



The Purple Spring

by LaBreeska Hemphill

It has been a long winter, in more ways than one. Nashville, our home town, has been unusually wet and dreary this year. Maybe it's just me, but it seemed like spring would never get here. Then around the first of March Joel and I had to make a trip south by way of Memphis.

Joel was napping and I was under wheel, clipping along the interstate when we came into the outskirts of town. It was a lovely day, bright, sparkling and sunny. Suddenly we came upon a grove of Bradford Pear trees in full regalia. Dozens of them, standing there in dazzling white to welcome us. This was my first glimpse of spring and it took me by surprise. The scene was absolutely breathtaking. Until that moment I hadn't realized just how *starved* my eyes were for signs of life in a world that seemed dead as if it slept beneath the surface like a bear in hibernation. No wonder we use the phrase "in the *dead* of winter!"

Immediately my spirits began to lift. The further we went the lighter I felt as I drank in the pale new growth of green interspersed with yellow. Yellow bells, dandelions, and crocuses were all along the highway. Those lovely sights put a song in my heart and springtime in my soul!

As we rolled along, another color began to appear on the landscape: purple tundra. I saw miles and miles of it like plush carpet covered fields. It sprinkled lawns, and ran along the median. Then, as we passed through Arkansas and Louisiana, we found purple wisteria in full bloom. It stretched along the highway cascading from the tallest trees, then downward covering shrubs and bushes. It beautified everything in its path.

By the time we came back home, Nashville was also coming alive. The red bud trees had blossomed and lined the interstate with purple majesty! Clumps of lavender ground-cover ran along embankments and the lilac bushes were in all their glory - heavily laden with fragrant blossoms.

There were blueish purple hyacinth growing wild along our creek-bank. The tulip trees were strutting their stuff; gracefully raining down their long, pointed, leaf buds to the ground like ribbon shaped confetti.



One might ask, what does all of this demonstrate? Well, it proves to me that **God** likes purple. And so do I. In fact it's my favorite color! Some may say that so much purple this spring is just a quirk of nature. I say, "*it's God.*" Others might say it's just happenstance. I say, "*it's architectural precision.*" Many may say that all those lovely colors evolved. I say, "*they were created by The Master Builder and used with a stroke of His genius, to beautify the earth and fill it with His glory.*"

The color purple, a blend of red and blue, has a diversity of shades. It varies from the deep rich hues of orchid and violet all the way to the more red bearing shades of lavender. It is an ornate and elaborate emblem of royalty, and is mentioned all through the Bible. By God's design Moses was ordered to use this color in the materials for the tabernacle in the wilderness - even the veil into the holy of holies. Aaron's ephod was gold, blue, purple, and scarlet and became the colors of priests and kings. In the New Testament, after the soldier's placed the crown of thorns on Jesus' head, they put a purple robe on him in mockery because it was the color of royalty.

In the book of Revelation, John gives a description of the new Jerusalem:

"And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband....And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation [on the bottom] was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysprasus; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth [on the top] amethyst" (Rev. 21:2; 19-20).

Amethyst – a purple - is my birthstone! When I read how important it is in the foundation of that holy city, it made my heart leap. I took it personally! Everyone wants to feel special to the Lord, and that made me feel special because purple is my color!

Several years ago when Joel and I were planning our thirtieth wedding anniversary, he said that we should go back to our home church and re-say our vows. When he suggested that, we only had six weeks to put it all together. As we made our plans I remember praying much about that exciting occasion. We needed to do it as inexpensively as possible. And, it needed to be done quickly and go smoothly.



I had no idea what color the theme would be - it had everything to do with what was available. It was early in the year, right after graduation, when I went into a department store and happened upon a rack of lavender formals of all sizes - at a giveaway price! When I saw them I was ecstatic and felt like they were there just for me! Immediately I bought all they had and called the other store and bought all of theirs too! I had so many beautiful dresses that day I could hardly stuff them into my car. Thirteen of them! There were dresses for all of the attendants in my wedding and in my favorite color! I know that I was led of the Lord to find them. No one then or now could ever make me believe otherwise!



I've said all of that to say this: many years ago our Heavenly Father made Joel and me some awesome promises. I've waited for them to come to pass, sometimes patiently, and other times not so patiently. Many of those wonderful promises have already materialized, and I constantly thank Him for it. But there is more. And, when I look around at all this lovely purple surrounding me this spring a new hope arises in my soul. I say with bated breath: "Lord is this a sign from you? Could this be the time? Is this the season that the rest of those promises will come to pass? If not Lord, I will continue to praise you with a heart full of love and thanksgiving. And while I wait, I'll continue to enjoy this incredibly gorgeous *purple spring* that you have so graciously given us!"