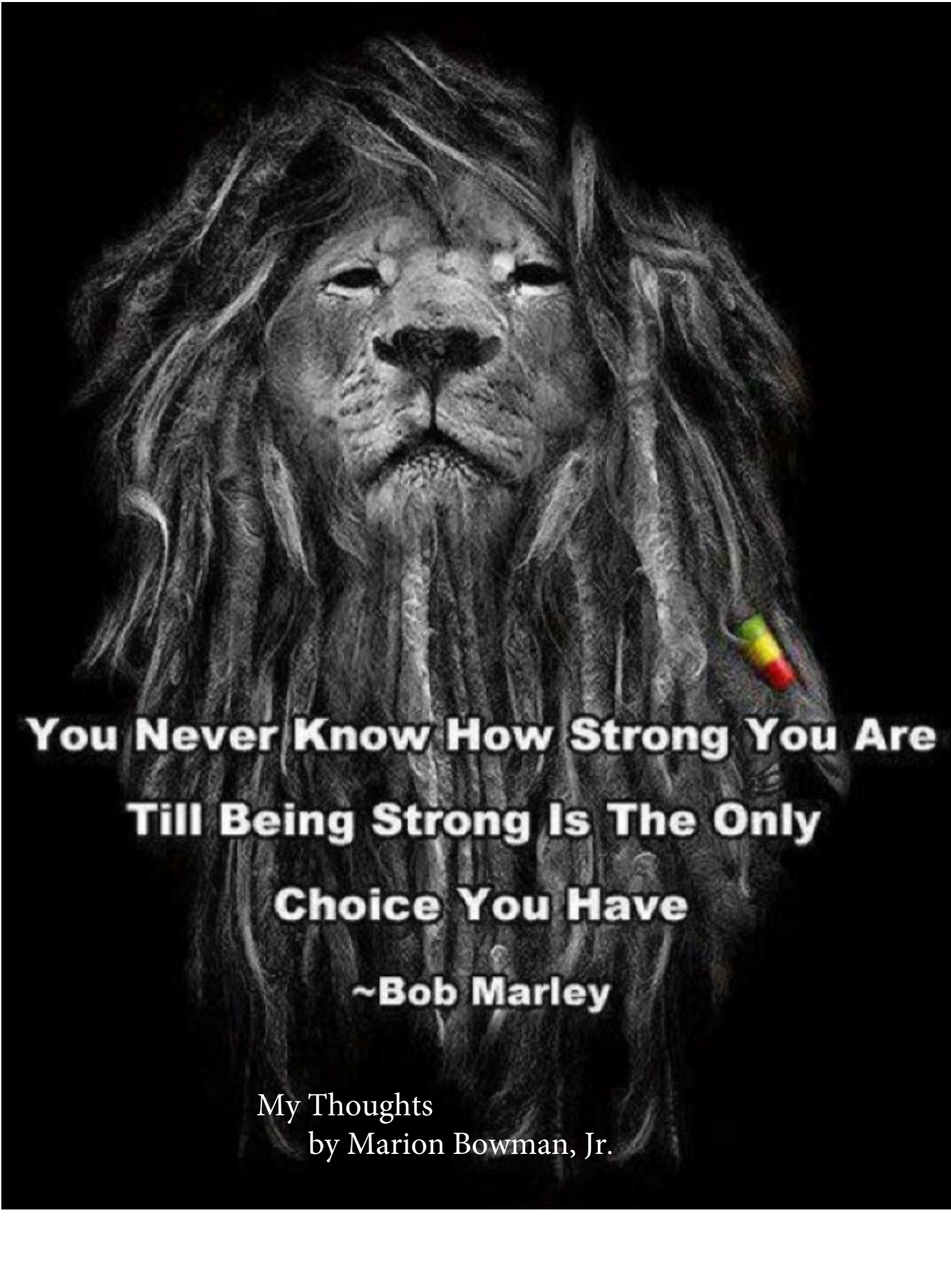


A black and white photograph of a lion's head, which has been styled with long, thick dreadlocks. The lion's face is centered in the upper half of the image. The dreadlocks hang down, filling the lower half of the frame. On the right side, a small Rastafarian flag (green, yellow, and red) is visible, partially obscured by the dreadlocks. The background is solid black.

**You Never Know How Strong You Are
Till Being Strong Is The Only
Choice You Have**

~Bob Marley

My Thoughts
by Marion Bowman, Jr.

I LOVE you!
Thank you! :)

LOVE

MARION

Introduction

Greetings, these words are my thoughts. They are not in any order. As I wrote current ones and found old ones, I put together this book. Some were used as words of encouragement, some as a way of venting, and others were about what was going on around me. I hope you get an understanding of my thoughts. All of them may not be uplifting, but they helped me through my journey.

Peace, Love, and Respect,

Marion Bowman, Jr

My Voice

Let no voice but your own speak to you from the depths.

Let no influence but your own rouse you in time of peace and in time of war!

Hear all but attend only to that which concerns you.

