

FOOTPRINTS

These are just two of the many variations of this poem with many being attributed to 'Author Unknown'. There was much debate as to the origins until a handwritten copy was discovered in 1984. Written by Mary Stevenson in 1939, it was authenticated some eleven years later and subsequently attributed. Many authors, including Margaret Fishback-Powers, have tried to claim ownership of the work, but none have been able to provide such significant proof. Mary is said to have originally penned it in 1936 when she was very young and distributed her handwritten copies to those who needed a comfort at low points in their lives. "Footprints" or "Footprints in the Sand" has since been seen in print by people the world over.

Version 1

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord.
Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.
In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand.
Sometimes there were two sets of footprints,
other times there were one set of footprints.

This bothered me because I noticed
that during the low periods of my life,
when I was suffering from
anguish, sorrow or defeat,
I could see only one set of footprints.

So I said to the Lord,
"You promised me Lord,
that if I followed you,
you would walk with me always.
But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life
there have only been one set of footprints in the sand.
Why, when I needed you most, you have not been there for me?"

The Lord replied,
"The times when you have seen only one set of footprints in the sand,
is when I carried you."

Version 2

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed
he was walking along the beach with the LORD.
Across the sky flashed scenes from his life.

For each scene he noticed two sets of
footprints in the sand: one belonging
to him, and the other to the LORD.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him,
he looked back at the footprints in the sand.

He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the LORD about it:

"LORD, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why when I needed you most you would leave me."

The LORD replied:

"My son, my precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

Mary Stevenson