

# Cloud Shadows

by Bethany Poore

This article is at once a first and a last. It's my first time to write under my new married name and my last cover article for the last issue of amie. I've thought for several weeks about what I should write about this last time.

God gave me a wonderful gift named Gregory, and I married him about a month ago in a big, beautiful, dream-come-true wedding. Our honeymoon was in the mountains of east Tennessee. We took some beautiful drives through spectacular scenery—clear, rocky streams; frosty-capped mountains; vast expanses of piercing blue winter sky. We took pictures, but how can you put mountains on a digital camera screen? I love the vastness and openness of mountain scenes that look like layer upon layer stretching forever. One of my favorite beauties to see is the sun making a shadow from a whole cloud outlined in clear dark and light on a mountainside or a valley. It's something transitory that you can see for just a little while; it won't be there tomorrow. And yet it rests upon and is made by creations that have stood in their places for thousands of years.

Six weeks before my wedding, my grandmother had a completely unexpected major heart attack. She lives alone about 2 hours away from my family. She managed to call the ambulance herself and get the help she needed in time. It was what we human beings would say was a close call, but God obviously had everything under control. That's the only explanation for why my grandmother, smiling and looking beautiful, was present for my wedding. We spent the Saturday night she had the heart attack in a hospital waiting room, and rushed back to where we live for a wedding shower the next afternoon. I found it's possible to be sleepy, excited, worried, and thankful all at once, in a swirl.

Two and half weeks before my wedding, my brother John and his wife Audra learned that the baby Audra was carrying had died in her womb at 5 ½ months old. They went through a necessary and very difficult induced delivery. At the end of two of the hardest days my family has ever lived through, we got to hold the tiny baby girl—a daughter, granddaughter, and niece named Melody Hope—that God gave us for a while and decided to take back to Himself. John and Audra held a memorial service for their baby girl a couple of days later—the evening after another wedding shower. Another experience of grief, joy, confusion, gratitude.

My mom was a beautiful example to me of how to gracefully handle this swirl of emotions all at one time. She was experiencing the seri-

ous health concerns of her mother, the loss of her granddaughter, and the wedding of her daughter all in one brief, crazy period. She mourned and rejoiced with all of us. She told me in the midst of the wedding presents and grieving, the loss of sleep and the sewing of lace on my bridal dress—it *can* all be true at once. We can be sad and we can be happy. We were, and we still are.

Driving with my new husband through the mountains, the cloud shadows spread out before me wondrously, I looked at them and saw something beautiful, and a picture of what life is. It is light and dark together. They are distinct, yet part of the same scene, and intricately related to each other. Our lives are a mix of the fast-changing and the constant. From where I was looking, at a distance from the mountains and the shadows, it's easy to see where the sunshine ended and the shadow began. But from deep in the forest covering the mountain, with the clouds and sunshine coming and going above, it's harder to tell where one begins and the other ends. And that's where we live day to day—in that forest, in the thick of the light and dark, the coming and going, the constants and the changes. It's only when we step back and look around and train our eyes to see that we notice—all this is making something beautiful. Like the majesty of cloud shadows.

From the start of this new life-chapter, I look back on the last one and see something beautiful—many-layered, rather vast (when I'm feeling old), and well sprinkled with cloud shadows: sunshine and dark places. I wish that I had walked through those scenes with more honest, childlike faith, holding onto the hand of my Father. Now I can see that He was making something beautiful; too often, back there in the forest, I really didn't see that it was. Now I know what then my doubting eyes often failed to see.

I know that this new chapter will have its shadows alongside the sunshine. I pray that I'll remember the lesson of the cloud shadows. We're all at different places in the forest. Some of us are lost in the dark tangle of thorny undergrowth. Some of us are dancing our way through bright green sun-washed pathways. And we'll all change places sooner or later. Your task and mine is to be at rest right now in our Father's care and enjoy the beauty He's making. He won't forget you; He will put it all together to create something breath-taking. We can trust Him.