Author unknown

She Walked Away

Into my life she appeared
Forcing out all bad thoughts and everything I feared
She walked away with my heart in her hand
She's such a positive force in this negative land
No aid could heal the hole that she left
The moment I heard those words the walls began to close
Nothing for sure only the possibility, the thought that she'll be gone
To know that she may walk away makes me feel alone
She walked away with no reason why
As the distance between us grew so did the pain only I knew
She walked away and I can still hear her good-bye
And like a rose with no sunlight, I can wither and die
She walked away...

Marion Bowman Jr.

Today

Today allows us a fresh start, a sort of new beginning

Yesterday is gone, with all its frustrations and isn't even worth mentioning

Tomorrow isn't here, yet we fret over the unknown

Let the joys of today stand alone

No eraser can change the things of yesterday so learn to forgive and let go

Worry about tomorrow and you'll miss all the blessings today has to give

Yesterday is behind you, so stand-up dust off and continue on

Tomorrow offers you worry and stress about the unknown

Today is filled with hope and joy so let today stand alone.

Marion Bowman Jr.

Words

The words we speak can make or break a person

We're taught sticks and stones may break bones, but words can't hurt

But we know fights, even wars are sparked by un-controlled tongues

A well-timed word can stoke the flames of passion and drive

Ill-timed words can ignite flames of rage and cause a divide

We create so much around as with the words we speak

So, with your words create the world in which you seek.

We shall be filled with the fruit of our mouths and with the consequence of our words we must be satisfied (good or evil) *Proverbs 18:20 Amplified Bible*

Will we be satisfied speaking words that destroy?

Do we build each other up or tear each other down?

Death (destruction, diversion, pain) and life (joy, peace, happiness) are in the power of the tongue and they who indulge in it shall eat the fruit of it- *Proverbs 18:21 Amplified Bible*

Let's employ words that build up, unify and not destroy.

Marion Bowman Jr.

Foundations

Sometimes those we love the most, cause the most pain

Trying times comes to all relationships like storm clouds bringing rain

A word spoken in anger can crack the strongest foundations and destroy well-built bonds

Scripture tells us love never gives up and will endure

Through every circumstance (1 Corinthians 13:4-7) amp Bible

This is a tall order knowing someone you love seeks to break you at every chance

Our strength comes from prayer and digging deep to forgive which at times is a difficult task

Through Grace, Faith, Love and Patience you'll find, God will fix it, if you 'd only ask

Marion Bowman Jr.

A moment

There are moments when we seem to hit a wall

We ask ourselves how and why as things around us seem to crumble and fall

Know that there is a season for everything in our lives

Sometimes we have to refill our “soil”; replant seeds and weed out our field.

It’s not about our falls. It’s how we get back up and fight on

A moment of weakness, doubt, or defeat is just that — a moment - It’ll pass

Don’t let moments like this define you, let these words remind you

This is a moment in time, and it will pass in a moment.

Marion Bowman Jr.

God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power and of love and of calm and well-balanced mind.... 2 Timothy 1:7 amplified Bible

Grace

I lay on this bunk thinking of the good ole days
Days that didn't involve the clanging of keys, locked doors and beds of steel
Now I'm plagued with court dates and appeals, cold showers and even colder meals
No way I could get through it on my own
Not wanting to heed advise because I was "grown"
Spend lots of time wishing I wasn't bout that life
All I gained was pain built on the back of strife
Now I'm placed where I have to rely on God above
Where anger and bitterness is replaced with love
Amazed that the haze has been lifted
No longer weighed down because of Christ my burden has shifted.

Marion Bowman Jr.

What lies ahead

How many days or years do I sit and just let life happen
Listening to the constant drip of poison that engulfs me daily
I cannot allow myself to feel any emotion — good or bad - happy or sad
Of course, there are moments of laughter but when it fades, I'm left alone
Will I ever walk the world as a free man again doing what I want
Do I get to sit with my child enjoying a meal and conversation
I've missed out on all her firsts, first words, first steps, first days of school
Not being there when she cried, never waking in the night just to watch her sleeping
What joys have I, no she has been denied, robbed completely of her father's love
Oh, she knows without a doubt that I love her dearly
But where am I when she calls
Not a moment passes when I don't want to be there
But it's out of my control
You'll get relief eventually, are loaded words that I'm often told.
But we all know no road goes on forever, and every car runs out of gas
I question myself daily about my choices, and ask how long will I allow this misery to last

Marion Bowman Jr.

Overcomer

Scripture tells me “I’ll run and not grow weary, walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:31) to fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12)

I struggle to climb this hell of life as the trail grows steeper

The more steps I take, the softer the dirt, my feet sink deeper

Can’t imagine why I’d want to keep going forward

Even worse I can’t imagine turning back

See we reach back to grab strength from those behind us

Looking at their tough times as inspiration as they remind us

That we’ve been given two hands for a reason

One to give with, the other to receive

The roles that will be reversed in due season

Extending a hand up allows you to one day pull up another

So as the hill grows steeper, and my feet sink deeper

I’ll press on

Knowing the summit, I seek is only a little further.

