

Fall 2019 Volume VI Issue 1

# CORNERSTONE

Justice and Renewal: An Interview with Jermaine Pearson 14  
Kathy Luo

My Soul Calls Out 19  
Kaitlan Bui

What the Bible Doesn't Say About Human Origins 20  
Hope McGovern

A Christian Journal of Literary Arts at Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design

# Staff



**President**  
David Shin

**Editor-in-Chief**  
Naomi Kim

**Copy Editor**  
Mikaela Carrillo

**Layout Editor**  
Liana Chaplain

**Senior Editor**  
Jeremy Wang

**Business Manager**  
Lisa Yang

**Content Editors**  
David Ferranti  
Hope McGovern  
Kathy Luo  
Tom Hale  
Cindy Won  
Pablo Caban-Bonet  
Mikaela Carrillo  
Jennifer Jeon  
Julius Gingles  
Karis Ryu  
Young Park

Kaitlan Bui  
Meichen Liu  
Charisa Shin  
Jared Jones  
Jeremy Wang  
Joseph Delamerced  
Lucy Tian

**Layout Team**  
Julius Gingles  
Kaitlan Bui  
Lucy Tian  
Meichen Liu  
Jeremy Wang

# Our Mission

Cornerstone is a publication that celebrates the truth and beauty of the Christian Gospel in order to glorify God, edify the Church, and reach the non-believer. We aim to provoke spiritual thought on and around the campuses of Brown and RISD. We publish works of art, prose, and poetry of all denominational persuasions that exhibit intelligent and creative approaches to current events, history, and our Christian faith.

## Submissions & Inquiries

[thebrowncornerstone@gmail.com](mailto:thebrowncornerstone@gmail.com)

## Online

[browncornerstone.wordpress.com](http://browncornerstone.wordpress.com)

[facebook.com/cornerstonemagazine](https://facebook.com/cornerstonemagazine)

*New Day, Hope McCovern '19*



*Ascent, Hope McGovern '19*

# Contents

Letter from the Editor Naomi Kim	6	<b>Art &amp; Photography</b>
<b>Non-Fiction</b>		Consider The Lilies Hope McGovern
He Does Not Leave Us as Orphans Karis Ryu	9	New Day Hope McGovern
Justice & Renewal: An Interview with Jermaine Pearson Kathy Luo	14	Ascent Hope McGovern
What the Bible Doesn't Say About Human Origins Hope McGovern	20	Bloom Kathy Luo
Senior Farewell	34	Walking on Water Hope McGovern
Ministry Profile: Brown-RISD Catholic Community	35	Eyes Briana Johnson
<b>Fiction &amp; Poetry</b>		Late Drive Kathy Luo
tsebel Lydia Haile	8	True Vine Hope McGovern
A Psalm Naomi Kim	13	Tree Planted By Waters Kathy Luo
Just Breathe Jared Jones	17	Weary Road Hope McGovern
My Soul Calls Out Kaitlan Bui	19	Wellspring Hope McGovern
Night Julius Gingles	24	San Francisco Liana Chaplain
Ask Me How I'm Doing Joseph Delamerced	25	Divine Providence Kathy Luo
Through It All Lucy Tian	29	
Memory David Ferranti	31	

# Letter from the Editor

## Justice and Renewal

Dear reader,

It might be hard to tell from this polished final product, but it's been a long, bumpy road to getting this magazine into your hands. I fumbled a lot through this first semester as the new Editor-in-Chief, and yet, somehow, by the grace of God, we're here. It seems like a miracle.

It's been an exhilarating journey, but at times it's also been exhausting. Balancing these new responsibilities with classes, an on-campus job, and other extracurriculars has been a trial. But this struggle isn't just mine: many of us are all too familiar with feeling burnt out. As college students, we are constantly mired in readings, essays, labs, and club meetings. And as if that weren't enough, we also find ourselves navigating friendships, failures, and the fast-approaching future.

We all want rest. We all *need* rest. And Christ promises us the rest we crave, the renewal we need. He calls to Himself all who are weary and all who are burdened.<sup>1</sup> In Him, the great King who is gentle and humble, we can let out the breath we didn't know we were holding. He gives us the life he promised us—life to the full.<sup>2</sup>

Resurrection is not something we await only for the future but something being offered to us right here, right now. Christ calls us to die to our old selves and to come alive again as new people entirely, not just *better* people. Yet we would be mistaken to focus solely on this personal, individual renewal, for God promises the renewal of all things and the righting of all wrongs. And so it is that our theme for this issue is “Justice and Renewal.”

