

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW PETERSON ■ BUZZ-OOMING IN ■ SPRING BLOOMS
TRACING ANCIENT STEPS IN TÜRKİYE ■ READING REDISCOVERY
MIMICKING THE MASTERS ■ ...AND MUCH, MUCH MORE. *THIS IS VISUAL HYMNAL.*



visual hymnal

VOLUME 2, ISSUE NO. 1

EASTERTIDE

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

Recently I've been rereading a book I first fell in love with in my ninth grade English class: "The House on Mango Street," by Sandra Cisneros. I loved this book for the stories and the writing, but most of all for its form: it's written in short vignettes that together paint a picture of life in a Latino neighborhood in Chicago in the 1960's. Cisneros describes the story collection as "a jar of buttons," as "a book that can be opened at any page and will still make sense to the reader who doesn't know what came before or after."

The same goes for the pieces in these pages. Each stands on its own, yet together they say something about what it is to be Easter people. An art student sees in her story of redemptive dumpster diving a picture of Christ's sacrificial love (pg. 45). A piece of bread—at once simple, sacramental, and rich with meaning—is meticulously rendered in watercolor (pg. 26). A professor's personal essay reminds us of the joy of losing oneself in a story (pg. 24).

Talking with singer-songwriter and author Andrew Peterson for this issue was such a gift (pg. 18). During our conversation, he told me that he makes a practice of writing a sonnet every day during Lent, so I joined his Substack and began getting them in my inbox. In a recent Lenten sonnet, written on the bank of the Reedy River in Greenville, SC (the first stop on this year's "Resurrection Letters" tour), Andrew takes up a theme he spoke about in our interview—human beings as "sub-creators":

Christ is the artist, but it was his will
That we add to the beauty of it all.
So again, gardeners, I give you thanks
For sowing Eden on the Reedy's banks.
— from "Lenten Sonnets XIV and XV, 2025,"

by Andrew Peterson

So again, intrepid artists (including our own frequent spinner of sonnets—pg. 10!), I give you thanks. For adding your buttons to this jar. For sowing Eden in the pages of this journal.

Christ is risen, fellow Easter people. And he is making all things new.

Katie Hautamaki

I think all of us can agree that sharing our work can be uncomfortable. It brings up so many thoughts about being enough: Is my work good enough? Am I smart enough? Am I skilled enough? I hope every single one of you reading this knows that your creativity matters, that you're made in His image, and part of that image is being a creator. Visual Hymnal is here to celebrate just that—to be a place where we can point each other toward the goodness, beauty, and truth of the gospel; and encourage you as you explore and refine your unique talents. Thank you to everyone for taking a brave, vulnerable step and contributing your work to this magazine. There are over 60 pieces featured this go-around—WOW! I hope you enjoy seeing the creations of your fellow Jesus-followers. I enjoyed putting it together for you.

Did you see the BIG news? Due to the Lord's providence through some sweet connections, Katie got to have a call with songwriter, artist, and author Andrew Peterson! You're going to love his insights about being a Christian and an artist. If you love the interview, you'll probably be interested to know that he's coming to Tallahassee this fall! There's more information about that following the article. I can't wait. Who should Katie interview next?

In this issue we also get to go on an adventure through the eyes of the team from Center Point Church who traveled to Turkey this past November! They did a great job cataloging their trip. There were so many great photos, how was I supposed to pick which ones to feature in print?! *Sigh* So falls my lot as Art Director. What I noticed, though, was how each of the photojournalists saw this new, unfamiliar corner of humanity's story and they each chose to capture something a little different (kind of like the four gospels, don't you think?). Thanks, Turkey Team, for bringing us back a little sip of your trip through your photos.

I want to express my appreciation for Christ Classical Academy. You guys jumped in with both feet on this issue! We've got poetry, award-winning drawings, and work inspired by artists from long ago. Special thanks to Mrs. Deyo and Mr. Hughes for sharing Visual Hymnal with your students. I hope to see these artists' work nestled in our pages for issues to come.

I hope seeing your work alongside so many others of all ages and skill levels sparks in you the desire to pursue and develop the special giftings God has graciously given to you.

Without further ado, enjoy this, the kick-off issue of the second volume of Visual Hymnal.

Sara Davis

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IN THIS ISSUE

Notes From the Editors	2
Contributors	3-4

Visual Art

<i>Flower arrangement and photo by Kristin Webster</i>	5
<i>Yes, a digital painting by Jay Colle</i>	7
<i>Dogwood, Pacific St. Apartment, a photo by Daniel Hautamaki</i>	8-9
<i>Night Sky Over Butterpot, a photo by Daniel Hautamaki</i> ... 10-11	
<i>Honeybee Drinking, a photo by Daniel Hautamaki</i>	12-13
<i>Substitution, a painting by Carlson Herbert</i>	14-15
<i>Acrylic rendering of "Seascape (The Wave), 1879" by Grace Huber</i>	16-17
<i>A photo by Lindsey VanAlstyne</i>	23
<i>Blue Jay for Dad, a drawing by Abigail Young</i>	25
<i>Prospheora, a watercolor study by Mike Houghton</i>	26
<i>Droplets, a drawing by Evie Drury</i>	27
<i>Cassandra/Troy, a drawing by Esther Gardner</i>	27
<i>Pattern Rhino, a drawing by Emily Bultmann</i>	28
<i>Athanasius Crocodile, a drawing by Charles Chason</i>	28
<i>The Little Owl, a drawing by Olivia Power</i>	28
<i>A painting by Annelise Jackson</i>	29
<i>Pastel Sunset, a drawing by Nora Jackson</i>	29
<i>Misty of Chincoteague, a drawing by Piper Gines</i>	29
<i>A linocut print by Heather Sherman</i>	30
<i>Rainy Window on a Tuesday, a photo by Shaun Davis</i>	31
<i>Photos from Turkey by Cody Sherman, Mary Jane Sinclair, and Brian Douglas</i>	31-39
<i>Three painted textiles by Kea Suiko Kamiya</i>	40-41
<i>Koinobori, a sculpture by Kea Suiko Kamiya</i>	42
<i>Some doodles by Sara Davis</i>	43
<i>Ceramic bowls by Joshua Askey</i>	44
<i>Aeneid Turbulence, a drawing by Sierra Carson</i>	45
<i>Lord, Will You Make it Good?, a collage by Sara Davis</i>	46
<i>A Good Home: Son, a collage by Caroline Jackson</i>	46-47
<i>Happy Hearts, a collage by Madison Henzel</i>	47

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

Jennifer Drury is a sinner loved by Jesus, thankful for her amazing husband and sweet kids. She loves truth, goodness, and beauty in many forms, from sunsets to poems to water molecules.

Jay Colle started drawing on folded Order of Service sheets on Sunday mornings at church—an attempt on his mother's part to tamp down the restless activity of a toddler. The restlessness never waned, so he just kept drawing and painting and creating stuff. There is no sign of it stopping any time soon.

Vicki Davis is new at expressing herself creatively. She's always been an avid observer of art and art forms, but never really a participant. She enjoys learning and growing, adventuring with her family, and growing closer to Jesus.

Nonfiction

<i>Of Heroes and Kingdoms, an interview with Andrew Peterson by Katie Hautamaki</i>	18
<i>Rediscovering My Joy of Reading, an essay by Justin Vos</i>	24

Music

<i>He's Not Dead, a collaborative playlist</i>	6
<i>Jesus Take the Way, a song by Vicki Davis</i>	30
<i>Come to Me, a song written by Dean Sinclair and performed by Dean Sinclair, Jessica Sinclair Bevis, and Adria Sinclair Fogarty</i>	31
<i>Jesus Coming to You, a song by The Regals</i>	42

Poetry

<i>Mary Had a Little Lamb by Verity Hawkes</i>	6
<i>The Gardener by Autumn Kloth</i>	8
<i>Glory and Trust by Jennifer Drury</i>	10
<i>iotas by Autumn Kloth</i>	15
<i>Easter Snow by Justin L. Hughes</i>	17
<i>Springtime by Joshua Webster</i>	17
<i>Beach Day by Jennifer Drury</i>	22
<i>Emmaus, a meditation by Mike Houghton</i>	30
<i>Refrigerator Poem by Sara Davis</i>	44

Mike Houghton began drawing as a kid in Miami and writing as an adult in Tallahassee. Among his loves is watching the dawn emerge while drinking coffee in his living room.

Autumn Kloth is an FSU senior who will graduate in May. In August, she will start her master's in Statistics at FSU. Between internships and classes, Autumn likes to write poetry and read books. She finds writing to be a great way to share joy, sorrow, or any of the emotions that come with this God-given life.

Brian Douglas is a grateful husband, dad, pastor, and son of God. He is trying to learn how to listen more and speak less.

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS, *cont.*

Justin L. Hughes serves Christ Classical Academy as Head of School, and he serves St. Peter's Anglican Cathedral as a deacon. He and his wife Allie have four children ages ten to fifteen.

Heather Sherman has gone dipnet fishing in Alaska, lived at 13,000 feet in Peru, eaten churros on a beach in Tijuana, and is very content with everyday life in Tallahassee, Florida, but alas she is moving away.

Cody Sherman doesn't like mayonnaise or attention. But he has learned to tolerate small amounts of mayonnaise.

