

# BETWEEN MIRAGE AND MIRACLE

Selected Poems for Seasons, Festivals, and the Occasional Revelation

J. BARRIE SHEPHERD

This is a book to be dipped into, rather than read right through. It should provide fertile soil for the practice of daily prayer and meditation. Shepherd selects here a series of poems that seek to portray and even illuminate the life of the spirit. They begin by tracing the progress of a typical year—January through December—but also by observing the high points of “The Christian Year”: Lent-Easter, Pentecost, Advent-Christmas. Other, more generally themed poems follow, including poems that reflect on the tragedy of September 11, 2001, in which several of the author’s parishioners and friends lost their lives.

“If ‘the Christian faith needs a fresh vocabulary and new images to recapture that initial astonishment, to express its radical, world-shattering impact,’ then *Between Mirage and Miracle* is a good place to begin to fill that need from the seemingly endless hints of holy connections, perspectives, and even revelations ... This one you will find to be a good friend with whom you will want to have frequent, enriching conversations.”

—James Forbes, Union Theological Seminary

“Barrie Shepherd’s accessible poems invite belief and assent, as ‘with bright and beckoning uncertainty’ he explores ‘the task of noticing / whatever has been there from the beginning’ ... While admitting that ‘we had not known that dark could be so deep,’ he is ever available to ‘all the holiness that hides in daily things.’ These poems extend and transcend Barrie Shepherd’s revelations of reality. In their honesty, range, and clarity, they offer pleasures as well as truths.”

—Daniel Hoffman

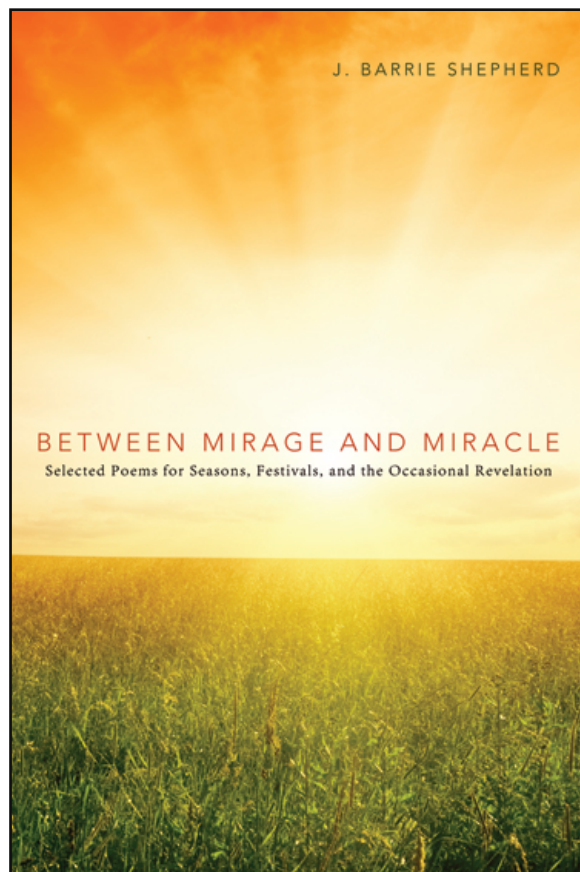
author of *Brotherly Love*, Pulitzer Prize winner, and recent Poet Laureate of the United States

“Barrie Shepherd’s poems are like the dark, bright blackberries that grow near his Maine island cottage—sweet, tart, and deliciously ripe. For forty years, this poet has been gathering clusters of wonder in the brambly terrain of daily life. His practiced eye helps us see in the illusion-filled and miracle-starved land-scape of ordinary circumstances, extraordinary things concealed in plain sight.”

—John S. Mogabgab, founding editor of *Weavings Journal*

“You’ll laugh and you’ll cry. Theology with verve. Pictures painted in words. Pithy sayings and extended dramas. All these and more await you as you ponder page after page of Barrie Shepherd’s collection of poems.”

—Jack Haberer, editor of *The Presbyterian Outlook*



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J. BARRIE SHEPHERD, Minister Emeritus of the First Presbyterian Church in the city of New York, has preached and lectured across the USA, Canada, the UK, Europe and Africa. He was named William Belden Noble Lecturer at Harvard in 1995 and Lyman Beecher Lecturer at Yale in 2002. Author of fourteen books, Shepherd’s poetry appears frequently in such magazines as *Weavings*, *Christian Century*, and *The New Republic*.

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