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**Let us  
consider  
how to  
stimulate  
one another  
to love  
and good  
deeds.**

Hebrews 10:24

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# Courage at Sea

## The Story of Ida Lewis

By Martha Louise Rayne, 1893 Edited by Amy Puetz

Ida Lewis was the daughter of Captain Hosea Lewis, of Higham, Massachusetts, and was born on February 25, 1842. She attended the public school at Newport until she was fifteen years of age, when her parents moved to Lime Rock Lighthouse. Soon after their removal to the lighthouse, her father was stricken with paralysis, and Ida was obliged to accustom herself to the use of the oars, bring all the supplies to the lighthouse, and row her smaller brothers and sisters to and from school. She soon became an expert—as much at home on the water as on the land. Her philanthropic nature was first gratified in the fall of 1858, when she won a place among the brave by rescuing from drowning four young men whose pleasure boat had been upset; at this time she was but sixteen. Eight years later she saved a soldier from a neighboring fort from drowning. In 1867, three Irishmen saw a sheep drifting off at sea, and started after it in a small row boat; they had gone but a short distance, when, amid the white-capped billows of the ocean, their courage failed them, and, on turning round, they found they were powerless to reach the shore. The heroine of old Lime Rock took them from their sinking boat, and brought them safely to shore, after which she returned and brought the sheep to land also. Two weeks later she saved a man whose boat, having sprung a leak from striking a rock, had sunk and left him up to his chin in water, while the rising tide was threatening to engulf him.

On March 29, 1869, Ida was sitting in her favorite chair, beside the warm fire, finishing some needlework before preparing the family's evening meal. Her mother, sitting near the window, suddenly discovered a capsized boat, to which two soldiers from the garrison at Fort Adams were clinging. She had scarcely made known the facts, when her daughter, catching only the words "drowning men," sprang to her feet, prompt and eager to save them. In spite of her invalid father's entreaties (for the old sailor knew the danger), she was at the door.

All thoughts of the warmth and comfort within have vanished, and the patient, toiling girl becomes a heroine, flying with dauntless soul to save the perishing. She has no shoes upon her feet, no hat upon her head, and no outer garments to protect her from the storm. With only a towel, hastily seized and knotted about her neck, her stocking-clad feet speed her away over sharp rocks to her ever-ready boat. A younger brother, at her request, accompanies her to assist in dragging the drowning men into the boat; but to Ida's skill and willing arms must be trusted the plying of those oars upon whose dexterous use depends the saving of those lives, now so sorely threatened. Never before were her hands so tried, or the strength of woman's arm so tested. Though the green billows, crested with white foam, come fly-

ing over the open boat, nearly filling it with water, she heeds them not. Fame, success, and a nation's encomiums wait upon her exertions or it may be a watery grave beside those she is trying to save.

Her mother stands upon the rock, wildly gesticulating and endeavoring to encourage the drowning men to continue their efforts for life; it is all the aged woman can do, but she does it well. The race for life is accomplished, our heroine reaches the drifting wreck, the exhausted men are brought safely to the lighthouse, and new laurels are added to Ida's well-earned wreath of fame. One of the rescued men, Sergeant Adams, is barely able to totter to the house, while his companion, but an hour ago a picture of strength and vigor, requires united strength to remove him from the boat.

Thus ends the story of Ida Lewis's exploits—deeds worthy of emulation, which, in the grand old days of Greece and Rome, would have gained the applause of the Senate and have been perpetuated in the sculptor's marble and upon the historian's tablet of brass.

The Life Saving Benevolent Association of New York awarded her a silver medal and one hundred dollars, and the General Assembly of her own State (Rhode Island) passed resolutions acknowledging her brave and valuable services. These resolutions were formally communicated to her by a document from the Secretary of State, and with the State seal affixed. The officers and soldiers of the fort sent her their thanks, accompanied by the more substantial reward of a purse containing two hundred and eighteen dollars, and from all parts of the country letters and valuable gifts were sent to her as tokens of regard.

