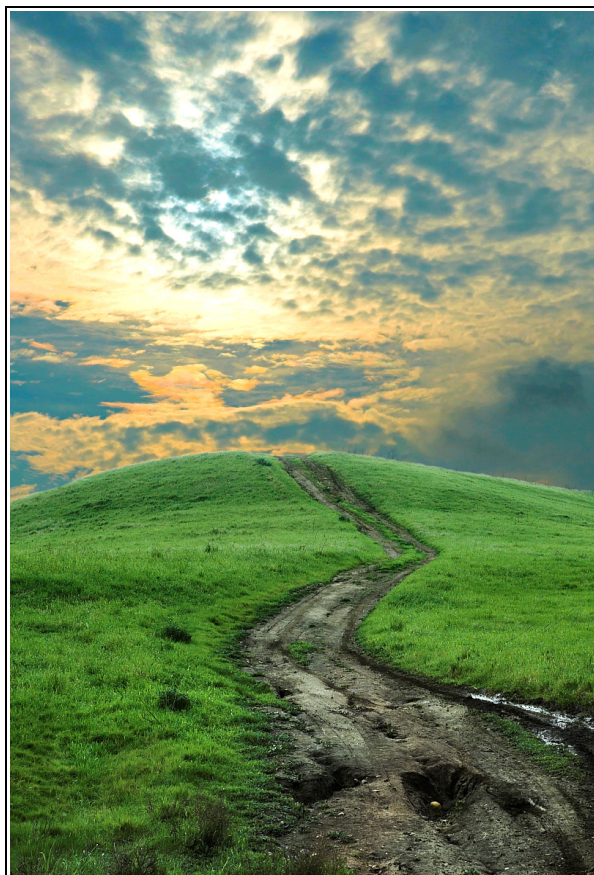


THE SEVENTH DAY



The account of the life of Saul
who is called Soul the Whistler

Luke Sawczak

Front Cover Image located at

http://lightproofbox.com/blog/wp-content/2006052501_road_to_heaven.jpg

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*A Prayer for Owen Meany by John Irving cited
where used.*

*Completed on November 27th 2007
for the class of John Terpstra,
New Testament, Grade Eleven
By Luke Sawczak*

In memory of

Saint Paul.

I

“It was God's will for your mom to die,” Owen Meany said. “My hands were the instrument that killed her. I acted out God's will.--

-- I am God's instrument.”

-John Irving

When he awoke, the song was there.

Its melody beckoned and begged him to sing it.

His father knew him to be a Whistler. His father was a Whistler himself. He knew the Tune but not the Lyrics. And according to the Tune, on the eighth beat he circumcised his son.

Many years ago the Fourth Kingdom of Iron had had a need for houses for its IronClad. These houses needed to be of a magical quality – that they could be packed up and moved at will. The father of the one who was to be a Whistler knew how to make these houses.

“You and your children will be entered into the Fourth Kingdom,” said the head of the IronClad. And so the baby boy was a Kingdomite and a Whistler.

When he awoke, the song was there. And his father lived in the City of Trade, and so he was born into it. His father named him Saul – which means the Whistler.

In play a little child came to the Whistler when he was young. He asked him “What will you do?” The Whistler said, “What else can I do? I will Whistle the Tune.” For they had learnt – the Lyricist did not suffer his Tune to alteration.

The Whistler's mouth was well-formed, and his mind captured the Tune even as it flowed before him.

“I will go to the Great City of the Old Music and will learn it by heart,” said the Whistler to his father. His deepest wish was to please the Lyricist and to Whistle the Tune properly.

So the Whistler, Saul, went to the Great City of the Old Music and in the room wherein sound echoed forever, he met the Least Breathy Whistler. There was no “Most Perfect Whistler”, for that was yet impossible; and the Least Breathy Whistler was named Gamaliel.

Under Gamaliel the Whistler's tongue became adept. The beats flew by, turning into bars, which only after passing can one recognize as movements. And he began to memorize the Tune by heart.

One day the Least Breathy Whistler said to him, “My child,” (for surely he was the child of many fathers) “I have heard of an impurity – a piece of the Tune that is being Whistled wrong. Yet they whose lips proclaim it say it is the Rightful Tune. It has not the Lyricist's pen-stroke I recognize.”

Who recognized the Lyricist's pen-stroke better than the Least Breathy Whistler?

Saul the Whistler said, “I will out-whistle them in the streets and when that fails I will *tell them to stuff a sock in it!*”

The Least Breathy Whistler's ancient breath released through his cracked lips as he nodded.

Saul's flute was the Lyricist's instrument.

II

I read in a newspaper that a man was being chased by a gang of thugs and they caught up to him and beat him to the point of death. However, he heard a voice which said, "Feign death; I have other purposes for your life yet."

He did, and the thugs left him for dead. He then began preaching what had happened to him. I used to wonder if he ever ministered to the gang of thugs.

The Scourging of those who whistled the Counter-melody began well but Saul soon realized that the Counter-melody was infectious. How fitting! he thought, that it was such a simple Tune, so lacking complications, so easy for even a simpleton to understand; that was why it was so catchy – how fitting that a Tune like that should be the one to supplant the Rightful Tune.

At the end of the Tune were a few bars missing. These bars were the grand finale, the end to the Tune. Nobody knew what they were. But the Counter-melodians claimed that their few simple bars were its denouement – oh, what an insult! For so great a Tune to end peacefully and simply, and not in lordly triumph? It was ludicrous –

Saul's sword struck swiftly. He removed the tongues of the Counter-melodians, and when they continued to *hum* the Tune he imprisoned them. Sometimes reports would come back of the guards walking out of the cells humming the Counter-melody absentmindedly.

“Do not let them live past the seventh day,” instructed the Whistler. He Whistled along on the seventh day and those Counter-melodians whom he found, he destroyed.

There was a man one day named Martyr. Saul heard of his name and trembled – for it was like an opened wound to hear again each punctuated part played by evil strike against the good.

It was hard for him to kick against the bricks. He began to hate these liars and their tricks.

Martyr was appointed a chief Counter-melodian by their unruly gang. Of false Singer and his worthless deeds that Martyr sang. And Saul despised him. With the Less Breathy Whistlers he convened; Martyr must be stopped, it seemed.

Some of the ones who had infiltrated the Counter-melodians were instructed to bring false witness against Martyr. They were told to lie (and with a sigh Saul remembered the law, that no man bring false witness against his friend).

And lie they did. When Martyr through the marketplace did walk the liars did begin to talk amongst themselves. "Look," they said. "The Composer's pen has been pushed aside by this man. He does nothing but spread lies." Ha!

Saul stood and smiled smugly as he watched the ugly play unfold. To martyr the Martyr was gold.

Soon a crowd gathered, enraged by the things said of this man; they carried rocks in hand.

Martyr gave his testimony. Saul'd heard it all. Soon the blows began to fall, his head made sound (and sad) collision with the throws.

