Valparaiso University

The Cresset (archived issues)

2-2017

The Cresset (Vol. LXXX, No. 3, Lent)

Valparaiso University

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Finding the Book
David Heddendorf

The Towpath
Sarah Hinlicky Wilson

Reading Shirley Jackson
Michael Kramer

What the World Needs Now
Kevin Cawley

On Becoming Grief Outlaws
Jacqueline Bussie

What We Carry, and Lose, Along the Way
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VERSE

Sonder
Devon Miller-Duggan

City Planning
Cameron Lawrence

Baptism
Meg Eden

VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY
thecresset.org
Vol. 80, No. 3
On the front cover: Werner Juza (German, b. 1924). *For Freedom Christ Has Set Us Free*, 1963. Woodcut on paper, 4 3/4 x 3 5/8 inches (image), 9 3/4 x 7 1/4 inches (paper). Gift of Crossings Community and Rev. Dr. Edward and Mrs. Marie Schroeder. Used with permission of the Brauer Museum of Art, Valparaiso University.

Juza is a German artist who for a long time lived and worked in East Germany, expressing his ideas of change and liberation in the context of the church and Christian themes. The Brauer Museum is pleased to have seven Juza works in its permanent collection, two donated by Crossings Community and the Schroeders, and five donated by the artist himself.

On the back cover: *Camino de Santiago*, April 4, 2016. Photo by Fresco Tours via Creative Commons. Original at flic.kr/p/FEd4Tk

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**THE CRESSET** is published five times during the academic year (September through June) by the Valparaiso University Press as a forum for informed opinion about literature, the arts, and public affairs. Periodicals postage paid at Valparaiso, Indiana.

Postmaster send address changes to The Cresset, Valparaiso University, 1320 Chapel Drive South, Valparaiso, IN 46383.

Subscriptions: Regular subscription rates: $20.00 per year; Student/Senior subscription rates: $10.00 per year; single copy: $5.00. International subscriptions add $8.00. Subscribe online at www.thecresset.org.

Letters to the Editor: Readers are encouraged to address the Editor and staff at cresset@valpo.edu. Letters to the Editor are subject to editing for brevity.

Submissions: We encourage authors and poets to refer to our online submissions management system at thecresset.submittable.com/submit.

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whatever is **TRUE**

whatever is **NOBLE**

whatever is **RIGHT**

whatever is **PURE**

whatever is **LOVELY**

whatever is **ADMIRABLE**

if anything is excellent or praiseworthy
—think about such things.

*Philippians 4:8*
IN LUCE TUA

In Thy Light

Lost and Found

There's a theme running through this issue, but we didn't plan it. We didn't even notice, actually, until all the pieces were in place. Only then did we see it staring up at us from the pages: loss, everywhere you turn. From belts and sleeping bags (page 24) to unsung virtues (page 16) to Bible literacy (page 42) and interest in the Bible (page 4), to loved ones who have succumbed to death (page 22), this issue is full of loss.

But alongside all of that loss, this issue also proclaims the good news of things found. Sometimes these are the very items that had been lost—see Kevin Cawley’s essay, “What the World Needs Now” (page 16), for one such example. Sometimes new insights and identities emerge from the unrecoverable, irreparable loss of something else; Meg Eden’s poem, “Baptism” (page 41), and Jacqueline Bussie’s essay, “On Becoming Grief Outlaws” (page 22) bear witness to that. Sometimes items are not so much found as simply dusted off and retooled, as in the case of the music of Banda El Recodo in Josh Langhoff’s column (page 50) or in the recent film version of August Wilson’s Fences, reviewed by Charles Andrews (page 46). Some things seem to be found at the precise time when they’re needed most, as in David Heddendorf’s essay, “Finding the Book” (page 4).

As someone with remarkably poor navigational skills, I know that unless I follow detailed directions when I'm traveling somewhere new, chances are that I'll become lost myself. For that reason, a few lines from Joel Kurz’s essay, “What We Carry, and Lose, Along the Way” (page 24) rang especially true for me. In addition to the impressive list of losses he incurred during his pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago, Kurz mentions the inevitable, if occasional, experience of losing one’s way on The Way. “One appreciates the keen vigilance of traveling companions and local residents who whistle and point with their hands when uncertainty is obvious,” he writes.

Recent headlines have chronicled obvious uncertainty in our country and in our world. Contributors to this issue—our traveling companions—whistle and point, helping lead us back to The Way. They each provide clues that can help us get on the right track and facing the proper direction: “The times give us boastful billionaires. The Bible gives us voices that proclaim good news to the poor” (page 7). “We should not let fear unbalance us, but the wise do not repudiate caution” (page 18). “The cross shows us that God has a story of grief just as you do, just as each of us does” (page 23). “This is a resurrection story” (page 55).

May the losses you sustain this Lent lead to much rejoicing in what’s later found.

—HGG
Finding the Book

David Heddendorf

A close friend told me recently that he can no longer read the Bible. He isn't as angry as Frank Schaeffer, whose Why I Am an Atheist Who Believes in God kicked up a fuss a couple of years ago, but like Schaeffer he's the son of a Calvinist preacher and has spent a long time searching for an alternative path. Both of these men, along with countless other people, can no longer tolerate what seems to them the naiveté, sterility, and oppressiveness of certain approaches to the Bible. At some point they find they just can't read it anymore.

For each disaffected former reader of the Bible, there are many more who are simply indifferent or negligent. In The Invisible Bestseller: Searching for the Bible in America, Kenneth A. Briggs portrays the Bible as a book that practically everybody owns but hardly anyone reads. The reasons are unsurprising. Modern critical scholarship has eroded confidence in an inspired, infallible Word of God. Ancient cultures and customs prove daunting for today's reader. Perhaps most significantly, fewer Americans are reading much of anything they can't skim on a screen. Briggs surveys the diminishing role of the Bible in churches, and concludes that "Bibleless Christianity has become thinkable" (42).

If the Bible really is an "invisible bestseller," in Briggs's phrase, it's invisible because it's forgotten through disuse, the way a household object disappears when it drops out of our routine. It's virtually lost, whether we're looking for it or not. The Bible is like the little espresso maker my wife and I had, which might or might not reside in the cupboard beneath our kitchen counter. The high-maintenance machine made excellent espresso and cappuccino, and for a while we used it frequently. But the novelty wore off, and the thing got to seem like a lot of trouble. The whole idea of an espresso maker began to seem vaguely dated, a fad we'd left behind. Gradually it went from seldom used to never used, then from rarely thought about to forgotten. It became lost to us, much as if it had ceased to exist.

And Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." 2 Kings 22:8 (ESV)

I like to imagine Hilkiah and his assistants rummaging around in the temple—they were consolidating funds for repairs, following a period of neglect—and discovering the Book of the Law under a pile of old documents. I picture Hilkiah gazing in wonder at the dusty scroll, a rumored, nearly forgotten relic. He has stumbled upon the guiding light of his forefathers. How could it have vanished for so many years?

We've been re-discovering the Bible ever since, periodically re-introducing it in some novel guise, or as a cure for lassitude and drift—Good News for Modern Man, Bible museums, ministries like Back to the Bible. Often these endeavors involve some form of public reading, or corporate reform, or a return to sound doctrine, much as when, following Hilkiah's discovery, the king reads the law before the people, or as when Ezra reads to the assembly in Nehemiah 8. Online reviews about Briggs's book focused predictably on Americans' declining knowledge
of the Bible. We've misplaced the Book, these stories warned, and our ignorance of its contents proves it.

Such recoveries emphasize the role of scripture as "the sole rule and norm of all doctrine," as the Formula of Concord puts it. We must re-learn what the Bible teaches and commands, securing our mastery of what it says. To this end, we can listen to the Bible in church services or over broadcasts. We can hear biblical teaching proclaimed by institutions of various kinds. As a matter of fact, when it comes to acquiring "knowledge of the Bible," we don't need to read it at all.

Of course instruction in the Bible by faithful teachers and preachers is an essential corrective to "Bibleless Christianity." Explaining biblical knowledge will always be a vital Christian practice. But knowing what's in the Bible just isn't the same as picking up that dusty volume from the bedside shelf and reading it, word by word and phrase by phrase.

The modern habit of silent reading, as opposed to the corporate hearing practiced in ancient times and today, deepens our experience of the Bible. It slows it down, planting words in our minds where they reverberate over a lifetime. By silent private reading I don't necessarily mean personal devotions—which, often guided by a well-meaning pamphlet, or by our own familiarizing, categorizing tendencies, can become as automatic as an unimaginative Sunday School curriculum. Private reading, practiced at home rather than in the pew, engages our authentic weekday selves. Intimate, concrete, and uncensored, it adds spontaneity to our patiently imbibed doctrine. Alone, we read as poets and artists read. With those bold, unlicensed scavengers we ask, "What moves me here? What can I use?"

Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." 2 Kings 22:10 (ESV)

MY FIRST CRISIS OVER READING THE Bible came during the early 1980s, when I was in grad school. Without actually confronting in any systematic way the thorny challenges to scripture, I sensed that my childhood faith, based on an unquestioning trust in the Bible, put me at odds with my new intellectual milieu. I knew I was different from my secular peers, and I became increasingly uncomfortable with that difference. (Perhaps "miserable" would be a better word.) So I did what any good graduate student does. I read a book.

I found Bernard Ramm's *After Fundamentalism: The Future of Evangelical Theology* in the "New Arrivals" section of the library. The title

Alone, we read as poets and artists read. With those bold, unlicensed scavengers we ask, "What moves me here? What can I use?"

alone enthralled me. Ramm's book is a brief, readable, and candid introduction to Karl Barth. ("Fourth, Barth can be boring" (32).) Ramm contends that Barth rescues orthodoxy from irrelevance by facing up to the Enlightenment and reckoning with its scientific criticism. Barth thus attempts to preserve evangelical theology without resorting to obscurantism, "the denial of the validity of modern learning" (19). Obscurantism, Ramm argues, "is a losing strategy in the modern world" (27), making some such undertaking as Barth's essential.

I didn't embrace this approach so much as throw myself upon it like a drowning man. "Losing strategy" described my growing sense of my graduate school experience. Every day, in my courses and reading, I absorbed a witheringly secular view of the world while clinging to a different view derided by the first. Not only that, I was dating a liberal Catholic woman—destined to develop a marked taste for espresso—who asked a lot of awkward questions, to the dismay of my rock-ribbed church friends. I figured Barth could help me survive the academy with my faith intact, while at the same time he would annoy certain evangelicals who were getting on my nerves.

It was a partial, messy solution, but it got
me through a rough time. Exactly how Barth reconciled orthodoxy and the Enlightenment was never quite clear to me. I tried to read his radical, early *Epistle to the Romans,* but mostly I leaned on Ramm. Some time later I came across

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Barth's "Biblical Questions, Insights, and Vistas," an address from 1920 in his book *The Word of God and The Word of Man.* In that address Barth offers a homely analogy:

We all know the curiosity that comes over us when from a window we see the people in the street suddenly stop and look up—shade their eyes with their hands and look straight up into the sky toward something which is hidden from us by the roof. Our curiosity is superfluous, for what they see is doubtless an aeroplane. But as to the sudden stopping, looking up, and tense attention characteristic of the people of the Bible, our wonder will not be so lightly dismissed. (62)

In the thirty years or so since I first read that passage, its simple, mysterious force has sustained my reading of the Bible. I still don't have answers to questions about authorship, dates, and manuscripts, but I sense with Barth that the writers I've been reading and hearing my whole life are bearing witness to a transcendent reality. The comforting words of the Psalms, the stirring exhortations in Hebrews, the spare, stern accounts in the Gospels—as Barth says of Paul's epistles, "I seem to see within so transparent a piece of literature a personality who is actually thrown out of his course and out of every ordinary course by seeing and hearing what I for my part do not see and hear" (63).

Today a different crisis looms, one much broader than my personal uneasiness about the Bible. Where Barth points to the timeless vision of the biblical writers, this new crisis demands a response within our times. Writing in 1983, Ramm remarks, "We are at the threshold of a great revolution created by the combination of the computer and electronics" (40). For better or worse, we are living in the midst of that revolution. One of its effects has been to transform the way we think and read, including the way we think about and read the Bible.

Numerous books and articles have examined and lamented the re-making of consciousness by digital devices. One piece that has received a great deal of attention is Andrew Sullivan's long *New York* magazine essay from September 2016, "I Used To Be a Human Being." Drawing on Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age,* Sullivan writes that the current decline in religious faith stems less from science than from the sheer drowning out of spiritual impulses by high-tech distraction and buzz. We can't hear our own thoughts, let alone the voice of God. As Briggs's findings about the "invisible bestseller" make clear, Bible-reading is one more casualty of this assault on contemplation and the inner life. In the information deluge
that Ramm and many others foresaw and that has now arrived, the Bible might be vanishing with barely a ripple.

Just when developments in technology have reached this critical stage, a stunning presidential election has convinced further millions that we live in extraordinary times. For many in the voting majority that opposed Donald Trump, his rise prompts some basic, urgent questions: “What can I do? What should I do?” In the Old Testament, a similar sense of a decisive moment prompts Mordecai to ask the reluctant Esther, “And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14 ESV) Mordecai’s words—such a time as this—echo today in newspapers, internet articles, and countless anxious conversations. The nation seems to have reached an unprecedented turning point.

It might be a good time to re-discover the Book. As phones and tablets claim more of our attention—as power and wealth are exalted, as Creation and the poor are threatened—the Bible cuts against the grain, subversive and radically countercultural. The times say stay connected, get followers, get likes. The Bible says “Be still, and know that I am God.” The times say look what’s trending. The Bible says “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” The times give us boastful billionaires. The Bible gives us voices that “proclaim good news to the poor.” If the Bible once seemed a boring, oppressive instrument of the status quo, it’s hard to see it that way now. The Bible rebukes hollow technology and exploitive policies, as well as the wistful adherents of “Bibleless Christianity.” The Bible, at such a time as this, makes fresh, relevant reading, at once explosive and reassuring. It’s only waiting for us to find it.

David Hedendorf lives in Ames, Iowa. His writing has appeared frequently in The Southern Review and Sewanee Review.

Works Cited


ACEQUIA

He bleeds the running ditch to soak the pasture. The farmer, shovel-armed, digs trenches where the water doesn’t want to cover and masters the blue to green his gold high desert square.

Once, Tiwa hunted hares on this sagebrush mesa. Now blue fingers crawl through dust, and might is mud all day. The summer sun’s eraser would scribble ought on his land and water right.

A cloud on one ridge ten miles out, a bush of smoke, of burning forest from a lightning strike last night, now speaks up with a sudden rush of wind. Where there’s fire there’s smoke—ghostlike.

White, throbbing fists of storm clouds threaten rain. His dark indignant muscles flex like Cain.

John Poch
USED TO HAVE A SINGULARLY LONG AND skinny backyard, thirty-six miles from end to end and about ten feet wide: the towpath along the Delaware and Raritan Canal. Sometimes I shared it with others, on Sunday afternoons with the leisurely sorts and at either end of the workday with the jogging sorts. The canal was dug by Irish immigrants in the 1830s, and for the next hundred years or so mules and boats toted coal up the canal from the Delaware River at Bordentown to the Raritan River at New Brunswick.

The mules are gone now. Instead there are painted turtles ranging from an inch to a foot in length, perched on fallen logs in the river amidst brightly labelled debris, tipping themselves off with a panicky little plop at the slightest passing glance. The fish didn’t mind human company; they were more worried about the black snakes, long enough to look uncommonly dangerous to a jittery homo sapiens. In fact, those snakes are pure pescatarians. I imagine they waited on the bank and darted their heads like spears into the water to snatch the catch of the day. I never did see this happen, but I often saw the result, a motionless black coil with jaws clamped around a fish whose heart and gills beat uselessly until, after a long interval, death and the snake won. It was the chief instance of nature, on my towpath, not being cute.

