

SHINING THE LIGHT

“So, how did you get the idea for *Fades the Light*?”

Scripture says that before the foundation of the world, God created each of us with a specific purpose in mind. I’m convinced mine was to write this book. Perhaps that’s why it’s been such a struggle and such a long time in the making. The seeds for *Fades the Light* were planted in my heart nearly fifteen years ago when my youngest son was diagnosed with PTSD after a tour in Iraq. Frustrated with the VA’s secular counseling and treatment methods, I knew there was a story to be told about the spiritual aspect of trauma and the need to include God in the healing process.

I made some preliminary notes in May 2014 about possible titles, characters, and scenes. I referenced Habakkuk 3:8, a verse about the dilemma faced by Christians who believe in a sovereign, just, and good God but who see a different reality in a world that too often seems governed by disorder, pain and evil. From there, I landed on the working title, *Rage Against the Rivers*, which seemed appropriate for my protagonist’s attempt to make sense of the chaos in his life and for the collateral damage done by PTSD.

By June 2015, I had a 60,000 word, detailed but rough, outline. By March 2016, I finished the first draft but the theme had shifted slightly, becoming more about identities—lost, stolen, and recovered—and the title no longer resonated. For months, I struggled to find a new title and verse that conveyed both the military and spiritual aspect of Mac’s struggle, necessary for me to crystallize the themes and symbolism I wanted to layer into the next revision.

Eventually, I junked my first chapter and rewrote the opening scene about an anonymous soldier at his buddy’s funeral where the eerie sound of “Taps” haunted him—and me. When I researched the history of the melody, I learned it was written and first played to honor the fallen during the Civil War. Although there are no official lyrics, various people have put words to the twenty-four simple notes, and numerous versions exist. The one that struck me included the lines, “Day is done. Gone the sun, from the lake, from the hill, from the sky ... *Fades the light.*”

I immediately thought of a photograph I’d taken of the sun setting over the lake from the top of the bank at my parents’ home. The memory of its waning light reminded me of Isaiah 60:20, “Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; The Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow shall end.”

Fades the Light is a story intended to honor military service and sacrifice, to encourage those living in the darkness of trauma and whose hope may be fading, and to shine bright the healing power of Jesus Christ.