw home;
She saw Jesus and he took her
home.

Heaven....heaven.....
heaven....heaven

For those who seek completion in
Him; it's still a long road and a fight
to win.
When we reach the finish line, we too
will see Jesus and win our fight;
Freed in His embrace to meet life.

When in His image we are fully found,
heaven opens up to display our crowns;
And in his image she was fully found;
heaven opened up to display her crown.

She saw Jesus, she saw home;
she saw Jesus and he took her home;
She wanted Jesus; she wanted life, so...
He called Pari to paradise;
He carried her over the finish line.

Jesus....heaven....Jesus....heaven

My Redeemer Lives

Jesus you are my friend hold my hand
दिल मेरा तू जानता वही देखता है
You draw me near when I wander away
You walk very close so I cannot stray
You are the pulse of life, my breath
Each beat of my heart, you direct.

And I know that my Redeemer lives
In the end he will stand on earth
And I with him, at his side
Will see him with my own eyes...
will see him with my own eyes.

Jesus exalted Lord of my life
परमेश्वर के संत दिन रात स्तुति करे।

When my harp only mourns and
my flute only wails
Shots in the dark are aimed at my heart
Though I be dismayed and
my mountain quakes
He ransomed his life to pull me from the
grave.

He's eyes to the blind and
feet to the lame
The lamp on my head to
walk out of the grave
He is the pulse of life, my breath
Every beat of my heart, he directs.

वो अन्धों की आँखें, लगड़ो के पैर
वो मुर्दा के जी उठने की आशा है
वो है मेरी घडकन, वो मेरी सांस

Every beat of my heart, he directs.

जीवित है मेरा छुड़ाने वाला
संसार के अन्त में खड़ा होगा
और मैं वहाँ उसके साथ होऊँगा
देखूँगा उसे आँखों से – देखूँगा उसे आँखों से

Sing to the Lord, cry out to the Rock
Dust cannot praise his name
Nor can the grave proclaim his love
He is there for you...
he is there to save you

myRedeemer
Lives

Rocks Begin to Grow

It seems so slow til I love you, Lord.
The rocks begin to grow,
'til I love you, Lord.
Night fades to day and
the stars pass away,
Each tear shed in vain
'til I love you, Lord.

Your word the food of my life, the truth.
Your servant runs away
but can't live without you.
Lord, spare my hard heart
from growing cold.
Fire my life with love and
passion til I'm old.

Your word, my food, my life, my truth,
Bless me, your servant,
I am falling in love with you.

तेरा वचन, मेरा भोजन, मेरा जीवन, मेरी सच्चाई
आशिष दे तेरे सेवक को, प्रेम तुझसे करता हूँ

प्रभु मेरा भाग है, उसकी आज्ञा मानूंगा
पूरे हृदय से खोजूंगा, तेरे मार्ग पर चलूंगा

पृथ्वी भरी तेरे प्रेम से, प्रभु मुझे भी भरो
प्रेम करने को अब, मैं तेरे न करूँगा।

Lord, you are my portion,
I have promised to obey.

I have sought your face with all
my heart and considered your ways.
The earth is filled with your love,
Lord, teach me, I pray.
Now I won't be slow to love you, Lord.

Oh no, no rock will grow,
oh no, no rock will praise his name

No rock will have a chance to grow cause...
I won't be slow.
No rock will have a chance to
sing praises to the king.
No rock is going to shout your praise,
Lord, I can sing!

उसने येशु को देखा

एक जीवन प्रभु में पूरा हुआ,
ईश्वर उसके लक्ष्य का कुम्हार।
अनुपम हर उंगली की छाप,
स्वर्ग से मिलता जिसका आकार।

प्रभु में पूरी बनी हुई
मुकुट लिये स्वर्ग न बाँहें खोली
मुकुट लिये स्वर्ग न बाँहें खोली

अब ना रहा आँसू हताश, ना रहा मरने का डर।
आशा से मेरी आँखों ने,
यीशु को देखा तो दखा अपना घर।
यीशु को देखा वह ले गया अपने घर।

स्वर्ग द्वार, यीशु
हर कोई जो प्रभु में बनना चाहता,
कठिन है जीत, लम्बी है राह,
जब आयेगा आखिरी मोड़,
यीशु में होंगी आजादी और विजय
उसकी बांहों में असली जीवन पायेंगे
हम प्रभु की भरपूरी में बने हुए हैं
मुकुट लिये स्वर्ग बाँहें खुलती है

और प्रभु में वह पूरी बनी हुई
मुकुट लिये स्वर्ग न बाँहें खोली
मुकुट लिये स्वर्ग न बाँहें खोली

यीशु को देखा देखा अपना घर,
यीशु को देखा वह ले गया अपने घर।
यीशु की चाहत थी जीवन की चाहत
चलो बेटी घर यीशु ने कहा,
ले गया उसे अन्तिम मोड़ पार।

स्वर्ग द्वार, यीशु ने येशु को देखा

Confession Song

In his arms, I am safe.
In his arms I have a place.

Bathed in mercy, showered with love.
I am cleansed by his own shed blood.