Marion Bowman Jr.

Policing

Not trying to mouth gag you, that's just some nauseous shit
This is some wake up people, cautious shit, we can work your factories
Flip your burgers, clean your houses
Old world slavery called for backs to be whipped causing mass lacerations'
Present day slavery calls for prisons to be filled - call it mass incarceration
Leaving brothers with no jobs only leads to prison, parole, and probation
The darker the skin, you see, the deeper the taint is perceived
Yet pedophiles, turned priest, are left to prey on the youth who believe
Why do I have to instruct my child - not to wear boots, or shorts, with a hood
When it's you patrolling my community, prowling, stalking our youth up to no good.

Marion Bowman Jr.

The Problem: Faults

I can see yours, but refuse to look at my own
Keeping track of the pain, because I've been wronged
Not worrying about the bridges I've burned 'til I'm standing alone
Pointing out your faults made it easier to ignore mine
Funny how when things are going right, together we shine
The word teaches us - all fall short, and no one is perfect - if that's your thought
It goes on to teach us there's an answer that'll cover any fault

The Answer: Love

Love is a thrice braided cord, together we're stronger than our faults
Love affords us the gift of forgiveness and the opportunity to heal
It covers a multitude of sins, which is easy to do with those we love
We'll hold our own faults against ourselves, even though we've been forgiven
Not realizing, doing so, only leads to resentment and bitterness
He who created us did so out of love and with that same love he forgets our past
Keeping that in mind, I'll forgive you, you'll forgive me, and we'll not let love slip our grasp

Marion Bowman Jr.

Support

AAAAHHH !!! AAAHHHH!!! AAAHHHHH!!!

I hear the words but all that comes out are screams.

My thoughts become jumbled, a man without dreams

Every waking moment I must fight off my fears

Struggling to keep holding on as I hold back my tears

So much pain and misery has come over the years

Can't seem to see the light in this dark tunnel

But if I can make it through the gloom, I know its there

I can almost hear it as it rotates calling me near

The light that I seek protects me spiritually

A love that guides me unconditionally

The waves of bad thoughts toss me to and fro,

But through the light of faith and love I'm not alone anymore

My God, My Light, and His Spirit has guided me safely thus far

Thank you, family, friends, and supporters, for being who you are

A card, a letter, a picture and a well-timed word

Above the yells, voices, or roaring screams that encouragement was heard

That light, My God, My Faith gives me more than I deserve

Marion Bowman Jr.

Not Tomorrow- Today

If tomorrow never comes but life ended today

Words or deeds of the past would be like dust in the wind - blown away

You hold on to anger not wanting to speak or even look at me

Maybe tomorrow It'll be different we'll wait and see

If tomorrow never comes but life ends today

Tomorrow is here but one of us is not

The problems we had yesterday seem so far away

Why was I even angry with you? Somehow, I forgot

We put off for tomorrow not thinking of today

We have no rewind, nowhere to begin, and nothing to say

If tomorrow never comes but life ended today

There's only one thing left to say

I'll love you always, but especially today

Marion Bowman Jr.

F.E.A.R (Conquer yours)

Fresh-each day is a new beginning, starting point

Expel- Expel all thoughts of disappointing others

You're an accomplished man/woman please don't allow or put expectations on yourself to satisfy others

Acceptance- accepting the outcome knowing full well you did the best you could with all your talents

No Monday morning quarterbacking!

Remind- remind yourself daily to enjoy the moment, and most of all - no regrets!!!!!!

Marion Bowman Jr.

Blackman Down

Blackman down is the cry in the streets

A cop claims - I feared for my life while working the beat

Stop resisting, officer needs assistance

Shots ring out in the distance

Black man down is the cry in the streets

Another of our youth lying beneath a sheet

Put on a badge, and gun them down

No indictment as long as they are black or brown

Get on the stand and tell a lie

Black man dead, he can't testify

Shoot up a school or theatre, turn yourself in

Sell a loose cigarette, and die on the scene

It's illegal to wear a hoodie, walk, or stand in the street

But legal to kill a brother by claiming I was just working the beat

Black man down, his life source stains the sheets

Black man down, how can you shout for peace?

Black man down is the cry in the streets.

Marion Bowman Jr.

Gavel

Bang, Bang, Bang! (A Gavel Bangs)

Order In the Court

Court's Now in Session

Brother cuffed and shackled hoping for a blessing

His mind races as he scans the faces before him

None of these people look like me,

How can they relate is there fairness or justice for me?

He showed none, so he gets none

So fuck you! I won't plead for mercy,

Bang your gavel and sentence me,

Your court's a joke, a sham as far as I can tell,

I was deemed guilty in the moment I was placed in that cell,

I'm the wrong complexion,

I get no protection.

You stop, pop, and drop us and they don't detain you.

I'm good for bouncing and catching balls,

Dancing to entertain you.

In your eyes I'm never the kind, can't carry the scepter.

