

## FRIENDS

My friends are the people I've cried with,  
to whom I have poured out my heart,  
who love me in *spite of* instead of *because of*.  
From them I will never depart.

My friends are the people I've laughed with,  
when laughing is just what I need.  
They share in my joys and my jokes and my songs.  
With them, I am happy and free.

My friends are the ones who have hurt me,  
and I have hurt them too.  
But with my friends, forgiveness abounds,  
and mercy, grace, and truth.

My friends are the ones I will stand with,  
for we can do nothing alone.  
With Christ in us, we walk hand in hand  
'til our Father leads us home.

—*Erin Gilmore*