"O my Composer!" spoke Martyr as he fell.
"Behold I now the gates of heaven and of hell!
And Singer stands by *the golden gate of Song!*"
Saul could not stand it any longer. He had looked on but now he grabbed a stone and flung it forth. He did not look to see it strike.

When all had gone, Saul saw humanity and wept.

Saul did not know what to do about this new tragedy. The Lyricist's Tune was beautiful – if only the Singer of the Lyrics to the Tune were here, they might understand its themes and movements! The Singer's crushing victory...

Meanwhile he went back to the Least Breathy Whistler. He said, "True to form the Dissidents and their Counter-melody have spread their vile discordance to the land beside the sea."

"Whistler," said he, "take this decree – and go. With this document all will know I sent you. The Tune that flows from your lips will sparkle. Show them the Rightful Tune, and go ahead of them – go father north. Cut them off. I send you forth."

There was a place called the City of the Changing Hands, or just Changing Hands, far in the north, under the rule of the Fourth Kingdom of Iron (for now). Throughought its past it had seen many different rulers and would see many yet. Saul decided that he would go there to stifle the Counter-melody.

On the way to Changing Hands, Saul, as usual, allowed the Tune to meander through his head. The bars flowed through his mind like water: living water, the notes coursed through his thoughts. He pondered its nuances, its movements; its rhythm was his deliverance.

But something strange happened. He drew near to where the Tune cut off. But in his head, it continued – to a melody he knew well. On the seventh day he recognized it. It was the Counter-melody.

Saul the Whistler fell to his knees – something he had not done in a while.

“What does it mean?” he asked of the melody.

Something he had never known before answered him. It was a voice. It sang the Counter-melody yet with lyrics.

“Peace on earth
Goodwill to men,” it sang.

No lyrics had ever been put to song.
The Whistler only knew that it was wrong.
In desire to see he opened his eyes to find
To discover that he was completely blind.

“Who are you?” he asked of the melody.

“I am the Lyricist,” spoke the voice. “I am the Singer. I wrote the beginning, and I wrote the end. The final bars of the Tune are no less Mine than is the opening – that mysterious opening you have on your lips now, my Whistler.”

In that moment Saul reflected upon the opening. Beginning in a minor key it moved into a major C. Chords of CEG, DGBD, unto infinity. And turning He wondered at the mystery of the Counter-melody... it seemed he knew those chords among the Tune. Indeed, he'd even known the Singer would be coming soon.

Although, there was a difference... the song was not just finished: it was fulfilled. Lyrics put to Melody. So “What would you have with me?”

III

One letter in Saul's name was changed to make Paul. It didn't really matter which one. In an alternate happening he might have become Soul, or Salt.

The Whistler ceased to see. The Tune slept. He had been told to see Baptizer, an old man in the City of Changing Hands. This man would play the ending of the Tune for him and bathe his eyes. Meanwhile Baptizer saw a vision of the Whistler coming to him and he prepared a cot and prayer.

The Whistler met the Baptizer and stayed in his home for a time, mulling on the Tune and its sweet mystery.

Baptizer baptized him and his sight was restored.

“Your name is not Saul anymore,” spoke Baptizer. “Rather it is Soul.

And neither are you a Whistler – for now everybody is a Whistler and it is no special ordinance.

When a Singer reveals the Lyrics to a Tune, all who hear it know the Lyrics and may sing them (though not as well as he) – you are a Singer now.”

Soul wanted nothing more now than to discover the Ending in its thoroughness. But many yet would not believe. Far south – the opposite of the way he had been going – was a desert called Ponderance. In Ponderance upon Perdition Rock, the first Singer had been tempted by evil.

Now to Ponderance would Soul go, to consider rightfully the Tune; for only if properly grounded in the opening could the ending seem right to those who knew the opening by heart.

In the desert Ponderance Soul went through the bars of the Tune in his head. And here he came to a fantastic discovery.

CEG – DGBD – ACE – CEG – whispered chords at the opening of the Tune. And soon Soul recognized what he had been looking for. The finale's closing was not spectacular in power. Progressed the chords CEG – DGBD – ACE – CGC!

The Theme of the Tune was consistent in the Old and in the New – those wondrous movements in the opening were in the ending too. There was but one profession left to man: in the image of the Lyricist, enactment of His plan –

Lyrics to Music! The Tune stretched on and on, there was enough to gather all the Words that man brought forth. The Lyricist brought no restriction, these Lyrics were man's children. Sometimes it may be wrong, unfitting, as was the way of man, but oftentimes the stanzas sing with beauty, inspired by the Lyricist himself.

In the old days one could but whistle the Tune – and it did not change. But now the power was given man to write it as he would. And each had heard the Tune afore and knew that it was good.

This was the message now of Soul the Singer. To the City of the Changing Hands he would return, to meet the Singers there and in ultimate to learn. He must devour all he could of this Eternal Life, so he might know its hidden truths that others might know too the joy he knew.

In the City of the Changing Hands having been in ponderance in Ponderance Soul walked into the greatest Temple to the Tune and began to sing in deep bass voice the oldest movements of the Song. (His Whistling was put away.) He sung it perfectly. The people were afraid, for his greater fervour was in persecution, but they listened.

Then Soul began to sing the birth of Singer. At first the people did not recognize it but soon they knew that it was from the New. It sounded like an alteration of the Old – so they thought that he was just off-Tune but he was not. They realized this: the people realized this indeed:

They were alike! The New was but the Old – nay, it was what the Tune foretold! Then every Whistler was a Singer and they whispered to themselves, -- Isn't this the man who used to persecute the Name? It is a trap!- If we listen now we'll only die the same.

This was brought before Soul by Baptizer who knew his way. When Soul heard the accusations he did not know what to say. Soul said “I will tell my story from the start unto the end; perhaps they will understand I worship their great Friend. Surely they will know me then.”

So he told them – but their anger was inflamed. They thought he was a liar who abused the holy Name. Besides which the Least Breathy Whistler heard of the events. His agents in the Changing Hands to kill Soul he then sent. But Baptizer heard of this - “Forgive me, Soul, but may I ask it: I hope you wouldn't mind escaping in a basket?”

IV

“No prophet is ever accepted in his own hometown.” Some prophets, like Ras Tafari Makonnen, refuse to let themselves be welcomed.

Others beg acceptance but are turned away and forced to flee – almost always to the place they went when they left home the first time many years back.

Waiting at the gaping gates of Changing Hands the ones who hated Soul did not see his escape. Those who loved him and his teaching lowered him over the walls in a basket and he fled away on foot to the Great City of the Old Music.

In that City the Counter-melody (rightfully the Rightful Tune) had spread and many there who would be dead for sake of Saul (now Soul) were yet afraid of him. He said to them, “Nay, do not fear, for I have seen the ending of the Tune and it is as you say.” But they did not believe him.