Of course, cute is no guarantee of nice, either. It is tremendously hard not to attach moral significance to everything, that being the peculiar burden of our species, meaning- and morality-makers that we are to a fault, so not even wildflowers escape. That ten-foot-wide strip through overdeveloped New Jersey bristled with flora, and I came to love the hunt for new flowers season by season, learning their myriad popular names and stubbornly shunning the unmusical Latin ones. In some cases my delight was righteous and good. Jacks-in-the-pulpit (renamed, by an offended girlfriend, Jills-in-the-pulpit), skunk cabbage, yellow and sweet white and violet violets, spring beauties in spring, exploding touch-me-nots in autumn, pilewort to cure your “piles” (read: hemorrhoids), mayapples like cocktail umbrellas, blue vervain like fireworks, trout lilies with blotchy spots on the leaves like those of the eponymous fish: all nicely native, unintrusively reseeding themselves year after year.

But the jacks-in-the-pulpit were johnnycome-latelys in my personal quest for flowers. First I learned the truth about chickory: invasive; and then common and English plantains: invasive; then garlic mustard, black mustard, Japanese honeysuckle, creeping charlie, daylilies stretching like little children wanting to be picked up, taller-than-
me purple loosestrife, butter-and-eggs, masses of multiflora roses—invading, invasive, invasive, and far more pervasive than the nice natives. No one would defend cheap and sleazy dandelions in their noxious fecundity, but what of the innocent-looking oxeye daisy, whose demure petals spoil the flavor of milk? Farmers dub the orange hawkweed “devil’s paintbrush” and the yellow kind “king devil,” but I defy you to find a cheerier field than one sown with the pair of them. And all too many of the nice, well-behaved flowers are invading foreigners too, if a little less aggressive toward the indigenous: Queen Anne’s lace, periwinkle, shepherd’s purse, dame’s rocket, deptford pink, bladder campion, asiatic dayflower, crown vetch, yellow and white and white sweet and red and hop clover, heal-all, lady’s thumb, moneywort, buttercups, Indian strawberry, moth mullein and plain old mullein, corn speedwell, deadly nightshade, birdsfoot trefoil. My skinny backyard in diminutive New Jersey was quite the international crossroads, with low tariffs and tolls for seafaring botanica.

The trees remained largely innocent. My heart was always with the sweetgums, decked out in spiky gumballs, for their most spectacular of all fall foliage. Sweetgums turn colors that sugar maples have never even heard of, kaleidoscopically all in one leaf, red orange yellow green (skip blue) but yes, purple! and a demure splash of brown, a respectful nod to imminent death. Locusts drop their pods, shellbark and shagbark hickories their nuts, always wormy; squirrels skitter and store them away, forgetting where they put 90 percent of them. Squirrels are not very smart. But like the trees they are innocent.

There was one tree that was not so innocent, though, because it was not a tree. This sinister specimen was the remaining trunk and principal limbs of a former tree, its personal identity card with genus and species long since lost, strangled to death by another favorite resident of the towpath: poison ivy. Poison ivy is deceitful, a shapeshifter, refusing to be one thing or another, sometimes a vine, sometimes a bush, sometimes a flowering plant, and sometimes, as in this case, a tree. The vine had wound around the dead trunk, shot down every limb, and drooped over, forming the most inviting canopy, the Parisian café of trees, leaves gleaming with the unnatural sheen of poisonous things, appealing to the media-saturated eye unless you were savvy enough to prefer matte everything when going au naturel. It was a wicked tree; once I knew it for what it was, I always passed it by with a sneer and rejoiced to see it finally collapse of its own dishonest weight.

Birds, for their part, have something to learn about improved gender relations in our day and age. They insist upon highly neanderthal notions of male superiority, and I fell for it every time—give me a male over a...
female any day. I am a sucker for color and glitz if it is on a feather and not on a lying leaf. Along the towpath red-winged blackbirds flash their targets, flickers fly with their undulating white bottoms, woodpeckers of the downy and red-bellied (which is really red-capped) variety twinkle in their black-and-white ginghams with Sunday-best red hats. The female red-bellied woodpecker is decently, if not flashily, arrayed; I know this because I kept a perfect specimen, found dead and intact, in my freezer for several months until I found the time to draw her. She had a lovely splash across the back of her head and I decided not to resent her for not being a male. But I was grateful at least for the good example set by the swallowtail butterflies to their fellow winged things—the blue females are much more alluring than the pedestrian yellow males. And I am glad that the generic names for ducks (mostly mallards on the towpath) and geese (noisy, prolifically defecating Canadas) belong to the females, the males being the ones who need the specialist terms: drakes and ganders.

Mammals were more elusive. A muskrat built his winter hut near my section of the towpath some winters back, and on blue-and-white afternoons out for a walk, the sun about to set at four, I'd see him shimmying through the water with his snaky tail wiggling behind him. Once I saw a deer pee, which is an astonishing sight, quite beyond description. Mostly I spotted mammals dead or dying: a shrew, a half-eaten raccoon, a fallen baby possum with fly larvae already laid in its poor little ear, whom we rushed off to the wildlife refuge but to no avail. Such encounters provoked unpleasant thoughts of mortality. By contrast, the invasive plants were relentless witnesses of hope.

And then there was the canal itself. It was unflappable, impassible, so still that when the wind was blowing you couldn't even tell which way the water was flowing. Bleached limbs of the dead trees like bones spiking out of the ground, resigned to the inevitable.

Whenever I'd walk alongside the canal, I would always be struck by the fact that I am natural and it is not. It would rather have been seeping all across the countryside. It yearned to be the swamp it was meant to be but instead was hedged in on either side by unnaturally straight boundaries and flowed on with unnatural calm. The canal was a compromised piece of nature, offering asylum to invasives and charlatans, but I was the indigenous, anthropomorphizing, moralizing homo sapiens on the towpath, occupying unimpeded my proper place in the natural scheme of things. ♦

Sarah Hinlicky Wilson is editor of the journal *Lutheran Forum* and adjunct professor at the Institute for Ecumenical Research.
SONDER

n. the realization that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own...
—The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows

Perhaps a methodology of wings. Breathe in.
Perhaps a methodology of sadness. Breathe out. Remember to breathe out.
Perhaps you remember every human surface can be scraped, torn, burnt, bruised, opened, broken into blood.
Perhaps you remember every human holiness can be broken—opened like a wound for flies, closed too tightly for breath to enter.
Perhaps you remember every human-ness can be broken, and will be.
Perhaps you say every body is sacred as light. Breathe in.
Perhaps you come to belief that every body is sacred as light, its atoms bumping into and fleeing each other, making light without explosion. Breathe out.
Perhaps HolyHolyHoly contains creation, redemption, sanctification.
Perhaps these are one Body—each Body expresses, rescues, breathes.
Remember the bodhisattva chooses to remain among. Breathe in.
Remember you need not be a bodhisattva to choose. Breathe out.
Perhaps you remember you, each and each, breathe each others’ air, alive.
Perhaps this is flight, ohmylove. Perhaps in my mouth/heart/breath/intention you are become verb.

Devon Miller-Duggan
And he brake that gallant ship in twain,  
And sank her in the sea.  

—last lines from “James Harris,  
The Daemon Lover,” epilogue to  
“The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson

I GROW CONCERNED ABOUT SHIRLEY JACKSON. Perhaps I grow sad. I suppose that seems rather odd—she’s been dead since just before my birthday in 1965, before my freshman year in high school. And, after all, the reputation of the woman and the respect she’s earned as a writer depends little on my opinion or on my concerns. But I find myself concerned.

Some weeks back, I read a review of Ruth Franklin’s recent literary biography, *Shirley Jackson: A Rather Haunted Life* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2016), and thought I ought to read it. I’ve been working with my own short fiction the last few years, and Jackson is a writer whose style I admire and recognize as important. I am glad I am reading this. Franklin writes skillfully and well, having conducted innumerable interviews with individuals involved in Jackson’s life still living, and having carefully worked through what must be volumes of correspondence and relevant papers. The author includes meaningful anecdotes and photographs, allowing the reader to grasp this significant mid-twentieth century American voice. When she quotes Jackson’s own written notes, Franklin maintains the prose writer’s idiosyncratic lack of capitalization and occasional misspellings.

I’m getting to know this writer whose story “The Lottery” I first read in high school. I read it again in college. I taught it years ago when I taught freshmen and sophomores in high school English.

I’m accompanying my biography reading with Joyce Carol Oates’s excellently edited *Shirley Jackson: Novels and Stories*, reading odds and ends as they come up in Franklin’s discourses.

And so I find myself this morning feeling concern about this woman I am getting to know.

For more than forty years I taught English, literature and writing in a solidly Lutheran high school, the largest in the United States and arguably one of the best. Over thirty years ago, when I taught freshmen and the school’s English program lacked the books necessary for a rock-solid language arts program (in those days the school supplied texts for students), I remember a conference, an oral book report, with a student, Sue Brockschmidt. She demonstrated stellar mastery of Jack London’s novel *The Sea Wolf*. I began to close our conversation with, “So, anything else?” That remains a standard final question for me, allowing conversation outside my agenda. Usually the response was, “No,” and the discussion ended. But Brockschmidt said something that caught my imagination and possibly changed my perspective.

She looked me squarely in the eye and said, “Yeah. I wish I could tell Wolf Larson, maybe Jack London, about Jesus.” I may be paraphrasing, but her words were close to that.

I’m Lutheran, a believing Christian, and the school’s mission statement required I incorporate Christian doctrine into my instruction. That was easy with English. Some writers—John Donne
—demand it. Most—Shakespeare, Dickens, the Beowulf author, even George Orwell—encourage or allow it. Some engage the Christian literature classroom in dialog. Perhaps foremost here would be Mark Twain, whose later works are openly hostile to Christian belief. I’m finding Jackson perhaps stands shoulder to shoulder with her nineteenth-century Missouri compatriot.

While Jackson did not champion feminism, this is the era and these the conditions that fostered Betty Friedan’s The Feminine Mystique. Jackson’s stories often feature the very plight that Friedan documents.

Shirley Jackson grew up in the 1920s and 1930s in California and then New York. Franklin recounts that Shirley was never the cute little girl her socialite mother, Geraldine, wanted. Her father, Leslie, seems typical of many men of that era, giving full rein over household affairs and child rearing to his wife. Franklin also assures her readers that Jackson’s mother’s correspondence throughout the writer’s adult life showed continual disapproval with much of what her daughter did as wife, as mother, and even as writer. Franklin highlights the positive, cheery tone of Shirley’s regular letters to her parents as evidence of the accomplished writer’s never-ending desire to win her mother’s favor.

Meanwhile, Shirley Jackson’s marriage to the scholar-writer-critic Stanley Hyman did not do her much better. Hyman was fascinated with manifestations of mythology in culture and literature. Jackson saw much of her best writing as precisely that, retelling of old stories and themes in a more modern setting. A relationship that each of its members and most of their friends assumed would lead to brilliant collaboration led instead to increased reduction of this woman’s self-esteem. Hyman cheated on her openly and routinely during their courtship and their marriage. Jackson more than tolerated it. In an era where Franklin records that society believed the only problem a housewife should have was keeping her husband, Shirley Jackson juggled running a household, mothering four children, and, often, supporting her family through her writing.

But the issue deepens. More often than not, Jackson received one-third to one-half the money paid to comparable (even critically-judged inferior) male writers. The famous incident of her admission to the hospital for the birth of her third child, Sarah, and the orderly’s refusal to write down “writer” as Jackson’s occupation—he insisted on filling the blank “housewife”—pretty well sums up the times. By this event, Jackson’s story “The Lottery” had rocked the sensitivities of the New Yorker crowd (the story remains one of the most significant pieces that magazine ever published). She had just finished polishing the manuscript for The Lottery, one of the best selling short story collections to that point in American letters.

While Shirley Jackson did not champion feminism, this is the era and these the conditions that fostered Betty Friedan’s The Feminine Mystique. Jackson’s stories often feature the very plight that Friedan documents. Her women are obsessed with household chores; Tessie Hutchinson, the victim in “The Lottery,” arrives late to the event, defending her tardiness with “Wouldn’t have me leave m’dishes in the sink, now, would you, Joe?” Away from their home, women in Jackson’s stories are often agoraphobic (like Jackson herself during her later years). In one interview for a woman’s magazine featuring her stories, Jackson disparages her own writing, suggesting that it came easily, recreationally, that the real meaning in her life came from providing a home for her husband and her children.

No wonder, Franklin suggests, Jackson grew fascinated with witchcraft. Raised nominally Christian, her husband nominally Jewish, Jackson knew her Bible. At one point she and her husband spent a month’s worth of evenings reading the Bible to their children. But they read it as mythology, the stance of so many sophisticated intellectuals in her day and in ours.

At the time I read “The Lottery” in high school, I don’t remember any mention of its updated rit-
ual from pre-Christian vegetation myths. Nor do I remember my college writing mentor, one of the best teachers I ever experienced, pointing that out when I read it as a model for a short story independent study during my senior year. Later, after I had read Sir James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and Robert Graves's *The White Goddess*, and after I taught the story at a boarding school, I recognized that level as one of the "multitudinous" (a Melville word) potential interpretations of Jackson's tale. I shudder at the relationship between humanity and the pagan gods.

And I wonder if any deeply thinking person can have self esteem without understanding divine grace.

Yes, witchcraft promises power to women. But Jackson's James Harris, her Satan effigy, leads women astray. In "The Tooth," the odyssey of a young married woman from the country into New York to get an apparently abscessed tooth treated, the reader finds an ending where that woman runs away with Harris, a mysterious blue-suited man, either in drug-induced hallucination or given over to the devil and his false promises. The visions of beauty described by Jim in "The Tooth" are so similar to those in Child Ballad No. 243 ("I will show you how the lilies grow / On the banks of Italy"), which Jackson uses as Epilogue to her short story collection. At best, this is a sorry solace. Any deal with the devil in folklore and literature—and I suspect in real life—always leads to conviction and sentencing.

**AND THIS IS WHERE I FIND MYSELF.** I have concerns about Shirley Jackson's soul. I realize fully my place is not to judge; certainly I must own up to my own issues. And, as Protestant, as Lutheran, I do not find routine in praying for the souls of the dead. That becomes Jesus's glory. I cannot be aware of the state of heart in which Shirley Jackson died. As I write this, I haven't finished Ruth Franklin's book just yet, but I somehow doubt if anything there will fill that chasm. I'm just getting to the 1950s and Jackson's drug addictions.

But I did recently have a very gifted student, a writer. Her stories often thrive on witchcraft and the supernatural. I suppose, like so much else in this life, my obligation to Shirley Jackson, my student, and everyone else, comes in paying debts forward.

I believe that student has a healthy respect for herself. I know the world we live in, while still replete glass ceilings and double standards and pay inequities, has come a long way toward Christian equity ("There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female...for you are all one in Christ Jesus," Gal. 3:28).

And I know that one retired colleague's determination that his students every day hear the gospel (as simple as the words “Jesus loves you”) is a reality at the school I served. I know my student has been assured of God's grace again and again. And I did what I could to add to that.

But I would not be Shirley Jackson's teacher. Oh, of course, I wanted my students to write with her kind of mastery, her kind of craft. I still teach. I work with writing groups and others. But I deeply desire to meet with all the writers I've taught at some sort of heavenly writer's retreat, hanging out with C. S. Lewis, with J. R. R. Tolkien, with John Donne, with William Wordsworth. And I'll just have to wait to greet the many others in that Great Camp. And maybe, just maybe, Shirley and I can together rejoice in our Savior's overflowing grace.