Christians cannot separate resurrection from justice, for with one comes the other. Yet Christians are so often guilty of injustices: our brokenness shows in conquest and colonization, slavery and sexual abuse scandals. We must humbly ask forgiveness for our failings both personal and collective, but

we must not stop there. God does not call us to wait passively for justice, for the resurrection, but rather to participate in bringing about justice here and now. Let us strive to be ever more like Christ, who actively reached out to the poor and the sick, to the outcasts labeled unclean and unwanted by the religious elite and the self-righteous. Let us, out of the overflow of the abundant life given to us by God, water the world around us with streams of justice.

In these pages, we present pieces that show us God's promise and present work of making things new and making things right. An interview with Associate Chaplain Jermaine Pearson provides some advice on incorporating justice into college life. The poem “tsebel” demonstrates the sanctification of all things and invites us to take part in sowing holiness through the world. “He Does Not Leave Us as Orphans” bears powerful witness to the liberating, life-giving truth of the Gospel, reminding us that resurrection and transformation are at work in our lives now. “What the Bible Doesn't Say About Human Origins” renews our wonder at the world and at what we can learn from scientific inquiry and Scripture when we welcome both.

And now, dear reader, I welcome you to dive into our newest issue. You have the easy part: all you have to do is turn the page. We hope this issue leaves you with a glimpse of the living water<sup>3</sup> and of justice rolling down like a river.<sup>4</sup>

Yours truly,



*Naomi Kim is a sophomore concentrating in English.*

---

1 Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)

2 John 10:10

---

3 John 4:10

4 Amos 5:24



*Bloom, Kathy Luo '19*

# ጸበል | tsebel | *holy water*

Lydia Haile



*tsebel in the founts*

*tsebel on the altars*

*tsebel dotting the priest's hands*

*tsebel sprinkled on faces*

*on grounds*

*watering soil*

*tsebel poured in little dixie cups*

the *tsebel jumped out*

*tsebel dribbling out of children's mouths*

*clearing small trails*

*tsebel filling empty water bottles*

*looking similar and yet not*

*tsebel under caps twisted tight*

*bunching plastic*

*tsebel cleaning from outside pollution*

*clearing skin*

*curing infections*

*tsebel when you are ready*

*tsebel when we are ready*

*holy water* on faces

*holy water* on grounds

*holy water* on soil

*holy water* on desiccated lands

on the beggar around the corner

on the meek near and far

*holy water* on MLK Blvd.

*holy water* on the morning news

*holy water* on the stories uncovered

*holy water* on the voting booths

*holy water* on our representatives

*holy water* on the comment threads

*holy water* on our tongues

*holy water* on our soft spots

*holy water* on the histories

*holy water* on the youth

on the children's children

on the bloodlines

what would that take

how can the water

flow

*Lydia Haile '19 is a senior concentrating in Public Health.*

# He Does Not Leave Us as Orphans

Karis Ryu

*Content warning: discusses depression, death, suicide.*

When I was fourteen years old, I decided that I no longer cared if there was a God.

I continued to sing on praise team at chapel. I listened to my parents when they brought our family together to read devotionals. But even as my mouth said all the things I had been taught, my heart hardened.

I was fourteen years old, in my sophomore year of high school, at my seventh school. I was small and sullen and lonely. Already there was a long, long trail behind me of people and places I'd had to let go. I remember how I stared blankly at my friends' Instagrams, friends I'd moved away from after just getting to know them, and cried, because while they had dates to Homecoming, cars to cruise in, and friends to study and have sleepovers with, I felt like I had nothing—only a list of names and places I had to leave behind. I dreaded spending birthdays alone. The mundane experiences that other people seemed to take for granted were the things I wanted desperately. All I wanted was a normal life.

As the first two years of high school passed, apathy festered inside my heart. If God truly existed, and if he truly loved me, then why did he let me suffer? Whether or not he existed (whatever “existed” meant, anyway), clearly it didn't affect my life. With or without him, my life sucked.

When I was in elementary school, my father, an army chaplain, used to put my siblings and me to sleep with the Aaronic Blessing: “The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance toward you, and give you peace. Karis. Shannon. Christopher.”

*Amen, amen, amen*, we would chorus in response, grinning underneath our blankets.

