

Poems for worship

Carol Penner

The whole score

*God breathes and the world answers
in a symphony of faithfulness.
Songs of services in chapels, halls and tabernacles,
arias of councils and conferences and conventions,
oratorios of missions and campaigns and committees.
The devoted bursting forth in a hundred million hymns,
harmonious, dissonant, raucous and serene.
The voice of the church exhaling its devotion,
praising Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer and Friend.
Angel voices and the saintly crowd of witnesses
hum along as God's kingdom call echoes in the world.
For so long we've tuned into only one part, ours,
examining it, analyzing it to the nth degree,
arguing over our notes, perfecting them, enjoying them.
We know our part by heart,
we sing it lustily.
Then one day God turns the page
and we glimpse the whole score,
infinitely intricate,
more voices than you can shake a stick at,
unclouded, unconcealed, unconstrained.
God the great scorekeeper nods
as we suddenly hear the age-old chorus,
the melody of grace in stereophonic surroundsound.
It's there for those who have ears to hear.*

Song of Peace Prayer

*Thank you for the gift of music,
for melodies and harmonies,
for voices of every pitch.
Thank you for composers and poets,
for instruments and musicians.
Thank you for ears to hear
and minds to comprehend
the gift that was given so long ago.
Immanuel, God with us,
be the song we sing,
each and every day.
Let yours be the melody we carry,
your song of peace ringing out
through everything we say and do,
grace notes in this season of discord.*

About the Author

Carol Penner is a Mennonite pastor currently teaching theology at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ontario. She has served congregations in Ontario and Alberta. The above poems are from her website, Leading in Worship (<https://leadingin-worship.com>), and are reprinted here with her permission.