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**Works Cited**


What the World Needs Now

Kevin Cawley

Tode had to walk the dog. I was visiting him from out of town and wanted to talk, so I went along. We found our way to the topic of What the World Needs Now.

Tode and I have known each other since high school. Tode earned a master’s degree in philosophy. I became a sometime teacher of rhetoric. So Tode expected to speak as the philosopher in our discussions, and knew that I would accept the role of sophist. Unlike some philosophers, Tode defended common sense. Like most sophists, in his opinion, I helped the dialog along by proposing uncommon nonsense in reply.

“So what does the world need?” I asked.

“Excellence, enthusiasm, and leadership,” he said.

“I would say mediocrity, apathy, and docility.”

“Oh? And why would you say that?”

The dog turned into the driveway and I never made it to a more serious exposition of the virtues of mediocrity, apathy, and docility. Many years later I still find myself thinking about what I could have said, what I should have said. I have decided to say it now. I do not plan to represent Tode’s views fairly: hard enough to present my views. Let him write his own essay.

How can we find out what the world needs if we ourselves belong to a culture that has gone wrong? We have lost many good things that we used to have. How can we find them again?

We can look for things presently considered bad that people used to consider good. We can look for words that have negative connotations that used to have positive connotations. We can look for names of vices that used to serve as names of virtues. We will find many candidates for study, among them mediocrity, apathy, and docility.

Mediocrity

The English word mediocrity comes from the Latin word mediocritas. In Latin, however, it means primarily the middle way between extremes, and rarely has negative connotations. In the tenth Ode of his second book of Odes, Horace characterized it as aurea mediocritas, golden mediocrity, and advised a friend to steer his ship on the middle course away from the dangers of the deeps, avoiding also the hazards of the rocky shore. He pointed out that the tallest trees come down in a storm, that lightning strikes the highest ground, that a modest home favors happiness as neither a hovel nor a palace can.

But Horace did not come up with this idea himself. Aristotle most famously made it the basis of his ethics. Plato’s Socrates also supports it, as did earlier and later Western philosophers, and Confucians and Buddhists in the East. Moral philosophers tell us helpfully that morality consists in choosing to do good and refusing to do evil. For practical purposes, the principle of mediocrity may prove more helpful in that it gives us at least a hint of the nature of good as a rejection of extremes.

The virtue of mediocrity applies outside of moral philosophy as well. In any occupation, any craft, any delight, mediocrity can guide us to avoid too much and too little, into the happiness of just right.
Excellence?

Tode was not defending an unpopular proposition when he spoke in favor of excellence. I hear about excellence frequently in political campaigns, commercials for fast-food restaurants, commentary on sporting events, and cheerleading from administrators in academic institutions. Excellence ranks high in the opinion of many.

Our pursuit of excellence makes us do strange things. Athletes take illegal steroids and shrink their sexual organs. Rock musicians turn the volume up on their amplifiers and damage eardrums. Parents spend long hours at work and neglect their families. In the name of excellence we sacrifice integrity, moderation, affection.

Aristotle et al. would have understood the English expression, “too much of a good thing.” Mediocritas means that too little or too much can make anything bad, that goodness lies in the middle, in moderation rather than excess.

Ordinary people who exercise moderately can achieve the health of mediocrity; star athletes who cheat with steroids cannot. Ordinary people who adjust the volume on their stereos to a moderate level can hold on to mediocre hearing longer than famous musicians who think that louder means better. Ordinary people who have time for their families practice mediocrity; successful workaholics can only claim to have achieved excellence as they sign their divorce papers.

A healthy respect for mediocrity can also foster amateurism. Amateurs do what they do out of love. In What's Wrong With the World G. K. Chesterton says that anything worth doing is worth doing badly. But our mania for excellence undermines amateurs. In sports, in music, in art, we now have easy access to what the best among us can do. Those who take excellence too seriously understand that they cannot do it themselves. They no longer play sports or musical instruments. They don't paint or draw or sculpt. They sit on the couch and watch their excellent contemporaries perform.

One of my professors in college, a poet named James Magner, once wrote on a paper of mine: “Next time put in more insights.” You might as well advise a baseball player who hits a single: “Next time hit a home run.” Or tell a modest Irish fiddler: “Next time play Bach in Carnegie Hall.” An obsession with excellence can only lead to failure for most people. If we do our moderate best without developing an obsession with excellence, we will probably end up happier than famous athletes or musicians.

A quick investigation of the etymology of mediocre reveals that it originally came from words meaning the hill (ocris) in the middle (medius). In the end I agree with Tode because I believe that true excellence actually consists in mediocrity, within the reach of all who dwell on bell-curve hill.

How Tode Got His Name

Tode and I met in high school at Divine Heart Seminary in Donaldson, Indiana. The faculty knew him as Ted or Theodore, but when he signed his name he wrote “T. Ode.” The students started calling him Tode—without malice. Tode treated everybody kindly, and did not inspire nastiness in his acquaintances.

I can't speak for anyone else, but when I said Tode I thought Toad. Only later, after an elementary German class, did the German meaning, Death, intrude. Still, nobody pronounced it as the Germans would. We always said Toad.

Apathy

The English word apathy comes from the Greek word apatheia. The word has two components: the second part comes from the Greek word pathos, which means suffering or passion; the initial a negates the meaning so that the word
means no passion, no suffering. The ancient philosophers known as Stoics concerned themselves with the pursuit of happiness. They recognized that we have no control over anything outside ourselves, that we can fall prey to misfortune at any time. But does unhappiness necessarily come with misfortune, or can we cultivate a virtue that will allow for happiness regardless? The Stoics taught that unhappiness or suffering comes from our unhealthy passions, from our emotional disturbance as we react to tribulations or to what Christians would call temptations. The virtue of apathy consists in an inner tranquility that allows for happiness in spite of circumstances that threaten to overwhelm us.

By definition, passion and suffering consist in what happens to us. The Stoics had a short list of passions for apathy to manage: fear and lust, pain and pleasure. At any time, and often unexpectedly, one of these might knock us off balance unless we have cultivated the inner tranquility that would allow for a rational response.

The early Stoics had nothing good to say about these passions, but later Stoics made the teaching less absolute. We should not let fear unbalance us, but the wise do not repudiate caution. We should not give in to lust, but the wise do not repudiate virtuous desires. We should not let pleasure rule us, but the wise do not repudiate joy.

The virtue of apatheia became part of the tradition of Eastern monasticism, and continues today as part of the formation of Orthodox monks. Later thinkers of various schools, including Christians, came to accept some of the Stoic doctrines, but often developed longer lists of passions. The early Christian monks of the Egyptian desert identified seven deadly sins: pride, greed, lust, envy, wrath, and sloth. All of these involve an initial passion, something suffered rather than something done, so all begin as temptations. They become sins only when apathy fails and we choose to commit ourselves to them.

We still commit all seven, but I'll limit myself to two. Consider adultery and road rage. The adulterer experiences a temptation, meets a person more exciting than a spouse, falls in love (according to the account given later to the spouse). Didn't plan to cheat. It just happened. But at the time of the initial temptation the adulterer had a choice, and apathy would have helped in the decision to resist the temptation. With apathy lacking in the adulterer, the damage spreads to the injured spouse and children, who find themselves overwhelmed with dark emotions unless they have apathy of their own.

Many of us heard advice from our parents about how not to lose our temper: count to ten. Our parents were unconsciously endorsing apathy, saying "Wait a minute: calm down. Don't act in the heat of the moment." Those who give in to road rage probably do not count to ten. They have not cultivated the virtue of apathy, which would certainly come in handy in their times of temptation. And so their victims need apathy to help them keep their balance.

In the pragmatic ethics of the Stoics, apathy can prevent any vicious action. When people behave viciously, their victims, if they have mastered the habit of apathy, can avoid acting viciously in response.

Most people today disagree with the Stoics. We do not view all emotion with suspicion. No doubt we want to avoid fear and pain, but we celebrate lust and pleasure. We like to be swept away by these passions, and expect them to bring us happiness. Come to think of it, we sometimes like to be swept away by fear. We watch horror movies. We visit haunted houses. We find terrorism fascinating.
Enthusiasm?

In recommending enthusiasm, I think that Tode had a thoroughly secular definition in mind. He did not mean religious enthusiasm, but the ordinary kind expected of sports fans and civic boosters. We should all work and play with enthusiasm, according to this view.

But we can hardly ignore religious enthusiasm. It plays a major part in the history of war. Fanatics use it in their recruiting, to persuade people to send money, or to volunteer for suicide bombing.

Politicians have found enthusiasm useful in their campaigns. A man who speaks with patriotic enthusiasm about making his country great again, about protecting it against incursions of foreigners, about preserving it from alien races and religions, can arouse similar enthusiasm in the voters. Once elected such a man can maintain the enthusiasm of his followers by keeping his promises. He can build walls, wage wars, send his enemies to camps, justify torture. This enthusiasm arises out of fear, one of the four passions identified by the Stoics.

We read about riots at European football matches: enthusiastic fans. And those civic boosters—don't they also want us to send money?

Sorry, I can't see this one as an example of virtuous moderation. I'll stick with apathy. Though it does not come from the philosophical tradition that recommends mediocrity, it can serve as a moderating influence when we find ourselves in danger of giving in to some nasty enthusiasm.

Perhaps, though, I merely lack enthusiasm for the word enthusiasm. I can see the value of engagement, and to the extent that Tode meant engagement when he said enthusiasm, I can agree that the world needs it.

How Tode Became a Lutheran

Students at a boarding school in Donaldson, Indiana, enjoyed weekend activities that allowed for a change of scenery. I remember playing soccer at Culver Military Academy, watching an intramural baseball game at Notre Dame, participating in the mania of Indiana high-school basketball at the lowest possible level, attending a performance of Shakespeare's The Tempest at Saint Mary's College, and going to many speech and debate tournaments at high schools and colleges around the state, including Valparaiso University.

For a debate or speech tournament we would have to get up early, sometimes as early as three a.m., drink bad coffee out of tall plastic tumblers, and stagger onto the school bus for a long ride in the dark. Tode had talent as a public speaker. He also had opportunities to hear speakers from other schools, and found himself particularly interested in one young woman from Hobart.

Once we accepted an invitation to the home of one of our competitors in Hobart, and I remember an especially pleasant evening gathered around the piano singing songs. For Tode these tournaments became mere background for his developing romance. In the summer after we graduated from high school, still teenagers, Tode and his young woman from Hobart got married. Their families did not approve. Tode came from a Catholic background, but his wife did not.

They settled in Illinois. Tode went to college. Together they raised two boys. They found that the Lutheran church in their town suited them best. And Tode became a close philosophical friend of their pastor, a man so wise that he admired my poems and sometimes used them in his sermons.

Docility

The English word docility comes from the Latin word docilitas, meaning teachability. The Latin word doctor means teacher. But no mat-
Docility qualifies as nothing more than a minor virtue in anybody’s book. Yet without it, and the humility it implies, know-it-all youth grows into know-it-all age and runs for president without ever having discovered the need for modest consultation with the wise.

Leadership?

I admit that we need leaders. But do leaders need leadership? This label has in my experience never had anything to do with what leaders need most. In the one business course I could not avoid, the professor, a master of the double *is*, would sometimes extend it to the triple or quadruple *is*. I remember her teaching on leadership because I recorded it word for word. “The most important thing about leadership is *is* *is* *is* followship.” She did not, however, define followship, and nothing she said made me think that she had docility in mind.

But we need practitioners of docility to lead us. A know-it-all might qualify as a demagogue, tyrant, or dictator, but would never make the cut as a philosopher king. And in a democratic republic, as in the business world, the chief executive needs to listen to underlings and learn from them.

All of this and more I might have said to Tode if we had gone walking with a younger dog, one with greater stamina in the philosophical enterprise. In high school we used to go for walks around huge rural blocks, and had time to solve the world’s problems in our sophomoric discussions. True, Tode’s solutions never resembled mine. But now, as always, I urge him to recognize that although I contradict him, we actually agree.

In his journal entry of May 24, 1853, Henry David Thoreau complains that he met Ralph Waldo Emerson, who insisted on claiming to disagree when the two of them were really in agreement. In June, Emerson’s journal accuses Thoreau of much the same thing. ✩

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CITY PLANNING
For Dave Harrity

There was no election, no voting booths' black curtains, the metal chink of rings sliding closed.
No appointment or inauguration to indicate the moment he had become the mayor of the city inside his life.

He woke one morning with keys in his hand, spent the day jangling into every lock, residents looking up from their televisions & ticker tape to say, So, you're the one. He soon found himself driving the neighborhoods, blocks of public housing, the power to condemn or endow like a perched bird on his shoulder, past high rises, empty warehouses, smokeless stacks of forgotten industry. All day he drove, gained a vision for the city, what to raze or remake—children's parks, the river cleaned up into a refracting countenance of moon, something for the people inside him to stroll alongside come summer nights. He could already see it, could hear the music on the restaurant verandas where everyone was dancing.

Cameron Lawrence
On Becoming Grief Outlaws

Bring Back the Black Armband

Jacqueline Bussie

IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY IN TAHITI, women in mourning used a shark's tooth to cut a small, deep scratch in their foreheads. The cut permanently scarred the woman's face, rendering it a grief-letter sent to the world, postmarked: "I have loved and lost." Similarly, in Victorian-era Europe, widows and mourners wore all-black mourning clothes or a simple black armband for as long as two years to signify their grieving state (Downton Abbey aficionados: remember when Daisy's husband died in the war, and she wore that black band on her arm for several episodes? Yeah, that.) What does it say about our culture today that we have no comparable custom for signaling our grief to others? I know these customs sound strange or even morbid, but isn't it more honest to show our scars than to pretend we don't have any? In stark contrast to honesty and armbands, our culture demands obedience instead to these "laws":

1) Don't wear your heart on your sleeve. (Vulnerability = weakness.)
2) Grieve in secret.
3) Apologize for tears.
4) Got scars? Hide them.

Though these stifling laws asphyxiate us with shame, secrecy, and loneliness, they still govern life with an iron fist in the upper Midwest, where I live and teach theology. To save my own life and hopefully that of others, I have turned outlaw.

My conversion to grief outlaw was a slow and painstaking process. When I was 20, my mom came down with early-onset Alzheimer's disease. She spent the next 17 years dying. She was my best friend—until she forgot who I was. For a long time, I extradited my grief underground. I didn't want to be a Debbie Downer. I didn't want to live in the jail of other people's judgment (especially the colleagues, acquaintances, and church folks who thought I should "move on," "get over it already," accept "God's plan," and "not grieve as one without hope").

But the life of lies and fake Barbie smiles wore me out. Eventually, I let grief back into its home country—my heart—and let my heart back on to my sleeve. These days, I long to bring back the black armband. I crave authenticity. I want to walk more softly around grieving people on days when they need me to, and for them—and others—to return the favor.

As a theologian, teacher, and person of faith, I want us to talk about the hard stuff. I want us to air all the dirty laundry we've taught never to air—questions without answers, anger at God, scars that cause us shame, doubt that wrestles us to the ground, sorrow we just can't shake. All of it.
In the Buddhist parable called Gotami and the Mustard Seed, a young mother named Gotami loses her only child—a baby boy—to a tragic illness. Bereft, Gotami goes to the Teacher and asks, “What can I do to bring my son back? I am nothing without him.” The Teacher tells Gotami she can bring her son back to life if she can obtain a single mustard seed from a house in the village where no one has ever died.

