A scenic landscape photograph of a lake with mountains in the background under a cloudy sky. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent dark grey rectangle in the upper half of the image.

# **Reflections on Hope by the Writers of Hope Connections**

**Joy Bailey**

**Connie Mae Inglis**

**Bobbi Junior**

**Katherine Kavanagh Hoffman**

**Tina Markeli**

**Jack Popjes**

**Featuring photography by Lynn J Simpson**

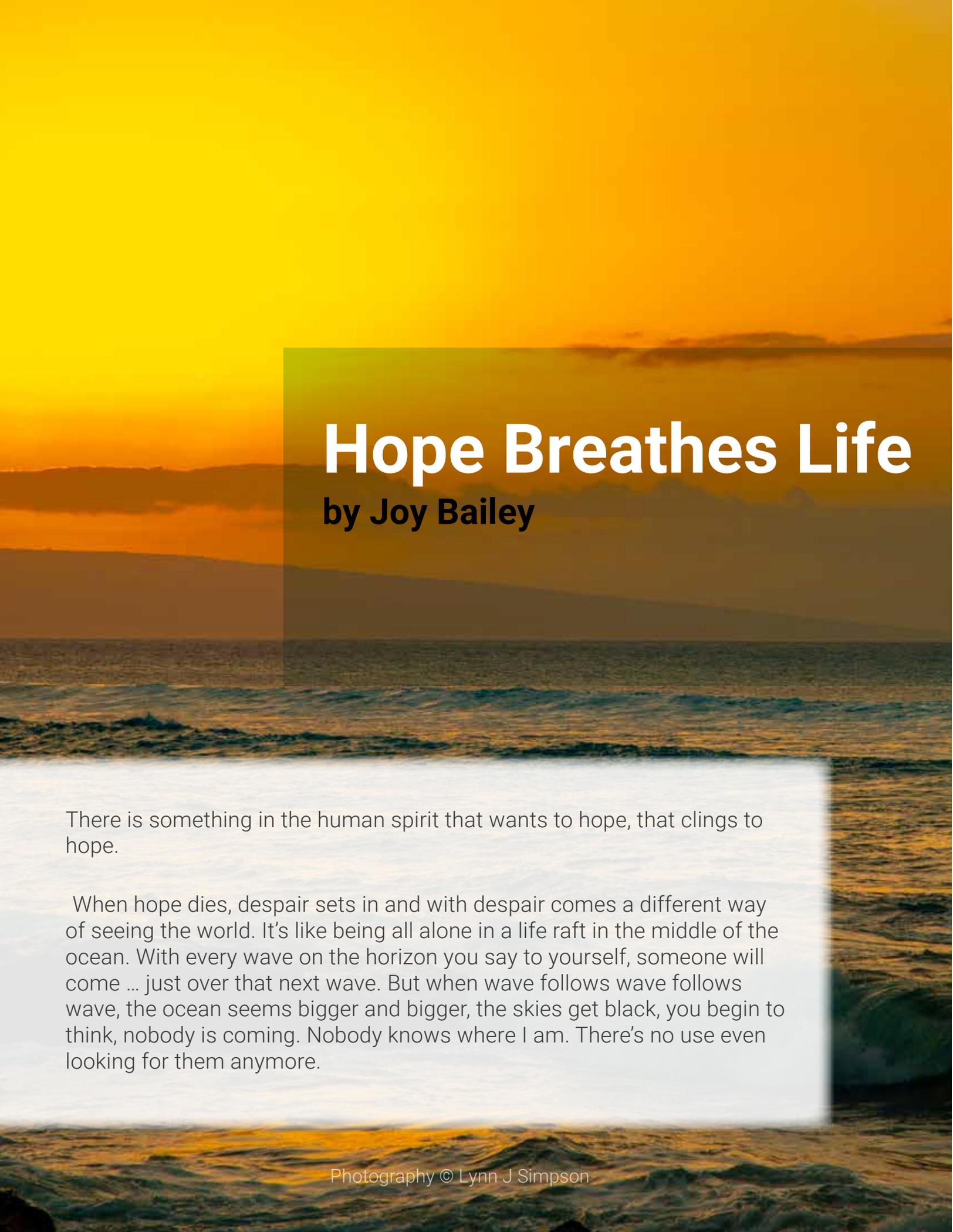
A collection of blog posts that first appeared in InspiringHopeInYou.com by the Hope Connections (2020) contributing authors-Joy Bailey, Connie May Inglis, Bobbi Junior, Katherine Kavanagh Hoffman, Tina Markeli, and Jack Popjes.