Karen Hawkins is a native Floridian who grew up in Panama City on beautiful St. Andrew Bay. She moved to Tallahassee in 2007 for an editing job at FSU. When she's not advocating for the Oxford comma, she can be found hanging with her cat Hamilton and quoting Shakespeare to anyone who will listen.

Caroline Jackson, a Georgia native, longtime Christ-follower and amateur artist, is fueled by coffee and naps. She's trying to convince her six extroverted roommates (one husband and five young offspring) that the quieter things in life—time outside, books, more coffee, more naps—are the coolest things in life, too.

Nora Jackson enjoys writing stories and making craft projects. She loves nature and can be found outside most of the time. She is in 4th grade and is 10 years old.

Annelise Jackson is a fabulous five-year-old who makes great art, sings at top volume, and can weave a fantastic tale. She lives and loves to the MAX!

Kristin Webster is a mom, college instructor, wreath-maker, and mystery connoisseur. She enjoys Bible study and walks in the morning with her husband.

Joshua Webster is a 10-year-old poet and archer. He has also been known to invent games with his brother, play basketball, run at Morning Running Club, and do chores for his parents.

Sara Davis grew up in the age of Left Behind vs. Harry Potter and, frankly, is still working through all that. Spoiled rotten by her husband, she enjoys homemaking, hosting dinner parties, and the more-than-occasional midday nap. Mom/Coach/CFO. Sometimes she designs magazines.

Shaun Davis is a husband, dad, and a *Holy Smoke BBQ* pitmaster. When he's not fighting the computers, he is out enjoying nature, where they can't control his thoughts.

Abigail Young is 15 years old and loves art, working with her hands, reading good books, hiking, and exploring in the woods. She seeks truth and wishes to show truth to the world through her art and her actions. She draws what she sees in God's creation, but also scenes from the books that she loves, most especially the works of J.R.R. Tolkien.

Lindsey VanAlstyne has loved taking pictures since she was a small child. Even though this hobby has now evolved to exclusively iPhone photography, she still gets prints developed to put up around her home. Seeing these snapshots every day is a visual reminder of God's faithfulness to her and her three children.

Kea Suiko Kamiya is from Southwest Florida. She received dual bachelors in Art and English from Florida Gulf Coast University. She is currently pursuing her Master of Fine Arts from Florida State University. Her favorite "traditional" hymn is "Hast Thou Heard Him, Seen Him, Known Him?" She is overjoyed to participate in a beautiful project that glorifies the Lord through art and creativity.

Carlson Herbert lives in central California with his wife and is inspired by blue in the shadows, funk, and the love of Jesus. He enjoys dancing and traveling with his wife.

Verity Hawkes is a fourth grader with two brothers. She enjoys sewing, ballet, reading, and ukulele.

Gary Hautamaki started singing "Camptown Races" at the top of his lungs under his house as a kid and hasn't ever stopped. He and his Southern Gospel quartet, The Regals, are childhood friends who started singing together in 1984 and are still ministering today.

The Lord revealed the love of Jesus Christ to **Dean Sinclair** when he was 22 years old. Since then he has served God around the world in business, government, and the body of Christ.

Mary Jane Sinclair is a daughter, a sister, a mother, a wife, a grandmother, and a fellow pilgrim enjoying the beauty and the challenges of the Christian life here on earth. She is proud to be a native Floridian but developed a love of having four distinct seasons in Cincinnati, Ohio. She considers it a privilege to be able to travel overseas especially when purposeful learning and gospel conversations are involved.

Katie Hautamaki is a Tallahassee native who loves reading outside in spring.

Daniel Hautamaki works in the woods and gardens with his kids.

Charlie Chason loves playing football, basketball, baseball, and piano!

When she's not at school, **Olivia Power** can be found practicing soccer, reading books, or playing piano.

Esther Gardner is a sixth grade student who values her privacy.

When she's not at school, **Emily Bultmann** will be found playing soccer, hitting a tetherball, or entertaining her kitten Prissy or her dog Atticuss.

Piper Gines can usually be found playing her ukulele on a Thomasville sidewalk or swimming at ATAC.

Grace Huber is a fifth grader who enjoys taking care of her horses, cat, goats, dogs, and chickens, and playing softball.

Justin Vos is a history professor at FSU. He is also a jack-of-all-trades in training, currently in the middle of a long bathroom remodel.

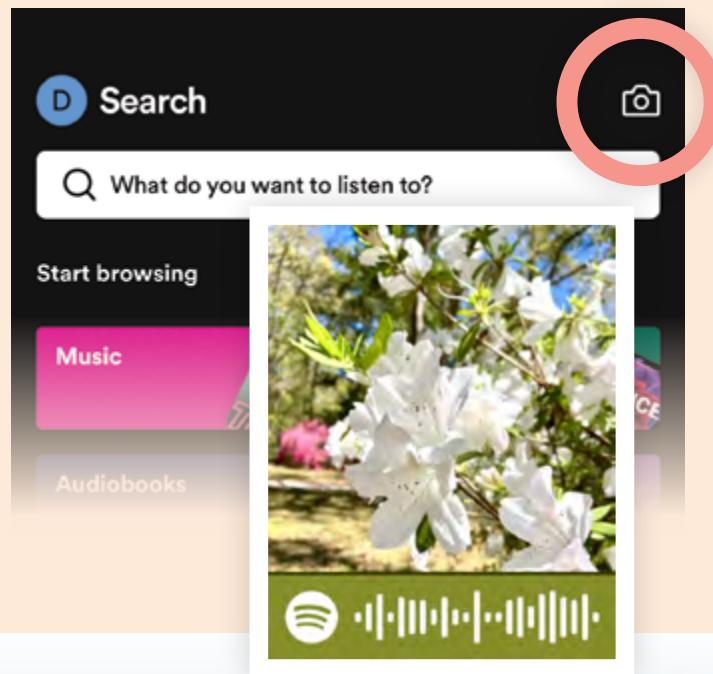


ALLIGATOR POINT, FL
FLOWER ARRANGEMENT AND PHOTO BY KRISTIN WEBSTER

HE'S NOT DEAD

A collaborative playlist of songs for Eastertide

*To play, go to the Spotify search bar,
click on the camera next to it, and scan!*



Mary Had a Little Lamb

By Verity Hawkes, 9

Mary had a little lamb, born humble in a manger.
Mary had a little lamb, died to defeat sin.
Mary had a little lamb, who died for all our sins.
Mary had a little lamb, who rose up from the dead.
He was the Savior of the world from sin and death and evil.

*Inspired by Mary Had a Little Lamb,
Sarah Josepha Hale, 1830*

“MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB”
PENCIL AND CRAYON ON PAPER
VERITY HAWKES, 9



The concept behind this piece is based on Jesus's prayer in the garden. Jesus said "yes" to his Father. Why do I ever consider saying anything less?

There are three versions of "yes"—enthusiastic, matter-of-fact, and questioning—but always "yes." Plus, I hid a "maybe" in the background, the Wall of Yes, to add some humanity.

– Jay Colle

"YES"
DIGITAL PAINTING
JAY COLLE

The Gardener

By Autumn Kloth

He would walk barefoot
in the green, luscious grass,
passing between the perfect
mixture of sun and shade
where animals could talk
and adam would ask,
“come! in this Heaven
let us roam and play.”

there was much joy
in this Eden of theirs.
all creatures great and small
would like brothers be
and their Master, gently
sustaining the earth with
prayer--
oh what bliss! for
from sin they were free.

yet this taste of Heaven did
not last long.
adam sinned and a nature
of rebellion spread like death
killing all friendship and love;
Hell
to forever be prolonged
if the Gardener decided
to save His sweat and breath.

but He did not abandon
the world He had created!
out of pity and love He
digs to replant and rebirth,
gently rooting out the disease
from our wilted hearts,
to recreate our eternal home;
Heaven on earth!





“DOGWOOD, PACIFIC ST. APARTMENT”
BROOKLYN, NY
DANIEL HAUTAMAKI

Glory

By Jennifer Drury

What weight of glory laid you down
To hang upon that tree?
What perfect raiment cast aside
So that you could clothe me?
Imputed: all your righteousness,
Forgiven: all my sin,
Submitted: all your will to Him,
The victory to win.