So, clutching her dead baby in her arms, Gotami goes door-to-door to every house in the village. At each and every house, the neighbors inside compassionately explain to Gotami that at one point in time, a loved one who lived in their house died. They do not possess the seed she needs to resurrect her son. At the very last house in the village, Gotami experiences her epiphany: no such house or mustard seed exists.

Each person Gotami has met is no different from herself. They too have lost someone they loved to death’s talons. But Gotami had forgotten their heartache, or perhaps never taken the time to notice it. Gotami, together with the rest of her community, then gives her son a public funeral and begins to heal.

This parable speaks to me because grief is just as invisible in our time and place as it was in Gotami’s ancient village. For me, a Christian, this Buddhist parable imparts four revolutionary insights.

First, grief is a liar. Like a wily, adulterous lover, Grief seduces you into believing that you are the only one he has ever embraced so completely—no one else has ever felt as bereft, alone, or abandoned as you. In reality, however, Grief has slept with everyone in town. Translation: though it feels hellishly so, you are not alone.

Second, we need community for authentic healing. We must create public spaces for people to share—rather than hide—their laments and scars. Lament gives the lie to alone-ness.

Third, grief is a blindfold. Despite all the ostensibly perfect lives you see on Facebook, everyone carries around a corpse of some kind. Everyone. They deserve your compassion as much as you deserve theirs.

Fourth, there are people in this world who understand your grief from the inside out. But we will never unlock their secret wisdom unless we knock on each other’s doors and share our sorrows.

For Christians, one of these grief sages is God. The cross shows us that God has a story of grief just as you do, just as each of us does. God understands what it is like to lose someone beloved to death, what it feels like to be abandoned. God in the gospels, much like Gotami in the parable, carries a dead child, and that child is Jesus, and all of us too. If God had no clue just how much it can hurt to be a human being, then God would be the only one in the room who didn’t know. Being understood changes things.

We can’t bring anyone back from the dead, but we can resurrect solidarity, hope, and authenticity. We can help one another retrieve our grief from the island of misfit feelings where it has been banished. We can take a vow of vulnerability—the honest sharing of feelings, emotions, and unhealed memories with each other. We can stop apologizing for tears. We can become outlaws.

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What We Carry, and Lose, Along the Way

Joel Kurz

On an early morning in May of 2015, my brother and sister and I strapped on our backpacks in an immigrant quarter of Bilbao, Spain, and began walking the northern route of The Way of St. James. Even though each of us had gone out for trial hikes with weighted packs in preceding weeks, something about the initial feeling of this journey's actual heft on our shoulders, backs, and hips steeled us with resolve for what we had undertaken. Unable to appropriate the weeks it takes to walk from there to Santiago de Compostela all in one fell swoop, we decided to divide it into three segments, three years in a row. This May, we aim to reach the cathedral that reputedly has held the bones of Jesus' disciple James since the ninth century and has drawn pilgrims ever since.

The Way (El Camino) has experienced a major resurgence in recent decades, and one does not have to look far for books, essays, and films about it. Despite all of the history, nature, and culture that converge on this journey, what stands out most of all is the deeply personal and communal character of this pilgrims' path.

My siblings and I decided to embark upon The Way the previous year while walking through Assisi on a cold and rainy day, noting its sister-city status with Santiago after being struck to the heart at seeing a young woman weeping at St. Francis's tomb as pilgrims filed past her or lingered to pray in the darkened crypt.

Each pilgrim on The Way carries a scallop shell somewhere visible upon one's pack—many of which are large and hard to miss. The three of us had smaller, less obvious variants tied to our packs—shells our father had collected during his years as a missionary in our childhood homeland of the Philippines. Our father, gone already eight years when we began, served as his last parish a congregation named St. James, visually represented by the disciple's symbol of three scallop shells—travelers' water scoops that serve as a collective reminder of Trinitarian Baptism.

Everyone walks carrying the most basic provisions for personal life, along with the experiences, uncertainties, and memories that add definite heft to our embodied souls. Yet a pilgrim learns that what is needed most at times, be it for the feet or the spirit, is not in one's own possession but in the pack or life of a fellow traveler.

Much of the pilgrim experience can be summed up and symbolized by two words: attachment and detachment. One needs the attachments of socks and shoes, clothing appropriate for the elements, a sack for sleeping, and certainly the pack which carries those and other necessities—including food and water. Essential as it all is, the weight of even the most basic provisions is a burden one learns to carry while also pondering how to lighten the load by letting go of the inconsequential. Each break begins with the divestment of one's pack—the elated unshouldering of that load—and ends with the hesitant shouldering of that weight again.

Even if one is entirely un-steeped in the
traditional mystical ruminations on attachment and detachment, the discourse becomes lived reflection. What do we carry, by choice or not, for ourselves or someone else? What is necessary, and what is detrimental? What slips from our grip, intentionally or not, and how do we respond? Is the loss a hindrance or an opportunity to say "good riddance?" This is the stuff of life we encounter on any and every path we travel.

Early on the third morning of our first year walking The Way, we grabbed our gear (by flashlight and feel while others slept) from the cramped convent sleeping quarters and took it to the lit lobby for easier pack assembly. An hour or so later, once our day's walk was already underway, I released my backpack's hip-belt for a spell to find that I had to keep pulling up my pants. I knew right away that my belt was still draped over the bunk rail, exactly where I left it the previous night. Aside from needing it to keep those pants up, that was my only canvas belt and the object of much adoration. Although I had no need of it while the hip-belt was connected, I found myself lamenting the loss of that belt as I walked—especially what I had paid for it after a long and previously fruitless search.

By the end of the day though, I was resigned to the occasional tug and consolation that maybe someone in more desperate need of a belt claimed mine as a fortuitous gift.

The day after returning home the second year, my pack (which had gotten stuck at the airport in Paris) arrived at my house much lighter than I remembered. On inspection, I discovered a host of items missing: the windbreaker I had purchased in Assisi, the new ultralight sleeping bag that was a gift from my brother, an expensive long-sleeved wool shirt and wool socks, five-toe sock liners, a short-sleeved shirt, a pair of under-

What do we carry, by choice or not, for ourselves or someone else? What is necessary, and what is detrimental? What slips from our grip, intentionally or not, and how do we respond?
wear, hiking pants that had made several trips to Africa, a regular compression sack, and a trusted compression dry-sack. To be honest, I took those losses in better stride than I had the loss of the belt. "Oh well," I thought, "I'll replace what I need to or just make do with what I already have." But the emotional attachment to those things and the places they had been still lingered a bit.

Six months after returning this past year, less than a month before Christmas, my brother and his colleagues lost their jobs. His reflections on that reality are his own—deeply informed as they are by the lessons of The Way—but the weight of that loss has also in some way become mine, carried about each day in my ponderings for him and what will come next.

In *The Way Is Made by Walking*, Arthur Paul Boers articulates convincingly that what The Way and other similar undertakings cultivate is "focal" living—a term employed by social philosopher Albert Borgmann. Amid the prevalent purposelessness, disorientation, and distraction of life as it is now lived, there is very little that centers our attention on a "commanding presence" or intention (135). "Focal realities" center and illuminate life in all of its varied aspects; they confront us with what we lose and carry along the way while equipping us to deal with whatever comes. Lanza del Vasto captured it so well when he wrote, "Teach your body to die walking. Teach it, step by step, the nature of everything which is to pass."

One sometimes gets lost in a reverie or conversation when walking the Way, and pays for it when the path has been lost. One's attention must stay sharply trained for the yellow arrows or scallop shells pointing in the right direction, for The Way takes many turns and forms—from a city sidewalk to a village lane, from the sandy ocean shore to a rocky or muddy forest footpath to everything between. One appreciates the keen vigilance of traveling companions and local residents who whistle and point with their hands when uncertainty is obvious.

Lent calls us to undertake such a "focal" preparation for Easter. Rather than calling us simply to give something up for a while only to take it up again, it challenges us to see what must go and what must not only stay but deepen. It confronts us with Jesus' question about gaining the whole world but forfeiting one's soul while echoing his truth that even one losing life for his sake finds it. It points us to observe with full attention that following him as a baptized and risen people means walking a path of self-denial and soul-discovery while shouldering the weight of a cross.

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Work Cited

Of Fathers and Sons and a Used Tire

Preston Thomas

A great gulf lies between my son and me, but none at all between me and my son.
—John Steinbeck, Cup of Gold

One hardly needed episode VII of Star Wars for the revelation that relationships between fathers and sons can be problematic. The mythic pathos of father and son conflicting amid mutual misunderstanding had already been played out between Luke and Darth Vader. The trope of father-son mutual incomprehension has a long and reputable history in folklore, literature, and, of course, more recently, film and television. Variations on the theme abound. In some instances the vast gulf that can come between a father and a son is easily bridged. Telemachus has little trouble reestablishing a full and meaningful connection with Odysseus, the template for the absentee father, who disappeared at birth and showed up again twenty years later. In this case, blood was thicker than abandonment. A more humorous rendition of this trope can be found in Johnny Cash’s “A Boy Named Sue,” even though the song plays a darker note on the son’s motivation.

Other iterations of father-son misunderstanding portray how even good-faith efforts at building bridges nevertheless erode away into lasting and unbridgeable incommensurability. In Ivan Turgenev’s Fathers and Sons, a father and a son are bound by blood while living in different universes, unable to touch each other’s lives across the light years. The son finally pursues his own life without reference to his father. For my generation, the sense that fathers and sons could live together in an Einsteinian relativistic prison—each alternately and forever bound by different clocks and frames of reference—was iconized by James Dean’s performance in Rebel Without a Cause.

My own experience of my father—I will not say his experience of me—was of just such a relativistic incommensurability. I spent the bulk of my life, until shortly before his death, certain that we would never really communicate; certain that we would play out the tragic trope parting as the complete strangers I insisted we were. If two people lived in more different emotive and alternatively valorized worlds, I was unaware of it. It is not that we ever conflicted. Our universes were so separate there was almost nothing about which to have a conflict.
We just never connected. From my perspective, we failed at having ever shared anything of significance. My father was never who I wanted him to be. My sense was that we were incapable of communication. I always thought his "photon clock" ran at a different speed than mine. Finally realizing that this problem was in my frame of reference, not his, saved us. Or, at least, it saved him for me. I will never actually know how he saw my life, never know if he, at times, experienced me as incommensurable. Our conversations did not get that far before his death. But I suspect the incommensurability was a one-way affair.

I was in my late forties when I had the epiphany about my relationship with my father. I regret that it took me so long. (I can be stubborn.) I have no actual memory of the experience, only that, I had spent much of my own life trying to be who I am rather than who others wanted me to be. How could I judge him for doing the same? He was who he was. I could finally let him be himself.

with what felt like suddenness, I could no longer blame my dad for being who he was rather than who I wanted him to be. I had spent much of my own life trying to be who I am rather than who others wanted me to be. How could I judge him for doing the same? He was who he was. I could finally let him be himself. This experience opened an all-too-brief window for connection before he died. Einstein would not have observed our two disparate clocks suddenly running in the same time, but they certainly moved closer to being commensurable. And for that, I am thankful.

The most direct effect of my epiphany was that it brought a host of memories from childhood and adolescence into a new and revealing light. The things (many things) my Old Man had done right (very right) emerged from their obscurity in the shadows. One such event is the story of The Used Tire.

I was five years old. Maybe six. It strikes me as having been the fall I started kindergarten. But for the purposes of telling the story, I'll log in at five. My mother always found me a difficult handful. So on a brilliant, cloudless Saturday in October, she convinced my father to take me out for the day. Together, Dad and I climbed into the pickup truck and headed off to a farm sale.

Farm sales were a recurrent, ubiquitous aspect of life in the Midwest of my childhood. Little did I know at age five I was living in what Wendell Berry would later famously call "the unsettling of America." We were constantly saying goodbye to relatives leaving their farms for jobs in cities. Circumstances varied, but under the post-War pressures of commodification and efficiency, farms were forced to grow larger or die. In the most favorable circumstances, farm sales happened when a farmer came to retirement and his children had all moved to the city. No one in the family wished to continue the family farm tradition. So it, and generations worth of accoutrements, were auctioned away. Some farmers experienced this as simply the change to modernity, and were happy for their children's decision to "move up" in the world. Others were saddened by the loss of family tradition, the end of a heritage.

Many of the boys I went to high school with wanted to stay on these small family farms. They loved the idea of being a farmer. But the reality was that without three or four times the acreage, it would have been a life of penury. The decision to move to the city was not always a willing one.

In the less favorable circumstances, a farm sale meant a farm family simply couldn't make it. The bank forced a sale. The loans could only be repaid by selling the land to the successful farmers acquiring more and more acreage. I think of Isaiah's words, "Ah, you who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is room for no one but you, and you are left to live alone in the midst of the land!" (Isa. 5:8). The rural county in which I grew up lost more than 50 percent of its population from 1955 to 2000.

I'm sure those sales were sad for the family selling. But while local people may have known the reasons for a sale, may have felt badly for the family, and might even have had some inkling of
the damage a declining population would have on their communities, sadness was not allowed to cloud the opportunity of taking advantage of someone else's misfortune! Here was a chance at unimagined bargains, perfectly good stuff, often available for next to nothing. Farm sales were stupendous, exciting festivals. Going to a farm sale was an adventure extraordinaire.

**My dad and I parked the truck in an open field and entered.** He gave me the run of the place. My mother would have had me on leash. All dad said, in his dead-pan voice, was, "Don't run off, now." Me! Run off? Unimaginable! I just ran around, rather than off. I ran here and there and everywhere to see this, to see that, to climb on what'sit and look under and in everything. It was as heaven should be. A hundred-plus adults benignly watched over me making sure I didn't accidentally kill myself.

The older men were dressed in bib-overalls and jackets. Some of the younger men wore blue jeans. Others, like my father, back from service in the Korean War, wore pants or shirts of army khaki. The young mixed in with their elders. All wore hats—the kinds actors wore in movies from the 1940s. I began the day in a coat but lost it somewhere. I distinctly remember looking at the toes of my shoes while kicking up clouds of deep, dry dust. More than likely, dirt was permeating my clothes, getting in my shoes, my hair, and my everywhere. I cannot imagine that when we got home my mother was happy with my state of cleanliness. Dad, on the other hand, didn't care. His pickup wasn't going to bothered one way or the other if I clambered in filthy for the ride home.

The geography was stereotypical farmstead: A white two-story box house with a front porch and back stoop, ample yard in both front and back. From the main road, a drive looped around behind the house in the shape of a "U" inscribing the house and the lawns. On the far side of the drive were two barns and an assortment of other outbuildings, sheds, and granaries interspersed with fenced-in lots and pens for hogs and cattle. Household goods—from lamps and chairs to cleaning supplies—were lined up in the front yard or set out on tables in the main floor rooms of the house. Farm machinery stood in neat rows in several lots, while animals milled about in the others.

**Farm sales were stupendous, exciting festivals. Going to a farm sale was an adventure extraordinaire.**

The miscellaneous sale items lined the fence along the drive separating the back yard of the house from the farm buildings.

I spent the morning exploring the large sale items. Tractors begged me to climb up on their seats and turn them into fighter jets—one of these levers must fire the wing guns! Hay wagons invited me to pretend they were sailing ships plying the vast oceans, rocking back and forth on their hinged chassis to mimic the vast saltwater swell. Equipment I couldn't identify asked to be played upon one last time before some stranger took it away. Hogs stuck snouts through fences, eager to make friends with someone at their eye level. The cows, well, they were cows—obviously, even to a five-year-old, not the brightest of God's creatures. They were mostly good at making poop and farting without remorse. It was a glorious morning.

