

“Broken Halos” by Larry Rawlings



Christmastide

December 25, 2021

Good morning. I usually start off by saying “if you remember one thing I’ve said today, then I’ve done my job.” So I’ll start off by saying: AA’S Third Step says, “Made a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God.” My will is my thoughts and my life are my actions.

A week ago Saturday, I said goodbye to one of my dogs. His name was Empty. It was a sad moment for me, but my conscience is clear. It was his time, and that was the last act of love that we did for him. Two other dogs that I had been caring for also received the last act of love this year. Both Toby

and Pepper are now gone, and I miss all three of those dogs.

Community-wise this year, Brenda's father, Margreta's husband, Rosa's mother, and Oswaldo's sister have all passed on. Collectively, they will all be missed and not forgotten.

Today I am fully vaccinated, and no, I don't know what's in it. Neither this vaccine or the ones that I had as a child. Nor do I know the 11 secret herbs and spices at KFC, or the ingredients in hot dogs or CocaCola's secret recipe or other treatments for cancer, AIDS, arthritis or vaccines for children.

I also don't know what's in Ibuprofen – it just takes care of my headaches and my pains, and I don't know what's in it.

I don't know what's in the ink for tattoos, what's in vaping, or what the ingredients are for botox or fillers or every ingredient in my soap or my shampoo or even my deodorant. I don't know the long-term effects of mobile phones, or whether or not that restaurant I just ate in really used clean food or whether the cooks washed their hands. I just don't know.

In short, there are a lot of things that I don't know, and I'll never know. I just know one thing: life is short, and I still want to do something other than going to work every day and staying locked up in this house. I still want to do fun things and hug people and hang out with folks without fear and find a little feeling of life again.

As a child and as an adult, I've been vaccinated for mumps, measles, polio, chickenpox, shingles, and some other things that I can't remember. My mother and my caregivers trusted in the science, and never had to suffer through or transmit any of these sad diseases.

I am vaccinated not to please the government – I'm vaccinated to not die of COVID-19. I am vaccinated to not clutter the hospital beds if I get sick. I am vaccinated to be able to hug my loved ones

I am vaccinated not to have to do an antigenic test to go into a restaurant or to go on vacation, or do many other things. I am vaccinated to live my life. I am vaccinated to see and hug my friends and family members. I am vaccinated for covid to be an old memory. I am vaccinated to protect us. So please, everyone, do your part.

I offer this prayer for the good use of my life:

Eternal God, who commits to us the swift and solemn trust of life:

We know not what a day may bring forth,

but only that the hour for serving is always present.

May we wake to the instant claim of thy holy will,

not waiting for tomorrow, but yielding today.

Consecrate with thy presence the way our feet may go, and the humblest work will shine.

Lift us above unrighteous anger and mistrust into faith and hope and charity,

through a simple and steady reliance on God's will.

So may we be modest in our time of wealth,

patient under disappointment, ready for danger, and serene in death. Amen.

In closing, I offer my 2021 version of 'Twas the Night Before Christmas, even though it's the day after Christmas:

*'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house
Not a creature was maskless, not even a mouse.
The sourdough starter was being fed with care
In hopes that the perfect loaf would be there.
The children were nestled all snug in their beds
With visions of TikToks and Facebooks rolling in their head.
And Momma and her computer reviewing our earning
While I tried to swallow another year of virtual learning.
When out on the lawn there rose such a clatter
I sprang from my Zoom to see what's the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
first putting on pants, even tying a sash.
The outside world looks oh so enticing
After nine months of quarantine, having nothing but dicey
When what to my wandering eyes did appear
but a miniature sleigh and eight socially distanced reindeer.
With a white bearded driver dressed in full PPE,
I knew in a moment that he must be covid-free.
They posed for a selfie holding their phones with sticks.
The quarantine pod had grown pretty thick.
Now Dasher, my Prancer, now Blitzen
Wash your hooves and scrub them well.*

*Now wash away, wash away, wash away all
Sparkling clean and brimming with gear
They jetted up the rooftop
to ring in the good year.*

Have a good day, everyone!