Trust

By Jennifer Drury

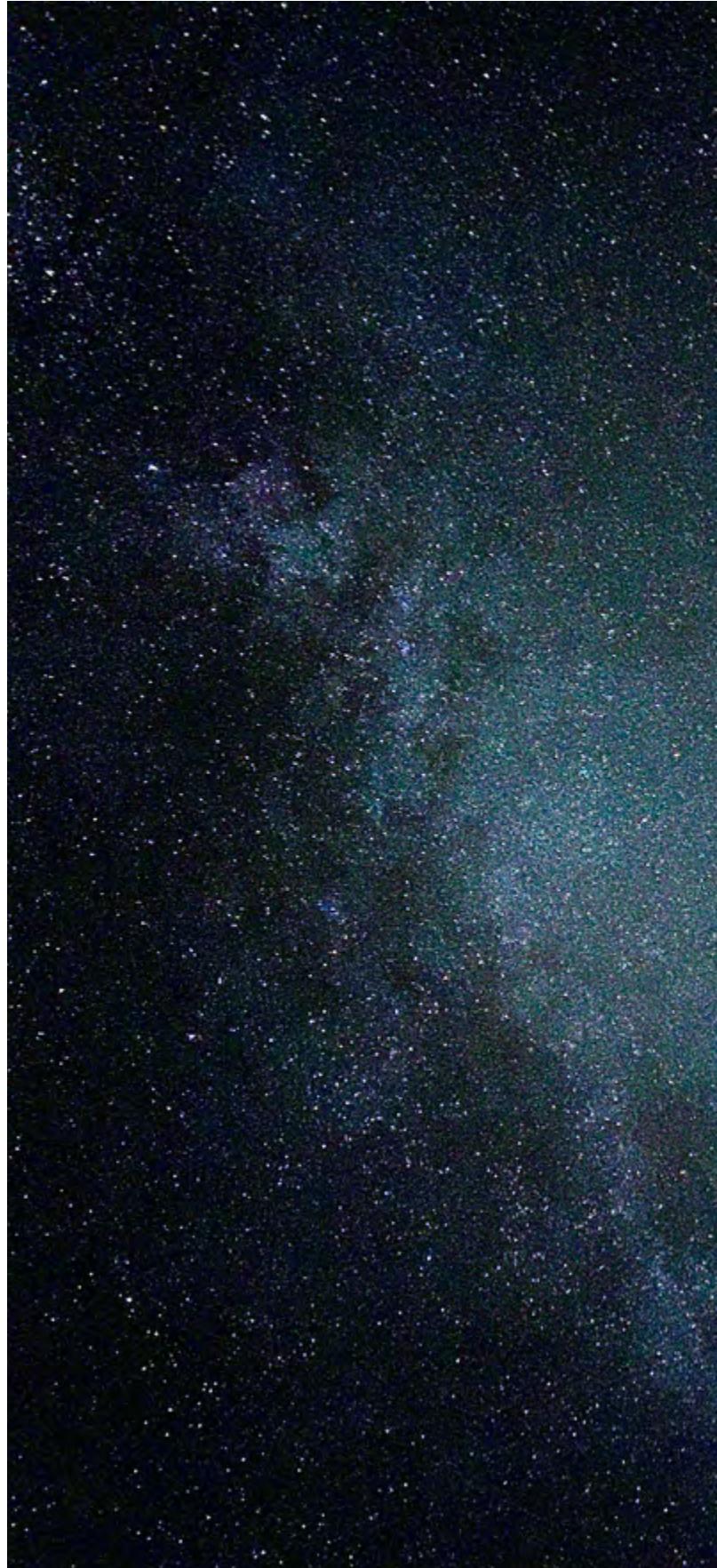
Proverbs 3 and Job 12

The universal human condition—
Dependency; control slips through our grasp.
Folly to ignore our limitations—
Can we control the rain, the air we gasp?

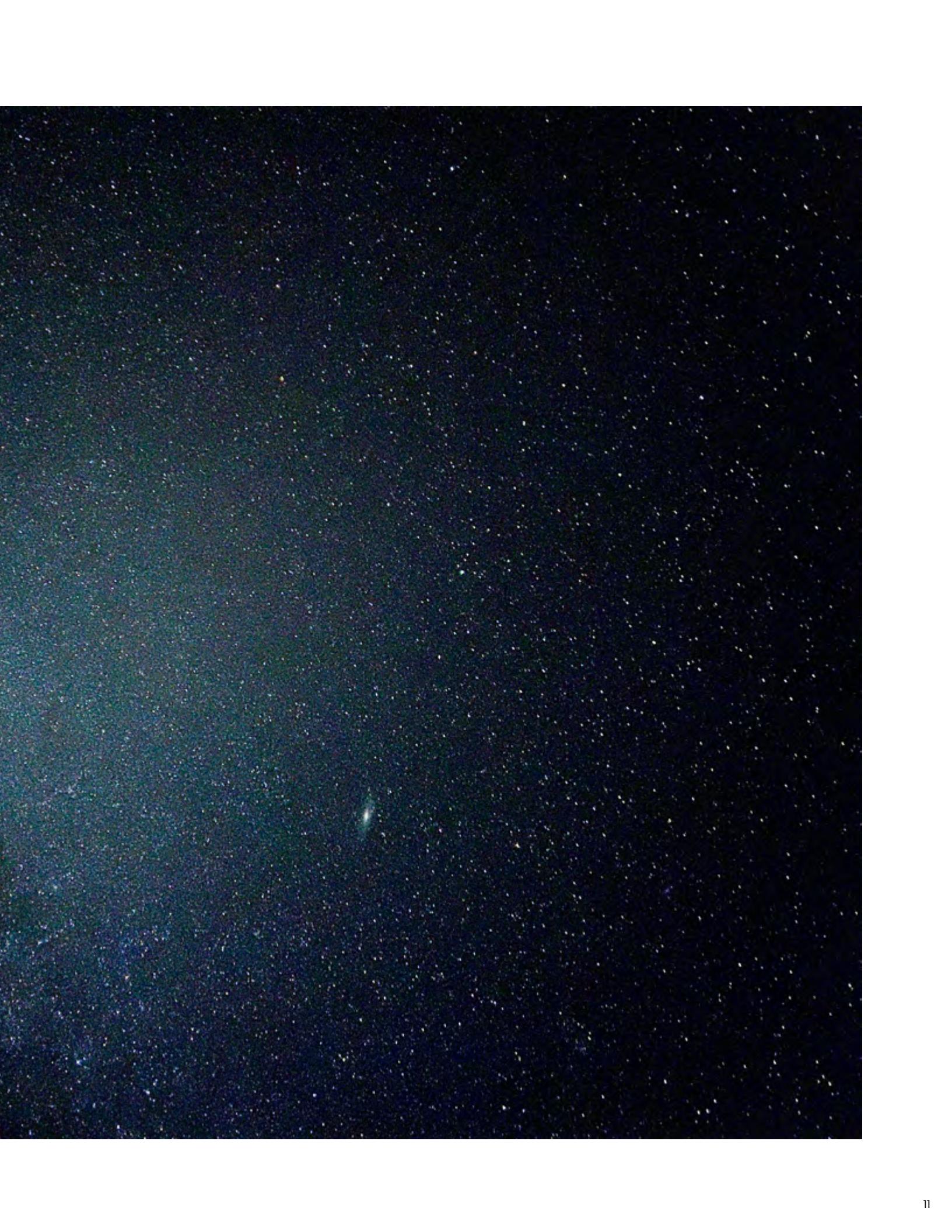
Oh how I fear to fall and not be caught
I'd rather think that I can catch myself
But tremble for the price at which I'm bought
Sufficient payment found in no one else

To claw for freedom is to forge a fetter,
That I am not my own should be my hope
Why then fret and fight like I know better?
All of creation is beyond my scope

My God illuminates the darkness grim
So though he slay me, I will trust in Him



“NIGHT SKY OVER BUTTERPOT”
MADISON, FL
DANIEL HAUTAMAKI







"HONEYBEE DRINKING"
BROOKLYN, NY
DANIEL HAUTAMAKI





iotas

By Autumn Kloth

the law that Christ fulfilled
through His precious blood spilled

to save us from sin and death
who reigned for three days breadth

until in humility He arose
Triumphant, yet not grandiose;

He visited many to persuade
and forgave him who betrayed

and loved us without reason
not only in good season.

Died for us not out of duty,
nor for our heart's beauty

but simply by choice
and a Father's will—sinners, rejoice!

on our behalf he was killed
and now the law is fulfilled.

“SUBSTITUTION”
OIL ON CANVAS
CARLSON HERBERT, 2019



ACRYLIC RENDERING OF RENOIR'S "SEASCAPE (THE WAVE), 1879"
GRACE HUBER, 5TH GRADE



Easter Snow

By Justin L. Hughes

Pastels.
Easter ties—
Pink, paisley, purple.

Brights.
Easter flowers—
Yellow, pink, red.

Whites.
Easter garb—
Pants, shoes,
the ground?

What is this?

Springtime

By Joshua Webster, 10

One day I went for a run,
Just for fun.
Through the trees
I felt a gentle breeze.
Then I heard a wonderful sound,
Birds singing all around.

If there is one thing I know about spring,
It's how God's creation loves to sing.
As I look at a flower,
I see God's never-ending power.



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY BRAGG MANAGEMENT

OF HEROES & KINGDOMS

*Andrew Peterson on
Songwriting, Storytelling,
and Sub-creation*

By Katie Hautamaki

***This interview has been edited
for length and clarity.***

“Those of us who write, who sing, who paint, must remember that to a child a song may glow like a nightlight in a scary bedroom. It may be the only thing holding back the monsters,” Andrew Peterson writes in his memoir “Adorning the Dark.” “That story may be the only beautiful, true thing that makes it through all the ugliness of a little girl’s world to rest in her secret heart. May we take that seriously.”