At some point I discovered the lunch tent set up on the lawn behind the house. Inside the tent was a counter with food and a stove and women cooking. Those cooks were selling hot sandwiches, coffee, soups, and—PIE! In the culture of my childhood, pie was its own food group, a necessity of life. A mark of poverty and deprivation was to be pie-less. My grandmother was noted by local historians for baking pies she set out for the hoboes during the Great Depression. I am certain I learned to love pie before my first tooth. In my extended family, Christmas dinners included turkey, ham, stuffing, the occasional goose, and two dozen side dishes. But what made a Christmas dinner memorable was the number, variety, and quality of the pies that were set out afterward. With great pride, my
grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins all rose to the task of eating leftover pie for weeks to come.

In the tent, I discovered a paradise of homemade pies. There were lemon meringue pies, chocolate meringue pies, apple, blueberry, strawberry rhubarb, rhubarb custard, pumpkin, mincemeat, banana cream, gooseberry, boysenberry, mulberry, and peach pies. I saw still more pies of such exotic style they must have been shipped in from foreign countries. All this and more was for sale.

It never occurred to me that as a five-year-old I was short on cash. I just stood and stared at the selection of pies. Magically, a sandwich and a piece of pie showed up on a plate set before me by a woman who simply said, “You’re Bill’s little boy, aren’t you?” The look in her eye said, “He told me to take care of you.” He also took care of another one or two pieces of pie I asked for in the course of the afternoon.

Later, as the sun bore down, the sale moved to the miscellaneous farm items set out in piles along the drive. This phase of the sale attracted my interest a great deal more than large farm equipment and the livestock. Here were all sorts of preeminently useful and mysterious things. There were whole boxes of bits and bobs that could be turned into almost anything your imagination could come up with. There were boxes of tools each destined to fulfill some as-yet-unknown task; pipes of varying lengths and diameters that one could use like tinker toys to build a rocket to Mars. There were brooms and hoes, axes and shovels, hammers and screwdrivers of so many varieties as to defy description. There were dozens of Folgers Coffee cans filled with perfectly usable used nails. I saw buckets of bolts and nuts to be matched up and used to fix important battleships or army tanks. One could open up a cottage industry repairing the barrels full of semi-broken stuff and reselling it. The entrepreneurial opportunities for a business savvy five-year-old were endless. How could one farm contain so many varied and desirable things?

At some point in this process I actually began to listen to the auctioneer. He was speaking in tongues! The religious force of his spiritual gift momentarily distracted my mind from the items he was selling and ecstasy filled my soul. In that brief interlude I could see a vision of my future. I was certain that I would grow up to hold crowds in thrall with such angelic languages. Oh, the power these unearthly words exuded! All eyes were riveted on the auctioneer as he oversaw and enabled the redistribution of wealth at the heart of what was a farm sale. Such sharing out of accumulated wealth was clearly worthy of mystical tongues.

In the midst of the religious experience of hearing a man speak in tongues and the mystical wonder of the flotsam and jetsam of life being set out for sale, it happened: The tire. THE Tire. The most beautiful, most perfectly round used tire I had even seen in my life or would ever see again.

MY MEMORY IS VIVID AND DISTINCT AT this point. The auctioneer stands before a vast mountain of boxes, barrels, cans and buckets filled with salable items. An assistant, like those TV magicians use, reaches back into the stash to bring forth treasures. Two or three dozen farmers in dusty overalls form a ragged semi-circle drawn into shape by the force of the auctioneer’s song. I have maneuvered myself to the front of the semi-circle in the middle. The auctioneer holds up the tire and begins his foreign song. I am feeling very adult, it is as though the Holy Spirit has given me the gift of interpretation for I am beginning to understand what the auctioneer is saying. A farmer on my left begins the bidding for the tire at a quarter. This is the most valuable tire I have ever encountered, utterly perfect in its tire-ness. The
whitewall gleams in the sunlight. When the auctioneer says, "quartribidaquartrwhollgimefifd?" I raise my hand.

Auctioneers are not trained to notice how tall a bidder is. They are only trained to look for a hand moving to bid. Only after uttering the magical incantation "fiddigofifd;" and thereby legitimating my bid, did he notice it had been made by an unemployed kindergartener.

Several fundamental laws of farm sale etiquette were simultaneously broken, creating a major cultural crisis. The scene froze. The auctioneer's gift of tongues suddenly stolen away he looked down at me, flabbergasted. Every farmer in the group was staring at me. The crisis lasted only a second or two as the auctioneer's eyes found my dad. Dad was standing to my left in the back of the semi-circle, hands in his pockets. I looked back over my shoulder just in time to see my dad nod his head to the auctioneer. He would make it good. The auctioneer's ecstatic gift returned suddenly, calling for more bids. The legalities of the crisis passed, the world was stable again.

Now what man in his right moral mind is going to bid against a five-year-old for a used tire? I got the tire for fifty cents. My little heart aglow with beaming pride, I took my place among the men of my community. I owned a used tire—at age five, no less! After this high point, my memories of the rest of the day fade away.

When the afternoon finally came to its end, when the final bits of someone's life had been priced and sold and spread about the county never to congeal as a whole again, dad put the tire into the back of our pickup truck and we headed home.

I have no idea what ever became of the tire. By the time we got home it had disappeared from my five-year-old consciousness and I was on about other things. I did not ask about it, nor to my knowledge did I ever see it again. Perhaps it became the tire swing in the tree in our front yard. Perhaps it ended up on a hay wagon. What matters is that my old man got this day in my life right, very right. I still owe him the fifty cents.

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The Monk as Muse

CHARLES OF THE DESERT DELIVERS WHAT it promises in the subtitle: A Life in Verse. In fifty-two poems, Woolfitt takes us through the life of Catholic monk Charles de Foucauld, beginning in 1863, when Charles was five years old, and ending with his death at the hands of Tuareg and Haratin raiders in 1916. Charles, better known as “Charles of the Desert,” as the short biographical sketch at the back of the book informs us, “is remembered today as a desert hermit and missionary, and as author of ‘The Prayer of Abandonment’” (73), a short but powerful prayer that states “I abandon myself into your hands;/do with me what you will. Whatever you may do, I thank you:/I am ready for all, I accept all.” The biographical sketch and a chronological listing of the major events of Charles’s life are useful tools for those readers previously unfamiliar with the monk. The poems, then, serve to flesh out the details and imaginatively consider Charles’s observations, emotions, thoughts, and spiritual struggles as he becomes an “artist, geographer, abolitionist, linguist, folklorist, fort-builder, and finally a martyr” (73).

Woolfitt’s poems in this collection are at their best when they employ vivid and concrete language to do this fleshing out, and many do so successfully. For example, in the first poem, “My Father as Weather Formation,” Woolfitt envisions Charles’s father as he drives the children to an outing in the woods:

... Sometimes I look

and look at his whip-like body, his bulging eyes that say to me he's half-lizard, his transformation incomplete. I tell my sister, his mouth makes no words,

only smoke. My mother whispers, chestnut, fir, mirabelle while my father veers from tree to tree.

And later, in the poem “The Pangs of Wanting”:

I gulp vinegar, dark, smoky, acidic, then sweet, garnet
and carnelian, the cup reflecting the candle flame,

pelting me with stars. His torn body in my stomach,
his blood in my spit, I almost vomit; I almost sing.

Poems such as these use the concrete to convey bold, fresh insights such as the one in that last line of “The Pangs of Wanting,” indicative of the simultaneous feelings of revulsion and ecstasy of real presence in taking the Eucharist. And in “My Father as Weather Formation,” we see how the descriptions of the father communicate to us not just his outward appearance but also his inner character, and indicate a fraught relationship between the father and the other family members.

Other poems, however, turn more strictly narrative, creating a sort of documentary poetry where the poems seem to exist mainly to convey information. While these poems may be necessary in a project of this type, they are less successful as poems, since they lack the insight and language play that drives us to re-read a poem, and they...
often tend to sound more like prose than poetry to the ear. "Summer in Giverny" is one such example:

In my idle hands, I tossed the brigantine my cousin had folded in her exact way. I was staying at my uncle's chateau that sticky summer. I was sixteen; she was almost twenty. I had watched her slender fingers as she marked, creased, and flattened the boat she'd promised to shape.

The many poems that do contain poetic language and concrete imagery in this collection keep the book from becoming straight documentary, but there are quite a few documentary type poems to get through in order to get to that poetry.

Lapsing into documentary is one of the dangers of this type of biographical poetry, and while poetic language and imagery can help, another technique that can help poets avoid falling into this trap is to create contemporary connections with the historical person and material, often by bringing personal experience into the poem. In her 2013 book, Second Sky, poet Tania Runyan weaves the life of the Apostle Paul into the speaker's experiences as a suburban wife and mother so that we see not just Paul's life, but connections between his life and theology and our own lives. For example, in "Groanings Too Deep for Words," based on Romans 8:26, we see a piece of contemporary news, "The morning I read about the newborn / found in the fast food dumpster," and the trials and tribulations of suburban motherhood, "and stepped on a Lego with my bare feet / the magma of my own anger rising." These become entwined with Paul's message in the book of Romans: "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans," as the speaker of the poem plunges a spade into the earth and bemoans that "there was no prayer to save us."

Beyond the personal connection, simply introducing contemporary references into a poem of this type can help the audience relate to the historical person or situation, as in the first poem of Runyan's collection, "Setting My Mind." Here, Runyan mentions salt trucks and minivans, licorice, I-55, and Dairy Queen, all while interacting with Colossians 3:2: "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." I had hoped to find similar techniques present in Charles of the Desert, especially since Woolfitt proclaims in the preface: "I know that Charles of the Desert is a creative work that fictionalizes some details from the life of Charles de Foucauld; I also know that I may have made a version of Charles in my own image, so much so that I have tipped the scales toward autobiography." However, the specifics of this scale tipping are not at all apparent; readers have no way to tell which parts are autobiography and which are biography. In effect, the author and Charles de Foucauld have become one person, and we are at a loss to discern between them.

Perhaps, though, this melding of author and subject is not so much a descent into the perils of documentary poetry as a different approach to the task. Does the melding create poems that are enjoyable puzzles to solve, where we must figure out which occurrence, emotion, or thought belongs to which person? Maybe, but that task would involve delving deep into further biographies of Charles, I suspect, which may make the puzzle an insurmountable
task for most of us. Or perhaps the question of who's who doesn't matter. Woolfitt and Charles are both human beings, with human problems and concerns; furthermore, they are both humans struggling with what it means to follow Christ. And we readers can join them in these struggles. Perhaps, in some sense, all fathers are “weather formation[s],” all mothers whispering to them as they “veer from tree to tree” (1). Maybe, when we stop to think about it, all of us can feel both the bile and the song when the Eucharist approaches (2). Maybe all of us remember, at times, that we are “foul matter,” and at other times that “our hands become strange birds, pulling new shapes from the air” (3).

1 “My Father as Weather Formation”
2 “The Pangs of Wanting”
3 “Tether”

This Is Only a Test

M y classroom door was decorated with a line from Marjorie Maddox’s poem, “On Defining Education.” It is the first poem in her collection on teaching and learning called True, False, None of the Above.

I’m not talking about who you should be but are. Let’s start with the essence of the seed
and see what sprouts from there.

I printed those words out in black ink and glued them on orange and green construction paper. I wanted my students to know I believed there is possibility and beauty not only in who they could become, but who they are right now. I want to believe that about myself. I kept Maddox’s words on my door through December, and each morning as I turned my key and then the knob, I remembered to concern myself with the seeds that were sprouting in my room.

I received a copy of True, False, None of the Above on an afternoon I’d been offered the sixth grade teaching position in a Detroit charter school. I didn’t want to take the job, but I didn’t know why. I’m a good teacher, and I love teaching. I love everything about the profession: the planning, the students, decorating bulletin boards; I even like using the copy machine. I figured I was afraid to take the job. My family had just moved from Maryland to Michigan. We were in a new house, new neighborhood, and our daughters were starting new schools. I figured I was afraid of all the newness, and that’s what had me considering turning the job down.

I didn’t want to make a decision based on fear, so when I saw the cover of Maddox’s collection with the broken red pencil and the Scantron-like boxes that made up the title, I believed it was divine intervention: here is a book of poetry that will energize and inspire me for the school year ahead. Maddox’s poetry did exactly that, and I took the job.

Maddox, a professor at Lock Haven University, has written more than ten collections of poetry, as well as essays and short stories. Her work showcases exactly what she writes of in “On Defining Education.” That is, she concerns herself with what is in front of her and considers what possibilities could sprout. If she writes about doubt, faith is also intertwined. If she writes about sorrow, bits of joy show up as well. Maddox offers a different perspective on a subject by studying and observing the thing that is.

I admit the broken pencil on the cover is unsettling. It looks as though it’s been tossed into the air out of frustration. The lack of an eraser and the perfectly sharpened point makes me the most tense. We cannot erase our mistakes, so why bother to try? The lead will never go dull. Forever sharp, forever unused. However, in her preface, Maddox explains that her poetry explores “the intersection of words and belief;” and that the poems in this collection can “lead us to discovery by bringing us face-to-face with the world we live in and the world to come.” This is a hopeful statement, and I turned the page to discover what else I could see besides what was broken.

“Gnarled Branch Outside My Window”
that juts up from nowhere and stops

34 The Cresset
before reaching the sky, 
misplaced beanstalk not courageous enough 
to chance a giant,

my eyes still climb you, 
claim the promise of harps, 
fresh eggs uncracked and golden.

I wanted to be courageous enough to chance a giant. I wanted to be on the lookout for gold as I climbed the beanstalk.

In “Euchre and Eucharist,” Maddox writes a mash-up of the card game and communion inspired by Robert Frost’s quote about T. S. Eliot: “I like to play euchre. He likes to play Eucharist.”

Trump is the still point of this shuffled world, 
Miracles and tricks hidden by the other.

I paused at “Trump,” immediately thinking of Donald Trump. I know Maddox is talking about an act in a card game, and not the person. Still, and I am embarrassed to admit this, I wondered if there are miracles hidden in Donald Trump. The thought scared me, but I entertained it for a bit. Could tricks be turned into miracles? I flipped back to the cover of Maddox’s book. The pencil, though broken and falling, is pointing to “None of the Above.” The answers are neither true nor false. I wondered if it is in the communion of playing the game—all of us fallen and broken—that turns tricks into miracles.

Maddox uses Flannery O’Connor’s words for an epigraph. “The type of mind that can understand good fiction...is at times the kind of mind that is willing to have its sense of mystery deepened by contact with reality, and its sense of reality deepened by contact with mystery.” Perhaps the broken pencil without an eraser is supposed to unsettle us. The test then, becomes an examination in how long we can look at something without turning away. A person willing to look at mystery in order to walk forward in reality is a person willing to be disturbed. It is in the disruption we ought to stand.

Mystery and reality are so intertwined in Maddox’s poetry that it is difficult to tell one from the other, which is what I think Flannery O’Connor was getting at. At times, the poems take the shape of this pairing. For example, “Watch vs. Warning” is shaped like a hurricane. The last line forms the tail: “Each day, the breeze and we pick up more violently broken.” Here, Maddox blends the storm caused by weather with the storms within each of us; both real, both mysterious.

“Confession,” a poem about the inability to name any sin worth confessing, is a circle on the page, the center of it a jagged space. A reader must jump from one side of the splinter to the other to read about the “strong tiny crosses right in the retina.” The poem doesn’t physically simulate a plank in one’s eye, though its shape makes a reader feel the difficulty in seeing clearly with sin so prevalent; whether our own or others.