A man called the Son of Encouragement had heard of Soul’s transfiguration, thus he spake: “Come, let us this fellow take into our company, for I know the name of this man and he is to be trusted.” The others believed the Son of Encouragement and welcomed Soul. And he began to share his revelation.

“The Lyricist,” he spoke, his words forming verbal shapes of logic and beauty yet unknown to man, “has finished the Tune at last ... ” Many in the City of the Old Music believed and were saved. Soul was heartened.

There was another in the city, Simon the Rock. He had seen the Singer and the Singer had loved him. The Singer had appointed Simon the Rock to govern the New Musicians. Soul stayed with Simon fifteen days while he remembered his old home.

However, the Whistlers, including the Less Breathy Whistlers, - they hated Soul.

The Community sent Soul back to his home in the City of Trade in the hopes that he would be safe there. Soul was not especially glad to be sent away – he loved the City of the Old Music where he had spent his latter childhood – but he was forced to leave at the counsel of his Community.

In the streets Soul passed the Least Breathy Whistler who looked at him as though he were a traitor. He thought he knew a narrow path but Soul knew his path was straighter. He also knew the words of a Less Breathy Whistler could untwist twisted paths or make it look like so. There would not even be a chance to talk to him and so Soul had to go.

He could not be silenced. Even in the city on the border of the sea he told his tale. He told those who belonged to the Fourth Kingdom of Iron the Tune – they did not know the Old; he sang it to them from the very start unto the very end. Among them one was named Titus, and he was strong in the Melody.

As many days as Soul has spent in the house of Simon, so many years did he spend in the City of Trade. And the Song flourished: many believed in all the cities of the Fourth Kingdom of Iron.

But things were then astir in the Fourth Kingdom. The Song had been being sung only to the Whistlers – whose birthright was the Tune. But the Son of Encouragement heard of trouble in city of Antioch. He went to Soul and said, “Brother Soul! Fifteen years have passed but now the world stirs: come we’ll go to Antioch!”

V

I spoke with a certain teacher, saying, "Not enough students these days respect a crazy teacher."

He answered, "That's an odd choice of words."

I said, "Crazy?" and he said, "Respect."

In Antioch a meeting was held. In the Community which was a foundling in the city there were gathered the Son of Encouragement, Soul, Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen. These were all men of virtue and full of the Spirit.

While they sat down to prayer the Spirit spoke; it said, “The Son of Encouragement – whose name is now Courage; and Soul – you have been set apart for the work which I will appoint you to.” (The one called John Mark also joined them.)

They left by boat for Island. They arrived at the seaside town called Salamis and, whistling even as they exited the boat, began to Sing the moment they entered the temple in the town.

A man spoke to them and said, “How may I too learn the Tune and sing it as beautifully as you?”

Soul answered, “Let me whistle the first few bars for you – the rest will come--”
The man Courage said, “Courage, man!”

They travelled throughout the island until they came to its capital called Paphos. There the king of Island, who served under the Fourth Kingdom of Iron, heard of their teaching and said, “Teach it unto me!” So Soul and Courage began to tell him of the Tune and of its Lyricist.

Heaven rejoiced for the briefest second. Then a sorcerer who served the king said, “Do not listen to them!” and tried to turn the king.

Heaven held its breath.

Soul looked straight into the eye of the fellow.

“Who,” he said, with the authority of the Lyricist on his lips, “is the devil here – you, or I?”

Suddenly the sorcerer gasped and put his hands to his face. “I’m blind!” he screamed. And truthfully he was. The king saw this – and he said, “Surely you are telling the truth with authority!” And heaven released its breath and praised Soul.

Soul and Courage sailed from Island to the mainland where John Mark being of small heart decided to go back instead of pushing on. Through this Soul watched tight-lipped and nudged Courage whose idea it was to bring him.

Then they continued on to Bastion-of-Song, a city where many Whistlers lived though located in the land of the Fourth Kingdom of Iron. The Whistlers there said, “Brothers, if you have any encouragement for the people, speak it now!”

Soul stood and motioned and the air was thin. In a moment music flowed from him. He sang the Tune not from the start but at the parts he knew these Whistlers loved best. He brought forth images of musical proportions and let them figure out the rest. Then his announcement – a bewildering pronouncement – he proclaimed, that the Singer was come and the Tune was done. And the people craved his voice.

But the Whistlers who did not believe were hateful of those who received the Singer. Soul did not linger they called for his death.

VI

I visited the Madill church once.
It was so named because John
Madill had purchased the plot of
land for the building of a church.
Now, however, it was only a
cemetery.

I noted with some amusement
that the most prominent
gravestone was that of Madill
himself.

Going forth to Lustre, Soul and Courage preached the news throughout the region and it spread like wildfire. In the city Soul met a man who could not walk but who could hear and listened to them teach. Soul said “What do you require?”

The crippled man said “Let me walk!” and Soul said “Do, for there is faith in you!” And he did walk.

The people of Lustre came to Soul and Courage and they said “Behold ye the godhead! Lightning-bolt and silver-tongue we call them and here they stand – these are gods, not man!”

Soul replied “No! Ye bow not so – for these things are not true. No different are we men than you.” Still they could not suppress the high priests in their holy dress offering animals up to them.

But some Whistlers from Bastion-of-Song decided they would come along and turn the crowd to hate the two. “Kill them!” they said. “For if they do not accept divinity they are but traitors to Olympiad!”

The crowd infuriated went with unbated hate – (with this they hated) – and took they rocks in their mad hands to stone Soul (Courage hid himself) outside the city gates. It seemed Soul was in dire straits.

They left him dead or so it seemed. When they had left he raised himself and said, “That's that!”

In the city of Derby, the last stop – the furthest-out point on the peninsula of inhabitable culture – did Soul and Courage preach their hearts out. Remembering the stoning Soul said, “Many hardships must you go through to enter the Kingdom of the Lyricist.”

Then they began their return from Derby, through Lustre and the other cities back to Bastion-of-Song. They set up a church to sing the Tune to keep the people from forgetting and in the gathering were elders – those who knew the nuances of the Lyricist's plan better.

From Bastion-of-Song they left the Tune strong and sailed back by sea to Antioch. There they showed themselves to the joyous Followers there and said “You see? The Lyricist has shown in me – and Courage – his work to be done.”

And they had finished for a time.

But soon enough at the Great City of the Old Music there rang a bell the warning knell that trouble was afoot. Throwing packs on shoulders Soul and Courage and the others who were now called Singer's Brothers left their homes for trouble's sake. And nothing but the Tune, whose reverberating chords had not yet let them down, did the Singer's Brothers take.

They heard from Simon that some others who had not quite got the grandeur of the ungrand finale had been spreading word to those they'd been to. It seemed they'd seen to making sure that no one but the Blood-born could be saved.

“Well!” Blood-born Soul replied when he heard the news. “Our proselytes they use! We shall reverse this message.”