Over the past 20 years, singer-songwriter Andrew Peterson has released more than 10 records, earning him a reputation for songs that connect with his listeners in ways equally powerful, poetic, and intimate. As an author, Andrew’s books include the four volumes of the award-winning “Wingfeather Saga,” which have sold more than a million copies; he’s also an executive producer of the Wingfeather Saga animated series, currently in production on its third season with Angel Studios. His creative memoirs, “Adorning the Dark” and “The God of the Garden,” explore themes like the calling of the artist, the wonder of the natural world, and the glorious reality of the kingdom of God. In 2008 Andrew co-founded the Rabbit Room, a nonprofit organization based in Nashville that nourishes Christ-centered communities by cultivating and curating stories, art, and music.

In conversation, Andrew is thoughtful, generous, and humble, relating hard-won wisdom with gentle humor and a tendency to respond to questions with stories. After all, “stories matter,” he says, and he takes them seriously.

VH: I'd love to start by asking you about creativity—to what extent do you consider it to be a calling for every human being?

AP: There's an essay by J.R.R. Tolkien called "On Fairy-stories" that's always been moving to me. It's basically Tolkien's theology of storytelling and his belief about how and why it works. In this essay he coins a few words, but the one that matters here is this idea of "sub-creation." He talks about how if God is the Creator with a capital C, then we are "sub-creators"—little creators. We don't create anything out of nothing—only God can do that—but we do take the bits and pieces that we've been given and we shape them into something else. So in that sense, he makes the case that storytelling is one of the ways that we bear out the image of God in us. There's a direct connection between our creativity and God as a creative God. What it means is creativity isn't the domain of the artist. Creativity is the domain of human beings. Human beings' capacity to create and to reshape the world into something beautiful is a God-given and universal aspect of what it means to be human.

The way that I sometimes put it is, I think that every human is a kingdom-builder. And I think that the question we have to ask ourselves as Christians constantly is, whose kingdom are we building? Are we building our own kingdom? Are we trying to leave a mark, to be remembered? Or is our main interest using our creative abilities to participate in the building of God's kingdom?

Creativity isn't the domain of the artist. Creativity is the domain of human beings.

VH: What are your thoughts on creating when "inspired" versus when not?

AP: It's an ongoing struggle. I forget who said it—if it was Madeleine L'Engle or Stephen King or somebody else—that said inspiration happens while you're writing, not before you're writing. I resonate with that.

Songwriting and writing a book, they're very, very different disciplines. Songwriting feels more like you're waiting on some flash of inspiration or some idea that's going to get you started or carry the song forward. But you still have to be in a posture of waiting, like, hands open. For me, that looks like getting the guitar out of the case and sitting in my office until four in the morning, just goofing around on the guitar or goofing around on the piano. You're just feeling around in the dark trying to find something to hang your song idea on. And so that does require a kind of inspiration in that sense, whereas book writing doesn't.

I think with book writing, you sit down and you write whether you're inspired or not. You just tell what's happening in the story. And there are moments in the story where it feels especially good, you know? Most of it feels pretty

mediocre, and then every now and then, you're like, "Oh my goodness. This is better than I can do." And all you can do is give thanks that the Lord allowed you to write something that might transcend what you're capable of.

VH: I was listening to a poet [Kaveh Akbar] speak at Florida State recently, and he described that phenomenon by saying, "The poem goes out ahead of me."

AP: Yeah, that's good.

*Whose kingdom are we building?
Are we building our own kingdom?
Are we trying to leave a mark,
to be remembered?*

VH: I recently read "The God of the Garden," and maybe it's because I'm from Florida, but I enjoyed the part about your experience reading "The Yearling" and what it meant to you. I liked that moment when you're visiting the museum in the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park, and you see the display with the many translations of the book, and how that hits you. You write, "The story with which I had identified so closely was, it turns out, universal." **How do you approach your own writing in a way that enables you to achieve both a particularity and a universality in your work?**

AP: Man, great question. Have you been down there, to the museum?

VH: No, I haven't been yet! I would love to go.

AP: One of these days when you're heading south, you should swing by. If you've read and love "The Yearling," it's exactly what you want it to be. It just feels like the book when you're walking around there.

I think if you use "The Yearling" as an example—I can't speak for Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, but she probably wasn't sitting down thinking, "I'm going to write a story that is going to mean something to someone in Tokyo." But she sat down and wrote with a great love for the flora and fauna of her local community, and she also wrote a very particular story about a particular boy. It feels like the story grew out of the Florida wilds and she was just following it. It went out ahead of her, as the poet said.

I think if you're trying to make a broad audience happy, you're going to water down your work and it's going to be paralyzing. So, for me at least, you have to fight to keep a handful of people in mind as your audience. A lot of my songs were written as a gift for one specific person. Then, as it turns out, because I was digging into something very specific, I was digging into something very foundational, so it ends up having a broader reach. It's not always true, but it's a good principle to try to be as particular as you can about your own story, and you stand a greater chance at overlapping with someone else's.

All you can do is give thanks that the Lord allowed you to write something that might transcend what you're capable of.

VH: Again from “The God of the Garden,” you write that, after finishing a song, “I felt a little embarrassed at the thought of sharing thoughts so raw with people I didn’t know.” I think anybody who’s ever put creative work out there can relate.

How do you deal with the competing emotions of needing to express something difficult creatively with the “harrowing” reality, as you call it, of actually sharing it with people? Has that become easier with time and experience?

AP: It has gotten more difficult, actually. Part of it is because as one’s career grows, the audience gets larger, so you have even more reason to second guess the wisdom of sharing personal details.

I feel like I’ve gotten more private the older I’ve gotten, but that’s okay, I think there’s a time for everything. I think the compass has moved for me from recklessly oversharing when I was younger, to then learning to more responsibly share the ins and outs of my own heart and my own story, to eventually being less interested in my own story and being more interested in someone else’s story or God’s story or something else entirely. I think that’s a continuum that we’re probably always moving along.

One of the most clarifying things for me was: the author Walter Wangerin Jr., who wrote “The Book of the Dun Cow” and a bunch of other great things, was a friend of the Rabbit Room. He passed away two years ago; I was honored to know him. He wrote a few memoirs about his life as a pastor in the inner city in Indiana. One of his really great books is called “Miz Lil and the Chronicles of Grace.” He was this white guy who was a pastor in an inner-city church, and there was this huge cultural gap for him when he was starting out as a pastor; he had to constantly learn from his parishioners. So many of his stories involve him making big mistakes. Somebody asked him one time at a Rabbit Room event, “How do you know when it’s okay to share a story about your own mistakes?” And Walt’s answer was that you have to wait until you’ve seen the story arc come to a kind of completion in your own life, and that you’re talking about the thing that happened in the past tense. It’s not necessarily okay to share about it when you’re in the thick of it, because you don’t know enough about what’s going on to be able to honestly share it. Now this is a principle—it’s not necessarily always true—

but I think it’s a good rule to keep in mind. If you’re in the middle of something really difficult, do sit down and write about it. Write a lot about it. Work it out. But when it comes to sharing it for public consumption, wisdom might say, “Hey, why don’t you wait a year?” Because then you’re not turning the audience into your counselor; you’re saying, “Here’s this thing that I went through and maybe it’ll be good for you to hear about what it was like when I was in it.”

I heard someone say one time, “Beware of people who are the heroes of their own stories.” If you’re either making yourself out to be this big knucklehead villain or saying “Look how wise I am that I was able to do this thing,” you’re the main character of the story. And as a Christian, another principle that’s good to keep in mind is to try to wait until it’s clear that God is the hero of your story before you share that story.

I was talking to David Wilcox, this legendary songwriter, and he said that when he was a young songwriter, he could hear himself always trying to be clever. And I remember thinking, what’s wrong with being clever? It’s taken me years to really understand what that means—that if you’re trying to be clever, you’re showing off. And the listener is thinking about you and what a great songwriter you are, not the thing you’re writing about. So the exercise is to keep trying to make the song so good that your listeners have forgotten that there was a songwriter. You get to midwife this thing into existence, but the song exists on its own.

VH: What do you see as the role of community in making art? What effect have others had on your work?

AP: Oh, man. Huge. I think the biggest thing is they give you something to write about. That life in community is dangerous and difficult and also intensely joyful. I think that’s one of the good things about going to church—it keeps you honest.

The exercise is to keep trying to make the song so good that your listeners have forgotten there was a songwriter.

If you are an artist, you need a community of people who aren’t terribly impressed by you. One of my oldest friends in Nashville is this guy named Kevin who told me after we had been friends for like, six years, that he’d never listened to my music. He was like, “I wanted to make sure that you and I were friends enough that I could tell you if I didn’t like it.” It’s this funny thing, but I felt a safety in that friendship that I wouldn’t have known if he had come into it the other way. It’s good to have friends like that, who are just friends with you because they’re friends with you, not because they’re impressed with anything that you do.



But on the other hand, it's tremendously helpful if you are an artist of any kind to have a handful of friends who get the particularities of the struggle. People who are better than you, ideally, with whom you can commiserate, but also people you can learn from, just by osmosis. One of the very best things that ever happened to me as a songwriter and an author was that I moved to Nashville, and without meaning to, fell into a community of people who were all about my age, who all had come to Nashville to be singer-songwriters and then had encountered friction with the way things were, like record labels and radio play and all this kind of stuff—this internal tension between selling out and making a living. I struggled with that a lot early on in my career, when I was on a label, then I got dropped from a label. I had some radio play, but nothing else seemed to really work and it was hard to pay the bills. To be surrounded by other people who were in the same boat was really helpful.