May you be inspired by these reflections on hope.

All photography by Lynn J Simpson

All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission by the contributors and publisher.

Copyright 2020 © Writers Café



# Hope Breathes Life

by Joy Bailey

There is something in the human spirit that wants to hope, that clings to hope.

When hope dies, despair sets in and with despair comes a different way of seeing the world. It's like being all alone in a life raft in the middle of the ocean. With every wave on the horizon you say to yourself, someone will come ... just over that next wave. But when wave follows wave follows wave, the ocean seems bigger and bigger, the skies get black, you begin to think, nobody is coming. Nobody knows where I am. There's no use even looking for them anymore.

## A LIGHT OF HOPE ON THE HORIZON

In 2017, I went to see a non-traditional medical professional. She was my last stab at finding relief from pain and mounting infirmity. I needed a cane to walk. Even then, I couldn't walk far. Half a block to the neighbourhood mailbox was extremely painful.

I told her my physical troubles, then she examined and manipulated my feet and ankles. At the end of that first meeting she said, "I think I can help you." A tiny pinprick of light appeared over the waves on my horizon.

I was still skeptical, but after another session with her I saw improvement. I knew it would be a long road ahead, but the light on the horizon was growing. At our fourth session I told her that I'd initially come to her in despair that I'd ever walk properly again, but she'd given me hope.

It changed my thinking. It changed my bearing. I sat up straighter, put my shoulders back. Maybe I can recover from this! Hope changed my perspective and breathed life into me.

## WHERE HOPE LIES

So far, the year 2020 has been like being in that life raft, riding wave after wave of sorrow and suffering. Covid-19, murder hornets, deaths, protests, riots. Personal hardships, lost jobs, lost loved ones. Every new piece of bad news is another wave that threatens to block out the light until all that is left is black despair.

But then I remember where my hope lies – in Someone even more understanding, caring, and compassionate than a trained medical professional. He sees. He knows. I can trust Him, cling to Him, hope in Him. He IS hope. He is the light over the waves on my horizon, the Light on which I focus.

He changes my perspective and breathes life into me.



"Hope  
changed my  
perspective and  
breathed life  
into me."

# Hope Defined

by Connie Mae Inglis



For the Christian, hope is one of those foundational beliefs—yet one that is difficult to define. To be honest, I hadn't thought much about the meaning of hope until mental illness hit my family six years ago. Now hope has become a dominant theme for my life. Right now I'd say that hope (in Jesus and His promises) is the anchor of my soul.

My husband and I are members of Wycliffe Bible Translators and are working with national believers in translating the Bible for a language group in Myanmar. Sadly, in this staunch Buddhist community, there was no word for hope—at least not the hope written about in God's Word. So, a compound word was created. The verb form means, "to wait expectingly (with anticipation)" and the noun form means, "the way of waiting expectingly."

Photography © Lynn J Simpson

“The way of waiting expectingly.” I like that definition because, even though it defines the noun form, it implies action. I’ve learned that hope is neither a static verb nor a static noun. Being on “the way” means we’re on a journey that has a direction and purpose. It requires faith in something and an active determination to walk in that faith. For believers, that is faith in God.

A few months ago, I attended a week-long workshop on trauma healing and how the arts can be used to bring healing. One of those steps included the use of laments to cry our anguish and hurt to God.

There was a time in my life when writing a lament would’ve felt like I was doubting God. And yet, King David, a man after God’s own heart, wrote many laments. In Psalm 42, verses 5 and 11, David says, “Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.”

You see, our lament to God is not an act of doubt but an act of faith. We are not doubting the hope found in God but rather we are resting in that hope. And that is an act of faith, not doubt.

When my perspective of God is right, and I’m anchored to the truth, I am free to lament. I can cry out to God just like King David did, knowing that He is so much bigger than my problems, but also knowing that what He wants from me is honesty and humility.

The way of hope is the way of freedom. Hope in God frees us to live life to the full—to laugh more, to love more, to **be** more, as we persevere in believing that all the promises of God are good and true and trustworthy. **This** way of hope is the anchor of my soul.

