

Footprints, A Marian Variation

by Anonymous

One day a woman sat in a lovely garden. She was alone. Two days ago she buried her son here. Today she simply sat. She dreamed she was walking over the familiar, rugged countryside near her hometown, Nazareth.

Across the clear blue sky appeared glimpses of events that transfigured her life . . .

A cold December night in a stable . . .

Her son's first footsteps . . .

Father and son together in a workshop . . .

The first table he made all by himself.

She remembered . . .

the time he got lost in Jerusalem . . .

the day his adopted father died . . .

a special wedding feast in Cana . . .

her son's laughter and his tears . . .

all those fishermen in her little house.

She remembered . . .

the faces of the people who hated him . . .

the outstretched hands and hearts of those who loved him.

She remembered . . .

the day they took him away . . .

and the time she held her son in her arms.

She had been there when he had taken his first step.

Her footsteps trailed the bloodied earth right after him when he took his final walk.

All through his life her footprints and his had intermingled.

But at this, the lowest and saddest time in her life, she felt and saw herself alone.

Just one pair of footprints traced in the sand near the Sea of Galilee.

Just one pair of footprints on the dusty road returning from Jerusalem.

Just one pair of footprints had kissed the soft earth in this beautiful garden.

And the woman thought to herself:

“I don’t understand! Why did it have to be this way? After all those years, why did he have to leave me?”

A bird chirped and a soft breeze kissed her tear-streaked face. In the distance she could hear the trickling of a playful brook.

Then, ever so keenly, she heard . . . the soft unmistakable footsteps. And before she could turn her weary head, he spoke,

“I love you and would never leave you, Mother.”