But the biggest thing was there were people who were Christ-followers. There were people who had all their eggs in the basket of the gospel. People who were trying to discern what it means to walk in the way of Jesus along with trying to figure out how to pay the bills and make a living as a singer-songwriter. That was one of the greatest gifts in my life. We just celebrated the twenty-fifth year of the Christmas tour. A large number of the people on that stage are the people I'm talking about. For two decades plus, we've been making music together. And more than that, we've been going to church together and watching our kids grow up together and pulling ourselves back from the ledge sometimes, holding each other accountable. And so that to me is as important as anything else. ■

Life in community is dangerous and difficult and also intensely joyful.

THE STORY COMES TO LIFE

*Christ Classical Academy's Annual Gala,
featuring Andrew Peterson*

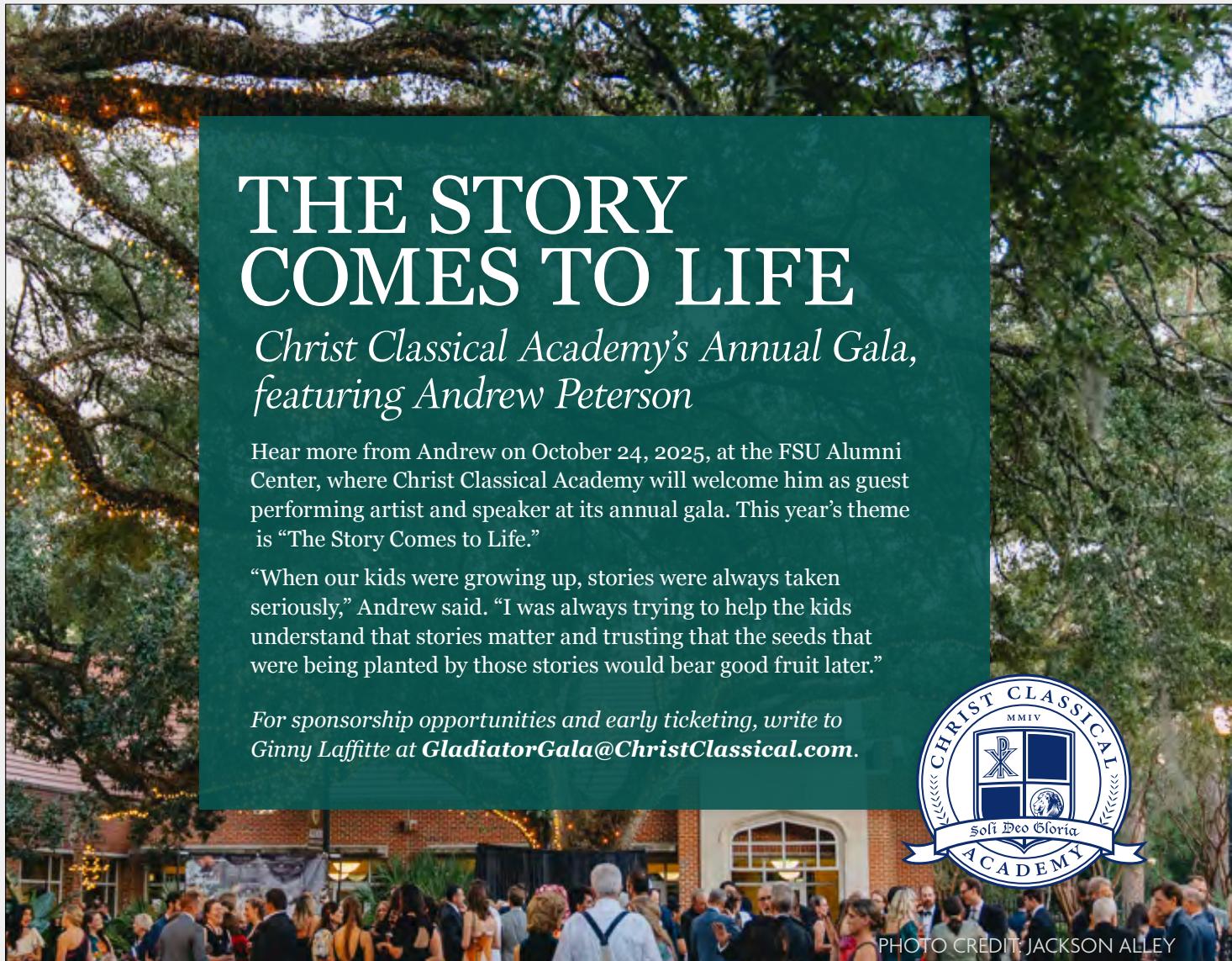
Hear more from Andrew on October 24, 2025, at the FSU Alumni Center, where Christ Classical Academy will welcome him as guest performing artist and speaker at its annual gala. This year's theme is "The Story Comes to Life."

"When our kids were growing up, stories were always taken seriously," Andrew said. "I was always trying to help the kids understand that stories matter and trusting that the seeds that were being planted by those stories would bear good fruit later."

For sponsorship opportunities and early ticketing, write to Ginny Laffitte at GladiatorGala@ChristClassical.com.



PHOTO CREDIT: JACKSON ALLEY





Beach Day

By Jennifer Drury

In terror I gasp for air,
Vastness and water against my small body,
Overwhelming me with strength and immensity.
Salt stinging, light dazzling,
I flail and cling and grasp, certain of my doom.
The strong arms that hold me, steady as the pier, stroke my head.
“I’ve got you,” he says. “You’re okay,” he says.
Never sinking, just surrounded, my tears join the ocean.
“Isn’t this fun?” as he hugs me tighter.
Shaky exhalations reverberate as I let myself be held.
Panic yields to awe.



ALLIGATOR POINT, FL
LINDSEY VANALSTYNE



Rediscovering My Joy of Reading

By Justin Vos

Growing up, I read fiction constantly. I was always in the middle of a book. I waited in anticipation for the release of “Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows,” the final book in J.K. Rowling’s series, jealous that my cousin somehow skipped school to finish reading the book before me. In college, the amount of reading that I did for fun drastically decreased but it disappeared completely while in graduate school. I was bombarded with countless academic articles and books, and reading lost its joy.

An encouraged practice for academic historians is “gutting” a book. To properly gut a book, you methodically read sections of a book for the key points and ideas. The goal is to scavenge the book as quickly as possible for the key ideas, theories, and historical arguments. When finished, the book is like an empty carcass left on the side of the road, the key ideas ripped away and the bones left behind. I tore apart hundreds of books in this manner, gaining a lot of knowledge in the process but losing something as well.

Just as reading lost its joy, so did writing. In high school, I would shut myself away in my parents’ office, typing away on the family desktop computer, striving to have my papers saved by my English teacher as an example for future students. In college, one of my favorite electives was a creative nonfiction course. We read memoirs and crafted our own short stories. One day our professor brought us to a country cemetery, hidden amongst half-harvested cornfields. Our task was to sit amongst the gravestones and describe the landscape around us: the green grass, the gray headstones, the rows of yellow cornstalks planted in the black Iowa dirt. I remember the sun shining, the wind swirling, and a

tractor slowly roaring past as I tried my best to emulate Willa Cather’s wonderful descriptions of the prairie landscape in “My Ántonia.”

Although I turned over a library in graduate school and undoubtedly became a better writer for it, something else was lost; a sense of joy and discovery had been replaced by due dates and pressure. Having survived graduate school, I have slowly regained my love of fiction, and as I sit typing now, I am actively working to rediscover a joy in writing.

But rediscovering this joy is not an easy process. Reading a novel is no longer a natural act for me. Oftentimes, joy requires work and commitment. As humans created in the image of God, we are not meant to simply “veg out” but to experiment, create, and actively engage with ideas and the world around us.

Oftentimes, joy requires work and commitment.

In the past year, I persevered through Barbara Kingsolver’s “Demon Copperhead” (a sweeping modern American tragedy), was weirded out by Jeff Vandermeer’s Southern Reach Trilogy (a bizarre science fiction mystery interspersed with wonderful descriptions of Florida panhandle geography), and am currently uncovering a mystery in Shelby Van Pelt’s “Remarkably Bright Creatures.” Small accomplishments in the grand scheme of things, but I am rediscovering the joy of immersing myself in a story. ■



"BLUE JAY FOR DAD"
WATERCOLOR
ABIGAIL YOUNG, 15



"PROSPHORA"
WATERCOLOR STUDY
MIKE HOUGHTON

Prosphora is a Greek term meaning "offering." Prosphora are the leavened pieces of bread used for the celebration of the Eucharist in Orthodox Church traditions. The bread is made in two parts, representing the divine and human natures of Christ, then joined and baked together, representing their unity. The Orthodox Church has a liturgy that begins with the baking of the bread as well as a "Proskomide" service of preparation for the bread and wine before the Divine Liturgy.

Before baking, the loaf is stamped with a seal containing a variety of symbols. In this representation, the "IC XC" and "NIKA" mean "Jesus Christ Conquers." The symbol to the left of the center commemorates Mary and the crucifixion. The nine triangles to the right of the center commemorate angels and saints.