After reading True, False, None of the Above, I decided to take the teaching position in Detroit. I wanted to be the kind of teacher who dances with the violently broken, the storm within her raging as well. I wanted to be the kind of teacher who has communion with the fallen, knowing how fallen she is, but still wants in on the game. I pushed aside that unsettling feeling that was nagging at me and signed on for another year...
filled with mystery, eagerly awaiting the reality of what would sprout. I anticipated all my students’ pencils going dull, and that we would all be sharpened only when we were disturbed. I wanted to do with my teaching what Maddox did with her poetry: create something at the intersection of words and belief.

I DIDN’T LAST THE SCHOOL YEAR. I LEFT because teaching meant more meetings and paperwork than I could handle. I took Maddox’s words off my classroom door in December and threw them in the trash on my last day. Crumpled up pieces of orange and green mixed with spit-out bubble gum and broken pencils lay in the trash and I closed the door. I suppose my experience could be summed up as a failure, but if I learned anything reading Maddox’s poetry, it’s that I ought to take a careful look at something so that I discover something else. If I failed as a teacher, if I’ve fallen off the beanstalk, surely then it is time to look at the fall and examine whether gold seeped from the eggs that cracked.

In her poem “Teaching Frost,” Maddox writes of students that come from “Pittsburgh or Philly” that she will “un-teach” poetry to. Soon, they will decide poetry isn’t so bad. Soon, they will admit that they, too, write poetry at times. She writes of the students’ faces:

telling me it’s all going to be OK,
and we can start,
and we can go
wherever the poem takes us.

Perhaps receiving Maddox’s collection of poetry was divine intervention. True, False, None of the Above might not have provided me with the answers, but it gave me a place to start, and see what sprouts from there.

Signs and Wonders

BECAUSE GROWING UP IN WHITE EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY is not a terribly unique experience, those of us who harbor fond (or perhaps terrible) memories of things like church, Sunday school, Christian schools, youth conferences, and missions trips find each other regularly and talk about what it was like to be in that world. I’ve found myself at countless dinners, work events, and wedding receptions, talking with old and new friends about the church environments where we grew up. When sharing these experiences, there is usually a twinge of, “Wasn’t that weird?” mixed with “Wasn’t that awesome?” and sometimes a bit of “Can you believe that someone really told us that?” Outsiders often listen with wide eyes, surprised at anecdotes about children playing schoolyard games themed around the crucifixion, about fifteen-year-olds being sent to New York City to perform Christian dramas in the middle of the sidewalk as an attempt to convert “the lost,” about kids being taken into a broom closet to be spanked by their teachers for stepping foot in the school too early in the day, or about a man pretending to commit suicide by gun in front of a class of fifth graders in order to teach them a lesson about, well, something he thought was important.

These are the childhood experiences of Bryan Parys, author of the spiritual memoir Wake, Sleeper. Growing up in evangelicalism may not be unusual, but Parys is not a typical kid experiencing typical Christian faith. He is an extremely curious child with a vibrant inner world, which is constantly being expanded and confused by the metaphors of faith that surround him. When Parys is four, his father, Alfred, dies of esophageal cancer, but not before recording onto a cassette tape a series of his thoughts about living a good life for little Bryan to listen to as he grows older. His father’s death introduces the young boy to contradictory ideas that people usually discover somewhat later in life: the pain of mortality combined with the Christian doctrine of eternal life. Parys writes in the present tense—not as a gimmick or to be a part of the trend of present-tense memoirs, but to challenge the idea that life is linear. He chooses to embrace the concept of eternity in his craft. The teachings of his childhood were sometimes meaningful and sometimes absurd, but they clearly affected him deeply, evidenced by the way the teaching that God exists outside of time determines his writing decisions as an adult.
When he listens to the tape of his father’s voice, his father is alive. When his father is dead, his father is alive in Heaven. When his father is alive, his father has a Father in Heaven, who is God, who is unbound by time. This is the kind of language that entangles little Bryan, who is constantly trying to figure out what his world means.

Parys’s entire childhood and adolescence are governed by the influence of his parents’ conversion to Christianity, which took place before he was born. Their transition from pot-selling hippies to ground-level members of the religious right places Parys in a non-denominational church and affiliated Christian school, where there is no institutional oversight or generations of tradition. Instead, there are simply people trying to live their faith authentically and prevent their children from being eternally lost to them after death.

These earnest believers try to teach their children spiritual truths from cradle onward, without realizing that their lessons could be misunderstood by the literal minds of children. Parys, however, seems to have been born with a mind more complex and creative than his peers, leaving him to question the more bizarre language of these teachings. Still a child, though, he doesn’t know how to ask questions in a way that doesn’t frighten the adults, and so he learns to silently straddle the lines between metaphor and fact, the spirit and the body, Truth and supposition.

One of the fascinating things that Parys does in Wake, Sleeper is to take the simple spiritual lessons that his religious mentors introduced to him as a child and spend time with those ideas in a far more exploratory and intellectual way than they could have anticipated. For example, the simple demerit system in his seventh grade classroom goes beyond a way to manage class behavior, and instead determines how Bryan perceives the state of his soul.

When his class, which has only a handful of students, is told that they are getting a bad reputation in the school for being unruly, Bryan thinks, “If my class has a bad rep, then I do, and therefore there are slices of my past that must be creating it.” He goes on to list his sins, from hanging on the basketball hoop for too long (“I am disobedient”), for not shutting his eyes when others are praying (“I am sacrilegious”), and for glancing at his friend’s copy of Hustler (“I am a pervert”).

It’s hard to believe that the adults in Parys’s life didn’t recognize the intensity of some of the things he was experiencing. They seem oblivious to the giant pieces of symbology that Bryan discovers everywhere. This is one of the strengths of the writing: these symbols seem authentic and obvious, yet only the right person is able to pick them up and examine them carefully. Take, for instance, the fact that teenage Bryan doesn’t have a traditional bed, but rather, he sleeps on the fold-out sofa on which his father died. To his family, the couch is just a couch, even if it carries some weighty history. It was a couch when his parents brought it into their home, a couch when it was moved to another house, a couch when Alfred died on it, a couch when it was put upstairs in the room that would become Bryan’s, a couch when Bryan opted to keep it instead of going the more common route and getting a twin bed of his own.

He writes of the decision to sleep on the pull-out bed, “I felt I had no choice. I kept what to me had become a relic that, no matter how coffin-like, offered me a connection with my father.”

He draws attention to his need to find metaphor and meaning when talking one night with
his wife, Natalie, who wants him to get rid of notes from his college courses. Parys can’t understand why Natalie would get rid of the paper trail in her own life and suggests that she should hold onto more things:

“But what if you get famous someday?”

“You think that if I get famous, someone’s going to come pawing through my notes from Research Methods?”

“You never know—people can read meaning into anything.”

This moment, like the other bits of humor throughout *Wake, Sleeper* is earnest and heartfelt, and often deadpan. Take, for instance, the way that he describes evangelical dramas that he and Natalie performed on the streets of New York City when they were in high school. He reluctantly plays Jesus in this pantomimed drama, while Natalie is the lost soul in need of salvation. Parys goes beyond some of his peers who are writing about growing up evangelical Christian by exploring the intense connections between the body and the spirit. The book covers extensive psychological, physical, and spiritual ground for the memoirist, whose unique way of looking at the world has caused him as much trouble as it has provided him with a knack for recognizing beauty and chaos in the unnoticed language of faith. The well-meaning adults who raised Parys and his friends in their insular religious world wanted to help keep them on the right path. Parys spends this entire book questioning what the path even means, but he does so in a way that honors the confusing tradition in which he was raised. He never comes through as angry or traumatized, and instead maintains a sense of wonder at the inner workings of his church and his mind. I enjoyed the familiarity of Parys’s experiences in the way that I enjoy talking with friends who grew up in the Christian subculture of the ’80s and ’90s, but also because it revealed new ways of understanding that world.

**A Lifetime of Spiritual Roots**

In the now classic *How to Read a Book*, Mortimer Adler, the author of the Great Books movement, wrote that “wonder is the beginning of wisdom in learning from books as well as from nature.” Clyde Kilby (1902-1986) was no stranger to wonder or to nature. As the title of this collection emphasizes, it is precisely Kilby’s natural predilection for the wonder of God in nature, and in all life, that attracted him to the authors he eventually established at Wheaton College’s Marion E. Wade Center. For readers unfamiliar with his extensive legacy, Kilby is responsible for starting the Wade Center and, as its first director, growing the now unprecedented collection into a home for world-class scholarship on the seven authors whose materials are housed there: C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, Charles Williams, Dorothy Sayers, Owen Barfield, G. K. Chesterton, and George MacDonald.
Like the eclectic collection at the Wade Center, *A Well of Wonder* pulls together an eclectic selection of Kilby’s essays, discussions, talks, and interviews (some of which were unpublished during Kilby’s lifetime) into one volume of a two-volume series. A companion volume including Kilby’s reflections on the *Arts and the Christian Imagination*, as the book is titled, is forthcoming to compliment *Well of Wonder*. For those, like me, who were unfortunate not to have known Kilby, but who have benefited from the Wade Center, this book is a breath of welcome air, firing the imagination that Kilby spent so much time exploring.

The poem opening the book by poet Luci Shaw, a former pupil of Kilby and graduate of Wheaton College where he worked, is exceptional in setting the tone for the work. The acknowledgement, as again referenced in the introduction by Loren Wilkinson, situates Kilby as a “doorkeeper” to the imagination, to the myths that point us to God, and to the joy that reading deep Christian writers engenders. To spend time in *Well of Wonder* is to linger in the halls of kings from Narnia, Middle Earth, and far off planets. This well-conceived collection of artifacts is, as Kilby often points out in his analyses, ordered carefully around more than just individual persons, but around the growing feeling of myth that pervades all.

Editors Loren Wilkinson and Keith Call carefully divided the volume into three sections: one on C. S. Lewis, one on J. R. R. Tolkien, and one on the Inklings. The wealth of experience, insight, childlike wonder, and personal correspondence that Kilby possessed in kind with Lewis and Tolkien alone make this book worth reading. Kilby’s words walk with readers through his experiences meeting, corresponding with, reading, and teaching about C. S. Lewis with generations of college students. In this section, “C. S. Lewis on Theology and the Witness of Literature,” Kilby’s insights range from Lewis’s depth in myth; his wit and fate among his contemporary theologians; to his joy, imagination, and lifelong pursuit of holiness. Kilby does not disappoint with the complexity he offers behind his clear sketches of Lewis.

Section two highlights Kilby’s relationship with Tolkien. Kilby’s time spent with Tolkien trying to bring *The Silmarillion* to print is recounted with clarity and excitement, placing the reader in the midst of sitting and talking with Tolkien, searching through his vast knowledge, scattered papers, and endless conversation. Readers feel Kilby’s sadness at the death of Tolkien and the unrealized publication of *The Silmarillion*. (Contemporary readers have Tolkien’s son Christopher to thank for bringing many of the previously unpublished works of Middle Earth to light, including *The Silmarillion* now in multiple editions.) In addition to recounting his time with Tolkien, Kilby extends his analysis of *The Lord of the Rings* to bring out its own mythic qualities and the underlying incarnational aesthetic that alone provides so much of the power inherent in the myth of “middle earth,” a medieval term renewed by Tolkien. Kilby’s conversations with Tolkien provide the background from which Kilby is able to offer depth upon depth in his words of otherworldly wisdom.

It is that same conversational quality that pervades all of the chapters in this volume. The third part of *Well of Wonder* offers Kilby’s reflections on a growing interest (his own and others) in Charles Williams, whose imagination was brought to bear...
on a substantial Christian theology. After essays on Williams, Kilby’s work provides inescapable insights into the relationship between Lewis, Tolkien, and Williams, moving eventually into overviews of Dorothy Sayers, and on to the other authors whose work has made the Wade Center a harbor of scholarship. What ties these final chapters together is Kilby’s consistent theme of the power of the Christian imagination in capturing

_Well of Wonder_ is well worth reading, both for its intended audience unfamiliar with these Wade Center authors, and for those whose long journey has provided many hours of intimate conversation with Lewis, Tolkien, and the Inklings.

The book’s only weakness appears for readers well versed in C. S. Lewis in particular. The first section of the book provides much from Kilby’s early writings, when he was, like Lewis, an apologist to those who doubted the power and possibilities offered by these British, Christian authors not yet claimed by Evangelicals. The nature of Kilby’s audience in these early essays required a substantial level of summary of Lewis’s works and repetition of those summaries. This is not truly a weakness, however, when one considers these uninitiated audiences Kilby addressed, the similarly unfamiliar audience to whom _Well of Wonder_ is intended, as well as the substantial understanding that Kilby brings to these seemingly simple summaries.

_Well of Wonder_ is well worth reading, both for its intended audience unfamiliar with these Wade Center authors, and for those whose long journey has provided many hours of intimate conversation with Lewis, Tolkien, and the Inklings. _Well of Wonder_ reads quickly precisely because of the ease of Kilby’s conversational style maintained throughout. Readers who complete the entire volume will not be disappointed, but may wish at the end to start again at the beginning, and return to the very authors Kilby spent his life championing. That calling, for Kilby, was due to the mythic quality of these authors to capture and communicate the substance of their lived faiths in the Triune God through such a large variety of genres. They all, indeed, portrayed Dorothy Sayer’s claim that Christian writing should be Trinitarian and incarnational, should rise out of a deep faith in God, undeniably evident under the surface of the narrative itself. Kilby’s own words mirror that same depth.
BAPTISM

_Fukuoka, Summer 2011_

Our suited pastor,
standing in the ocean:

water dark up to his thighs.
From the shore, he looks

like a lone oyster buoy,
returning from a storm.

Kaylee beside him:
an American sky-scraper.

Behind them, a still horizon blue.
Strange, this water: the same

that buried five cities, now
over Kaylee's shoulders,

a celebration. From the shore,
we the church stand, holding

our shoes, feet bare
in the sand, waiting. Out east,

new cities will be built.
Inside Kaylee, a renovated

city is filled.
She rises from the water.

Meg Eden
Missing the Word in the Words
The Dangers of the Narrative Lectionary

Benjamin E. Leese

Since the earliest centuries, the Church has followed a pattern of reading Scripture, organizing the Bible into portions for proclamation at each gathering. A standardized one-year lectionary had become the norm in the Western Church by 1000 AD. The eastern churches have followed a separate one-year lectionary for many centuries also. However, the Second Vatican Council expanded the lectionary used by the Roman church, adding an additional scripture reading (often from the Old Testament) to the Mass and switching to a three-year cycle. With that move, other churches began re-assessing their own lectionaries. Working together across confessional lines, Protestant scripture scholars and liturgists proposed a lectionary similar to the Roman Catholic one. Its most recent iteration, the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), was released in 1992. (Gail Ramshaw’s many works, some of which are cited below, are a treasure trove in understanding the internal logic of the RCL.) The RCL, across three years of readings, provides preachers and worshippers a rich diet of Biblical texts for proclamation, reflection, and prayer.

While popular, the RCL does not own the market. Other lectionaries, and even a proposal to add a fourth year to the RCL (Slemmons), appear from time to time (Thorngate). The alternative with the biggest following in recent years has been the Narrative Lectionary (NL), which has become a popular worship-planning tool in Lutheran churches and other denominations. The compilers of this lectionary, Rolf Jacobson and Craig Koester of Luther Seminary, created it as a response to waning Bible fluency in our congregations and in our culture. Proponents of the NL identify the RCL as part of the problem and argue that the RCL does not “present Scripture—especially the Old Testament—in a way that helps people to become fluent in the first language of faith” (Luther Seminary). NL proponents maintain that the Old Testament readings in the RCL (even the semi-continuous option) do not adequately show the grand scope of salvation history. According to the Luther Seminary website, the NL seeks to “show the breadth and variety of voices within Scripture” and aid the proclamation of what God is up to in the world.

