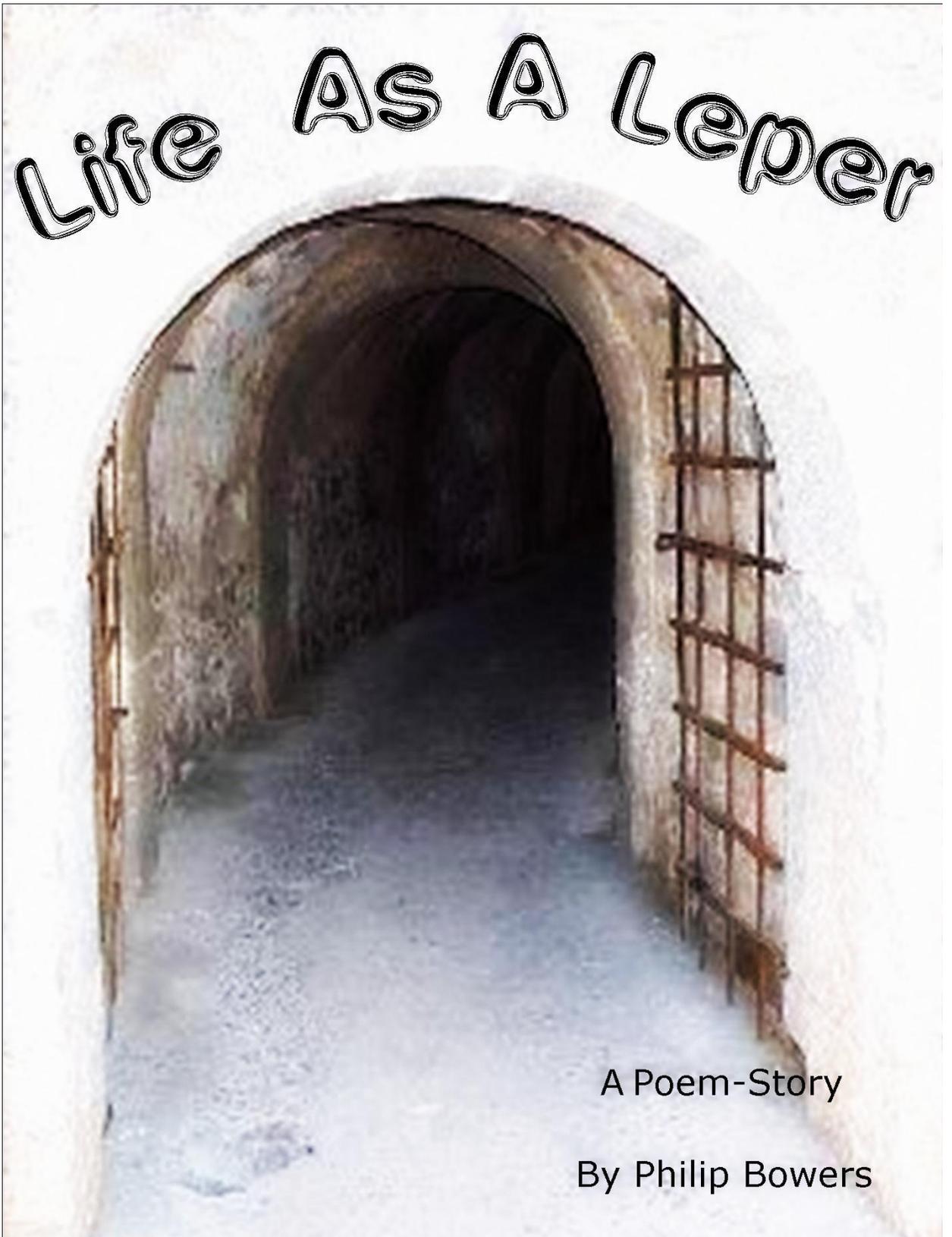


Life As A Leper



A Poem-Story

By Philip Bowers

Life Of A Leper

By

Rev. P.A. Bowers

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Philip A Bowers

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Life Of A Leper

Hey there! It's me, my name is leper; no "Mr." and no "sir," just leper. I do still have a real first name, underneath all of my shame; though it means nothing, because I no longer can lay claim. I never was a man of great fame, my life was actually quite lame, with every morning, the same old same.

It's not my fault that I became ill, but let me tell you the real deal. My life, "sigh" it's really not a big thrill, for real!

Life was good, how could this be? I lived on a farm; it was mom, dad, sis, and me. We had animals that we bred, and chickens that we fed. Yes it was hard work, and no play, but I still woke up every single day, without dismay.

Becoming a leper really ruined my life, my chances are now zero at getting a wife. Oh how I would love to just get a date, but now my nights are spent sleeping at the gate. "Unclean, unclean," are the words that I say, what they really means is, "just stay away." My new favorite line of the day; "God bless you, please toss a few coins my way."

Why oh why did I fall in this trap, I feel like a prisoner who just took a bad rap. My skin is white and my body is frail, please pray that my faith doesn't fail.

I called to my family, I called to my friends, but I found in the end, that there was none to amend. I was a light who used to shine bright, and now I'm looked on, as a sinner who aint right. This really is the fight of my life, man, I really try hard not to be so full of strife.

I once tried a synagogue, I really had to pray, the priest shook his head and said, "no way!" Surely I thought, this was the way, "sigh," I guess its back to the gate for another day.

The dogs, I hate and abhor, but it sure brings comfort when they lick my sore. I beg at the gate from five until eight, I'm hoping someone notices that I haven't yet ate. As days become weeks and weeks become months, won't someone say "hi" at least just once?

As seasons change from hot to cold, I say to myself, “this is getting old.” “The world is yours” they used to say, I really hope they never see me this way. I’m a shame to my father’s name, he doesn’t even talk to me because I’m lame. Why should I even fight, I have no right, let me roll over again, before I get frostbite.

I sure do miss my sister....”hey mister!” I really lucked out with that one today, he threw a loaf of bread my way. If sharing is caring, then I don’t care, let the other lepers continue to stare. As people walk by, they snare and they glare, there once was a child who sat and watched on a chair.

If you were me, what would you do? Being a leper brings nothing new. Silver and gold have I none, what could you give to help me live? These days are very trying, many times I just feel like dying.

I was once a good man, set to inherit my father’s land, I guess it’ll all go to the farm hand. Folks used to count on me for the manly jobs, now when my name is mentioned, there’s nothing but sobs. I was big, I was strong; Oh Lord, please tell me how long?

When the waters were troubled, I surely ran then, but I could never seem to beat the other men in. I’m a fighter they say, one day it will all go away, but I stood up today and my legs gave way. I think in my mind, could this be the day? I just shake my head and say, “no way!” A fighter indeed! To this sickness I concede. I now realize that I’m just a man who is in need.

“Just be thankful that you’re not dead,” that’s what all the parents said.....as they pat their own child on the head. “Unclean, unclean” are the words that I know, progressive signs of my sickness are really beginning to show. It has now spread from my feet up to my head, it won’t be long, until I’m dead. As I think, while lying on my bed, I wonder what eulogy will be written above my head.

I now have no feeling, in my leg, it’s getting even harder, just to beg. I looked at my arm where there use to be a hand, I guess someone else will have to till the land. As I ponder these thoughts in my head, I also begin to wonder what new leper will take my stead. As I think about the last days in this place, I feel a piece flesh, just fall off my face. I’m glad this life of suffering is almost won....”WELL DONE, THOU GOOD AND FAITHFUL SON!”