– Mike Houghton



"CASSANDRA/TROY"
GRAPHITE ON PAPER
ESTHER GARDNER, 6TH GRADE



"DROPLETS"
EVIE DRURY, 14



"PATTERN RHINO"

EMILY BULTMANN, 5TH GRADE

INSPIRED BY ALBRECHT DURER'S "RHINOCEROUS"



"ATHANASIUS CROCODILE"

INSPIRED BY THE CCA HOUSE ATHANASIUS FLAG

CHARLIE CHASON, 5TH GRADE



"THE LITTLE OWL"

INSPIRED BY ALBRECHT DURER'S "LITTLE OWL"

OLIVIA POWER, 5TH GRADE



ANNELISE JACKSON, 5



"PASTEL SUNSET"
OIL PASTEL ON PAPER
NORA JACKSON, 10



"MISTY OF CHINCOTEAGUE"
PIPER GINES, 5TH GRADE



Emmaus

After all this time, I never really saw you. Blinded by inherited expectations and embittered desire, I left in sorrow and distress. As I wandered away on a well-worn path of familiarity and assumption, you found me. You took my hand, and invited me to dance, each step a word on fire. I was ablaze by the time we sat at the table, yet I still could not see. Your final word, a prayer of thanks. You broke the bread. And there you were.

– Mike Houghton

Jesus Take the Way

Written and performed by Vicki Davis



"I wrote this after my husband passed away, on the morning before the funeral visitation. It's been a source of comfort to me these past few months."



LINOCUT PRINT
HEATHER SHERMAN



Embrace the dark, gloomy, rainy days. As someone who has been through a lot of them recently, embrace them. They are not easy. They hurt. They make you question a lot. But know that spring will come. The bright, beautiful green days are ahead.

– Shaun Davis

“RAINY WINDOW ON A TUESDAY”
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA
PHOTO BY SHAUN DAVIS

Come To Me

“Come To Me” is a father’s dream come true. It is a true story. My family was having a yard sale in Southern California when a lady we did not know arrived and within minutes was pouring out her heart to me and my fourteen-year-old daughter, Jessi. It was incredible ministering to her with my own daughter. We talked and prayed and hugged right there on the sidewalk, and the change we saw in her was incredible. When she arrived, she was full of stress, frustration, and worry. Her face was beaming when she left; she was expressing words of comfort, thankfulness, and hope.

Sadly, I never saw her again and do not know the rest of her story. But there are two distinct observations from that day that remain with me. The darkness of the world, the weight of sin, and the crushing accusations of the evil one result in unbearable pain and frustration. The light of Jesus Christ not only drives it away but replaces it with delight and joy and confidence. People driving by saw a small yard sale with kids running around. Praise God, I saw Him working in wonderful and life-changing ways.



From Matthew 11:28-30
Words and music by Dean Sinclair
Performed by Dean Sinclair, Jessica Sinclair Bevis (harmony vocals), and Adria Sinclair Fogarty (spoken word)
Recorded at Center Point Church, January 2010 by Vance Watt

TRACING ANCIENT STEPS IN

Türkiye





In November 2024, seven members of Center Point Church in Tallahassee traveled to Istanbul to visit fellow Christians there. On the Asian side of the Bosphorus, in one of Istanbul's most quaint and "local" neighborhoods, sits All Saints Moda, one of the rarest kinds of churches in Türkiye: a church for Turks, even pastored by a Turk.

A Turk who follows Jesus is exceedingly rare. Less than one percent of Türkiye's 80 million residents are Christian, and perhaps only one percent of those are ethnically Turkish. It is not hard to find a Greek or Armenian Orthodox church, but due to the complications of history, a Turk might not feel welcome there. For security reasons, the doors of those churches usually remain shut during the week, so where can a Turk with questions hear about Jesus?

The doors of All Saints Moda are open as often as possible. People from all over the city attend weddings, performances, and other events in its century-old chapel. But most importantly, Christians gather there every Sunday morning to worship Jesus together in Turkish. We met one man who travels three hours, each way, every week.

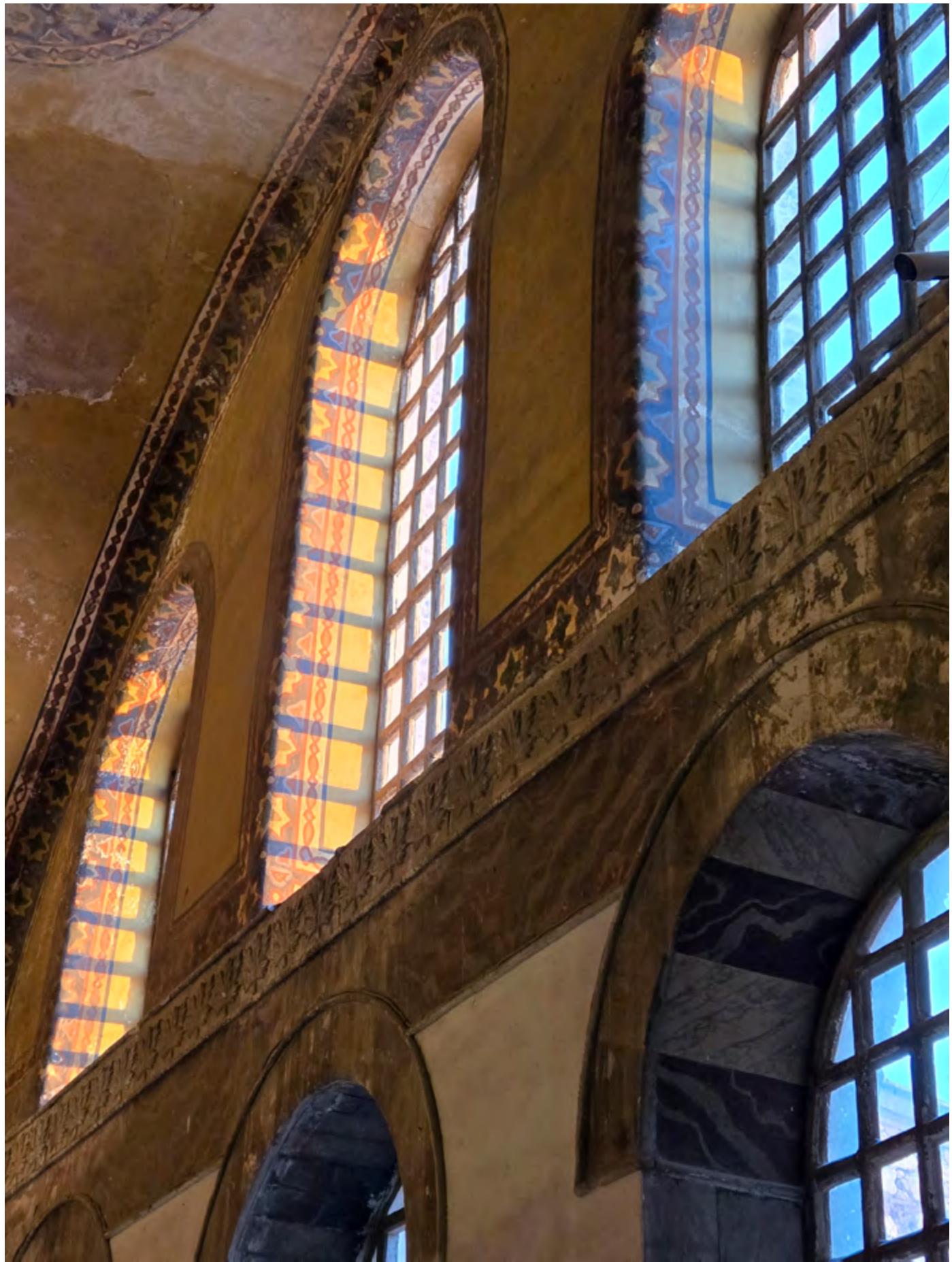
Those of us who flew 13 hours to visit them experienced how deeply different parts of Christ's body can encourage one another. As we shared time, conversation, and especially food, I couldn't help but wonder: how will God use our two churches, working together, to expand the borders of his kingdom?