“There is hope in the promise of the cross;  
You gave everything to save the world You love;  
And this hope is an anchor for my soul;  
Our God will stand, unshakable.”

“And this  
hope is an  
anchor for  
my soul.”

# Hope

by Bobbi Junior

In 1969 singer Peggy Lee came out with a hit song, Is That All There Is?

Even though I suffered from depression at the time, this song surpassed anything I was going through.

*Is that all there is, is that all there is?*

*If that's all there is my friends*

*Then keep on dancing.*

*Let's bring out the booze and have a ball*

*If that's all there is.<sup>1</sup>*

Further on the singer poses the obvious question: Why she doesn't just end it all? Her answer? She's not ready for that final disappointment. Even through my own depression, I wondered how anyone could survive with so little hope.

Hope.

HOPE HAS MANY FACES

Over the years I've found hope has many faces.

Those who believe this life is the only life tend to express hope along a spectrum of good works, dogged realism, and submission to the inevitable. They seek their strength from within themselves and hope that's enough to control the outcome.

Those who believe in life after death live their current existence according to their faith in a power greater than them, but even then, their actions vary.

Edith is a character in one of my stories in Hope Connections. For Edith, hope means coming face to face with each obstacle, grabbing it wherever she can get a grip, wrestling it to the ground and stomping over it as she moves forward. In the process, she drags her small family into the next day, whatever that may hold.

Photography © Lynn J Simpson



In *Conversations*, Francie manifests hope through worry and anxiety, fretting her way forward as she attempts to deal with her friend's bad choices. While Edith meets challenges head-on, Francie would like them to all go away, and yet she carries on with a quiet belief that she's not alone.

Hope can look different in the same person's life, as seen in the two books I have in print.

*The Reluctant Caregiver* describes my journey caring for my mother when she developed dementia. Hope lay in my assurance that the One in whom I place my faith would keep me on the right track. *When the Bough Breaks*, serialized on my website, tells the story of our baby who died the day after she was born. Not a time one would describe as hopeful, and yet hope was there. I knew I would see her again, in the next life.

Today, liver disease is taking its toll on my body. Immediate hope is expressed in the cell phone I carry, waiting for a call that a liver is available for transplant. Each time I think of that, I know it will mean another family has lost a loved one and I feel at once grateful and guilty.

## HOPE IS COMPLICATED

For me, hope is based in faith, as defined by scripture. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for."<sup>2</sup> Hope detached from faith is just a wish. Faith is trust placed in God, something outside ourselves, something foundational, something proven. Pastor Scott Tolhurst wraps it up well, I think, when he says,

My characters see their situations through realistic eyes, but have hope that as they address each moment, they are connected to something greater than them. And me with my liver disease? That's where my hope lies as well. I thank God this life is the temporary one, a preparation for the eternal life to come. My assurance lies in this truth, a hope I know will be realized.

1 Is That All There Is Source: [LyricFind](#); Songwriters: Jerry Leiber / Mike Stoller

Is That All There Is lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC, Warner Chappell Music, Inc

2 Hebrews 11:1 NIV Translation

# What Is It About Hope?

By Katherine Kavanagh Hoffman



Photography © Lynn J Simpson

Do you ever wonder what life would be like without hope? What would motivate us? What would encourage us? How would we find purpose? We tend to think of hope as something ethereal, otherworldly. And I suppose it is, in the sense that it finds its beginning and end in God. But He has gifted us with hope in this world, in this time, as a means of providing a way through the difficulties and chaos we so often face.

So what exactly is hope? It is more than just a feeling, or wishful thinking. We use it so often that way that we forget that there is far more to it than that. Hope is expectation, but expecting with the confidence that what we hope for IS going to happen. Not maybe, but definitely. We are looking ahead not to a dream, but to a reality. And this hope for the future helps us to live with joy and trust in the present.

That is the kind of Whether I look at to the dispersed of or Paul's reminder to other similar passages, and based in truth,

“Every pillar and every bridge needs a firm foundation, and hope is no exception.”

regardless of our present circumstances, as we look to the future. I love how Paul teams up hope with faith and love in I Cor 13:13, and how the writer of Hebrews sees faith and hope as being intertwined in Hebrews 11:1. Hope is a pillar we can cling to in fair or stormy weather, a reminder of the promises of God for our lives now and forever. Like a door left slightly ajar, hope gives us a glimpse of eternity, and reminds us that God and his promises are real and trustworthy.