But others at the Great City of the Old Music did not agree: they failed to see inheritance of birth irrelevant to inheritance of earth. They came into sharp dispute.

Soul and Courage reflected upon the joyous hearts of the hearers of song who weren't Blood-born. The Singer's Brothers torn, they councilled to decide to fate of those outside the faith.

Four tenets found they to be good and easy to be understood. So two leaders of the Singer's Brothers were sent forth to south and east and west and north and they bore a letter from the Great City of the Old Music.

The letter came near Christmas season;
It made them think of Singer's life.
It said “I love you” in small letters
They simply had to read it twice.

With it came the Singer's Brothers
Cheer upon their weary tongues.
The faith, they said, was not exclusive
And the Singer's praise was sung.

Retiring home from their first journey the
Brothers found a place to rest. They did not yet
understand it but they'd passed their first real
test.

Soul let out his breath and said “That's that.”

VII

I used to write on my hand,
“Servitor Domini Sum.” This
phrase means “I am the servant
of the Lord.”

How naïve – I hadn't read a word
of Acts!

After a year so Soul grew restless in the Song. Soul said to Courage, “Let's go back – to see our Brothers and how they fare: to see what has transpired there.”

Courage was overjoyed. “Oh, good!” he said, “We'll take Small Heart (John Mark) with us!”

Soul balked at the idea. “Goosed!” he thought. “Well,” he started, “I wouldn't say we ought...”

Courage disagreed and soon debate ensued. Small Heart had deserted them last time. Courage was his relative and did not lose an inch of ground; no compromise was to be found. Courage and Small Heart (each others' worthy compliments) went their own way.

Soul being left alone found Companion and they left for Derby and for Lustre. A man from Lustre quickly mustered all his bravery and said “Let me come with you!” Soul looked favourably on him.–

But Soul was crafty and he took a Tool and with it altered Timothy (the man)'s appearance so that he looked like a Blood-born. This was because there were many critical Blood-born nearby and nobody *really* likes being stoned.

As Soul, Companion and Timothy travelled west to Troas, they were also preaching so as to strengthen those who did believe – they repeated the decision of the council at Great City that they could indeed be saved (so long as according to the Tenets they behaved). At Troas they were stopped by forces greater than them.

While asleep Soul's soul did keep alive the Tune. And soon enough the Lyricist spoke to him in a dream, "Go to the Former Kingdom." (The Former Kingdom was the one before the Fourth – the previous conqueror had come from there, had conquered, and had died.) So they went.

The next morning they sailed for On-the-Coast, a city wherein were a host of converts waiting to become converted. The three stayed there for several days and sang the Song in the streets. On the seventh day they went down to the riverside and found a woman washing garments there.

They gave her the message and she praised the Lyricist. She took her family to see the three who gave them all the Song to sing, that they would live. They had nothing more to give but in return the woman gave the three a place to stay.

Walking in the city On-the-Coast Soul, Timothy and Companion met a girl possessed by a demon. Her eyes gleamed and she declared all sorts of things about the three for many days. Finally Soul looked her in her brilliant eyes and said, "You, girl, I exorcise!" The demon in her left her then and never troubled her again.

Unfortunately there were those who profited by her affliction. You see, the demon often made predictions of the future which even more often tended to come true. When the girl was clean this practice she'd no longer do. So these profitters told the leaders of the town that Soul and company were insulting to the Crown of the Fourth Kingdom of Iron, stirring up the crowds.

The officers deemed these accounts to be correct and so they ordered their arrest. Soul and his Companion were thrown into the city prison. They were beaten and overnight their feet were put in chains.

In the middle of the night there was something like a holy earthquake and the shaking of the walls did split their chains. The two and all the other prisoners remained despite that they could yet escape. The man who watched over them was in despair – he would be killed for insolence.

“But wait,” Soul said, “you must not fear – we are still here!” The jailer looked them and over and when he saw that they were Singer's Brothers he then asked, “How do I be saved?”

Smiling Soul began the old flute to play, the Tune sweetly coming forth from his cracked lips. The man believed and in belief was overjoyed.

In the morning the officers returned to set Soul and Companion free. But Soul's eyes took on a glint ever so reminiscent of mischief in his former days.

“I was born,” he said, “a Kingdomite.” It was illegal for a citizen of the fated Fourth Kingdom of Iron to be castigated without warning. The officers were somewhat worried and with something of a hurried tone they said “We beg you to go free – and never speak again of what we've done...!” Soul gave them this small mercy and after visiting the woman they'd converted all three then continued on their way.

Being thus expelled from On-the-Coast the Brothers went on to Thessalonica. Therein there was a synagogue of Blood-born and Soul, considering the Blood-born knowing half the Tune already, started the story from the near-the-end. He cited themes and chords from partway through to prove to them the Singer was the true Son of Lyricist.

Many there believed including one who offered them his house. But the Blood-born who were in the area and opposed to the Tune finishingso blithely brought the criminals-to-be, those hard-hearted riotists, forth to stir up trouble.

When the magistrates beheld the commotion in the marketplace their complacence belied ulcers inside. “All over the world,” said the riotists, “these men have defied the King – they have come here now, let’s destroy them!”

When this was said the city lost its head. The Brothers fled to the city-state Berea under watch of night. Nobody saw their flight.

The Bereans were a noble sort, and listened to Soul’s teachings, considering the Tune as it had been for all their history. But when those whom they’d escaped heard of their relations in Berea they came to stir up trouble in that city too; and the Brothers’ friends said to the travelling Brothers, “You must get far away from here.”

Soul departed for Greeceheart. Companion and Timothy were to join him when they were able – for by themselves they did not incite wrath.

Greeceheart was a beautiful city, wise and wonderful. It was the capital of the Former Kingdom (of Bronze), now inhabited by the Fourth Kingdom of Iron. The people of the city were philosophers: they bore the love of wisdom in their hearts and all they did was talk of this.

In Greeceheart, Soul beheld many statues to many gods – those fake and those demons. Some even claimed parts of the Tune as their own composition. Soul was bewildered when he observed an altar with this inscription:

TO AN UNKNOWN GOD

Deeply troubled he came unto the Debatatorium and began his speech. “You people,” he began, “with your many gods – I have seen your altar to an unknown Lyricist. Let me make him known!”

He spoke his story start to end and finished with the resurrection of the Singer from his death. Some laughed at this idea and laughed at heaven (though heaven did not laugh at them) but others begged Soul, “Return tomorrow!” Some believed and they were saved.

But Soul’s mission was not in Greeceheart; and anyhow the seeds of Song had there been planted. Granted he was running out of funds, he moved on to the city called Isthmus.

He waited for the Brothers to catch up. Two years he waited – and he worked for money. Still each seventh day he preached the Singer’s song.

VIII

Snow covers only that which
does not move.

“Hullo!” said Companion. “We’re here!”
He knocked on the door. Beside him, Timothy.

“Who is it at this hour?” weary-eyed Soul
inquired, and his hair was silver at the temples.