Through the heroic deeds of Ida Lewis, Lime Rock Lighthouse has become famous, and many noted persons have since then visited the place. Ida Lewis was appropriately called by some "The Grace Darling of America."

Amy Puetz is the author of *Uncover Exciting History: Revealing America's Christian Heritage in Short, Easy-to-Read Nuggets and Countdown to Christmas: Memory Making Stories and Activities for Every Day from December 1st to the 25th*. As a columnist for *Home School Enrichment* magazine she shares stories about historical events from a Christian worldview. She especially loves to dig for little-known stories that show God's providential hand. Visit her web site at [www.AmyPuetz.com](http://www.AmyPuetz.com). Join her mailing list and receive a free e-book! © 2010 Amy Puetz. This story originally appeared in *Heroines of the Past* e-zine by Amy Puetz.



# We Have Seen His Glory

*a study of the book of John, part 13*

1. Read John 20:1-2. What was Mary Magdalene's assumption when she saw that the stone had been rolled away?
2. Read John 20:3-10. What small details did John include? Why do you think he wrote about them? Are they important to the story?
3. Read John 20:11-18. Write out all the things that Mary Magdalene spoke in this chapter, through verse 18. Next to each one, write what emotions she was experiencing when she said it.
4. Read John 20:19-29. What does John include in this section to emphasize the miracle of the resurrection and the power of Jesus?
5. Read John 20:30-31. Taking the "you" in verse 31 as though John were writing specifically to you, write about how writings of John have impacted your life.
6. Read John 21:1-14. How did Jesus show that He was interested in the disciples as people and concerned for their needs?
7. Read John 21:15-17. What do you think Jesus was trying to communicate to Peter?
8. Read John 21:18-25. How was John's life changed because he encountered Jesus? How did his life bear the fruit of the transformation that God worked in his life?
9. Reflecting on what you have learned in the book of John, what comes foremost to your mind about how you are different because you have encountered Jesus?



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**Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.** John 20:29

# Letters from Rachel Starr Thomson

## A Samuel Generation

He was born as an answer to his mother's prayer; dedicated to God before he could walk. He was raised by the High Priest of Israel and grew to be a man of God, of whom it was said that God "let none of his words fall to the ground." He was a prophet and the last judge of Israel: the one who made way for the king, who anointed David to sit on the throne of Jerusalem.

His name was Samuel. Sometimes I think he and I have a lot in common.

You, too. Do you doubt it? You were born again in answer to someone's prayer. God chose you for Himself before you could walk. Chances are you've spent a lot of time in the Temple—in church culture, singing in the choir, memorizing your verses; listening to the sermon, maybe even preaching it. Your service has been sincere and real and God has accepted it. As to Samuel's unique place in history, as the man who stood in the gap between two eras . . . well, who can say what will come after us? We may be in the last days. We too prepare the way for our King.

But there's something in Samuel's story I'd like to point out: when God called him, in 1 Samuel 3:4, the boy who had served the LORD all his life did not recognize His voice. Does this mean that all of Samuel's years of service prior to this had been a sham, a series of empty, wasted years? No. He spent those years serving God, and God spent them preparing him to enter a whole new era in his spiritual life.

All the Sunday school lessons, principles, "right-thinking," good practices, Bible study, and seminary lessons in the world can never measure up to a single encounter with the living God. The one who sees God is forever changed.

Samuel's call was not the end of his walk in the supernatural. 1 Samuel 3:21 records that "the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel by the word of the LORD."

When I was fourteen, I had an experience similar to Samuel's. I was born into a Christian family with generations of believers on both sides. I grew up in church. Moreover, I was always inclined to take spiritual things seriously. As a nine-year-old I did my best to evangelize the neighbors. I tried to make myself cry over the crucifixion. I rededicated my life umpteen times throughout my childhood and early teens. I ruled in Bible trivia.