The concerns about biblical fluency are valid and well founded, and the NL helps the Church to think through its relationship with the Hebrew Scriptures. But in the way it addresses those issues, it creates other problems. Most importantly, it fails to keep Christ at the center of Christian preaching. The Narrative Lectionary’s assumptions about the goals of preaching create problems for Christian proclamation in general, and Lutheran preaching in particular.

All lectionaries bring assumptions to the ways that biblical texts are presented. Identifying those assumptions allow us to determine if they match the assumptions that our confessions ask us to bring to the task of preaching and interpreting Scripture. One assumption of the RCL—that it is good for Christians from various Christian families to hear the same or similar readings each week—has many defenders and does not need to be elaborated upon here. Instead, let’s focus on the assumptions of each lectionary about the interpretation of Scripture and the central function of worship.

Perhaps the fundamental difference between the NL and RCL is the assumption made about the reason for a lectionary. On one hand, the NL exists for mainly educational purposes, to present the “breadth and variety of voices within Scripture” (Luther Seminary). Congregants in churches that use the NL can expect to learn about the shape of
biblical literature. Certainly, the compilers chose particular texts to convey the depth of the human experience in the Bible, but the main problem and goal is educational. As this lectionary purpose suggests, the preacher should educate his or her audience. With more knowledge in hand, the assumption and hope is that they will be able to find themselves in the Bible story or discern what God is doing today. Folks may then find in Jesus Christ the fulfillment of God's relationship with the world and enter into a fuller relationship with Him. Some may argue that the NL pattern of proclamation helps hearers to discover what God is up to in their lives and in the world, but without the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the central event, hearers could miss the heart of the Christian story.

On the other hand, the RCL exists for preaching rather than teaching, and the proclamation that flows from its use is more likely to be centered on the Gospel message rather than on Bible literacy. Preaching is not teaching; preaching is about justification, especially when seen from a Lutheran perspective. The preacher preaches in order that God, through the preacher's words, might justify sinners. Preaching is accusation and promise. Preaching is about God's great gift to us in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The RCL serves this purpose well (it is sometimes criticized for using justification texts too often, as if such a thing were possible). The RCL cycle of readings centers on the Gospel. There is no getting around Jesus and his work.

Another striking difference between the two lectionaries is the number of readings appointed for each Sunday. The NL proposes one preaching text for each Sunday, from the Old Testament from September to mid-December, from the Gospels from Christmas to Easter, and from Acts and Paul's letters from Easter to Pentecost. Because some congregations “find it helpful,” the compilers assign a “complementary” or “accompanying” text that can also be used. But the assumption here is that one can have a full experience of God from any given passage of Scripture, and that all Scripture does not necessarily need to be read, learned, judged, and preached through the lens of the good news of Jesus Christ. Jesus is pushed to the sidelines in favor of Bible knowledge. While there is some interaction implied between the main text and the accompanying text, the accompanying text is often so short that it is clearly subordinate. The NL holds the mistaken assumption that Scripture is the point of Scripture, rather than finding Jesus to be the point.

The RCL assigns four to six portions of Scripture for each Sunday, including one or two Psalms. For festival Sundays, the RCL appoints a Gospel reading, an Old Testament reading chosen to illuminate or deepen the hearing of the Gospel reading (a reading from Acts stands in that spot during Easter), a Psalm, chosen to match the Old Testament reading, and a reading from the New Testament that also correlates with the Gospel reading. During the time after Pentecost the RCL also provides a semi-continuous series of Old Testament readings that are not matched with the Gospel reading, as well as a Psalm to match the alternate Old Testament reading, in order to provide an option more amenable to the Reformed way of understanding Scripture. The readings from the New Testament letters are semi-continuous during this season as well.

All these readings together interact in rich and sometimes unpredictable ways. The juxtaposition (Lathrop) of these texts gives a richness to proclamation of the Word in the Sunday assembly.

The concerns about biblical fluency are valid and well founded, and the Narrative Lectionary helps the Church to think through its relationship with the Hebrew Scriptures. But in the way it addresses those issues, it creates other problems.
None of the texts is ultimately clear without the others. In the midst of many readings, the messy work of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ becomes much easier. Preachers have a greater opportunity to hit on the message of Jesus when using the RCL—although even then, congrega-

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in which Jesus is not necessary. Christian worship becomes hardly recognizable from Jewish worship in this model. Ironically, the NL commits an equal but opposite error during the winter, when it appoints only a Gospel lesson and not one from the Old Testament. The assumptions during that season hearken back to Marcionism, an ancient heresy rejected by the early Church. Scripture exists to lead its readers and hearers to Jesus, but the NL’s implicit assumptions distort that purpose. Jesus belongs at the heart of worship and preaching throughout the year, and the NL simply does not maintain Christ’s centrality.

In my own ministry, I have used a march-through-the-Bible method (though not the NL) for preaching at our youth-oriented service on Wednesday evenings. While I worked in each sermon to connect to the death and resurrection of Jesus, I failed on many occasions, and my practice communicated that all Scripture is equally important in helping us to meet God in worship. I have since returned to the RCL for Wednesday worship services, sometimes using Gospel readings missed by the RCL if I feel the need for more depth or a different slant for folks who attend on both Sunday and Wednesday. The march-through-the-Bible approach simply risks missing Jesus Christ the Word for the sake of the word of the Bible. I cannot be confident that one who learns the Old Testament will necessarily have an encounter with the saving love of Jesus Christ.

If preachers still feel called to help their congregations grapple with the grand scope of the Bible, there are other options besides the NL. The most obvious, but perhaps most difficult, is through Christian Education. Many will wring their hands at the challenge of getting people to attend Bible study, but that should not stop us from offering substantive education for all ages. Nor should that challenge trick us into using the time for worship and proclamation as a time for teaching. If the best strategy is to use worship as an opportunity for education, a regular Bible highlight in the service might allow the preacher to present the biblical story in a linear fashion from one week to the next without losing the Gospel-proclamation function of the assigned
readings. For instance, for the past three years I have added "Faith in Life Instruction" just before the Benediction. I have used that time to provide a homework assignment or application of the sermon just before sending the congregation into the world. It would be easy enough to turn that time into a Bible Snapchat of sorts and walk through the grand scope of Scripture at any pace one liked, perhaps even using the NL as a guide.

Ironically, the NL seeks to fight the crisis of biblical illiteracy, but it has ended up creating a defective means of interpreting Scripture. An interpretation of Scripture without Jesus at its heart leaves the Christian assembly starved for true preaching, true love, and an encounter with the Crucified One who yet lives. The RCL, by consistently offering Gospel readings bolstered by related readings from other parts of the Bible, helps preachers to preach and helps congregations to learn that Jesus is the center of Scripture and necessary to its interpretation. The greatest need of our time is not an increase in biblical literacy but for preaching that responds to people's hunger for the mercy known in Jesus Christ. The RCL is still the best guide available to help preachers bring congregations into the presence of that mercy and to feed that deep hunger.

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Works Cited


Lives that Matter
August Wilson’s Fences on Film

Charles Andrews

Shortly before his death in 2005 at the age of 60, the playwright August Wilson completed the tenth dramatic work in his monumental Pittsburgh Cycle, his unparalleled survey of black American life across the twentieth century. The stories are loosely related, mostly set in Pittsburgh’s Hill District, and each explores a different decade in the lives of black Americans. Wilson himself wrote the screenplay for his 1985 Pulitzer Prize winning stage production, Fences, and, as he required of all his works, stipulated that a black director must be hired for the project. Production on the film stalled for decades, and only now, with Denzel Washington both starring and directing, a Fences motion picture finally appears eleven years after Wilson’s death.

The story extends over several years in the mid-1950s, mostly in the backyard of Troy Maxson (Washington), a former Negro League baseball star and ex-convict now in middle age, supporting his family as a garbage man. Troy’s household includes his wife, Rose (Viola Davis), their teenage son, Cory (Jovan Adepo), and frequent visits from Troy’s grown son, Lyons (Russell Hornsby), mentally damaged younger brother, Gabriel (Mykelti Williamson) and best friend, Jim Bono (Stephen Henderson). Though the narrative has a few twists and turns that add to the dramatic tension, the primary mode is thick, complex characterization developed through scintillating dialogue. Wilson’s ear for the speech patterns of working class, black Pittsburghers in the 1950s is remarkable, and the script pulls us deeply into the lives of these characters and their debates about their changing fortunes during the early stages of the civil rights movement.

Troy is a fascinating, contradictory figure—boastful and insecure, hilarious and seething, devoted and unfaithful, amorous and cool. His Hellenic name signals Wilson’s intent to construct this fatally flawed semi-hero in the mode of Greek Tragedy, where Troy’s best and worst selves clash and threaten to destroy him and the people he loves. That Troy is both likable and in some ways awful seems a vital part of the political gesture Wilson makes. Similar to Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart (1958)—a novel that sought to rescue Nigeria’s Igbo culture from racist caricature not through idealization but through complex, richly detailed humanization—Fences portrays these black American lives not as flawless but as intensely real. If the original production in 1983 was partly a response to Reagan-era attempts to idealize the 1950s, this new film version necessarily becomes a conversation piece with Black Lives Matter and post-Obama America. It remains a fresh and bold work by suggesting that these lives matter not because they are perfect but because they are fully human: surging with love, jealousy, desire, commitment, and failure.

FENCES IS ABOUT MANY THINGS, BUT VERY important among them is parenting, and, more specifically, fatherhood. Troy is a father to two sons—Lyons, whom we first meet at age 34, and Cory, who is 17. Troy’s relationship with both boys involves a significant amount of badgering, by turns desiring that their lives become better than his and then growing envious at their superior opportunities. The world Troy knew as a young man militated against him, and only his determination, athleticism, and streetwise intellect allowed his survival into middle age—toughened, scarred, but alive. Each son struggles in his own way with their father’s large shadow. Cory wants a football scholarship to attend college, a dream
Troy sabotages in the (partly) altruistic belief that a paying job in a supermarket is more realistic for young black men. Lyons inhabits a life outside the middle-class aspirations of his father, playing guitar in seedy clubs and flirting with petty crime. The fourteen years that separate Troy's sons reveal their differing opportunities for stable livelihoods, and a key aspect of Troy's tragedy is his inability to accept the career choices his children pursue—and the fact that they live in a world less hostile than he had experienced. Significantly, Wilson never allows his audience to feel settled about whether success is a matter of individual agency or social configuration.

The moral center of the film is Rose, Troy's strong, sexy, humorous wife and the mother of Cory. Viola Davis portrays Rose with passion, fury, and steely resolve, reprising her role from the 2010 Broadway revival. In the pivotal scene where Rose confronts Troy about his infidelity, Davis sustains an eruption of method-acting pathos, her face going liquid with pain and disbelief. The complexity and fire in her performance are demonstrably Oscar-worthy and, indeed, garnered Davis the award for Best Supporting Actress. Through much of the film, she carries the family, quietly sacrificing herself to its stability and to Troy's often overbearing presence. At one key point, she tells Troy that she never wanted her family to be like how she was raised, where every sibling had a different father and no one could share completely with their parents. That she ended up with a family like this anyway grieves her deeply, but her force of will ensures that at least her unbroken marriage will become a base for her kids.

At a structural and thematic level, *Fences* grapples with Arthur Miller's classic *Death of a Salesman*, the 1949 play that exposed the fallacy of the American Dream through a past-his-prime salesman clinging to the tenuous strands of his glorious youth and the conflict this produces in his struggling sons. Willy Loman's wife, Linda, bears a crucial resemblance to Wilson's Rose, right down to the powerful finales in both works, where each woman stands defiantly and gives blessing over her husband's failed life. But unlike Miller, Wilson twists his storyline in a way that saves Troy's heroism. Rather than using his protagonist's failure like Miller did as a focused critique of the society that crushed him, Wilson shows us the strained yet still admirable mettle of his central character. Social forces have undeniably been hard on Troy, and at times he has been his own worst enemy. But through all of this, Rose's final pronouncement to her children—who are rightly skeptical about their father's virtue—is that he exemplifies someone who "gave the best of what was in himself" to the people in his life. Utterly flawed yet persistently striving to offer all the good that he had—this is Troy's legacy.

Much of the greatness of the film version of *Fences* is already the greatness of the play. Film critics have tended to applaud the stirring performances and the virtuosity of Wilson's original
masterpiece. Less thrilling is the translation of this fine play into cinema, which is a notoriously difficult task for any director. Washington does a thoroughly adequate job with a largely insurmountable problem. We might think that theatre and film are similar media, more similar at least than film and fiction. After all, they share many aesthetic elements, such as sets, costumes, and actors. But the dramatic style Wilson embraces is largely aural, much like his conventional American forebears, Eugene O’Neil, Arthur Miller, and Tennessee Williams. Wilson’s script is deliciously, ebulliently talky, and its more natural second home would be radio rather than the distinctly visual medium of film. With Fences, we are a long way from Hitchcock’s celebration of a “pure cinema” that tells its story as much as possible through pictures alone—a widely accepted secular doctrine of sola pictura. Washington adds a few visual flourishes, such as rides in Troy and Bono’s garbage truck and some attention-grabbing camera work during Troy’s most emotional moments. Overall, though, the editing remains invisible, and the camera simply captures the speeches and discussions of the characters. The force of Fences on film is slightly diminished compared to Fences the play, simply because it lacks the immediacy that only the live theatre can bring. I am glad, however, that more viewers have access to the story through this film.

It is hard to imagine anyone but Denzel Washington doing this production. Not only did he star alongside Viola Davis in the 2010 Broadway revival of the play, but he is also his generation’s Sidney Poitier, the premier ambassador of black masculinity for mainstream American cinema. Unlike Poitier, though, who is sometimes criticized for being too polite and too “acceptable,” Washington roils with sexual energy and verbal explosiveness, and he is thoroughly convincing as the physically, emotionally, and intellectually imposing Troy. However, without taking anything away from Washington’s nuanced performance, this version of Fences exposes the persistent, much discussed problem of Hollywood’s lack of diversity among directors, producers, and even major stars. Washington is superb, but why is he the only person available to create this film at this level? The Twitter hashtag #OscarsSoWhite mobilized a furor around the 2016 Academy Awards that had (once again) snubbed many worthy actors and films made by and for people of color. The 2017 lineup of nominees fared somewhat better with films like Moonlight, Hidden Figures, and Fences getting Best Picture nods. The stunning conclusion to the ceremony, with Moonlight receiving the award after a mistaken announcement that La La Land had won, gives some kind of vindication to the outcry for more diversity. (One can only imagine the outrage if the mistake had gone the other way and Moonlight had been announced first, only to be stripped in favor of a very white, self-adoring, musical love note to Hollywood.)

It remains to be seen whether the 2017 awards are merely a token nod or a changing tide that might usher in more black talent and exploration of diverse lives that matter. Whatever its struggles to be a purely cinematic experience, Fences is an important enshrining of a great American play and perhaps an invitation for more high-profile works by and about black people, as well as broader recognition of August Wilson’s extraordinary achievement.

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THE BOOK OF NO

all that remains of Jonah

anger
became angry

he prayed
you are a
love
God

it is better for me to die

he made himself
a
plant

God provided a worm
and
a scorching
sun

he grew
he wanted to die

God said
is it right for you to be angry

it is
he said
I wish I were dead

but the Lord said
you
died overnight

Katie Manning
Mexican Tradition with a Twist
Banda El Recodo Taps into Its Roots on Raíces

Josh Langhoff

The song opens with a fanfare for three trumpets before the rest of the band crashes in. Two alto horns seem to joust with a sousaphone as three trombones start up a complicated rhythm. Most of the crashing comes from the percussion section, a snare drum and a bass drum topped by cymbals; meanwhile, four clarinets ride their time, waiting to take up a different tune once the percussion settles down. The overall effect of the song, a standard of northwest­ern Mexico called “El Sinaloense,” is not unlike watching a three-ring circus, or the motion of ants. Trying to grasp it all at once is overwhelming. You can focus on one element at a time, a single melody or the overarching rhythmic pulse, but something more interesting will forever vie for attention at the corner of your eye. Turn and marvel before it disappears.

