

# “PICKING BLACKBERRIES WITH A DEER”

A Children’s Story: based on the Song of Songs

By: Uncle Runny



## A Word of Thanks

I want to thank my niece Bernie and her husband Jim, (better known as Bear), for allowing me to experience their family life, without which this book would not have been possible. It is then also necessary to thank their now grown children Brenna and Ethan, for sharing the wonderment of your childhood years with me. As you grow older may you always keep the sense of wonder of creation alive within you! May you never be too old to cuddle and have a bedtime story read to you. May you always enjoy a park, an animal farm and especially picking blackberries! I pray that you continue to experience the excitement of discovering the world around you!

Bernie and Bear, in allowing me to share in your family life, you have allowed me in my adulthood to reach out with the amazement of a child and touch God through Creation. Although there are times, when this bachelor priest needs to move apart to maintain his space, I am a fuller and more complete human being due to the gift of yourselves and your family life to me! Can we not dance in front of God and with God in trust just as a child plays in front of their parents?

My prayer and wish for all who read this book is that you be "Kissed by a Deer" which is an analogy of being embraced by God, as described at the end of this story and in the Song of Songs from the Old Testament.

## **THE SONG OF SONGS Chapter Two**

I am a flower of Sharon, a lily of the valley.

As a lily among thorns, so is my beloved among all peoples.

As an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my lover among all.

I delight to rest in his shadow, and his fruit is sweet to my mouth.

He brings me into the banquet hall and his emblem over me is love.

Strengthen me with raisin cakes; refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love.

His left hand is under my head and his right arm embraces me.

I adjure people of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and hinds of the field.

Do not arouse, do not stir up love before its own time. Hark! My lover – here he comes.

Springing across the mountains, leaping across the hills.

My lover is like a young gazelle, or a young stag.

Here he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattices.

My lover speaks, he says to me.

"Arise my beloved, my beautiful one, and come! For see the winter is past, the rains are over  
and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth, the time for pruning the vine has come, and the song of  
the dove is heard in the land.

The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines in bloom, give forth fragrance.

Arise my beloved, my beautiful one, and come!

"O my dove in the clefts in the rock, in the secret recesses of the cliff.

Let me see, let me hear your voice for your voice is sweet and you are lovely.

Catch us the foxes, the little foxes, that damage the vineyards, for our vineyards are in  
bloom!"

My lover belongs to me and I to him;

Until the day breaths cool and the shadows lengthen, Roam my lover,

Like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bether."

I can feel the sun warming my face, tickling my eyes to open them up. It tickles my nose. It's that kind of a sun that pulls up the corners of your mouth and makes you want to wake up smiling! I see you Mr. Sun, bringing me another happy summer day. I can walk to school in my summer clothes, hopping and skipping all the way! Maybe I'll stop at the park at the animal farm to see all the new baby animals. My friend Elizabeth said, there's baby goats, ducks and little chicks, a calf and even a colt! They're all on wobbly legs learning to walk and smelling all the new smells of Mother Earth!

So I am thinking, I'd better get up! I throw off my Poo quilt that grandma Angie made me, and I feel Mr. Sun on my legs. I stretch and stretch until it feels so good, and so I stretch some more! Dad pops his head in the door and says, "Little man, get up, get washed and dressed so you won't be late for school!"

Mom comes in my room and tousles my hair and says, "Your breakfast is ready. Papa made waffles, with peaches and whipped cream!" I smack my lips three times, because nobody can make waffles like my dad!

Up I jump! I wash my face, brush my teeth and quickly comb my hair. The sun is shining warmer now in my room. It's a good day for a T-shirt and short pants. Maybe some sandals and no socks so I can run barefoot through the grass in the park on the way to school!

There they are on the table! Those delicious waffles, only my Dad can make –with yellow peaches, maple syrup and gobs and gobs of whipped cream on top! I sit down quickly as my sister Brenna is already eating them! I eat them with a big spoon with Mom and Dad smiling 'cause I've got whipped cream all over my face. Dad says, "Unca Runny said he would come and pick you and Brenna up after school today and take you blackberry picking!"

I jump off my chair and climb up on Dad's lap and give him a big hug. The only thing better than Dad's waffles or running barefoot in the grass in the park and seeing the baby animals is picking blackberries with my sister and Unca Runny. He is my favorite Uncle! Mom and Dad always call him Unca Runny too. He is part of our family! I can hardly wait! "Better get started" says Mom.

I wipe off my face, grab my schoolbook, my lunch and backpack and wriggle my feet into my sandals. Mom always walks me to school before she goes to work. "Mom, can we please stop at the animal farm for a few minutes, do we have time? My friend Elizabeth says they have baby animals! Do we have time?" Mom says there is and when we get there; there are the babies!

