



Identity Crisis

By Lucy Wall

During the Summer and Autumn of 2017 I found I suddenly had an influx of auditions coming in. I was learning so much material and adopting such a vast array of characters that I almost felt like I should be appearing on an episode of the program "Stars In Their Eyes!" The famous statement, "Tonight Matthew, I'm going to be..." wouldn't have seemed out of place at this point! I had been remarking to my husband one day in the midst of it all that it would be good to write a poem about all the different characters I was auditioning for. The idea remained just a thought for several months however as I went off on tour with a show not long after this.

When the tour finished and I returned to London a friend recommended I join a group which is a community of Christians within the creative industry. It consists of all different kinds of creative types from performers like myself to musicians, writers, directors, stage technicians and the like. It's a really great group of people who meet up every couple of weeks to chat over coffee, encourage one another and pray for each other's needs. In a tough city like London and a brutal industry like Performing Arts I think a group such as this is a wonderful connection to have. Talking with like-minded people and sharing in each other's successes and struggles can be so rewarding and refreshing.

It was during my first meeting with the group that one of the founders asked me if I had ever written a poem about being a Christian performer. I replied that sadly I hadn't but as I went home that day I started thinking about the idea that had taken root from all the auditions in 2017. I soon found myself feeling inspired to write "Identity Crisis."

Every anecdote that appears in this poem is genuinely something I've experienced as a performer and is meant to offer a humorous insight into the realities of the world of Performing Arts. I also hope and pray that it can really encourage other Christians, not only in my chosen industry but in any realm of life.

The challenges faced relating to identity, self-esteem, value and worth aren't exclusive to creative types, anyone can struggle with this. I hope these words can really point to the truth that Jesus never wants us to feel inadequate. I pray they can encourage us all to focus on our First Love and to know the sweetness of His presence and power as we walk in the glorious light of His love for us. This alone will bring us into the joy and fullness that only Jesus can bring into the human heart.

The life of a Performer, what wondrous joys there are,
Ranging from the fabulous to really quite bizarre!
To find yourself within a show, of course the main objection
While putting on your thickest skin to deal with the rejection!

But even when you've found success and been within a cast,
Unemployment always looms for contracts never last.
One week you're starring centre stage then find that all too soon
You're jumping through the hoops again in each audition room!

All comfort and security have met their bitter end,
You step up to the plate and need to prove yourself again.
I too have had to bid farewell to nightly acclamation
While bringing my portfolio back out of hibernation.

Dusting off my repertoire I look to the unknown
And pray I see my agent's name appear upon my phone!
With weeks of no auditions and my prospects looking grim,
I praise the Lord when suddenly they all come flooding in!



And so begins the challenge that all actors must endure;
Try your best to fit the bill no matter how obscure!
Before I know, I'm on my way, audition bag in hand
And pray my vocal chords achieve whatever notes they've planned!

Of course the first endurance test to face in my vocation
Is travelling on London tubes and *finding* the location!
With cancelled trains and bus detours, travel is a pain.
Ensuring I'm on time I get "the train before the train!"

Arriving with straight hair before the wind and rain could spoil it,
I shuffle to my "changing room," aka...the toilet.
Though some may think it glamorous and envy my career
The truth is, *every* job I've had has always started here!

And so I find I'm perched again upon a lidded seat
While placing loo-roll down to keep the germs off of my feet.
Assuming toilet bugs are over all that I can see,
I get "audition ready" and ignore my OCD.

They're looking for a Mezzo and a slight "Dickensian theme,"
So I exit from the toilet like an 1860's dream!
Before I know, it's time to shake off all my fear and doubt;
My name's been called so off I go to sing my poor heart out!

No time to think of how it went, I find I'm off again
This time it's for an advert and the break-down says "Look plain."
Forsaking all my lip gloss and ignoring facial shimmer
I head to the audition room without a hint of glitter.

Next day I have a vocal call so battle through a market
Then find to my alarm the room is lined with cushioned carpet!
Carpet, heels and nerves all soon combine to my dismay
As I realise acoustics will be absent for today!