To you I'm the amusement, simply your court jester.

So let your gavel bang!

Marion Bowman, Jr.

My Anchor

She's a woman who wears many hats, all of which she wears well
A daughter, a sister, a wife and mother, a friend and hard worker
She wears these hats proudly with grace, compassion and strength
A woman of faith, elegance, and beauty both inside and out.
She's not afraid to speak her mind yet carries herself with class and a pinch of sass.
While I could go on forever listing her attributes, I'll stop for now.
When my spirit is low, I draw on the confidence she exudes.
She's taught me to love again, to keep the faith through hard times,
A calming force in my life, I'm held down by the words she speaks and her laughter.
Wise beyond her years, I've realized she wears a hat
Just for Me

She's my Anchor

When I'm tossed back and forth on the waves of chaos and confusion
She's there to ensure I never drift beyond the point of reason to breaking,
So, for the reasons listed above an amazing person
She'll always be.
But she's an anchor for me.

I drew comfort and strength from her more than she may know
And on cloudy days she reminds me there are blue skies ahead
God is my all, prayer is my outlet, faith is where my hopes lie,
But you,
You are and always will be my anchor.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Never Again

Never again, will I trust or love the same, thanks to you.
You took my heart, ripped it apart, something I never thought you'd do.
The faith and love I had for you ran so very deep,
Your games and lies had me wishing I was asleep.
Better to be dreaming than to let this reality seep in,
Never again will I trust or love the same, thanks to you.
Your smiling eyes and sly grin foreshadowed your betrayal in the end,
I'm cutting the ties that bound us together,
You're out of my life - gone forever.
I hated you for what you did, you were more than my lover, you were my friend.
Thanks to you, I'll never view love the same,
That in itself is a tragedy that you'd treat real love,
As a game.
That you could be so treacherous I never knew,
Never again will I trust or love the same, thanks to you.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

One in a Million: A Vow To The One I Love

A one in a million love is a term often used,
Yet most of the time it's a love built on lust.
I want a love built on compassion and trust,
A love that will endure at all times, never to be abused.
In this love, my Queen, you'll be cherished and never taken for granted.
I promise to fall in love with you more each day,
And each day, to remind you how you've blessed me and made me better in every way.
To profess my love each morning and each night I'll do the same.
I vow to always make you smile and if you cry, I'll dry your tears,
And through our good and bad days, our ups and down, I vow to love you forever and a day,
You are my one in a million love.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Why

I was asked why I don't write about love,
Now I sit wondering if I ever felt real love.
The kind of love that makes my heart race at the sight of her.
When I'm away grinding, she fills my mind and my day is a blur.
Maybe one day I'll fill a page talking about this type of love.
I'd look her in her eyes, and she'd know how I feel,
We'd speak without words as one mind and soul.
Could God have someone out there like that for me?
Faithful, faith filled, loyal, genuine, and full of beauty.
Can I write one day about love gained instead of love lost?
This is why I don't write about love.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Lighthouse

The wave of life has tossed me all around.
Storms dogged my every voyage; no peace could be found.
On a ship lost at sea, I longed for solid ground.
A wind then fills my sails, pushing me forward when I fail.
It reminds me no tempest is too strong that God can't get me out,
A light in the distance that guides me safely to shore.
The light isn't that bright, but its assurance left no doubt.
You can make it through, God answered my call.
As I get closer, I see the faded tower, rusty rails,
Battered as it may be the lighthouse remains a calming beacon.
My lost hope has been found even with shaken faith; God's love abounds.
God lights the paths of life's storms though I am knocked down and rolled,
He rights my vessel; he is my lighthouse.

Marion Bowman, Jr. & Shane Goranson

Thank You

One year ago, I called feeling the pressures of my situation,
Those I sought to speak with were unavailable at the time.
But through you, God was able to let his light of love shine.
I thank you for stepping in and stepping up to fill that void.
I had my doubts about how long this would last,
Nothing against you personally, I was just going off my past.
The scriptures and prayers we've shared put me in a better place.
Don't know how or why God blessed me with you, but I'm forever grateful.
I now see plainly that he rewards his faithful.
Thank you so very much for the love and kindness you've shown,
Through your encouragement and support, I see how much I've grown.
At times when I'm feeling low, I reflect on our conversations to gain an edge, get some peace, and maintain control.
Thank you for putting my fears/doubts to rest, for being a constant for me,
And mostly for lighting the candle of hope in my heart again.
For this you'll always have a very special place in my heart.
Thank you for being there.
Thank you for being you.
I look forward to what this next year brings.
Thank you for being my friend.
Forever & A Day, Truly,

Marion Bowman, Jr.

May the Lord, our God, bless your life beyond measure for all the ways you've blessed mine.

Matthew 25:35-36

P.U.S.H

Hope is a candle that burns eternal, so you push.

What do you do when nothing you do works?

How can you find relief from pain that's inside?

You pray, but prayers go unanswered.

You call, but no one picks up.

You write, but no one responds.

