



Came a Whisper

1 Kings 19:12

Women 4-2 Day Newsletter

Editor's Notes by Kelly Linton

Welcome to a fresh edition of *Came a Whisper*.

A new season is upon our fair city, blowing in scents that excite our senses, and maybe not in a desirable way!

I love the smell of the wet earth moistened by spring rain. I dislike the pungent

odour of... er... *natural* fertilizers, as good as they are for beautiful gardens.

It's like that in life too though, isn't it? Aromas come into our lives that we might welcome, or grudgingly tolerate.

The pages of this newsletter

are filled with written artistry expressing the many fragrances that life can contain. Some are sweet and some are sour, and all are real and even inspiring.

So please, open your window wide, breathe deep and read on...

Unexpected Inhalations by Cindy Martin

While recently attending a conference in Washington, D.C., I had the privilege of taking in the annual Cherry Blossom Festival. This is a significant event, complete with a parade and hundreds of thousands of people. A group of us that attended the conference maneuvered our way through the masses, amazed at the myriad of cherry trees that lined such stalwart icons of American history as the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument and the White House. Thousands of cherry trees in full bloom complemented by countless tulips bursting with a rainbow of colour and stately magnolias hanging in overflowing bunches almost overshadowed the monuments they surrounded.

Beyond the splendor of their beauty was the feast of fragrance that was just there for the taking. The fresh green grass, the hint of cedar trees, the plethora of flowers—you could just smell



it...you could almost taste *it*. My sense of smell was on full alert as we walked through a large grove of cherry trees and I inhaled yet another wave of aroma. I was struck by the emotional response that this triggered in me and

for a moment I wondered what had caused this. After some more reflection, things became clearer. With each visit to the smorgasbord of fragrances, I was breathing in hope. That was *it*. Just as the cherry blossoms foreshadowed the fruit yet to come, the anticipation of new and revitalized life was so thick, it was tangible. The overwhelming sense of promise that *it* brought, invigorated my heart and reframed my perspective for the days ahead. Even though I was in a wheelchair due to recent ankle surgery, I was ecstatic to be alive and my soul was energized. Not only had I seen some of the most impressive sights in North America, but I had breathed in hope!

Flowers never emit so sweet and strong a fragrance as before a storm. When a storm approaches thee, be as fragrant as a sweet-smelling flower.

Jean Paul Richter

The Sweet Fragrance of ...Fish? by Germaine Bleile

"We had such a fight. He reeks of petroleum all the time," the young wife said. "I don't mind him having a hobby, but couldn't he choose something less stinky than restoring old cars?"

Listening to this woman, my mind went back to my first year of marriage. Dan had always loved fishing. Back then it wasn't catch and release. It was catch and bring the stinky things home for the little wife to gut, scale and cook. I never even liked fish. I didn't like to touch them or eat them and I hated the way the fish smell permeated through everything.

So I drew the line at the little-wife-clean-fish bit. I did consent to cook them though, which I thought was a big concession. My mother-in-law jumped on me when she found out I

wouldn't clean the slimy things. "Dan goes through all the work of catching the fish," she said. "Surely, it's not too much for him to expect you to clean them."

"He gets the fun of catching fish," I deliberately emphasized the word fun. "If he doesn't want to clean them, he can stay home and when he wants to eat fish, I'll buy fillets at Safeway." We glared at each other. My husband, always the peacemaker, said he didn't mind doing it himself and that was that.

So he cleaned them. Over the years, I discovered some tasty fish recipes and he eventually changed to catch and release, so there was never another issue about fish. Although his clothes

still smelled of fish, he used to hang them out in the garage until he took them to the Laundromat.



Then, five weeks after his fatal accident, I went into the garage and brushed up against his coveralls. The rich smell of fish brought tears to my eyes.

I didn't wash those coveralls until I was engaged to my second husband.

I snapped back into the present and to this young wife perplexed by her car enthused husband. "Honey, let's pray together for wisdom and peace. Then I'd like to tell you a little story."

Gethemene by Lois Codreanu

Anguished, in torment, He kneels in the garden. Great drops of blood spill from His forehead. Imploring His Father, He raises His eyes to Heaven. A deep groaning is torn from His soul as He falls prostrate. The blood drops fall faster as He pleads for release from His Father's will. "Not My will but Thine be done," He cries, but His body cringes, "Must it be so? Is there no other way?" Intense pain suffuses His body as grief tears at His heart. He knows there is no other way. Only blood will satisfy the need for justice. The price must be paid.