My family moved out to California and I found myself looked up to in youth group because I was so spiritual. I knew all the right answers; I tried to be obedient and live a godly life. But inside I was starving. Call me a melodramatic teenager (and I probably was), but I remember going to God in desperation one day and telling Him that if this was all there was, I was through. It was time to go my own way. As far as I could see, I had reached the limits of what Christianity had to offer—and it wasn't enough.

That same week I huddled in a dark room and listened to partygoers celebrating the New Year outside my window. Two words passed through my mind, frozen in empty significance: "You're alone."

And on the heels of that thought the Hound of Heaven came howling in. "You're not," said a new voice. "The Holy Spirit is here."

I can't explain what happened in that room in that moment. Amy Carmichael once described a similar experience by saying that "the darkness became light around me." I knew God was there. I could almost touch Him. The air that I breathed was joy and peace. I fell asleep in absolute peace, knowing with all my heart that He loved me and was with me.

Did that "spiritual high" last? Of course not. But I had been changed. In the next year, God began to open the floodgates and show me who He was. Scripture blazed to life. Praise songs burst into glory. Even the dust beneath my feet caused me to rejoice, because He had once walked on dust just like it! Today, the echoes of that time still shape my life. I cannot always feel God. Sometimes I doubt His word. But I know that I know that I know He is real—and I know that He is love. I know. I've been with Him.

Before Samuel was called, God told the High Priest Eli that "I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind" (1 Samuel 2:35 KJV). This is what I believe God wants to do in our lives. He is not looking for a group of people to keep a list of rules or agree with a set of propositions. He is looking for a people who will seek Him, who will love Him, who will know Him so well that they can do according to all that is in God's heart and in His mind! It is true, we can never achieve this on our own. No amount of prayer, praise, or service will reveal God to us. He can only reveal Himself. But I believe that He wants to do so—and that He will.

God is not interested in setting us on spiritual mountaintops for all time. He wants us to know the depths of who He is, and so we must go through deep places in our lives. Suffering and abundance, sorrow and joy, heartache and a cup that runneth over—all serve to reveal Him. We must open our eyes; we must look for Him, because He is looking for us. His first purpose is not to make us happy. His first purpose is to reveal Himself to us, and in so doing, to make us like Him.

The New Testament resounds with this great anthem. Jesus came to reveal the Father. The Holy Spirit comes to reveal Jesus. Paul's letters sing with the joy of one to whom the Lord had appeared. The writer of Hebrews urges us to "leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ and go on unto perfection," to follow Jesus beyond the veil into the Holy of Holies, into the very presence of the Living God (Hebrews 6:1, 19-20).

Thousands of years ago David, the psalmist and king, cried out to God to come and fulfill all of his deepest longings. "O God, thou art my God;" he said, "early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary" (Psalm 63:1-2 KJV).

My friends, my family, know that God has called you to this. "This is life eternal," Jesus said in John 17:3, "that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

Rachel Starr Thomson is the oldest of twelve children, a homeschool graduate, and the author of several books including the fantasy *Worlds Unseen* and its sequel *Burning Light*, *Tales of the Heartily Homeschooled*, *Letters to a Samuel Generation*, and *Heart to Heart: Meeting With God in the Lord's Prayer*. She is a believer in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and hope of the world, and she loves to write about His goodness and grace. Rachel loves long walks, good books, and the fellowship of God's people. She is an incurable tea-drinker and a counter-culture revolutionary who thinks life would be far, far better if we all chucked our television sets out the window. Visit [www.rachelstarrthomson.com](http://www.rachelstarrthomson.com)

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# A Message from My Heart

Interviews with women of God by Annalisa Perry

## A Talk with Bethany

Bethany lives in Texas with her husband Gregory.

### Why did you decide to start the amie network?

I wanted to do something to be of service to Christian homeschooled teenage girls. I respect them, believe in them, and appreciate the good they are doing in the world. I was one of them and I felt lonely a lot. I started the amie network to help them make friends with each other and realize that they aren't oddballs—or at least that there are a lot of us fellow oddballs out there!