This is the joy of banda music, the brass band style from the Mexican state of Sinaloa. In this case, “El Sinaloense” is the theme song of Banda El Recodo de Cruz Lizárraga, one of the longest running popular musical ensembles in the world. In 1938 the late clarinetist Cruz Lizárraga started playing with the banda, which served the villagers of El Recodo, a small town near the coastal city of Mazatlán. Back then the banda was just one of many village brass bands in Sinaloa, ignored outside their home state and viewed with suspicion by neighbors who considered musicians drunken neer-do-wells. Now, eight decades and countless personnel changes later, Banda El Recodo is a widely respected and wealthy institution that has managed to become commercially relevant outside its home country. The banda regularly releases hit singles, its 17 members spend most weekends playing concerts across the U.S. and Mexico, and its most recent album Raíces (“roots” or “origins”) earned the band its fourth Grammy nomination.

Despite its longevity, the banda and its music are thoroughly modern.

Yet Raíces is an album of old songs, most of them instrumentals. It opens with “El Sinaloense,” a song the banda has been playing since at least its first recording session in 1954. The album’s hoari­est artifact is “Diana Ranchera,” a medley of several martial themes punctuated by thrilling snare drum solos; it may date back to the Mexican Revolution. The band also tackles “Palillos Chinos,” a kitschy mambo about chopsticks, and “Corazón de Texas,” a polka that sounds remarkably similar to “Deep In the Heart of Texas” despite their different composers. The hit single, a waltz called “Mujer Mujer” (“Woman, Woman”), was one of Mexico’s top ten radio songs for much of the past summer. Previously performed by accordion-led norteno bands, “Mujer” is one of the two songs on Raíces to feature the band’s singers, both good-looking muchachos with stylish haircuts. In these and other songs the age of the material disappears, leaving us with the perpetually fresh sound of young men reveling in their precision and dexterity.

Banda El Recodo is not alone in these pur­suits. Since the turn of the millennium, bandas fronted by singers have grown increasingly popular in both the United States and Mexico, with an industry of songwriters, producers, record labels, and concert bookers at their disposal. Enjoyed largely by immigrants from Mexico and their descendants, regional Mexican music—an industry term denoting banda, norteño, and other less popular local styles like mariachi and Tejano—has long been the dominant Latin music genre in this country. Regional Mexican radio stations attract as many American listeners as do contemporary R&B or alternative rock formats. (We have two such stations in the Chicago area.) Most bandas record newly composed pop songs, not the clas-
more questionable audiences: narcos, the drug traffickers who came to dominate regions of Sinaloa during the ’70s. These private shows were no secret; in fact, the iconic band sometimes finds itself mentioned in the lyrics of narcocorridos, story songs about the drug trade told from the narcos’ points of view. After Lizárraga hired the rough-voiced singer Julio Preciado to front the band in the ’90s, Banda El Recodo wrote and recorded a few narcocorridos of its own. Surveying all these changes in 1994, one frustrated banda fan told Simonett:

“The only thing I lament is that the new bandas are so contaminated. They dress like clowns, like eccentrics. Banda musicians didn’t use to be like that! The garb of the former musician was that of a peasant. But now... it’s the American influence! Those of us who like the original tambora do not accept this clowning. Cruz Lizárraga was the first to popularize the banda, but he also corrupted the banda... Out of the need to survive, they do whatever pays well.” (Simonett, p.220)

In a delicious turn of events, a group of small “technobandas” started getting paid just as well in the early ’90s, briefly achieving the American popularity Lizárraga had dreamed of. These new groups also wore flashy matching suits, adding cowboy hats to the mix, and their sound resembled traditional banda music, only with most of their songs’ horn parts replaced by synthesizers and electric bass. With dramatic irony, the great innovator Cruz Lizárraga grumbled to the magazine Furia Musical, “I even dare to say that the majority [of them] aren’t bandas at all.” But Lizárraga and his acoustic banda remained stub-
bornly devoted to change. After his death in 1995, Banda El Recodo seized on the decline of the technobandas by working with two up-and-coming Los Angeles producers, twin brothers Adolfo and Omar Valenzuela, who go by the professional name Los Twiins. Then recent immigrants in their early 20s, the Valenzuelas had seen their young peers don cowboy costumes and flock to technobanda shows, and they thought acoustic banda could appeal to the same growing audience, hungry for ties to the country of their ancestors.

Along with other banda producers of the time, Los Twiins capitalized on a crucial epiphany: that acoustic bandas could deliver contemporary pop songs just as well as guitar bands or synthesizers. Banda El Recodo’s 2001 single, the lively polka “Y Llegaste Tu,” (“And You Arrived”) blanketed Regional Mexican radio for most of a year by splitting the difference between traditional banda and radio pop. The vocal hooks were front and center, and the different sections of the banda framed those hooks with orderly changes in tone color. The Valenzuelas devoted time to another innovation that surely registered on listeners’ ears. “We put a lot of time in the studio,” Omar Valenzuela told Billboard, “and we’ve learned how to really tune the banda, which maybe wasn’t really done [before]” (Cobo, 2001).

In 2001 the brothers arranged a hit for another act, Rogelio Martinez, that would provide a template for songs like “Solo Con Verte.” Martinez’s “Amame” (“Love Me”) was a romantic ballad that could have come from anywhere, except it was sung in Spanish and played by a brass band. The song used more chords than the typical Sinaloan polka, even modulating to a higher key at the end, and its rhythm wasn’t a polka at all; it was a slow backbeat, with tuba filling the role of the kick drum and trumpet stabs supplementing the snare drum hits. The legato horn line sounded more like the band Chicago than “El Sinaloense.” Was this banda music? Well, yes; what else could you call it? But it was clearly a sign that bandas had arrived someplace new.

Martinez’s previous hit single had been “Y Sigue Siendo Tu,” a cover of “You’re Still the One” by the pop country singer Shania Twain. This was fitting, because at just that moment Twain was inspiring some familiar hand wringing in the country music world. The complaints echoed those leveled at Cruz Lizárraga: Shania Twain was corrupting country music with the sounds of pop, she was just doing whatever paid well, and she dressed funny. But where “Y Sigue” could have been simply a novelty cover song, “Amame” was part of a movement in the making. Even as these songs looked ahead to our current banda pop moment, they also looked back: to Cruz Lizárraga rewriting Glenn Miller charts for his band to play, hoping they could land a long term gig outside El Recodo, playing to people with more disposable income than their friends and neighbors.

Banda El Recodo has released another single since Raíces. “Vale La Pena” (“Worth It”) is a smooth easy listening ballad, newly written, with the banda’s horns creating backbeat rhythms and its singers indulging in melismas worthy of American Idol. It may lack the technical thrills of “El Sinaloense,” but for fans who have heard the song five million times (and counting!) on Youtube, “Vale La Pena” offers a different kind of thrill: hearing the music of secluded Sinaloan villages play to the broader world they know and love. This sound is both old and new, familiar yet uncanny; but it is obscure no longer.

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When the Praises Go Up
The Religious Core of Hip Hop in 2016
Anthony Easton

In his magisterial 1962 essay, "Letter from a Region of My Mind," James Baldwin wrote about his ambivalence toward faith—about how much he needed it, and how much damage it could cause. Baldwin's New Yorker piece is chimeric, moving between profoundly earnest faith and a cynical analysis on the ongoing problem of capital. Right in the middle of the essay, he writes about meeting his friend's female pastor. He talks about her in terms reminiscent of Whitman, as if this woman were all of America. She says to him, "Whose little boy are you?" Baldwin is a child at this point, but he realizes that he hears the same question from the pimps and racketeers on the street. The question of who owned him would become central to his life. The answer would be, of course, no one—except, in moments of extreme vulnerability, the vague possibility of God.

This is the question central to the American holocaust of slavery and Jim Crow: Who owns you? The question conjures up feelings of loss and abandonment that come from having an owner but no family and no home, that come from the diaspora being born in your flesh and the displacement barely covered by a shuffle of practices and desires. The question is still asked in the space between the church and the street, but it is rarely answered there.

In 2016, hip hop music asked such questions in ways that were profoundly religious, but religious in ways that wrestled with a wide variety of heterodoxies, verging on blasphemy. Kanye West's The Life of Pablo, Beyoncé's Lemonade, Kendrick Lamar's Untitled and Unmastered, and Chance the Rapper's Coloring Book are some of the albums asking complicated questions that branched (perhaps indirectly) from Baldwin's questions of identity and social construction, of the mutual hustle of city street and church back room. The street is bloody, and the church might not provide necessary solutions. These searching, difficult texts ask more questions than they answer.

Hip hop in 2016 was often about not knowing. These songs are ironic if we define irony as the space between expectations and actuality, or between the sign and the signifier. The gap between expectations and of lived realities—and what is written about those things—has a literary and religious set of problems. Baldwin tells us that for the black religious community, irony is the space between audience and performer, and that it holds deep power. Such irony is not grasped by white folks, whose understanding of black culture requires no slippage between sign and signifier. He writes, "White Americans do not understand the depths out of which such an ironic tenacity comes, but they suspect that the force is sensual, and they are terrified of sensuality and do not any longer understand it."

Kendrick Lamar's 2016 album, Untitled Unmastered, begins as a sex jam, but quickly transitions into an almost literal jeremiad—an eschatological (he quotes the Book of Revelation) list of that which he fears. The first half minute of the first (untitled) track is a guest verse sung by Bilal. It speaks with loving tenderness of a lamb:

Come here, girl
Oh, you want me to touch you right there?
Oh, like a little lamb, play in your hair

The lamb here is complicated: Lamb as in angus dei; lamb as in Blake's poem; lamb like honey or baby or any name for a woman that suggests an infantile lack of power; lamb like the possibility of a sensual God; lamb as a little child will lead them; lamb like an adult woman will lead them—an adult woman that one will want to sleep with;
lamb like a distinct kind of eroticized blasphemy, a push of religious and sexual desire; as the first line of an ongoing introduction to the repeated themes, a triple helix, an unsolvable riddle. But

Kanye’s gospel is one of money but sacrifice, of refusal of flesh but desire for the body; of joy and melancholy. It also comes close to blasphemy.

it is not the most explicit of these anthems. That would be Kanye’s Pablo.

PABLO WAS MARKETED AS A GOSPEL ALBUM before its release. It has some gospel traits, especially in whom Kanye chooses to guest or sample. On “Father Stretch My Hands,” he quotes Father TL Barrett; on “Ultralight Beam,” the breakout single, he quotes gospel superstar Kirk Franklin. But Barrett is notorious for running a multi-million dollar pyramid scheme, and Franklin is engaged in an interdenominational fight about his religious purity. Kanye’s gospel is one of money but sacrifice, of refusal of flesh but desire for the body; of joy and melancholy. It also comes close to blasphemy. The ambivalence of the genre and of the theme cannot mean that Kanye’s earnestness about religion and the earnestness of sexual themes are unified. The power to convert and the power to shock appear in a single space.

O NE THING THAT REED FLIRTS WITH, BUT Baldwin does not, is something surprisingly absent from Kanye’s work: reclamation of traditional West African spiritual practices, away from Christian piety. Beyoncé did that this year. Absent from traditional piety, Bey’s video for “Hold Up,” shows a personal goddess, a syncretic, both/and ritual practice, which incorporates Yoruban and Christian motifs.

In a story for PBS, Kamaria Roberts and Kenya Downs explain this as a text of the African Diaspora: “In ‘Hold Up,’ the album’s second single, Beyoncé appears as Oshun, a Yoruban water goddess of female sensuality, love and fertility. Oshun is often shown in yellow and surrounded by fresh water. Donning a flowing yellow Roberto Cavalli dress, gold jewelry and bare feet, Beyoncé channels the orisha, or goddess, by appearing in an underwater dreamlike state before emerging from two large golden doors with water rushing past her and down the stairs.”

“Hold Up” begins liturgically—not the liturgy of Kendrick or the gospel of Kanye, but some-
thing less Christian. It begins with a depiction of ritual practices. Some seem more outrageous than others, but she mentions God in a way that seems familiarly Western, and the Holy Book could be considered a Bible. The orisha finds her way through the diaspora, into the churches of black America. That it ends with death seems less than heartbreak; she becomes a diaspora, another example of another black body, dead on the street, when she talks about betrayal, about ashes to ashes, about death. This is not a personal narrative. This is a resurrection story. A double resurrection, through a double baptism—her presence overwhelms the colonial forms; her mixing is a source of profound power. Like in Formation, when she stands on the cop car in the Louisiana swamp, she owns a world, flooded by indifference.

Beyoncé mixes social identities with the problems of religion, culture, and personal narratives, and she, Kanye, and Kendrick all complicate what Christendom could be for African American audiences, moving the borders of orthodoxy and orthopraxis. But to talk about theological implications of hip hop in 2016 without talking about Chance the Rapper would be foolish.

Chance is the most orthodox of the rappers. His work is earnest and not ironic in its faith. He loves Christ, and though there is a through line of prosperity gospel in his work, it is not the work for “paper,” or money. Rather, he is working as an evangelical, sharing with others an understanding of the Kingdom that has given him life. In the song “Blessings,” he sings:

I don’t make songs for free, I make ’em for freedom
Don’t believe in kings, believe in the Kingdom
Chisel me into stone, prayer whistle me into song air

Here, Chance creates the liberating view of Christ in the image of himself. Chance reads the violence of the state against himself as not only a black man, but also considers Christ as the marginalized victim of state violence. This marginalized Christ is placed in context of blessings delivered, but not material positions or goods. It becomes another kind of corrective to the power found in the world, and to this cult of paper.

Thinking about all of this in relationship to the original Baldwin quote, the question of social identity and its religious components, in the culture that continually oppresses it, is difficult. Hip-hop music of 2016 seems especially fecund, but the construction of identity against the racism of America is an ongoing process. How these artists recast Christ as part of the ongoing black imaginary has a religious power—and some practical magic.

Anthony Easton is a Toronto-based writer.

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JIANGXI CITIZENS SEE FLOATING CITY,
PHENOMENON CAUSED BY REFRACTED LIGHT

They pour out into the streets by the thousands, cars parked quiet like upturned faces—
clouds billowing colossal Olympus spume
and from their shadows
the dark fortress of a city hovers heavenward and broods for minutes in refracted light,
a masterpiece matching Miyazaki.

The vision dulls Jiangxi conversation, observers look silent in wonderment,
think to themselves the light will break through, revealing a lie
but still the clouds hold.

A man youthful like me
gazes up and places belief in the portal opening up before him:
highways heaving from some limitless expanse between buildings scraping sky

clean of bluish hue and space darkness lurking beyond—

If only a ladder tall enough,
a pilot brave enough.

What he sees solidifies: floating city becoming mountain rock.
His eyes make the journey to the small square window he knows too well

[Building #32]
on the town’s west side where rose petals blossom just as they did this morning
when he left for work, light shafts dancing around single stem.

In tempest current, the flower lets loose a single leaf lifeless along the jet stream,
pitching it to and fro, pale rimmed-rose dipping
and falling.

He utters a prayer—
the petal fading in and out of cloud before it breaks
moisture’s undercarriage, careening all directions and down
the last few thousand feet to the dirt that seeded it.
He watches it fall the long way to earth.

Aaron Brown
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On the Poets


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