— Brian Douglas

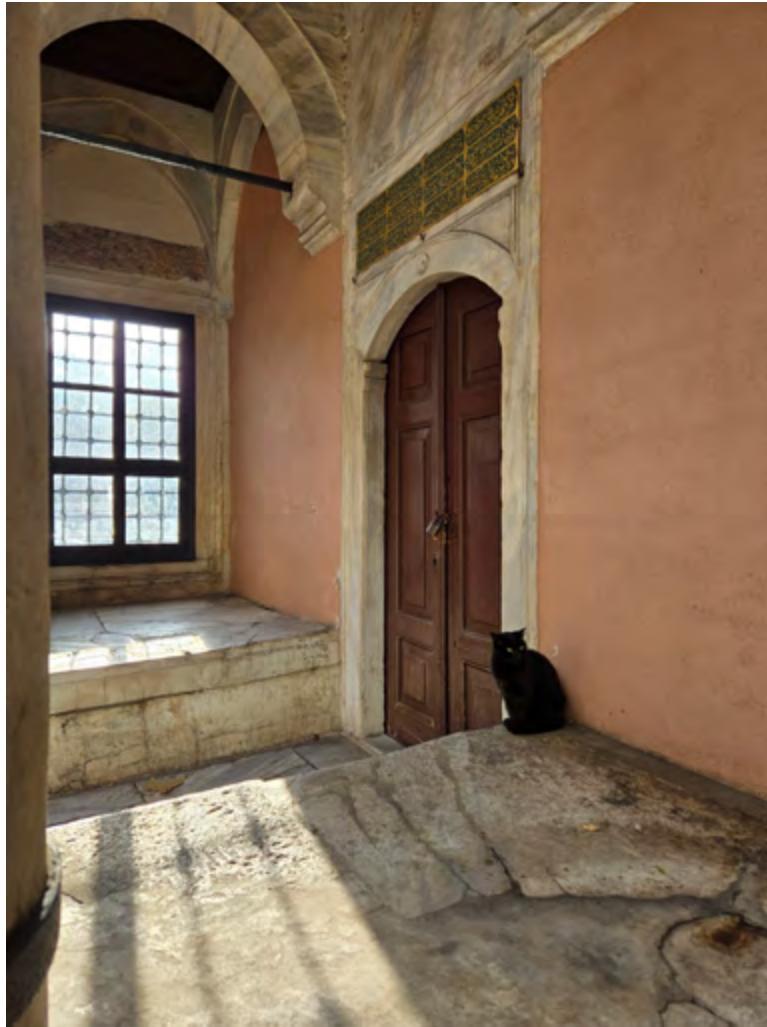
Those of us who flew 13 hours to visit them experienced how deeply different parts of Christ's body can encourage one another.



HAGIA SOPHIA TUNNEL, CODY SHERMAN



HAGIA SOPHIA, CODY SHERMAN, COVER IMAGE



SEHZADE MOSQUE, ISTANBUL, CODY SHERMAN



HAGIA SOPHIA, MARY JANE SINCLAIR



THE TURKEY TEAM + FRIENDS



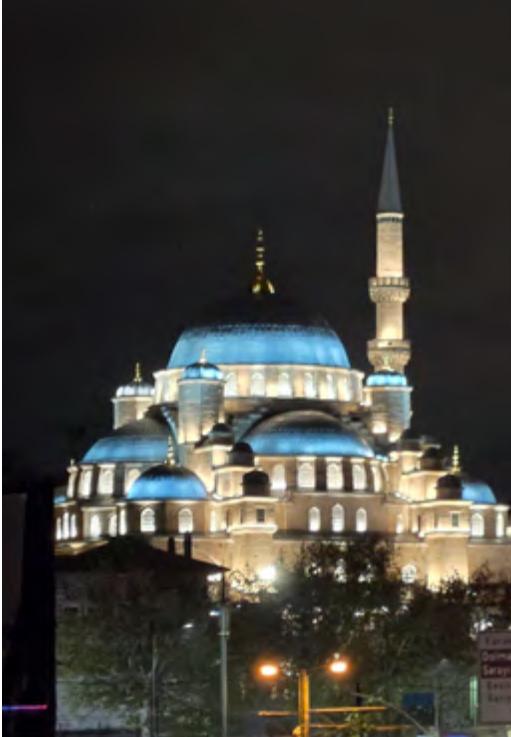
EGYPTIAN SPICE MARKET, ISTANBUL, CODY SHERMAN



EGYPTIAN SPICE MARKET, ISTANBUL, CODY SHERMAN



MOSAIC WITH THE VIRGIN AND CHILD FLANKED BY JOHN II AND IRENE, C. 1118–1134,
SOUTH GALLERY, HAGIA SOPHIA

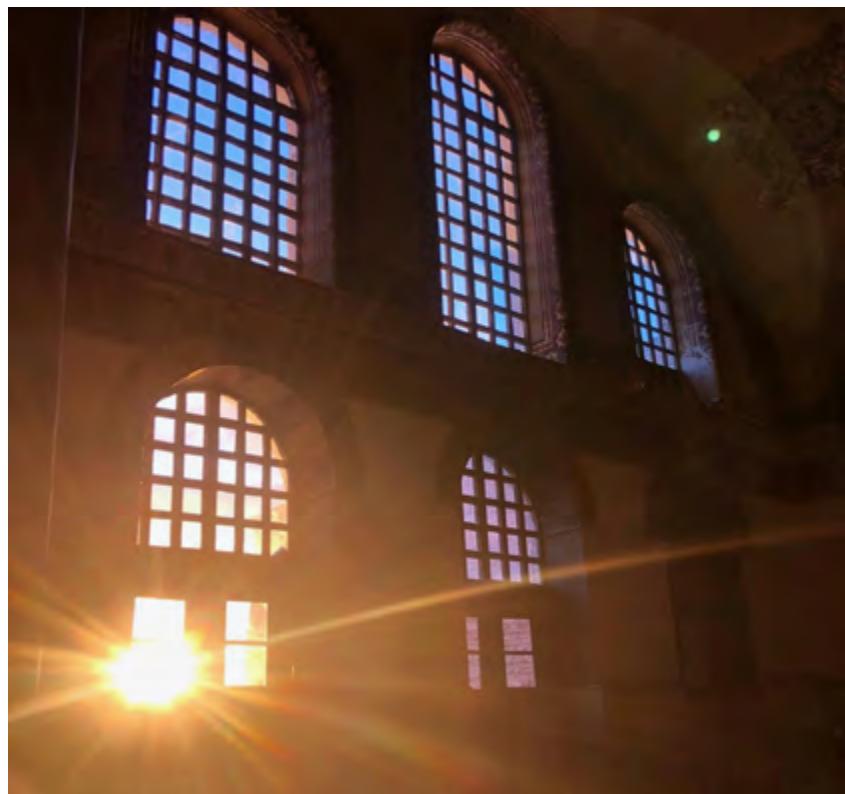




IZNIK TILE PANELS, EYUP SULTAN MOSQUE, ISTANBUL, CODY SHERMAN



ISTANBUL, TURKEY, CODY SHERMAN



WEST WALL OF THE HAGIA SOPHIA, BRIAN DOUGLAS



FATIH NEIGHBORHOOD, EUROPEAN SIDE OF ISTANBUL, MARY JANE SINCLAIR





EGYPTIAN SPICE MARKET, ISTANBUL,
MARY JANE SINCLAIR



CODY SHERMAN



BREAKFAST AT MADO, CEILING MIRROR,
CODY SHERMAN



CHURCH OF ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA, ISTANBUL,
CODY SHERMAN





"EMBRACE"

WATERCOLOR AND ACRYLIC ON
SECONDHAND CURTAINS, THREAD
KEA SUIKO KAMIYA



"MY LOVE IS STILL SLEEPING"

WATERCOLOR AND ACRYLIC ON
SECONDHAND CURTAINS, THREAD
KEA SUIKO KAMIYA

In my sculptures, I use traditionally gendered materials to explore the role of woman as maker and caretaker. I am interested in woman as crafter of identity, forger of home, composer of art, and bearer of children. I look to photographs of and stories about my female ancestors as I consider the overlooked creations of women.

Working with both steel and textiles supplies me the opportunity to intertwine two distinct aspects of what it means to be a maker and caregiver. Together these materials represent women and our labor as complex: soft and protective, restrictive and comforting, and structural and fragile. My desire is for my sculptures to explore these complications while also serving as evidence of the creation of home, of self, and of family that is passed over and too often forgotten. Both for my ancestors and for the meek among us, these sculptures stand in secure memoriam of those whose care and creation was unsung.

– Kea Suiko Kamiya

LEFT: "MOURNING VIEW"

WATERCOLOR AND ACRYLIC ON SECONDHAND CURTAINS, THREAD
KEA SUIKO KAMIYA



"KOINOBORI"
WELDED STEEL AND INK ON FABRIC
KEA SUIKO KAMIYA



“WORD ON THE STREET”
SLEET ON PAVEMENT
TALLAHASSEE’S WINTER-MIX EVENT, 2025
SARA DAVIS



“WORDS OF JESUS”
PEN ON NOTEBOOK PAPER
SARA DAVIS



I can't remember a time when my father wasn't singing. Some of my earliest memories are on a tour bus or at one of his concerts. His quartet, The Regals, were well-known in the world of Southern Gospel, a style named for its combination of gospel harmonies and country instrumentation. These many years later, The Regals are still touring the South—our family recently went to one of their shows in South Carolina. This song is one of my favorites, written by Uncle Terry, with Dad contributing the last verse.

