

Stars of Hope

The chilly night descends silently and swiftly upon the city, suddenly blanketing
The unsuspecting skyline that stretches up hopefully in the shrouded sky.
Thousands of lights of night sparkle and shine reflecting off the bay
While a towering tree proudly wears its December clothing glistening brilliantly
As it hosts a wide variety of colors, shapes, and sizes.
In the shadows of the season a wary man drifts slowly, lost in his reflections,
Wandering aimlessly amidst the bustling crowd,
Having lost his foundation, his purpose, consumed by his cynicism, trying to make sense...

As he continues on his journey, he remembers the day a grief-stricken nation watched
In horror as their freedom and security was instantly obliterated, changing their lives forever.
The aftermath of this tragedy stirred an outpouring of love, compassion, strength, and unity.
As he gazes at the revelers around him, he thinks of how distant those memories now appear
And wonders how swiftly and easily we seem to have forgotten those lessons.
Disappointed in himself, concerned with others, he sulks in his solitude and meanders through the preoccupied shoppers.
He pauses to gaze up at the giant Golden Star topping the spectacular tree, its brilliant light warming
The young children who play together at its base, their bright eyes reflecting the hope, anticipation, and love of the holiday season.

With his head bowed down to shield him from the bristling cold,
The pensive man walks hypnotically as he leaves the bright lights and stumbles
Upon the downtrodden, depressed neighborhood just blocks away.
Ragged clothes, empty bottles and stolen shopping carts litter these forgotten streets while
Wrinkled, aging, faded faces pleadingly stare as he walks the lonesome road.
Wandering through this maze of despair and helplessness his trance is disrupted by the clanging of a single bell.
He is startled by the hopeful, excited voices of young people working selflessly to serve others
While the glow of the White Star adorning the shelter beckons neglected souls to warmth and temporary peace.

As his lonely hours of reflection lead him through the uneven roads toward the bay,
The black of the night quickly turns to grey as another day unfolds.
The sun swiftly rises through the fog and clouds
Dispersing the haze, warming his heart and unveiling the sky.
In the distance a lone white dove circles slowly above a drifting sailboat
Decorated with colorful lights, its mast topped with a bright silver star.
Through sleepless eyes he watches it glide and bounce, parting the waters,
As it slowly picks up speed amidst the wind and begins its journey.
Like the Wise Men guided by the light so many centuries ago,
His eyes follow the fleeing star as it disappears in search of the open seas.
The whistling wind and dampening air rise up to greet the floating vessel that
Courageously accepts the uncertainty as it ventures out beyond the safety of the shores.
The welcomed winds guide it along on the pre-determined course
Or move it precariously, pushing it in a different direction while
Providing new challenges, new opportunities, and a new path.
The glimmer of the last star finally disappears upon the horizon, leaving him with a clear vision.

The cynicism of yesterday gives way to the hope of today as he discovers
The meaning of the three stars he has seen on his uncertain journey.
He sees the hope and anticipation reflected brightly from the faces of the children
He hears the love and compassion in the voices of the unselfish, serving souls and
Understands the courage necessary to embrace challenge, adversity and uncertainty.
He walks briskly and deliberately up the steep hill
Appreciating the lessons and hope of the night that now
Inspire him with new energy, focus, and challenge to meet another day.

May this Christmas Season inspire us to see the symbol of the stars around us
As we continuously strive to make our lives as meaningful as possible.
May it challenge us to live, give and love in such a way to make it easier for others,
Following the example of the young Babe born in a humble stable
Who left us with an enduring example of love and sacrifice, and taught us this simple truth:
That in loving and giving to each other, we love and give to Him.
Each day, He caringly calls us to live with a spirit of peace and understanding,
To live in such a way that some part of us lives on in the lives of those whom we touch.