“We are the Singers’ Brothers,” Companion
winked. “You called for some help, Brother?”

From that point on Soul took his pipe and played
each day in the synagogues and in the crowded
marketplaces, the gatherings of Blood-born and
of those whose inheritance was not blood.

One day a gathering of the Blood-born stopped
him in his way. Now Soul was tired of them; but
he listened as the opposed his teaching.

Filled with holy anger, Soul replied, “If you
cannot – *will not* – take up this cup, then I shall
find another who *will!* The warning has been
given. Your fate is now your own!”

Immediately he left their synagogue and went
next door to the house of an Ill-fated (that is,
those who are not Blood-born). He preached the
Song and the Singer, and the Ill-fated believed
and became a Brother – he and his household.

Soul took this as a sign that his decision was
unanimous with the Lyricist. To strengthen this
proposal, he dreamt (in song) of a man who told
him “Do not fear to stay here, Soul, for I have
many followers within the walls of Isthmus!”

Soul remained in Isthmus for another year still.

While they stayed there, there was yet more trouble. The governor of Isthmus, a man of the heart of the Fourth Kingdom of Iron, sat upon his marble chair and waited for the people there. Receiving their complaints he made his feints at caring; but he was never one for power-sharing.

The people there persuaded Saul to come with him. (These were the Blood-born un-re-born, those who'd hated him all the way to Isthmus.) "Proconsul Callus," they opened,

"This man called Saul – he calls him Soul – has been provoking the people of this region to worship their Composer (imagine that!) in ways that contradict *your law*," said the Blood-born.

It was early in the morn and Callus wasn't feeling up to par in pretending. He knew this day would not be ending soon. So in benefit (but not intentional) of the Tune he thus replied: "Perhaps if some man had died –

"Maybe if someone had been killed, or someone suffered, or some other crime had happened by our law," Callus said, "I would consider you.

"But as it is it is your law – words and names, useless things written upon walls!– settle it yourselves! Am I my servants' keeper?"

Hearing this the Blood-born took the ruler of their synagogue and chanting flogged him. They sat him in the court and caused his blood to flow.

Callus raised his eyebrows and said "So?"

Soul and his Companion and Timothy decided after that duration that they would return to Antioch to re-establish contact with their homes. On the way they sailed by Prince Androklos Port, a city of much bustle and many willing minds.

Soul looked over the edge of his boat and grinned. “Someday,” he thought to his Lyricist, “I’ll go there, too, and all the world will honour You.” But they sailed on for now – they knew they’d go there anyhow.

Meantime while Soul and Companion and Timothy stayed in Antioch a man went to Prince Androklos Port who was a Blood-born; and he knew the Tune very well. He even knew the main theme of the Finale that the Singer sung.

But his knowledge was incomplete and soon the closest friends of the Brothers in Isthmus visited him. “Listen to us whistle,” they began, “and watch our lips, that you might reproduce it – ;”

For you see, this was the Lyricist’s choice, that this Blood-born man prepare the way today for Soul to come in the proverbial tomorrow.

“Why is the ending of the Tune (as you so claim) so different from that which He (we omit his name) wrote so many years ago and how say you the Composers are the same?” he was attacked.

“If you cannot see the Singer’s harmony,” he replied, “you are singing in a different key.”

Thus neither were the Blood-born fully lost.

A while later, after they had rested, Soul went to Prince Androklos Port. There he asked them, “Have you learned the heart of the Song?”

The people there answered, “We have not. We have heard there was an end –” So Soul continued to enlighten them. For three months he preached the Singer’s Song to the city. It was a large city, prominent – a relic of the Former Kingdom which had remained substantial through the Overtaking by the Fourth Kingdom.

Then he was turned out by some who remained obstinate in their hatred of the Brothers and their Tune. Instead Soul set aside time each day to hold discussions of the Song and of its Lyricist, its Composer, and its Singer (the holy Trinity) in the city’s Hall of Androklos. He continued this way for two entire years and the Song spread through the entire Fourth Kingdom.

There was a man who sold sheet paper – sheet paper with printed lines he carefully wrote out. Its purpose was that the people write on it the notes they wished to hear, and then they’d keep it near and whatever they had written they’d be smitten with. (Keep in mind they often changed their tune and bought more to reflect upon.)

They were no Composers, their music was their own fulfillment of their own desire. As his music makes a lion so did theirs make wooden carvings of a lion which they bowed before – and more.

People had a tendency the moment they heard the first notes of the Tune to burn these papers.

So the man who made them soon got angry. He was quickly running out of business and he got some friends and told them what was going on. “What!” they said. “Does Soul claim the name and works of his Composer are so much better?”

Dmitry who was their leader soon began to shout, “Great are the composers of Androklos!” Soon people who heard the uproar joined in, proud for Androklos. They gathered together in a throng as one man like only madness can.

They filled the streets and soon the amphitheatre. Soul wanted to go out and calm them but friends told him “Don’t go out! Can’t you hear them shout?” And he was restrained.

A man of wisdom calmed them (most knew not even why they were there) saying “People, stop your braying – else the IronClad will silence us!”

One day some seven sons of a Blood-born who was converted went to the house of a demon-possessed man to cast out his demon. “In the name of the Singer and of Soul, we cast you out!” they declared.

The demon replied, “I know the Singer – and I have heard of Soul. But who are you!” - and they failed in their attempt. But because of this, the names of both the Singer and of Soul became known worldwide.

For if the demons know the Singer – and the demons, hearing his name, *quiver with fear* – who then can stand against the Trinity?

IX

Somehow some men seem to know when they are near their end. Others are entirely ignorant of it and go to their deaths. And the least part are those who know their own death and go to it anyway.

One day on the way home from Isthmus to the Great City of the Old Music, Soul stopped at the city Seventh. He was to speak to his friends again before he left tomorrow. Knowing he would soon be gone they listened eagerly and he did not let them down. He talked till midnight.

Of many glorious things he spoke and one man named Eruditus sat in a window ledge where the fresh air blew in (the lights were on and oil-fumes do not do well for clearing heads) and listened to Soul speak. His heart yearned to hear more of Soul's amazing words and Song sung.

But as the night drew on later and later he found his head nodding forward only to snap back up. He strained to keep awake, he pinched himself. "Law kills a man: obeying it, not necessarily," Soul was saying. Eruditus struggled to know it.

Suddenly his head nodded and his eyes closed. He leaned backwards and toppled out the window. All ran three flights to see him die.

Soul arrived last, still trailing his last thought behind him. When he saw the body he did not see a dead man but a sleeping one – thus the Singer enabled him through purest Song.

"Fear not," he said, "he only sleeps, it won't be long..." and Soul laid his hands upon the man's body and he prayed in Tune to Lyricist. Soon Eruditus made a fist and then got up. All were astonished. Soul yawned and continued on.

Next morning Soul's mind raced with Song.

