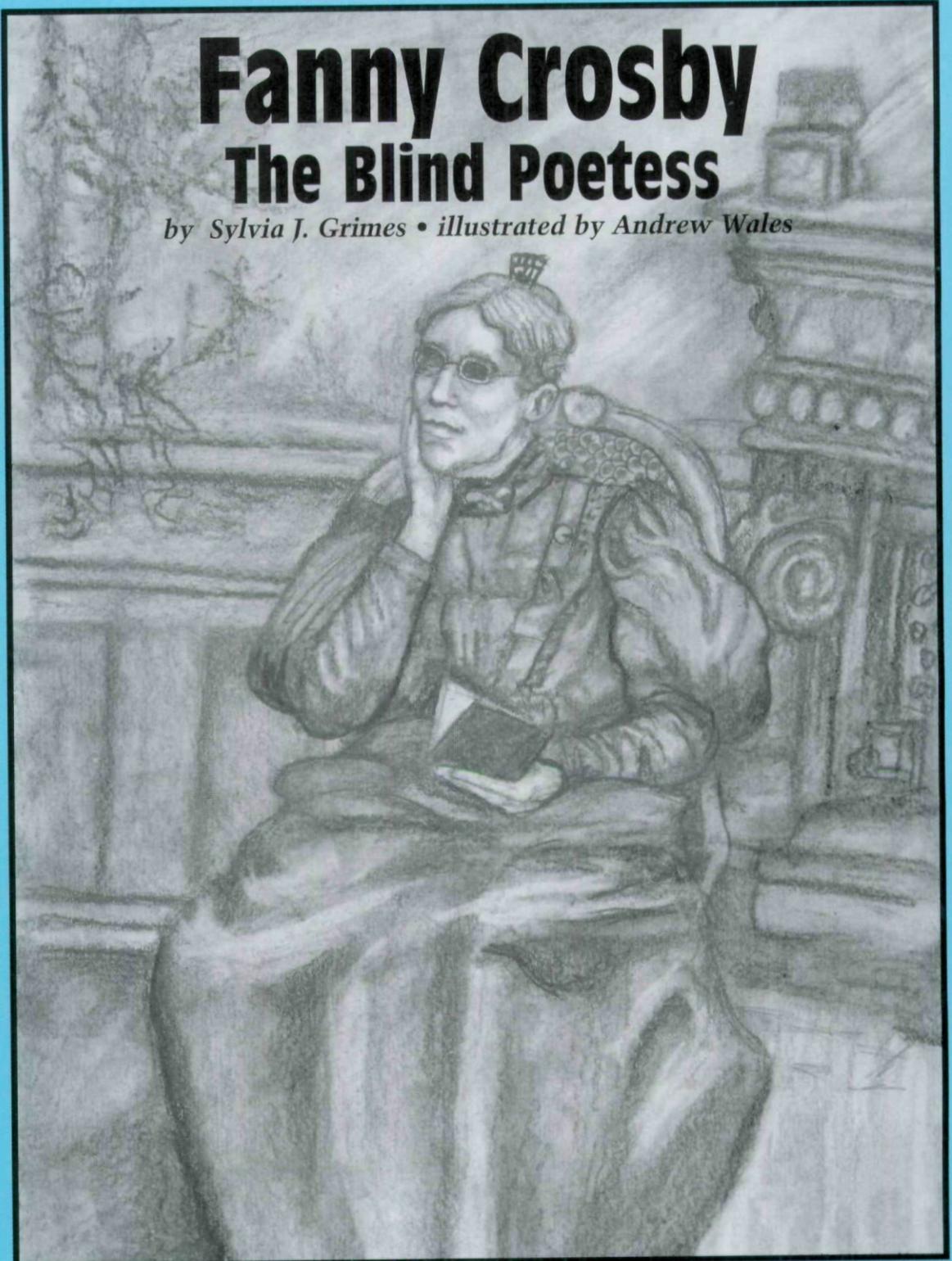


Fanny Crosby

The Blind Poetess

by Sylvia J. Grimes • illustrated by Andrew Wales



Oh what a happy child I am
Although I cannot see!
I am resolved that in this world
Contented I will be.

How many blessings I enjoy
That other people don't!
So weep or sigh because I'm blind,
I cannot, nor I won't!

These lines were Fanny's first, written when she was eight years old.

Frances Jane Crosby was born on March 24, 1820 in Putnam Co. NY. She wasn't born blind but developed a minor eye inflammation at six weeks. A doctor's careless treatment left her blind.

Fanny's father died when she was a baby. Her mother had to work. Fanny spent most of her time with her grandmother Eunice, who greatly influenced Fanny's life.

Grandmother quoted a Puritan proverb, "What can't be cured can be endured." Fanny repeated the saying in her 90s to people in trouble.

At the age of 14, Fanny enrolled in the New York School for the Blind. She was an excellent student in everything except math. In rebellion against it, she wrote: I loath, abhor, it makes me sick, to hear the word arithmetic!

Fanny became the school poet. She prepared a poetic greeting within 15 minutes notice, for the President of the United States. Then she recited it before President John Tyler and other guests.

In her day, Fanny was considered to be the greatest hymn writer in America. She wrote more hymns than anyone in recorded Christian history. God used her to pen over 9,000 gospel songs.

How did Fanny Crosby write her lyrics? "I never undertake a hymn," she explained, "without first asking the good Lord to be my inspiration in the work I am about to do."

Some of Fanny's most popular songs are "Pass Me Not," "Safe in the Arms of Jesus," "Blessed Assurance," "Near the Cross," "Rescue the Perishing," "Tell Me the Story of Jesus," "I Am Thine O Lord," "To God Be the Glory," "Praise Him," and "Saved by Grace." These songs have been translated into more than 200 languages.

Fanny was paid only about two dollars for each poem, later 10 dollars a poem. But she certainly earned eternal rewards through her ministry of song. Fanny's hymns brought salvation and comfort to many. We are blessed by them today.

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