Another break-down comes and so I travel through the city
And hope I've hit the balance of "nice face but not too pretty."
Next is "gym instructor, trim physique, who's #winning."
I rake through every drawer to get the top I find most slimming!

Next I'm told to learn a song and bring a "Rock Chick" status.
I start to rake through belts and clothes, this needs some apparatus!
Digging through my wardrobe for something not too raucous,
Concerned I'll delve so deep I'll end up meeting Mr Tumnus!

Back inside a toilet with another script and score
I'm pulling on my tights while trying not to touch the floor.
I slightly lose my balance so I grab the radiator,
Then come to the conclusion that I'll bleach that foot off later.



But if you want to know what makes me really come un-stuck,
It's every singer's fear, I wake to find my glands are up!
Doing all I can do to restore my dulcet tones,
I'm rescued by my steam pot and a box of vocal zones.

I'm up for understudy for "A woman passed her prime,
Who hasn't seen the light of day for really quite some time."
If *pastiness* is what they want I know I'll fit right in,
I'll scrub away the tan and utilise my Scottish skin!

I'm whiter than a ghost, "au naturel" is how I'll go.
No fake tan today, I'll blind them all with skin of snow!
But next I'm up for "Woman with exotic look" they say.
In quite the turnaround tonight I'll bathe in St Tropez!

Oh yes, Performing Arts can really leave you in a spin!
So many different parts to play and moulds you must fit in.
"Fifties' Icon," "Panto Fairy" then "Generic Mother."
I go with one identity emerging as *another*!

Memorising scores and scripts can set you in a whirl,
I change so many times I almost feel like Supergirl!
It doesn't seem to matter what shows I've done before,
Each time I must convince them I'm "The One" they're looking for!

The challenge of auditions is a mix of fear and hope,
A tricky act of balancing and walking a tight-rope!
But then there comes the moment that makes it worth it all,
The thing that every actor loves is when we get "The Call!"

The call to say the job is ours and we have won the part
And then begins the countdown to when rehearsals start!
But going through this process gives me cause for some reflection,
For value isn't based in man's acceptance or rejection.

At times I need reminding though this really *is* the case
For personal rejection is a brutal thing to face!
Bitter disappointment comes pursuing *any* dream
And leaves us feeling low and quite devoid of self-esteem.

Society will tell us that to be of any worth,
We must achieve some prominence or fame throughout the Earth.
Wealth and great possessions mean we're "shining like a star"
And levels of approval show how "valuable" we are.

But *healthy* self-esteem comes not from worldly acclamation,
It doesn't lie in man's applause or gushing admiration.
I realise my worth will not be found on my CV,
My self-esteem and value lie in **Jesus' love** for me.



The love that drove Him to the Cross to pay my debt in full!
The love that says my value supersedes the finest jewel.
The love that never wavers even when I know I'm failing.
The love I can rely upon, that's constant and unchanging.

Dwelling on these promises sets me free from strife,
My status as a child of God gives purpose to my life.
It's not about my talents or what I have achieved
But rather it's about the one in whom I have believed!

Focusing on Jesus means whatever my position,
I'm free to use my skills for *God* and not my own ambition!
Knowing my Creator is the Author of my story
Brings joy into my heart to know my days will bring *Him* glory!

This blesses me beyond compare and brings my spirit rest,
Confident my Saviour's plan is always what is best.
So even on the days so full of sorrow and oppression,
My soul finds peace in knowing I am *still* His prized possession.

A crisis of identity need never play a part;
The true and living God has put His stamp upon my heart!
To know that I am cherished brings me great security.
I'll aim to be the woman God intended me to be.

Seeking out His purposes for which I was designed,
Leaving insecurity and every doubt behind.
Safe within the knowledge that whatever job I'm in,
I know *exactly* who I am. I'm daughter of the King!!

Ephesians 2:10

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

Psalms 139:14

"I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvellous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well."

1 John 3:1

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him."

1 John 4:19

"We love Him because He first loved us."



1 Peter 2:9

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.”

Romans 12:4-8

“For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

Matthew 11:28

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Proverbs 3:5

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding”

Philippians 4:13

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”