You saw what was to come and You felt what would be. Because You knew the road to be traveled Your body cringed as Your soul cried out. You

were to be separated from the Father, to not have that sweet communion—to be separate, alone, as every man is whose soul God has not made alive. You were going to taste every sin of every man, to feel every pain, every terror, every dark moment of every

soul past, present and future, and to know the guilt and shame of everyone from now to eternity. To taste the wrath of God—to sip that bitter cup to the dregs, Your frail body could not contain the agony. Blood flowed, Your blood, in great clots.

How could You do it, Lord?

How could You see, feel and know every moment and still walk toward the cross?

You knew every terror, every pain, and every agony.

You gave Your heart, Your blood, Your life.

Your will was His to command—Your body a freely offered sacrifice.

In Gethsemane You lived the cross and knew it to the uttermost.

There is no experience, no single detail, no terror, no pain, no agony, no sin, no shame, no hurt You did not suffer on Calvary or in Gethsemane. Nothing surprises You. You plumbed the human experience to the bitter depths.

You know Lord, all that is in me, all that I am and still, You love me.

Can You Hear Him Singing? by Carol Jack

I love Zephaniah 3:17 "The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing." (NIV)

I imagine myself as a child in God's arms being sung to and sung over— deep connection; warmth in His eyes, tenderness in His smile, pure joy and lightheartedness in the moment - such an intimate and comforting image of my heavenly Father. Picture a mother singing and rocking her baby to sleep or a man singing a love song to the woman he loves. I am glad that He is with me, is mighty, that He delights in me and can calm and quiet me. And that He thinks I am so wonderful that

it makes Him want to sing over me. It is such a sweet and fragrant image.

It would be nice to live in moments like these all of the time.

Circumstances and pressures tend to get in the way. Our own internal voices often contradict this image of how special we really are. We tend to end up feeling small, insignificant, crumpled and harried. God does not live this way. He is not rushed, hemmed in by circumstances and pressures. He does not see our lives and say, "Oh my!" Instead He speaks words such as "My ways are



not your ways... My plans are not your plans... Come to me... Abide in me...

Rest awhile... Take joy, comfort, peace..." Our heavenly Father means for us to stop, pause and rest awhile. He wants us to be open to having a song or two sung for us. To be willing to sit still

long enough to enjoy it. To live with open hearts and open hands to receive what He wants to give us. To remember how much He loves us and what our worth and value are in His eyes.

Unseen Thoughts by Amanda Grant

Peacefulness comes after many a storm
Silence becomes the music of the soul
My soul in communion with God
In prayer and petition
Waiting to hear Your voice

You speak to me in whispers
So discretely that You are heard
Heard over all the other noise
Of other voices and words
That lie to me about You

Rest comes quite quickly to me
In Your arms of love and warmth
Warmth that fills my heart
My heart overflowing with joy
That only You can provide

I know that I am safe now and always
Your protection is so clear to me
To me Your undeserving child
In a world as cold as stone
Only Your grace can truly save

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

John 14:27 (NIV)

A New Thing by Keira Romich

I woke to a blizzard – in mid-May! It was wonderful at Christmastime. It was fun to go outside and make snowmen. It felt cozy to come in and sit by the fireplace with hot cocoa.

But now I'm tired of it.

Tired of the cold.

Tired of being stuck inside.

Tired of the illusion of a clean white blanket when I know the truth of frozen mud and dead brown grass beneath.

To my surprise, I opened the front door and in spite of the snow, was hit with the scent of a gentle spring rain. I closed my eyes and winter disap-

peared, along with my melancholy. The snow was merely a reminder of what was past.

My hope of sunshine and fragrant flowers wasn't the only thing that awoke inside of me. In stillness, I realized that God was waiting to wake up my spirit. Wintertime for me, too, needed to come to an end. He has new life and promises waiting every day, if only I take the time to open my senses to His truth.

The truth of His desire to see me grow and bloom.

The truth of the new 'me' He wants to mould to His pleasure.

The truth of who I really am because of who lives in me.

*See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the desert
and streams in the wasteland.*

Isaiah 43:19 (NIV)

Springtime Confession by Alicia Debliek

After six long months of winter I am weary of the stale air, brown or colorless landscape, bone-chilling cold. I am anxious for the scents of springtime: Lysol wafting out of open windows where spring cleaning is taking place, damp earth defrosting and making way for plants to grow, and shave gel, as women everywhere rejoice at the thought of wearing skirts without nylons.

There is a renewed energy that comes with the longer periods of daylight. I am awakened from my winter hibernation with an eagerness to present all the old things of my life in a new and refreshing way. I busy myself with reorganizing and cleaning up my home. I plan and toil to make

my yard an oasis with new plants and colors. I even spend some effort and money to renew my appearance with new spring clothes, a new hairstyle and with any luck, a tanned face from working in my yard.