The time was nearing for the Singer's Meal. It was a yearly communion of Brothers to commemorate the Singer's last night before going to his Song-finishing death (or so it had seemed at the time). The Singer's Meal was held with the gathering of Brothers in the Great City.

Soul decided to leave the area that was largely what had been the Former Kingdom of Bronze, which of his time spent there most had been spent in Prince Androklos Port.

It was in Prince Androklos Port that Soul made his final speech to the people of the Former Kingdom. Now many of them had come to love him dearly; in fact it was for that reason he had chosen to make his farewell in that city.

When they had gathered together in the Hall in which he had so often spoken with them, Soul, tears standing in his eyes, spoke thus.

"You know how I have lived when I was with you," he began. "I have served the Trinity with humility and tears. I have spoken publicly and from house to house; I have not withheld anything for your salvation. To everybody have I given this offering; you know all this.

"Now I go on to the Great City of the Old Music, because the Lyricist compels me to. I do not know what fate awaits me there, Brothers. Everywhere I have gone the Lyricist has warned me of the dangers. But there is nothing that I am not willing to sacrifice for the Singer's sake. My only desire now is to finish the Singer's race.

“My Brothers – I am innocent of the blood of men. For if I had left anyone not having heard the Word of the Singer and his Song it would be the same as murder. Tend the flock, Brothers. After I am gone there will be wolves who try to tear apart the flock – yea, even from among you. So be on your guard.

“Lastly, my brothers, I commit you to the grace of the Trinity. By my own hands I have sustained myself and helped many others – do the same. For it has been revealed to me that none of you shall ever see my face again, Brothers,” he wept.

When they heard this last, they too could not contain themselves. Throughout the Hall the Brothers cried in searing sadness for their Brother Soul. They embraced him and they kissed him in farewell.

Then the whole party of them went down to the docks where Soul’s ship waited to carry him to the Great City of the Old Music. And I – myself Luke – now reveal to you that it was at that city that Soul’s death began.

Soul first stopped at Seventh, a city on the way to the Great City of the Old Music. While he was there, a prophet came to greet him. The prophet took his belt and wrapped it around his hands.

“In the same way,” said the prophet, “will you be bound when you go to the Great City.”

Soul let out a long sigh.

“I do not fear to lose my life,” he replied.

X

When any major event happens – good or bad – everyone wants it to just go ahead and happen. Yet these events seem determined to build suspense with seemingly endless pretext.

Soul's first days in the Great City of the Old Music went well. When he arrived, he met the elders of the Brothers and they discussed events. He told them of all that he had done in the land of the Ill-fated. And they approved and in turn told him everything that had happened at home.

“See how many thousands of Blood-born have been converted,” they said to him. “Only – not all of them accept the fact that your importance is not on the first half of the Tune. At least put on a show, Soul, so that they consider you to be playing the game according to their rules.”

Soul consented to this and he paid for the initiation rite (a useless ritual) for two young men who were Blood-born. As an extra measure he participated in the rite himself.

And he was well looked upon until the seventh day. Then, as he was walking through the square in the centre of the Great City, somebody shouted, “Look! An Ill-fated who associates with those devils the Composer has rejected!”

Immediately people came running. The crime against the Composer and the Blood-born was unforgivable. From all directions the crowd formed – all of the Great City of the Old Music – and the gates were shut.

When the people were about to kill Soul once and for all, the commander of the Fourth Kingdom of Iron heard of the events and with his soldiers he entered the crowd. The people immediately parted to let him through.

The commander was a shrewd man and to stop the uproar he arrested Soul instead of his assailants. From all directions the accusations flew. The commander and his soldiers took Soul into the barracks to question him.

“Hold on,” said Soul. “Let me speak to them. I will get them to *stuff a sock in it* at last.” He spoke the language of the commander, who was astonished and at a moment’s decision let Soul speak.

Switching easily into the language of the Blood-born, Soul began by saying “Brothers!” And the crowd was silent with astonishment.

“I am not Ill-fated,” he announced. “I was born in the City of Trade – a Whistler, a Blood-born! I came to this city to study under the Least Breathy Whistler himself. And I was as zealous for the Composer’s justice as are you today.

“But while I was on my way to the City of Changing Hands, I had a vision. The Singer spoke to me, saying, ‘Why are you persecuting me?’ I said, ‘Who are you?’ and he answered he was the Singer – and the Composer – and the Lyricist. Well! I was converted!

“Then the Lyricist led me to this Great City. But after I had begun to speak and was rejected, He said, ‘Quick! Leave here, for they will not believe you. You must go, away from the Blood-born –

“ ‘And preach to the Ill-fated!’”
At that line, the crowd began to shout again.

The commander withdrew Soul into the barracks again and decided that he be beaten and also questioned in order to discover what the crowd was so angry about – for he did not understand the ways of the Blood-born.

But Soul brought forth another hidden fact of his heritage and boasted of another inheritance. “Commander, is it legal to flog a Kingdomite?”

For you recall, you all, Soul was a citizen of the Fourth Kingdom of Iron by his father’s lineage! Yes, Blood-born and Kingdomite his heritage!

The commander’s face turned white and he said “Remove him from my sight – I’ll deal with him in the morning.”

And so he did. And his decision was to exact with exact precision the nature of the uproar previous. He called together the rulers of the Blood-born, the council called the Seventy, made of half by those who believed in the spiritual world and half by those who did not; and with hatred both these factions for Soul were fraught.

Soul opened the meeting by saying, “I have done everything that the Composer has required.”

Immediately the entire assembly was enraged. He had not! they declared. How ridiculous!

“I am here,” he continued, “because of my belief in the resurrection of the dead.” The eyes of faction one lit up; while those of faction two grew red with hate.

Immediately a dispute broke out between the two. “Perhaps an angel has spoken to him!” one faction said. The other, “Perhaps there is a hell and you will burn in it!” The argument grew so violent that the commander, one eye twitching in anger, withdrew Soul from the proceedings to save his life.

During the afternoon he heard a report of a young man who said, “Tomorrow morning the Seventy will ask to see Soul again – to ascertain more information about him. Do not listen! They are waiting to kill him when he arrives.”

The aged commander patted the young man on the head and gave him a sip of wine. “Don’t tell anybody that you told me this,” he said, winking.

Immediately he arranged that five hundred soldiers be assigned to Soul and that he be brought to the governor of the area – another rank up in the Fourth Kingdom of Iron. For as a Kingdomite, Soul was entitled to a trial.

The governor, Felix, accepted Soul in the morning. When he had discovered Soul’s background (and he was very well acquainted with the Singer’s tale) he told Soul that he would be tried when his accusers arrived tomorrow.

Soul spent the night in prayer.
He knew his fate would be decided there.

The lawyer presented Soul’s case before Felix. Felix heard it and was astounded. In fact he was afraid. Soul spoke of saviours and salvation.

