

**Beyond the Sunset**—February’s Hymn of the Month 2021

By  
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In their lifetimes, Billy Sunday and Homer Rodeheaver did much to promote and preserve the singing of these great hymns of the faith and, along the way, help give us some great songs. One such song is *Beyond the Sunset*. It was at Rainbow Point, Homer’s home in Winona Lake, that the inspiration for writing this song took place.

On one particular evening, during the mid-thirties, the faculty from the Rodeheaver School of Music were guests of Dr. Rodeheaver at Rainbow Point. The time of fellowship was quite rewarding and to cap off a perfect visit, the sunset that evening was breathtaking. As each member of the group gave testimony of its beauty, a blind man named Horace Burr finally exclaimed, “My, that sure is a wonderful sunset. Thanks so much for picturing it for me. I sure would have missed a lot if you folks hadn’t been here to describe it.”

History was in the making that evening at Homer’s home because Virgil Brock was part of that group. Someone had raised the question, “I wonder what’s beyond all of this life?” In Virgil’s mind, he started to form an answer to the question. He reasoned, “Horace Burr has never seen the glory of an earthly sunset, yet was blessed as we tried to describe it to him—so we too have never seen what is beyond this life; but God has promised us in His Word of the glory that is waiting those who are willing to trust in Christ and Christ alone.”

Within an hour, Virgil and his wife were back at their hillside apartment. Together at the piano, amid the afterglow of the sunset, a poem took form and the music was written. A hymn was born that evening that gives hope for those who have yet to leave and for those who are waiting *Beyond the Sunset*:

Beyond the sunset O blissful morning  
When with our Savior Heaven’s begun  
Earth’s tolling ended, O glorious dawning  
Beyond the sunset when day is done.

Beyond the sunset, no clouds will gather  
No storms will threaten, no fears annoy  
O day of gladness, O day unending  
Beyond the sunset eternal joy.

Beyond the sunset, a hand will guide me  
To God the Father whom I adore  
His glorious presence, His words of welcome  
Will be my portion on that fair shore.

Beyond the sunset O glad reunion  
With our dear love ones who’ve gone before  
In that fair homeland we’ll know no parting  
Beyond the sunset forever more.

The original *Beyond the Sunset* was published in 1936 by Homer Rodeheaver. Then, in 1950, Hank Williams under the name of Luke the Drifter recorded a record entitled, *The Funeral*. The “B” side had *Beyond the Sunset* as the musical background for a poem written by Albert “Rosey” Rowswell called, “Should You Go First.” Many gospel artists have followed Hank’s lead and recorded this version of *Beyond the Sunset*:

Should you go first  
And I remain to walk the road alone  
I’ll live I memory’s garden dear  
With happy days we’ve known.

In spring, I’ll wait for roses red  
When fades the lilacs bloom  
And in early fall when brown leaves call  
I’ll catch a glimpse of you.

Should you go first  
And I remain for battles to be fought  
Each thing you’ve touched along the way  
Will be a hallowed spot

I’ll hear your voice, I’ll see your smile  
Though blindly I may grope  
The mem’ry of your helping hand  
Will buoy me on with hope

Beyond the sunset  
Oh, blissful morning  
When with our Savior  
Heaven is begun

Earth’s toiling ended  
Oh, glory dawning  
Beyond the sunset  
Day is done

Should you go first  
And I remain to finish with the scroll  
No lessening shadows shall ever creep in  
To make this life seem droll

We’ve known so much of happiness  
We’ve had our cup of joy  
And memory is one gift of God  
That death cannot destroy

I want to know each step you take  
That I may walk the same  
For someday down that lonely road  
You'll hear me call your name

Should you go first and I remain  
One thing I'll have to do  
Walk slowly down that long, long path,  
For soon, I'll follow you

In that fair homeland  
We'll know no parting  
Beyond the sunset forever more