I know that I am not alone in these rituals of spring. I have seen my neighbors and friends energetic and busy with the same tasks. Okay, I don't always see it, but I do hear about it. We commonly share stories of the agony it causes us; the time it takes, the things that aren't getting done, the cost of everything required, traffic endured on the road and in the stores, and, the lack of cooperation or differences of opinions encountered with various parties in the midst of

trying to make everything look better. It is as though our hearts and minds are still stuck in the stagnation of winter, frozen in the habit of negative talk.

I confess that it is easier for me to focus on the outer appearance of things than it is to work on the attitude and fragrance of my words. Lord, help me in this season of new growth to do some personal spring cleaning from the inside out, especially my words. Help me be more thoughtful and positive in the words I choose to use that it may bring healing to my life and others.

Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

Proverbs 16:24 (NIV)

Backpacking by Doris Hirsch

It's that time of year again
Everyone is going somewhere

I need to find my backpack
it is here somewhere
Oh, there it is
all musty and dirty
in the far corner

Squirming to reach it
I finally pull it out
It is heavy
I must have forgotten
to take out some things

Let's have a look
I pull out some packages
Looking at one I see it labeled
Old grudges
Another one
Old hurts

Dismayed - I remember now
those who said things about me
and let me down
They didn't understand
or so I thought
I put aside my backpack
It can wait
I am overcome by guilt
by my own lack of understanding
I kneel in prayer asking God above
to release my load
Now I can pack my bag with love
For I am leaving
the load at the cross.



"But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

Philipians 3:13, 14

Walking Dead by Charlotte Riegel

He died, too young.
Hopes and dreams evaporated.
Life's circumstances turned against him.
His body lived on. His spirit died.

Loved ones wrapped his soul
With fragrant perfumes and spices
Of love and encouragement.
The stench of death was too great.

Decomposition of the spirit.
No joy. No sparkle in the eye.
Drudgery. Depression.
A man walking with a dead spirit, stinks

Watching, waiting, praying, hoping.
Years later, grave clothes fall away.
The dead man comes alive again,
With new hopes and dreams.

Death stinks,
But God has overcome death.
He breathes new life into a crushed spirit.
The fragrance of new life is sweet, invigorating.

Fragrance – a distinctive, pleasant odour, used to enhance

In some cultures spices and perfumes are used to conceal the stench of death, but this does not hide the putrid odour of death forever, only for a time.

Hearing God in an Eco-Friendly Garden by Maryruth Belsey Priebe

Spring has my mind inevitably turning toward sweet-smelling flowers, ripe-scented tomatoes, and the aromas of soil and rain. Each seedling is a reminder of the mystery of life; each fragrant bud a glimpse into the power of God's life-sustaining will for our lives.

But so often, conventional gardening wisdom has us reaching for convenient chemicals to keep our perfectly-manicured green spaces just so. Could it be that by doing this, we're dampening God's ability to reveal Himself to us?

The Genesis story exhorts us to be stewards of the earth, working with God in an effort to bring forth the pungent perfumes of earthly life. So how do we cultivate outdoor spaces that reflect the bouquet of God's creation? Here are a few ideas:

A little planning goes a long way. Choose plants and seeds that are suitable for our climate. By doing so, you'll need fewer soil amendments and you'll reduce your water consumption.

Make it chemical-free. Pesticides and herbicides are highly toxic. They've been linked to cancer, autism, and developmental delays, and they pollute our rivers, lakes, and streams. They're also haphazard wildlife killers, stamping out both harmful **and** beneficial plants and insects, sometimes even increasing pest problems. Choose manual pest removal and homemade (or store-bought) compost instead.

Attract God's little creatures. Many birds and bugs keep bad pests at bay; killing these do-gooders opens the door to an increase in pesky pests. Make your garden a haven for these

creatures by using non-toxic gardening methods and choosing plants and flowers that they'll love to visit.

Protecting blissful diversity. If you haven't already, check out heirloom plants (those that were cultivated for centuries but are no longer in common use). These precious plants will add unique touches to your garden and will help sustain the earth's biodiversity, which could be key to warding off super-pests that are predicted to cause serious harm to the world's food supplies.

Want to find resources for making your garden a heavenly oasis? Check out the Calgary Horticultural web site at www.calhort.org

Upcoming Events 2008

Willow Creek Leadership Summit	August 7 + 8
Women with a Mission	Starts September 8
Evening Edition	Starts September 8
Women of Heart	Starts September 11
4Single Moms, Breakfast	Starts September 20



WRITE US! We would love to hear from you! Do you have any comments? Would you like to contribute an article? Please contact Kelly Linton by email at kc040602@shaw.ca

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