You read, but the words are jumbled.

You hit, but it's a concrete wall, so who feels it, is you.

At every turn in every way, you're surrounded by what doesn't work.

Sleepless nights, better days are the only constants in life.

It's dark in these cells, so your thoughts become dark.

You imagine things that don't exist until you spiral out of control.

Who'd want to live out this cycle for untold years?

Push on, never give up, never give in.

Pray Until Something Happens.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Hope Burns Eternal

Be Still

There is no way to foresee the Devil looking around the corner.

Satan shows his ugly head at the most inopportune time in our lives.

Like a storm he blows in causing turmoil and destruction.

In these times of trial and pain we question ourselves.

What could we have done differently?

How could I miss the signs?

Why is this happening to me?

What am I to do now?

When all these questions go unanswered, we question God,

We ask how and why God let this thing happen.

All the while its storming, rain is pouring, and the wind is fierce.

Stop for a moment and see that God has provided you, his peace.

Isaiah 25:4- God is a refuge from the storm.

Isaiah 40:31- Your strength will be renewed; you shall mount upon wings like eagles... to soar high above the raging storm.

Mark 4:39- Peace, be still! This is a direct command to the raging winds and sea in your life!

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Construction

Brick by brick, I built my wall.

It's easier to go it alone, less painful that way.

I, and I alone, get to control the material within my wall.

What makes it through, who or what to love,

Year after year went by, loved ones were born, and loved ones died.

All I could do or would do, was hold my breath.

I've given it my all, I'm empty, I have nothing left.

I add another brick before the cement dries,

Better to build my wall than to let tears fill my eyes.

Construction of my wall made me feel safe,

Then you come along with your tools chipping away at my safety,

Making me vulnerable again, exposing my weaknesses,

Only to one day leave me once again feeling lonely.

And surrounded in darkness.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Bad Hand

I play the cards I'm dealt, no folding, all in with a set of duces
Looking around this hell hole trying to figure it out, tired of making excuses.
Your head Bad, mind gone, a nutcase, space cadet, your head empty,
Green-eyed and a coward filled with jealousy - Mr. Envy.
Telling lies to make you a deceiver like basket makers and spiders, you're a master weaver.
Got everyone convinced you're a Bad man, yet got cats doing bids cause you took the stand,
I was once bitten, now I'm twice as shy. You was once smiling, now you 'bout to cry.
You was able to convince I was that Bad man.
But we both know it was you who dealt me this Bad hand.
You bragged about doing it then lied when you took the stand.
Even the State knew before you raised your right Hand.
Quietly, I sat before an angry baker's dozen.
Inadequate attorneys, a crooked prosecutor and my lying cousin,
In a cell I sit, still playing out this Bad hand.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

The Cross

At the cross I try dropping off the burdens of the day.

There are so many things to get off my chest,

I cannot count the ways I've slipped and fell.

Pain courses through my veins, just like the blood that keeps me alive.

My heart races as I pour out my soul, at the foot of the cross.

Will I walk away feeling better?

Will I get back on track?

My focus has shifted, what I thought was, truly isn't.

Only a figment of my imagination.

Kneeling at the foot of the cross, I can't find what's usually there.

No peace, no joy or relief.

The prayer is over, I stand to leave still feeling the same as when I knelt,

Broken, battered, and afraid.

As I go to walk away, I realized I am shackled to the cross.

Kicking and pulling, struggling to break free.

The more I resist the tighter the shackle becomes,

I fall to my knees, breathless, and tired of this fight.

And as the tears begin to flow, I find peace.

It wasn't me that was shackled to the cross, it was he who was nailed to the cross that was shackled to
me.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Jingling Keys

I hear the slamming of doors and the jingle of keys,
My heart races as the c/o walks the rock,
When they pass the cell, I'm in, I release the breath I'm holding.
With each hour that passes from eight to four, I watch the clock.
Today it wasn't me, my hope rests in I'll be free.
"Bowman!" the C O yells, "get ready we're pulling you".
My heart beats fast, my mind is spinning- "why me?" "Why now?"
As they reach the door, "you have an attorney visit", they say.
I know they say the confusion in my eyes and kept my panic at bay.
Days later, "Bowman!" shouts the C O "call your lawyer" he yells.
The rock quiets, everyone knows this could be good or bad.
The call isn't a good one "you've been denied". I hang up and encourage myself.
It'll be okay one day as I again focus on slamming doors and jingling keys.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

The Pursuit

The pursuit of happiness differs from person to person,
Yours may be staying away from pitfalls, mine, the struggle to be free.

It's crazy how someone else's pitfall led to my struggle.

Looking into the mirror of my life, I can only blame me.

What advice should I have heeded to?

How many things I did that I didn't need to do.

I knew this game was survival of the fittest.

But cousin, what did I do to get on your hit list?

The pursuit of happiness will never end.

We chase after things with no value pursuing it to no gain.

Happiness is fleeting in the pursuit of things labelled upon,

Like a dog chasing its tail and gaining no ground,

We pursue that which happiness can't be found.