Being unsure of what to do, Felix considered his standing with the Blood-born. He wanted to do them a favour to gain their trust – so he put Soul in prison. And his inaction was Soul’s languishing.

Two years later, Felix died and was succeeded by a man named Ospicius. On the seventh day Ospicius was seen by the Less Breathy Whistlers of the Blood-born in the Great City of the Old Music. They said to Ospicius, “Send the man Soul over to the Great City so that we can judge him!”

But Ospicius said, “I’m on my way to where he is being kept – you come along with me, not I with you.” So they accompanied him and the next day a trial was held. Again. The accusations were brought forth and Soul’s defense was made.

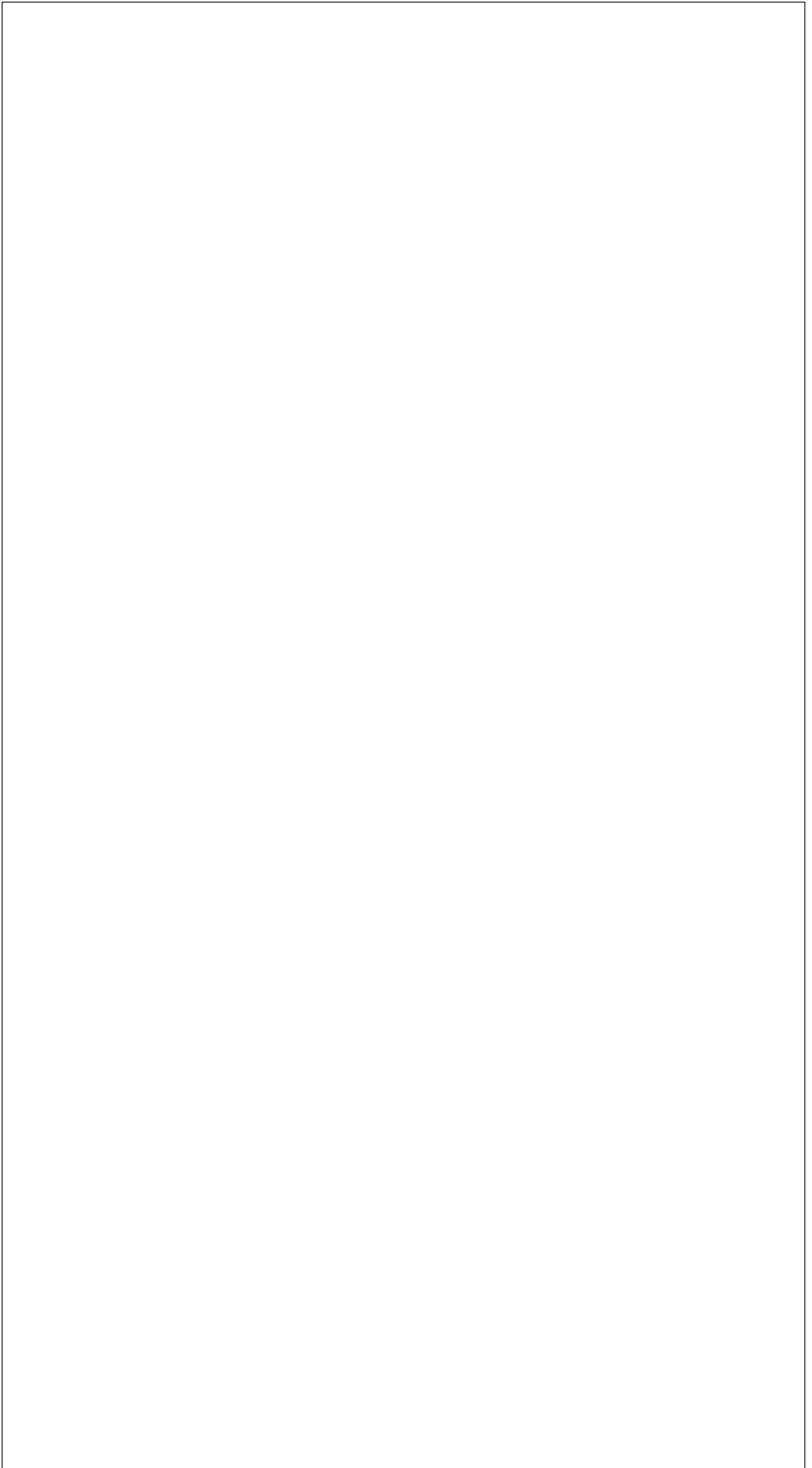
Soul declared, “I am a Kingdomite. I appeal to the King!”

“Then to the King you shall go,” declared Ospicius.

While Ospicius was waiting for the opportunity to send Soul to the King of the Kingdom, a governor one more step up arrived. His name was Agrippa. And he consented to judge Soul – for as yet Ospicius had nothing to tell the King when he sent Soul to him.

Agrippa sat down with Ospicius and all his court and they brought Soul forth and he prepared for a long trial which would bring him to his death or to his life.

“Agrippa,” Soul said. “How good to see you!”



XI

What did I say about pretext?

Agrippa opened by saying to Soul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.”

Soul began from the beginning. “Agrippa,” he said, “I consider myself fortunate to see you. I know that you know the customs of the Blood-born well. Therefore listen to me patiently.

“I lived as a Blood-born from my birth. And, my king Agrippa, it certainly was not from a need to escape it that I live as I do now. Rather it is out of the hope of fulfillment of the prophecies of the Blood-born! And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today. It is because of this that the Blood-born are accusing me. Why lives not faith?”

“I myself was opposed to this movement of the Song and the Singer. I caused many of the Whistlers to die. I went to the synagogues to capture my prey. And in my obsession with the persecution’s procession I even travelled to foreign cities with the purpose of persecution.

“On my way to the City of Changing Hands a bright light appeared, blinding me. And I heard a voice ask, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ I asked ‘Who are you?’ and he answered ‘I am the Singer, whom you persecute. I have appointed you to be my light to the Ill-fated, to turn them from darkness to light.

“Agrippa, I was not disobedient to heaven! From the City of Changing Hands and then throughout all the lands I began to preach this new revelation of everyone’s salvation.

“That, Agrippa, is why the Blood-born have brought me before you – although I am doing nothing beyond what the story of the Tune’s progression foretold – and now tis Song!”

In his excitement Soul had broken a sweat.

Ospicius then interrupted, saying, “You are out of your mind! Your incredible learning – it’s driving you to insanity!”

“That’s not true, brother Ospicius,” Soul answered. “Agrippa knows these things – and I am speaking to Agrippa. What I’m saying is true and reasonable. And he’s familiar with it. After all it was not done in a corner!”

Agrippa smirked, but he too sweated. “Did you think to convert me in so short a time?”

Soul smiled and replied, “I hope someday that everybody will be like me – without the chains, of course.”

So Agrippa and Ospicius convened quietly. Their conclusion was this: that Soul had done nothing to deserve either death or imprisonment.