### How has the amie network helped you?

I have made many good friends through my work with amie. I really appreciate the blessing of these people in my life. I have learned a lot of computer and organizational skills by necessity. (I regret that I never learned how to consistently get the issues out on time!) I've also benefited from writing articles for the newsletters about my own walk with God. I have realized that what I say applies to me as much as anyone else, and that I need to live up to what I'm asking other Christian young women to consider. Interacting with people younger than myself has been a good accountability check for me as I live and make decisions.

### What has to be done to send out an issue of amie?

These aren't in order because I did them in a different order every time: working with my contributing editors; choosing the topic for the cover article and Brain Bender and writing them; studying the Bible Study portion of scripture and writing the questions; placing and formatting everything and trying to make it fit into 6 pages (the fonts just keep getting smaller and smaller through the process); adding photos; asking Mev to proofread; making corrections (many of which involved periods and parentheses—don't ask Mev about this); buying stamps from our friendly neighborhood post office; asking my brother John to print the mailing labels; printing, stapling, folding, stuffing, labeling, stamping, sealing, and handing the box of ready-to-go "amies" to the clerks at our friendly neighborhood post office.

### Tell us about your assistant editor.

Mev is more than an excellent assistant editor; she is a wonderful sister and friend. We have played, talked, laughed, cried, and depended on each other our whole lives. She's been a true friend through every changing season—ready to listen to whatever I needed to talk about. She is one of my very favorite people to spend time with. She makes me smile and laugh and very thankful to have her for my sister. She has served as chief consultant for all aspects of amie, and made it much better than I could have by myself.

### What are some benefits and challenges of living at home after your graduate?

Benefits are more time with your family, spiritual and emotional protection, saving money, maintaining the skills needed to live and get along with other people, and certain opportunities to serve that wouldn't come otherwise. Challenges are not necessarily knowing what to do with this stage of life, becoming a grown-up individual in the same setting where you were a child, and learning how to relate to your family day-by-day as an adult.

### Can you list some lessons that helped you as you grew up?

Annalisa (who is a really wonderful, bright, and funny person, by the way) suggested that I answer this question: See amie articles. I can add a few tidbits here. Your parents love you and want the best for you. Cherish and nurture your relationships with your siblings. Trust God to know what He's doing. Wearing the right clothes isn't nearly as important as it seems. Don't restrict yourself to friends of your own age. Don't get caught in the trap of thinking that life really starts when (fill-in-the-blank) happens—live right now. Don't take your family for granted. Get to know God as your friend.

### Tell us about Gregory.

Gregory is my brand-new husband. He seeks to know God's truth and do what is right. He is intelligent and humble. He is friendly to everyone and lifts people up by the way he talks to them. He shows me that he loves me and he takes good care of me. He is a great person to have a conversation with and he makes me laugh. I really like being married to him.

### What are you looking forward to in 2010?

I'm looking forward to being with Gregory, learning my new role as Gregory's wife, new challenges in my work, keeping up with the family and friends I've moved away from, developing friendships in my new town, the trip to Scotland Gregory and I are planning, decorating our apartment, sewing things and reading things, and seeking God.

Annalisa is the eldest of eight children. She enjoys reading books, writing stories, talking to people, and spending quality time with her family. Annalisa and her family were missionaries in Germany for five years and now live in Arkansas. She enjoys homeschooling because it gives her independence and unique opportunities. She is in 12th grade. You can write Annalisa at [annalisaperry@yahoo.com](mailto:annalisaperry@yahoo.com)



## BRAIN BENDER answers (from p. 6)

Across: sister, Hebrews, penpals, Lowe, lighthouse, Mev, Samuel, tea, Germany, history, January, Standard  
Down: Cookeville, Mary, John, amie, Bethany, Haiti, newsletter, teenage