I have decided to end pointless and valueless pursuits this day,

I found not only happiness but joy and peace as I knelt to pray.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

He Visits Me

Alone and afraid with the walls closing in...he visits me.

As the birds sing their songs to God in Heaven... he visits me.

In reading and studying his word, I feel his presence and peace...

He visits me.

Through kind words filled with encouragement and prayers... he visits me.

In deeds and letters that come unexpectedly but always on time...he visits me.

And through your friendship, both near and far...he visits me.

Thank you, Father, for visiting me.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Matthew 25:36- I was in prison, and you visited me.

Dying Black Man

“They’re burning the city!” “They’re burning the city!”

This is the outcry that receives the most pity.

“I can’t breathe!” “I can’t breathe” fell on deaf ears.

Most often it’s said “this isn’t the way” verbiage used for years.

What words don’t work, forums are deemed useless.

We talk until our mouths turn dry, click on the news,

Another just died.

Unarmed, white collar crimes, non-violent calls don’t change it.

No one knows who’s next, traffic stop, loose cigarette or phone in hand.

“I can’t breathe” “I can’t breathe” “They’re gonna kill me,

Last words of a dying black man.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

5-31-20

You

When I close my eyes, I see visions of you.
I see you smilin' and wonder the reason for that smile.
I hear your laughter and long to be a part of your happiness.
When I stress and fret about the unknown, it's you...
The thought of you which keeps me calm and going strong,
With closed eyes I see paradise...
A bright shining sun,
Blue skies,
Crystal clear water,
White sandy beaches,
And you.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Black Beauty

Black beauty skin is dark with eyes so bright,

Heart and soul filled with love and your mind is right.

Black beauty, the source of our life, a mother, a daughter, a wife.

You take on the task of standing in our corner worrying by day, praying by night.

Black beauty, strong, wise, and humble, you defy all negative stereotypes.

She's (unknown) and firm when she needs to be, but she's always a friend to me.

Beautiful both inside and out, loyal and supporting she is with no doubt.

Black beauty, the source of our life. A mother, a daughter, a wife.

For beautiful black women,

I love you, Black beauty.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

The Joy You Brought

At a time in my life when things aren't going well,

You brought me a reminder.

“God will never leave you nor forsake you”.

As the holiday approached and loneliness began to set in,

You brought me “my name is Quanesha, a special new cousin”.

When I felt that no one cared and I'd be forgotten,

You brought me a message from God's love & yours.

“His love never gives up on us” and “Love always”.

Though I feel weak and helpless in my current situation, you brought me God's strength.

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever

(Psalm 73:26)

And lastly when happiness escapes me,

You brought me joy.

“I will be here to listen and write you”.

This is the joy you brought.

Love,

Marion Bowman, Jr.

I was in prison, and you visited me. -Matthew 25:36

Your Eyes

Eyes are the window to the soul,

Yours are big, beautiful and bold.

They shine with a flow that rivals the brightness of the sun.

Getting lost in them is like falling into an abyss and staying there.

Oh, that they were the first thing I see upon rising,

That your eyes were the last thing I see before I die.

(Your) Eyes.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

They (You) Don't See Me

As I walk the street, they (you) lock their (your) doors.

They (you) clutch their (your) purses & their (your) heartbeat rises.

They (you) don't see me.

An unmerited fear looms as they (you) stare at me,

Yet they (you) don't see me.

They (you've) been wronged by those who look like them (you), yet they (you) fear me.

They (you) don't see me because of what they (you) were taught.

A prejudice that clouds every aspect of their (your) life and mine.

They (you) don't seem me as they (you) sit in judgement.

Those who fight beside me, don't see me.

They (you) don't look like me, how can they (you) understand me?

They (you) don't try to get to know me so they (you) cast me away.

If given the chance, we may relate.

But they (you) don't see me.

Not because of me, not because of an act, not because they're (you're) blind. But because of
my skin tone.

They (you) don't see me.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

No Ordinary Rose

If a rose was just an ordinary flower, no one would notice it, admire it, care for it, nurture it, prune it.

As it grows, the rose goes through hardships.

It struggles to survive the harshness of its environment,

It takes a beating from the wind.

It's trampled on by those who come near, yet it fights on.

This is no ordinary rose.

With dry soil, without leaves and fading hope, it fights on.

Someone sees something and knows.

This is no ordinary rose.

It's taken cared for, pruned, and nurtured.

Place in the right soil, it grows.

And when it blooms and blossoms, its beauty is admired.

The one who found it is happy to see and know,

That this flower is...

No ordinary rose.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Where Were You?

Where were you when Jit needed a role model?

Need someone to guide him, shape his mind?

Where were you when Jit was walking and talking thuggish?

Could you have changed his walk, corrected his talk?

Where were you when Jit picked up his gun? Were you there laughing, clowning, thinking
it's fun?

Where were you when Jit ran off into the night? Not knowing his end was in sight.

Where were you when Jit was chased down, stalked and hunted like prey?