Agrippa had a new thought and he grimaced in bittersweet. After turning it over in his mind he, jingling the coins in his pocket, turned to Ospicius and said, “This man could have been set free – if he had not appealed to see the King.”

Ospicius also gave that wan smile and knowing nod, and said, “I know.”

XII

Great rains generally fall after
extraordinary events.

-Plutarch

They sailed for Immensity shortly after. They had a rough time on the Centre of the World Sea, for there was a great storm and a great rain. The navigator, a Kingdomite commander, was not very experienced with ships.

First Soul was allowed to see his friends one last time to provide for his needs. Then the ship set sail again. Immediately it was beset by a storm; and they sailed in the lee of Island, to avoid the wind.

The wind caught up with them. The storm brewed. They did not see sun or stars. The waves began their play at the side of the boat, even in the lee of Island. When they left it to continue on to Immensity, the sea attacked.

The next day, they began to throw the cargo overboard. On the third day, they tossed the ship's tackle overboard. Soul grew worried. For three more days no heavenly light by day or night shone on them at all. It seemed that they would suffer death for sailing in the squall.

On the seventh day, Soul received a message from the Trinity – the Lyricist, Composer and his Singer. They stood closeby to him and said, “Fear not for you will not be dead before you see the King.” He relayed this message to the sailors for encouragement – for they too would be spared.

On the seventh day after the seventh day, land appeared. The storm was ceasing, the water's shallowness increasing. Soul broke the last of the bread on board to eat and it fed everyone.

When daylight came they did not recognize the land. They did however recognize something was at hand. Soul claimed divine intervention and declared they swim ashore, for the ship had run aground now on the shallow ocean floor.

The island was called Safehaven and they lit a fire. As the wood burned a viper who'd been hiding leapt out of the ashes and lodged its teeth in Soul's right hand – "He may have escaped the sea," the islanders thought, "yet he is only man!"

But Soul did not die from poison. It was not yet his time. He knew this from the vision and he continued to smile at everyone. After all it was a bloody cold and rainy night and Soul felt that perhaps recent events had perhaps been more extraordinary than he had first attributed them.

Three months passed and the sailing band set out again to find the land they'd first set out for. Another ship had wintered on Safehaven took them to Immensity, the capital of the Fourth Kingdom of Iron, and there Soul struck gold.

They reached Immensity and Soul was given a place to live under guard. For two more years Soul sat and waited but the hate had not abated. Twas but stewing. A greater storm was brewing.

Soul spoke to the church there as though he were at home. To the Blood-born and the Ill-fated he preached about the great and worthy Singer and his Song. And yet it was not long before Soul was brought to the King to face his trial – cruel justice, as men see it, sought him out.

King Nero hated Whistlers – hated Singer, hated Song and hated Love (which in truth is all of the above). And yet he could not find a charge on which to kill the Love at large. Soul made his defense as a Kingdomite and in king's sight he was set free – though grudgingly.

Soul set out east to go back home – his trip was done. No longer could he be convicted once he'd been evicted from the prison. For now that he had done his time his work could not be called a crime.

He was on his way to those he'd told would never see his face again. Oh, what joy awaited!

Back in Nero's palace Nero sat and pondered
And as he did so his hatred grew but stronger.
On the sixth day he lit a torch and hauled
A fiddle with him. Oh, Nero's mother bawled
Inside her grave to know what he was doing.
He took the torch on the sixth night and crept
Outside – his malediction'd finished stewing
And fiddling while everybody slept
His hating anger had stopped brewing--
He cast the flames of death upon Immensity
While from his rooftop he sat viewing
The burning of the city, and in the morning
To the sound of fiddle Nero took
(While the city was still mourning)
One last victorious look
And sent his man
To gather Song-
Singers from other lands
And bring them here
To the burning of the greatest city Nero cheered.

Soul received a message from a messenger that he return where he had come. He was halfway home. The balding shining dome of his head glinted as he looked up from his papers – endless papers, many notes and letters to the churches he had been to, that he'd preached to, letters reinforcing what he'd said, he hadn't time to teach to them the final bars of glorious Song.

Now Soul found he'd took too long.
He'd been recalled. So, then, it was all
For nothing that he'd seen those trials.
Firstly he was in denial but after a short while
Soul agreed to come with them to Immensity.

When he arrived Nero sat upon a throne.
“What is my crime?” asked Soul.
“You know it,” answered Nero.

Soul did not, actually. But he'd not refuse death.
After all it was the seventh and final day.

“You cursed us with your every breath.
Take him outside.” The guards complied.

And while Nero sat enjoying to the taste of wine
his final victory, the glory of God was testified as
one guard took up his sword and raised it high
above Soul's neck – and when Soul was about to
die, he asked, “Do you know the Singer?”

Nero having made the call
The soldier let the hatchet fall.

The perfect ending of the Tune had played.
And at that moment it began to rain.



Glossary.

Blood-born: Jews

Whistlers: Believing Jews (i.e. non-Sadducees)

Ill-fated: Gentiles

Immensity, Fourth Kingdom of Iron: Rome

Kingdomite: Roman Citizen

Former Kingdom of Bronze: Greece, Macedonia

Isthmus: Corinth

Prince Androklos Port: Ephesus

Bastion-of-Song: Pisidian Antioch

Lustre, Derby, On-the-Coast: Lystra, Derbe, Philippi

Seventh: Caesarea – sometimes used for Troas

Great City of the Old Music: Jerusalem

City of Trade: Tarsus

City of Changing Hands: Damascus

Soul, Companion, Courage: Paul, Silas, Barnabas

Singer, Composer, Lyricist: Jesus, God, Holy Spirit

Song, Tune, Chords, etc: Bible, history, love

Safehaven, Island: Malta, Cyprus

Less Breathy Whistlers: Pharisees

Martyr, Callus, Eruditus: Stephen, Gallio, Eutychus

Singers' Brothers, Counter-melodians: the Way

XII: Epilogue

Soul's Song

I'll buy you your life for to live on in heaven ---
The Joy of the Lord I garner as pay.
Hail to the piper who calls this sweet tune
But I must be gone by the seventh day.

Lo behold – I'm the Whistler.
I have a pipe and I come to play.
Get ready for the Whistler.
I whistle along on the seventh day ---
Ready your hearts for the seventh day.

All kinds of sadness I've left behind me.
Many's the day when I have done wrong.
But I am God's for ever and ever.
Climb in the saddle and whistle along.

Never fear – I'm the Whistler.
I have a pipe and a drum to play.
Rewards gathered in heaven
For whistling along on the seventh day –
I whistle along on the seventh day.

Deep red for the blood spilt of our Singer.
Call out the tune and the Singer will play.
We'll find the speck of truth in each riddle,
And still find the Song at the end of the day.

So come on – I'm the Whistler.
I have a pipe and I come to play.
I'll turn you all to Whistlers
I whistle along on the seventh day –
Whistle the Song on the Sabbath day.