# BRAIN BENDER *One last workout, just for you*

## amie's last issue *Crossword*

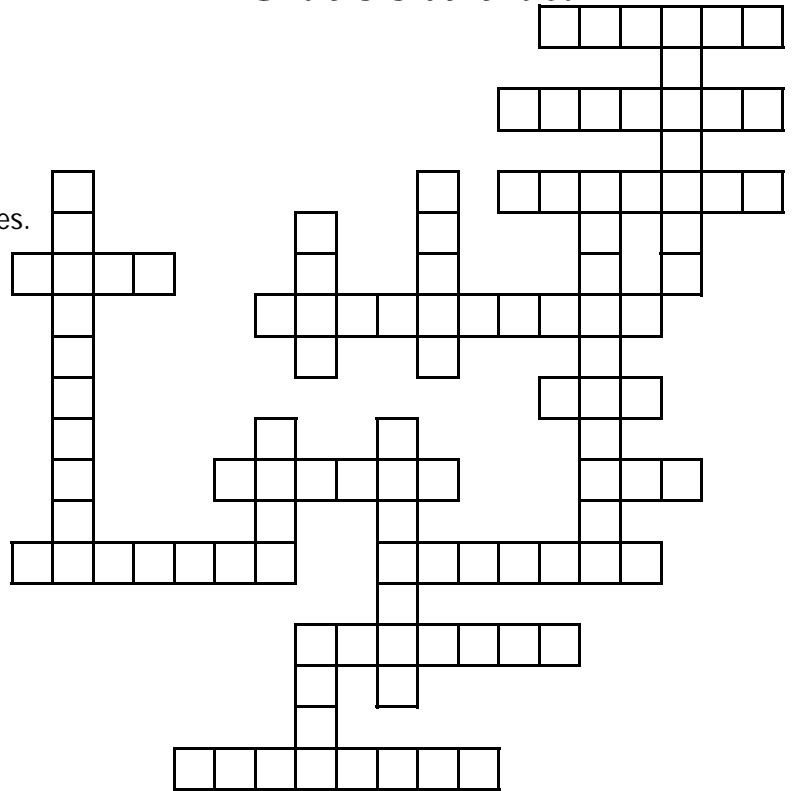
Across: (in order from the top of the puzzle to the bottom)

- Mev's relationship to Bethany.
- The theme Bible verse of amie is from this book.
- Members of amie mailed in request forms for these.
- Street name of amie's mailing address.
- Ida Lewis lived at one of these.
- Our beloved assistant editor.
- Rachel's article discusses his call.
- Rachel Starr Thomson likes this drink.
- Where Annalisa Perry and her family were missionaries.
- Amy Puetz writes about this.
- The last issue of amie was published in this month.
- The Bible version amie mainly uses is the New American \_\_\_\_\_ Bible.

Down: (in order from left to right)

- City of amie's mailing address.
- The first question of the Bible study is about her.
- Bible study is from this book.
- Is it a newsletter or a network?
- The person Annalisa interviewed this month.
- The destination of our Christmas Blessings gifts. amie is a monthly \_\_\_\_\_.
- The amie newsletter is designed for girls of this age.

Answers on page 5.



## Christmas Blessings 2009

Thank you! Christmas Blessings 2009 was a success! You gave generously, and we received a huge pile of daily supplies to send to the House of Hope orphanage for girls in Tabarre, Haiti. Please pray for them as they face the aftermath of the recent earthquake.

## *One Last Word*

To God: I offer these nine years of newsletters to You. If any good seeds have been planted in hearts, it is Your miracle. Bless these girls. Thank you for this opportunity.

To my contributing editors: Thank you for your help and for generously giving of your talents to challenge and encourage readers of amie.

To my mom Charlene: Thank you for helping me learn how to move things around on a computer and encouraging me about amie from beginning to end. And thanks for folding and stuffing.

To Mev, my assistant editor: Thank you for proofreading at a moment's notice, for telling me when an idea was good and when it wasn't, for hanging in there with me, and for folding and stuffing.

To Gregory: You are a good trade.

To all amie readers: Thank you for honoring me with your time and your trust. I really value your support, encouragement, and sisterhood in Christ.

Your amie, Bethany