All my fears, are no more.
Gone the tears, forevermore.
He will help me through the night.
All the darkness will seem as light.

May his grace be all I need.
May his Spirit dwell with me.

He has touched me with his love.
All my healings are from that touch.

In his name I will stand.
By his joy I will live in this land.

Jesus my guide, ever by my side.
Jesus my hope and the
Saviour of my life.

Reponsive Reading 101

Leader:
Everybody can sing of your unfailing love
Flows out like a flood,
flowed out in blood
For your laws and precepts
are righteous decrees
Cause now I can see
they are right for me
They are good, real good,
like honey on my lips
Good bread of life Good holy सच्चाई

Congregation:
No Rock's gonna' grow,
no rock's gonna' sing
No rock's gonna' dance,
I'm gonna' praise your name.

Leader:
If it seems too slow till I love you Lord
The rocks begin to grow till I love you Lord
If night fades to day and
the stars go away
Then pull on my reigns
cause your love I claim
You are my portion, I promise to obey,
I have sought your face and
longed for your ways

Leader:
Cause your unfailing love just fills us up
Everybody can eat, everybody can drink
Everybody can walk, walk in your way
You are our portion and I promise to obey
Now I won't be slow no rock's gonna' grow
I can sing your praise all night all dayt

Choir: No rock's gonna grow
No rock will shout or sing
No rock's is gonna' dance when
I can praise the King.

Jump or Dive

I'm standing in the church
with worship welling up in me
Throngs of people weave around,
some swaying up, some going down
Eyes are closed but looking up
as though they can see
I know they were lookin' at
the true reality?

That same Word now filters
through me,
Ignites my spirit to fly and leap
Opens doors set the prisoners free!
Pick me! Pick me!
Should I bounce and leap?

Jump or dive?
I clearly had to leap.
Dive or jump?...
choosin' was for me.
A question bright as neon
lights to live or join the dead
The resurrected Jesus is the
only choice ahead!

Jump or dive? Time to leap.
Dive or jump?...
What's it gonna' be?
Warning lights are flashing
bright and poundin' in my head
The resurrected Jesus doesn't
know a word called "dead"!

I choose love! I choose life!
I choose him,
to be Lord of my life!
And my final choice was.... dive!

*Songs and lyrics written and
produced by Frieda McRae*

Singers

Lead Vocalist: Frieda McRae

Special vocalists: Sheva McRae,
Michael Sethi, Janey Lal,
Raelene Churisnoss

Hindi Vocalists: Sonu Kumar, Shagun
Johri, Michael Sethi, Frieda McRae

Female Classical Vocalist: Alpana

Instruments

Acoustic Guitar: Frieda McRae

Electric and Classical Guitar:
Adam Michael

Organ: Adam Michael

Piano: Sydney Thyle

Tabla: Sheva McRae

Sitar and Tanpura: Arvind Mehta

Saranggi: Vinod Kumar Mishra

Bansuri and Shennai: Sahabe Alam

Bass Guitar; Nidan Nautiyal, Evy Pun

Violin: Michael Sethi

Stand Up Bass: Kevin Beeby

Title song translation:

Shagun Johri

Music Video: Hebron School,

Class of 2008

Jump or Dive?

Special percussion by Sheva McRae:

Snare drum, Cymbals, Beat box,
Spoons, Chopsticks on sugar jars,
tabla, Congo

Recorded at:

Studio Music Matters, Utrtrakhund, India

Recording and Sound Engineer:

Daniel Rajive Massey

Recording Help: Bhagat and Evy Pun

There are a few more people, without whom, this would not have happened, like my husband, Yip, and my family, who constantly stood with me till the finish, and then cheered. Daniel Rajive Massey was a “pro” in every way – patient throughout; I learned much from him. Michael Sethi was a faithful comrade who kept himself on-call for me; ever-ready to pour out his extraordinary musical talent. Thanks also, to Rajan, who did some of the recording and donated instruments freely. Thanks to Bhagat and Evy, whose technical know-how and musical talent and words of encouragement helped me to the finish line. Thanks to Lindsay Kumar for her exclamations of enjoyment! I am indebted to Liza Hartman, who came to India to give her time. She threw her heart into creating this book and worked graphic miracles, making Pari’s story beautifully vivid.

Contact: frieda.mcrae@gmail.com

The day her chemotherapy began, she celebrated her fourteenth birthday in bed. As expected, a fourteen-year-old will not immediately grasp the seriousness of the situation. For Pari, the idea of being sick enough to die was something that only happened in books or in movies – it wasn't "real life..."

This is the true story of Pari, a normal teenager, full of enthusiasm and dreams. The year was 2004, a year which proved to be a new beginning for her; it was a year of making new relationships – deep relationships that would mean far more to her than life itself.

This book contains a disc including 10 audio songs which serve as a backdrop for the story. A music video and a photo gallery help to depict some of the intimate relationships that were so precious to Pari.



Kiss the Feet
Come Away
Humbled and Bow Down
She Saw Jesus
My Redeemer
Rocks Begin to Grow
उसने येशु को देखा
Confession Song
Responsive Reading 101
Jump or Dive?