— Daniel Hautamaki

Jesus Coming to You

Written by Terry Darnell and Gary Hautamaki, 1987
Vocals: The Regals (Kim Lanford, Carroll Phillips, Gary Hautamaki, Scott Whitener)
Keyboards: Roni Godfrey, Milton Smith, Steve Keeter
Guitars: Ronald Radford, Bobby All

Drums: Joe Howard, Russell Mauldin
Bass: Eddie Howard, Tim Compton
Producer: Eddie Howard
Engineer: Buddy Strong
Art Direction: Michael Burnette



I am
an enormous
monkey goddess
trudge ing
heave ing
a thousand bitter chant s
in to a sordid lather .
the repulsive ache s
a frantic symphony
in my blood
but —
but I
was just
hungry

"REFRIGERATOR POEM"
MAGNETIC WORD TILES
SARA DAVIS



BLUE/BROWN CERAMIC BOWL
TRIMMED AND GLAZED BY JOSHUA ASKEY

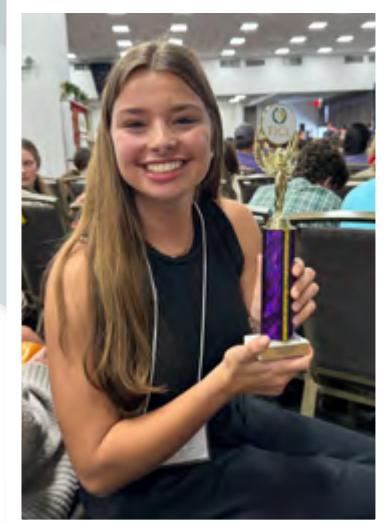


GREEN CERAMIC BOWL
THROWN, TRIMMED, AND GLAZED BY JOSHUA ASKEY

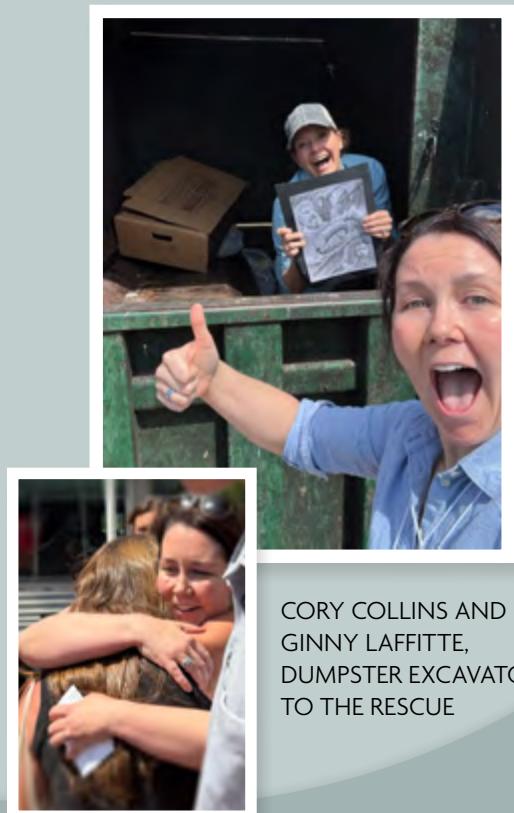


Some may look at this drawing and see simply the visual illustration of the "Aeneid" and a battle that ensued upon the sea. However, others will look at this picture and remember the beautiful story of redemption wrapped in behind the scenes. One weekend in March, I was competing with this art piece at a Latin event and irresponsibly missed the deadline to pick it up after judging. Because of this, the judges threw the art into the trash. I was so embarrassed and disappointed that I sat quietly and cried and didn't tell anyone. Two moms from my school found out and ran toward the dumpster to begin their search. They didn't stop until they found it and rushed to tell me. Many tears and words of gratitude followed. I will never forget the moment I saw my art in their hands along with their smiling faces. This story is so beautiful because it displays God's love and grace so well. I was so undeserving of this act of love, due to my mistake and irresponsibility, yet these two moms searched and retrieved it, even though it meant diving into a dumpster. This is an amazing representation of Jesus, who loved us while we were still sinners and chose to die for us, even though it meant death on a cross.

— Sierra Carson



“AENEID TURBULENCE”
SIERRA CARSON
11TH GRADE



CORY COLLINS AND
GINNY LAFFITTE,
DUMPSTER EXCAVATORS
TO THE RESCUE

Art Journaling



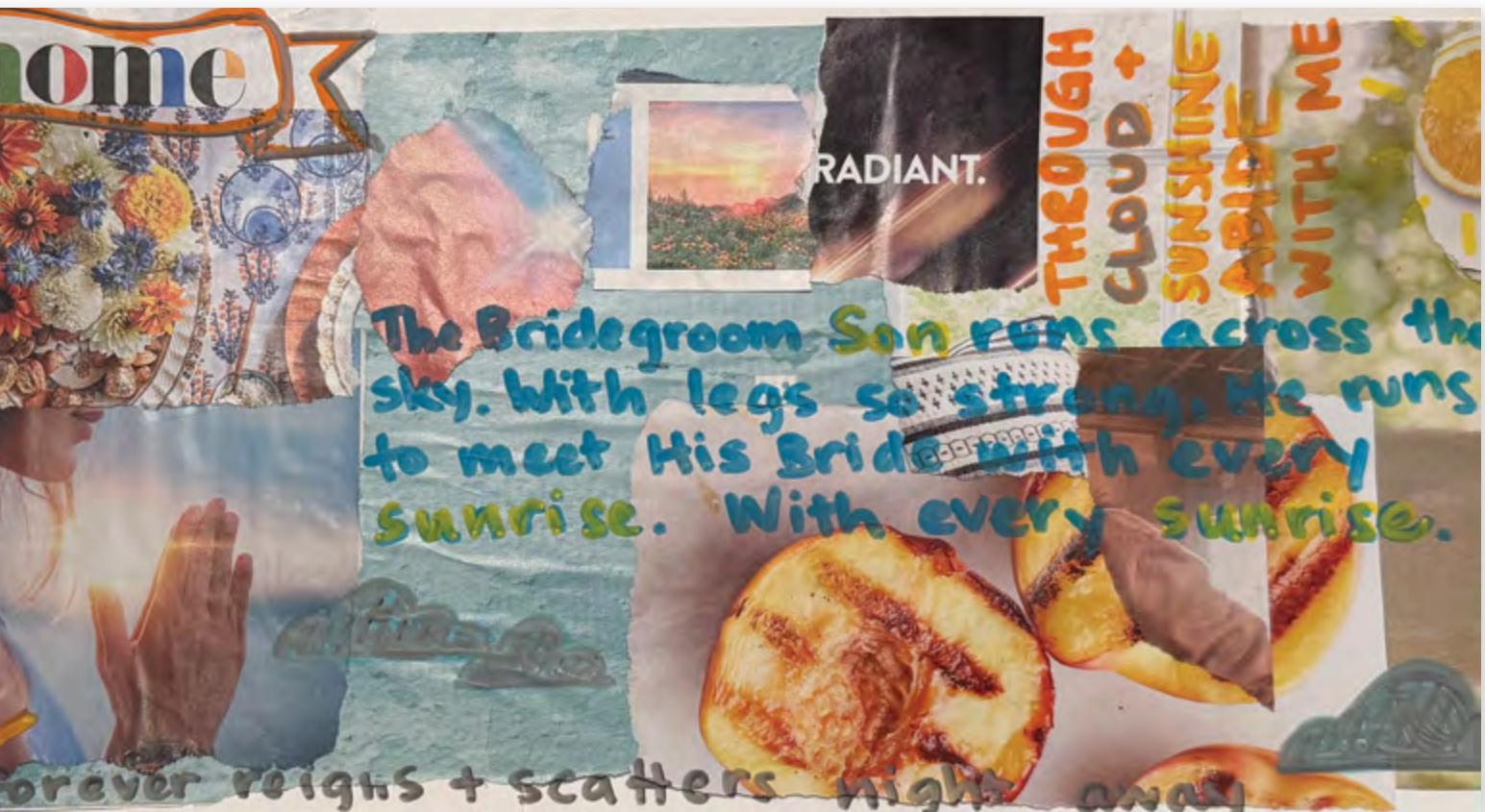
"LORD, WILL YOU MAKE IT GOOD?"
ART JOURNALING COLLAGE
SARA DAVIS, 2025



These pieces are born from a meditative "art journaling" practice we learned during a free time session at a women's retreat this January. Basically you ask the Holy Spirit to help you meditate on him, what he's doing, and how you're feeling about it by making a collage. We tore images or words that stood out to us from magazines and put them together with glue on paper. It requires a posture of surrender and honesty—a kind of visual prayer.

Personally, I find it very challenging to focus my mind during prayer or quiet times and my personal discipline suffers because of it. Having something tangible to work with helped keep my mind tethered. And it makes me think, "How often do I ask the Lord to enter into my other everyday activities? Do I believe he's here with me, even if all I'm doing is washing dishes or going for a walk?" It was freeing to bop around creatively without pressure of knowing where it was going to go, having an agenda, or trying to make it perfect. 10/10, I highly recommend giving this a try.

—Sara Davis



"A GOOD HOME: SON"
ART JOURNALING COLLAGE
CAROLINE JACKSON, 2025



"HAPPY HEARTS"
ART JOURNALING COLLAGE
MADISON HENZEL, 2025



Visual Hymnal exists to celebrate and cultivate the creative work of Christ followers in our local community and beyond. Founded in 2024 in Tallahassee, Florida, we feature writing, visual art, music, pottery, sewing, cooking, gardening, and more. We encourage submissions from those who may not think of themselves as “artists” but who, as bearers of the Creator’s image, are creative nonetheless.

While we welcome submissions on any theme or topic, each issue is tied to a season of the liturgical calendar. Our next issue will coincide with Ordinary Time; please send us your work by July 4, 2025.

Visual Hymnal is run and funded by a small staff of dedicated volunteers. Want to get involved or support this project? Write to us at visualhymnal@gmail.com!