Where were you when that shot rang out?

When that bullet struck, tearing through his young body.

Where were you as his blood seeped into the ground?

Were you like me sitting in a cell?

Were you looking in a mirror realizing that again, you and I (we) failed?

We couldn't be found.

Where were you?

Marion Bowman, Jr.

06-02-2023

Fading

As the years continue to pass by, I can feel it fading.

How can one have faith, yet have this feeling?

Mustard seed faith is what scripture calls it.

I can feel it fading.

With each sunrise and each sunset, it diminishes, fading.

Like the light on a lighthouse or headlights in a rearview, it's fading.

Do I continue to chase the sun, staying mentally a half step ahead of despair?

Engulf me as my hope keeps...

Fading.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

While I Breathe

Grandma would say “as long as you got air in your body, you got hope”.

While I breathe, I hope.

Does this mean my breath should cease as I lose my hope?

Time seems to both speed up and stop.

While I breathe, I hope.

Doors continue to close, slamming with a resounding bang.

While I breathe, I hope.

With my hope gone, Do I cease to breathe?

Dum Spiro Spero.

Grandma didn't know Latin, but she sure knew faith.

I'm still breaking, so this I know

While I breathe, I hope.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Dixie Cup

Dixie cups are disposable.
They're not fine china to be passed on to the next generation.
Dixie cups have a single purpose, at most, a single use.
Rarely kept for more than an hour,
They're discarded, tossed aside.
Left on the tables, littering the ground.
Once its purpose usage is fulfilled, it's worthless, nothing, trash.
It's sad, crushing as a person to feel as though you're nothing, trash.
To feel less than, to feel you're a dixie cup.
A thirst is quenched, a buzz is had,
With each sip the dixie cup's worth is diminished.
I, too, have lost my value, my usefulness.
This places me on the same scale as a...
Dixie cup.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Let's Talk About It

Let's talk about it.

Why you catz out there spraying indiscriminately,

Taking out each other and filling the penitentiary.

Helping them folk call the "herd",

Calling us animals subliminally.

Every day you wake up and put on your gangsta,

Everybody, even you know, you ain't like that.

Hope you realize it ain't in, it's just on you.

Soft at heart with the stench of fear all over you.

Can't wash it off, cause it ain't on you, it's in you.

Takes more pressure to bust that gun in your hand, than it takes to tell on your man.

Oops, there goes that smell again.

Fear.

But it ain't on you, it's all in you.

Fear.

Don't get mad at me cause I spoke on it.

Seek a new way of life, come on,

Let's talk about it.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Grieve You

I never got the chance to grieve you,
From the moment I found out you were gone; I was in flight mode.
It's hard to shed a tear when you're cloaked in anger and fear,
Prayed God opened Heaven's Gates to receive you.
For what they did I wanted muthafukaz to bleed too.
You woulda forgiven them, so I guess I gotta forgive too.
Still feeling your loss and the pain that came with it.
Trying to keep my sanity, struggling to maintain, you was cheated out of yours. But I was
cheated too.
Guilty of a lot of things but one, that's harming you.
So sorry your folks didn't get a proper goodbye for who you were and the Angel you are.
I pray you're looking down on us beyond the sky.
Still holding the tears 'cause I never got the chance and still waiting to...
Grieve you.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Plotting

There are days I wish I'da seen the hate in your eyes,
All that smiling and laughing was just your disguise.
You needed a way to hide your fangs while you plotted my demise.
I'd rather you let buddy get me than you do it, telling your lies.
Bruh, I wasn't doing nothing you couldn't do.
But we all knew you was doing things you shouldn't do.
Just ask your mistress, I mean your sister.
Wait, she'll keep y'all's secret.
She's a part of your disguise, for years she's covered your lies.
Some days I sit and hold back tears wondering why.
Dang bruh, I wish I coulda' seen the hate in your eyes.
That smile of yours was a great disguise.
Did a good job hiding your fangs,
While you sat back plotting my demise.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Unity

The power of unity can bring down any system,

But we're too busy fighting ourselves.

We've lost the will to fight for our own,

Yet we spend hours, even days, fighting our own.

We stand solid for the fruitless, and we scatter from the fruitful.

Close our fist in unity, we shatter the wall.

Open our hand and like broken fingers, watch us crumble and fall.

We gather to destroy and raise hell in the dead of night.

But from substance we abandon, we take flight

we have no...

Unity.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Morally Bankrupt

We're fucked. We got great grandmas clutching their bags and hugging floors.

Afraid of us and ducking bullets coming through windows, walls, and doors.

Folks scared to go shopping cause youngsters are clocking.

Babies making babies and it's gangsta to jack old ladies,

And if you ain't doing it you drinking and blowing with a Cat who is,

It's all funny til' it's your grandma or his.

You laughing while he bragging to you,

What does that make you?

Morally bankrupted too!!!

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Seasons

To everything there is a season and a time,

To every purpose under the Heaven (Ecc. 3:1).