Baby goats! A brown one, a black and white one and one, all white, standing on rocks! They have funny long hairs on their chins and their noses are twitching smelling the breeze. A baby calf is standing with its legs wide apart, chewing on new green grass. And there's the new born colt, just learning to walk, with his Mom's head holding him up! There's little chicks everywhere, all yellow and some red and brown, peep-peeping from under their mother hen's safe warm wings. Mr. and Mrs. Peacock walk slowly like a King and Queen. She looks like a bride in her white dress and she is so proud of Mr. Peacock as he spreads his long wide beautiful blue tail! They really do look like a King and Queen with those long curly curls on their heads!

Time for school. I hear the bell ring and so I take Mom's hand to cross the street. I see Elizabeth and I holler, "Elizabeth, I saw the baby animals and there are little bunny rabbits too! They were all sleeping, curled up like little cotton balls! And guess what? Dad said, Unca Runny is picking Brenna and me up from school to go blackberry picking!"

Elizabeth has gone blackberry picking too, so she knows how much fun it is and how tasty they are! When we get them home, we always eat them with Dad's waffles, whipped cream and maple syrup. I can hardly wait till after school. All day long I think about those blackberries!

Before I know it, the bell rings and I grab my back pack and run outside and there is Unca Runny waiting with the top down on his car! We jump in the car and drive home. I change into long pants, a jacket and take some gloves. Sometimes, a lot of times, those blackberries just don't like to be picked! They have a lot of prickles and thorns to protect themselves!

I climb into the back seat, Brenna gets in the front beside Unca, and we drive through and out of Victoria, BC where we live. He listens to the Oldie Goldie radio station and my sister Brenna and I sing along with him! We know all the words to those old rock and roll songs because that's all Mom and Dad listen to! We love singing along with Uncle Runny and waving at people when we put the top down! He often gets silly and changes all the words and we scream and laugh!

Pretty soon we are driving out of the city. All the tall buildings are behind the car now as we turn onto a country road. The trees are big, tall and green and some of them join arms over our heads. I can even see the top of the fir trees touching the blue sky. And there's Mr. Sun still shining warm on me. I pretend I'm a little goat and I twitch my nose. I can for sure smell the fir trees and I think I might even be smelling blackberries! As we turn a corner, there they are, hanging thick on the bushes! Big blackberries, all ripe and juicy waiting to be picked, to be put on top of Dad's morning maple syrupy breakfast waffles!

We put on our gloves and begin to pick blackberries into the empty ice cream pails Mom gave us. Unca Runny pulls down the branches for me and I pull the blackberries off, one by one, big, black and juicy! Sometimes, I can't wait more than a second and I push two, three and four or five into my mouth! Unca Runny leans

back and laughs so hard that his ball cap falls off his head because my mouth and nose are all covered with blackberry juice! I jump for joy and oops, my pail goes rolling down the hill! But Unca just tells me how when before I was born, he spilled his pail one time when he was picking blackberries with Brenna and how she felt sorry for him and poured some of the blackberries from her pail into his! That's exactly what Unca Runny does! He fills my pail half full of blackberries from his pail and we just keep on picking!

It is really hot and my pail is almost full and so I sit down under some shady blackberry bushes. Unca and Brenna are still picking berries. He is talking to us about how we will have to wash the blackberries and put them through a strainer when we get home. Unca Runny is not a clean Blackberry picker.! He picks too many twigs and leaves into his pail! He has almost two pails full but Brenna and I only have one pail full. But Brenna's and my blackberries are cleaner. There are no leaves or twigs in our pails!

My eyes are heavy. It's nice and cool down here under the blackberry bushes. I lay my head down on the grass and it tickles my nose, just like the baby goats and calves. I kick off my sandals and wiggle my toes in the grass. The breeze is full of so many strange and nice smells and I stick my tongue out and touch the grass! My eyes are really heavy now and it can't hurt to take a nap; just for a few minutes until Unca Runny and Brenna finish picking their pails full.

Suddenly I wake up! I don't move because something is tickling my feet! I blink, and blink and blink some more. It's a deer licking my feet. I wonder if it's Bambi or his Mother?

I close my eyes because I don't want to scare it away. For a few minutes I don't hear a thing. I squeeze my eyes shut really tight and I don't move at all. Slowly, I start to open one eye. There is a big black nose looking into my face! I see Mr. Deer, his eyelashes are almost touching mine and he licks my face with his bright pink

tongue. I sneeze, kerchoo, and he jumps back, standing with his head down and his white tail up in the air! And as he leaps and jumps and runs away I can only think of one thing, 'I've been kissed by a deer!' This will be a story that they will never believe at school! Elizabeth will scream! Mom, Dad and Brenna will tell me I was dreaming, but Unna Runny just might believe me! This is even better than waffles with blackberries, maple syrup and whipped cream and the animal farm all on the same day! "

## **THE END!**

(Refer to the Song of Songs as this story is about being kissed by God just as a parent tucks their child in and kisses them on their forehead or cheek.)