Every pillar and every bridge needs a firm foundation, and hope is no exception. It is in the person of Jesus, fully man, fully God, Creator and Sustainer of all things, who brought everything to completion by His work on the cross, that I find my hope.

As a contributor to the anthology Hope Connections, I am thrilled to share this hope with you. In my three pieces I have chosen to look at hope in three very different ways: a short story, a fairy tale, and a poem. Each one looks at hope from a different perspective: one examines a personal struggle to maintain hope, another cultivating purpose through hope, and, finally, an allegorical examination of the effect hope can have on humanity and the fight against evil.

# A Few Thoughts About Hope

By Tina Markeli

Hope says,  
“There is  
something to  
live for. Take  
a baby step  
forward.”

We all know what hope is. But I find it downright difficult to define it. The best I can offer is illustrations, one negative and one positive.

“I can’t breathe.” Asthma often held my father like a vise. His wheezing breaths frightened me. Today the mere words still strike fear into my heart. Not being able to breathe, because of illness, lack of air, injury, or violence, is terrifying. “I have no hope,” is equally terrifying, for as our bodies need air and breath to sustain life, our souls and spirits, our “inner selves”, need hope to survive.

On the positive side, hope is an invitation to go on living. Hope assures us that there is something bigger than we are, that our lives have meaning, that there is a source of strength to see us through the current or looming crisis, that there is something good in the future. Hope says, “There is something to live for. Take a baby-step forward.”

The optimists of the human race seem to have an endless source of hope within themselves. Frankly, they puzzle me as they bounce back from defeat or discouragement with fresh enthusiasm. But even optimists meet situations that overwhelm their natural good cheer. The melancholics, of which I am one, have a harder time finding that kind of hope. Still, I think we have a slight advantage because we know that hope needs to come from beyond ourselves. Mere human optimism will fall short at some point.

We need a steady source of hope, an open invitation. Around 740 BC, a Jewish prophet named Isaiah wrote on Gods’ behalf, “Listen to me, and you will eat what is good. You will enjoy the finest food. Come to me with your ears wide open. Listen, and you will find life.”<sup>1</sup> About seven hundred and seventy years later, Jesus repeated the invitation, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”<sup>2</sup>

Why do I write about hope? I find feeling hopeful a slippery goal, often eluding my grasp. I find the God of the Bible a steady source of hope, a place where I can breathe again. Perhaps my stories will be your invitation to look for Him and let your spirit breathe.

Isaiah 55:1-3 **New Living Translation (NLT) Holy Bible**, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of [Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.](#), Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Matthew 11|:28 **New Living Translation (NLT)**

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a tan dress and a black crossbody bag, stands on a rocky trail. She is leaning against the trunk of a large, weathered tree. The background is a vast, green valley with a lake and a distant town. The scene is captured in a high-angle, wide shot, emphasizing the scale of the landscape.

# What Hope Brings to Me

**By Jack Popjes**

Photography © Lynn J Simpson

The term 'hope' carries the concept of a desire for something not yet realized, something good we want to happen in the future.

The term however has changed its meaning over the past few centuries. Currently, when we say, "It's been raining every day, but I sure hope it won't rain tomorrow and ruin the backyard birthday party," we are expressing a strong wish—a desire for something in the future over which we have no control or influence. It may happen or it may not. The current, popular, use of the term 'hope' simply expresses a strong desire, it is based on wishful thinking.

## A BIBLICAL HOPE

The original word "hope" as used in the Bible, and listed as "archaic" in the dictionary, carries the meaning not just of strong desire, but also of a guaranteed positive outcome. "I hope my wife and I will remain married for the rest of our lives." This statement shows the desire, as well as the confident expectation that it will happen. It is based not just on our desire, but also on our moral wills which are under our control, and on God's will as expressed in His Word. In this sense 'hope' has much in common with 'faith' in God. Psalm 42:5 crystalizes this as David tells himself, "Hope in God, I will yet praise Him."

The term hope carries the concept of a desire for something not yet realized, something good we want to happen in the future.

In my statement about my marriage, therefore, the term "hope" could be replaced as follows, "I confidently expect that my wife and I will remain married for the rest of our lives."

The way I personally use the term 'hope' is synonymous with Confident Expectation.