Ecclesiastes 3:2 says in part “a time to plant and a time to pluck that which is planted”.

_____ was planted here to give beauty/light to their world.

To give off this light and to share their love and wisdom.

After giving off their light, fragrance and beauty.

God saw fit to “pluck that which was planted”.

I’m sure _____ heard “well done my good and faithful servant” (Matthews 25:21 in part).

_____ season was completed.

Ecclesiastes 3:4- A time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance.

Weep for your tears will water your soul.

Laugh for your laughter will ease your pain.

Mourn for that which you have lost,

But dance, for dancing will bring you joy as you hold onto the memories and moments you
shared.

I am so sorry for your loss, yet rejoice in

knowing you have an angel watching over you.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

I Heard Them

It's not your fault, I blame me.
Didn't realize my trust was misplaced,
Only I can atone for this lapse.
No need to stay where I'm not welcomed,
That by no means changes my feelings.
Couldn't imagine those words coming from you,
Arguably you were one of my greatest blessings.
Reality has set in, I've failed, lost again.
I'm reminded once again; every good thing must come to an end.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Who Are You

Who are you to stand still when folks forsake you?

To stay strong when your oppressors try to break you.

What gives you the strength to stay in course?

When it feels as though you've been beaten like a rented horse.

Who are you to have the audacity to get off the ground?

To fight with the tenacity that knows no bounds.

To know that invisible wounds are real.

To look at your scars seen and unseen and know you are healed.

Who are you not to want an answer to the prayers you make?

To believe all things are possible, until the last breath you take.

Or is it a question of who aren't you?

Who are you?

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Tell Me

Tell me why I'm responsible to explain another mofo's why,

Why I'm the one to tell you why a mofo lie,

Tell me why y'all look to me for remorse?

When I ain't the one that set this train on its course.

Tell me why she felt safer under my mama's roof than yours?

Why when I came to y'all, y'all basically barred the windows and locked the doors.

Tell me why at fourteen she was running away,

Popping pills, drinking, doing lines of blow.

Why am I asking you why, when we all know I already know

Tell me why I get funny looks for expressing empathy.

Tell me what would that look be if I expressed apathy,

Tell me...

Marion Bowman, Jr.

My Friend

There were days in here that I thought I'd never make it
Moments where I was filled with so much doubt
No matter how I sought to encourage myself I failed
At times fear seemed to consume me
Anger boiled below the surface and tears glistened in my eyes
Nothing could comfort me I found no solace in tomorrow
The day our paths crossed I felt renewed comfort
A sort of peace in not what's said but just your presence
God has truly given me a gift in your friendship
My faith was tried my patience tested my hope faded
But in the corners of my mind it was you
Your smile, the glow in your eyes the compassion in your words
Tomorrow holds no promises
But today I take comfort in your friendship
I thank God continuously for you
Thank you for being my friend.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

My Daughter, My Princess...

My daughter, I prayed for you

God heard my call, He answered me “give me a girl, Ill give her the world

Only the best for my princess, nothing less will do

While in the womb of your mother, I just knew the moment you came into this world, I’ll
forever cherish you.

My daughter, my princess, as God’s my witness I’ll find a way to be there for someday.

I love you with all my heart

Being away tears me apart

My daughter, my princess, I love you!

My daughter, my princess I’m coming for you !

My daughter God’s my witness, you’ll forever be my princess.

I love you, my daughter, my princess.

To my daughter, Marissa T. Bowman,

Love, Daddy

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Just One Day

All I need is one day.

One day to tell you I love you

One day to spend it watching you smile, and hearing your laughter

One day looking into your eyes, holding your hand

One day with you is what I wish

To hug and kiss

One day is all I need.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Prison

What prison does to the heart
Is very slowly pull it apart
Day by day, life seeps out
Leaving you filled with emptiness and doubt
It tears up families and years go by
Minds and bodies wear down, no tears to cry
That is what prison does to the heart
So down this road you don't want to start.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

When I think of You

When I think of you

I think of birds singing

I think of rain falling

I think of a gentle breeze

When I think of you

I think of angels watching

I think of Grandma humming

I think of children laughing

When I think of you

I think of ringing bells

I think of a burning

I think of the sun shining

When I think of you I could think of a million things

But I really think of love

When I think of you.

Marion Bowman, Jr.

Last Breath or Sigh

Last breath or sigh of relief,
It was God who breathed the breath of life into Adam.
So why is taking our last breath so hard to fathom?

How many times you've held your breath,
When you've wondered what would happen if you exhaled.
Overcoming your fears, doubts, and many tears,
And you know God's pulled or pushed you through,
Only to release a sigh of relief.

Let there be no mistaking—
I've felt love with every breath I've taken.
I hope I've given a good return on that investment.

So, when I've breathed my last gasp,
The good Lord just took back what He gave me as breath.
Know that I'm in God's grasp,
And it's in His bosom I'll rest in.

Did I take a last breath or sigh of relief?
Last breath or sigh of relief.

- Marion Bowman Jr.