

The Light in Kajaani

This song was inspired by a mission experience as told by Gary Carter

February seventy-five, I came
To Kajaani, a quiet name
Tucked among the forests deep
Where winter's cold and snowfall sleep

Veli Keller by my side
First floor of a building, gray outside
Walls were drab and rooms were bare
But burning light was everywhere

Five souls, one brother, four sisters strong
Most in their fifties, seventies long
Their devotion fierce, their joy so bright
True strength's not measured by our might

But by the fire that faith ignites
In a humble room on Sunday nights
The light in Kajaani The light in Kajaani

Sister Korhonen stood alone
For twenty years, she made her home
Joined the Church in forty's age
When no other Saint had graced that stage

The Book of Mormon came serially
Translated, printed piece by piece, you see
Like drops of water to her thirst
Waiting months for every verse

Imagine treasuring each page like gold
Her faith sustained through winters cold
Occasionally to conferences she'd go
To see the Saints she'd come to know

Five souls, how her heart rejoiced that day
When the branch finally grew that way
Their love for gospel spilled in every act
Sacrament meeting, auxiliary classes packed
Shared meals that felt like family true
Sister Mähönen's piimäkakku too

The light in Kajaani The light in Kajaani
They cared for missionaries like their sons
cleaned our collars till they looked new,

every one pants pressed with tender hands
Shirts washed and ironed, understand

Their faith reached far beyond this town
To Switzerland they traveled down
A pilgrimage of sacrifice
For temple worship, paradise

In March of seventy-three, Rees came
With Pekka Holopainen's name
The branch was just as Carter said
But Sister Mähönen wasn't baptized yet

They taught her many lessons well
Rees transferred, but this is what I'll tell:
Soon after, she was baptized free
Part of that faithful family

Sister Riihonen was just a name
On a contact list, a quiet flame
Members tried to fellowship her in
Planted seeds, invited her in

Her journey slow, line upon line
Precept by precept, taking time
What held her back?
We couldn't say
Pride or pressure or doubt's own way

When Veli Allred became my friend
We continued working to the end
She studied hard, she prayed each night
She sought for answers, sought the light

Then quietly, the miracle came
One night after prayer, not quite the same
She dreamed and saw her father there
In a great building, white to wear
He served others, especially kin
In life, he'd been so proud within
Strong, reserved, not one to serve
But now with joy, this she observed

She realized it was temple ground
Her father doing the Lord's work now
This was her answer from above
Her heart filled up with heaven's love

June eighteenth, seventy-five
Sister Ritva came alive
In Oulu's waters, baptized that day
Two other sisters joined the way

On Veli Mottishaw's birthday blessed
Two days before mine, I confess
What greater gift could there ever be
Than souls set free eternally

She became a pillar standing tall
In the branch and Oulu's call
Brought her best friend to the light
Who brought family members bright

Years later on FamilySearch
I'd see She'd been faithful, temple frequently
Performed the work

Forty years went flying by
When Rees received an email,
my President Watson wrote to say
Sister Riihonen told him one day

"My conversion began," she said with tears
"When Veli Rees gave a prayer," through the
years
She remembered that prayer so clear
Though forty winters had appeared

"Because of your one prayer," Watson wrote
"Many now enjoy the gospel's hope
You weren't even aware," he said
Of the seeds that you had spread

A seed planted in seventy-three
Harvested in seventy-five by me
Missionary work's a tapestry
Woven by many hands, you see

September 2018 came round
Rees returned to that holy ground
The branch had grown to fifteen, twenty
strong
Those faithful members had moved on

But the Spirit Carter described
Was still present, still alive
Even in a brighter building new
The light of Kajaani shone through

The branch president said with care
"Sister Riihonen can't be there
Her health is failing, mind unclear
But I visit with sacrament here"
"Would you like to join me today?"
"Yes!" said Rees without delay
The president blessed the bread so white
Rees passed it in the sacred light

She didn't recognize his name
Her memory lost to age's claim
But the Spirit there was strong and true
The light of Kajaani shining through

From one prayer to generations blessed
From five souls giving their very best
Sister Korhonen standing alone
To a branch that's grown and grown

This is the light in Kajaani
A handful of Saints who helped us see
That true strength is not in numbers found
But in devotion, holy ground
In a gray and humble room
A spiritual home dispelled the gloom
Built with joy and faith ablaze
The light in Kajaani Through all our days

The light in Kajaani Still shines always
The light in Kajaani The light in Kajaani
Forever and always The light in Kajaani