But that felt like ages ago. That was four schools ago. Three military assignments ago. Where was the Lord here? Where was he when I snuck into the bathroom at night and pressed towels against my face so no one would hear me cry? Where was he when I skipped meals and dragged myself up and down the twenty flights of stairs in our apartment building, hoping that if I were thinner, *if I were prettier*, I would be happier? Where was he the day I collapsed in the living room out of fatigue, on shaking legs and an empty stomach? Where was he when I dangled my feet between the bars that separated the top story of our apartment from the stretch of parking lot below, wondering in tears what would happen if I just let myself fall? Would people mourn me? Would people finally understand? Would this so-called God finally look down and pay attention to me?

Where was this new life I was supposed to have in Jesus when all I wanted was to die?

Where was this God who was supposed to tell me that I was beautiful when I wanted to throw up whenever I saw myself in a mirror?

Where was this hope I was supposed to find in Jesus when all I knew in every waking moment was the agonizing pain of my heart breaking into smaller and smaller pieces? Where were these so-called “blessings” that seemed like they would never, ever come?

If God was real, he clearly didn't care about me.

\*\*\*\*

I used to draft suicide letters. If a day at school was particularly awful, I sat at the family laptop, opened my Drive, and began writing a document I would inevitably delete later. “Hi,” I would write. “If you're reading this, then I'm not here anymore.”

“If you’re reading this, then I’m gone.”

“If you’re reading this, then you’ve won.”

In my head, life was a battle: a battle against my parents, a battle against everyone at school who didn’t talk to me, a battle against this strange entity in the sky that had apparently made me and then left me alone to die. It was a battle that no one knew they were a part of except for me. And at the end of the day, I was the only one who was hurt.

I could never finish these letters. Halfway through, I would go back and delete all of the words I had written and stare at my blank screen, the same way I stared out between the bars that lined the window on the twentieth floor of our apartment. *You chicken. You’re weak. You don’t have the guts.*

Everyone’s story is different, but I know that there are millions in the world like me. Broken people. Lost people. Wanderers, searching for meaning in themselves and in the world, only to find more and more ugliness. There are days even now when these emotions come back, when I collapse out of weariness and wonder if it truly would be better to just give in to the voices telling me that I will never be good enough, to the world that only seems to grow more and more grotesque?

*But*—by the grace of my Lord, my Savior, my Jesus: I’m here. I wish I had an answer for why. It certainly isn’t because I flipped a switch and changed my life by myself. It certainly isn’t because I became happier, because my problems disappeared. It certainly isn’t because I worked my way out of it through my own willpower.

God met me when I was on my knees, bewildered, lonely, terrified, depressed. God met me as I thrashed and wailed: “I don’t know who you are. I don’t know who I am. I don’t know why I’m here. I’m tired, God, and I’m lonely, and I want to die more than I want to live. I don’t want to be this way anymore, but I don’t know what to do. God, if you’re there, why don’t you see? Why don’t you care?”

As I continue to walk in faith, I realize more and more that the best prayers are those that are utterly unabashed. God knows everything about me, so I wail at Him. God knows everything about my hurt, my confusion, my fear, so I thrust it all upon Him.

In the Bible, Jesus assures his disciples with a promise: *“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.”* (John 14:18-19, ESV)

\*\*\*\*

<p>There are days when depression returns. Loneliness returns. Insecurity returns. But the Lord is constant in His peace.</p>	<p>When I was fourteen years old, I fell to the ground in tears and devoted my life to Jesus Christ.</p> <p>We are not orphans. God didn’t make us and then abandon us. Jesus Christ didn’t die for us and then leave us to die again. God watches over us every day. Jesus <i>lives</i>. He lives, and walks alongside us, and the Holy Spirit dwells among us so that we will never be alone.</p>
---	---

That doesn’t mean that the struggles end. I still grapple with my emotions. Every day can be both a blessing and a source of utter confusion. While I am incredibly grateful to the Savior who called me out of my darkness, I still have questions.

*Why do I live, I still cry out, when others don’t? Why am I still here when others are gone?*

Because people do die. Some people are worn down. Some people have their lives unexpectedly taken away from them. Some of my friends struggle with the same depression that plagues me. I watch my family struggle with illness. I have loved ones, classmates, people I knew, who left our world much earlier than anyone had expected. Last summer, I sobbed to God in confusion and guilt after a series of heartbreaking incidents. Why was I still alive when someone else had died?

Why, in my brokenness and shame, was I alive instead of someone who had their whole life ahead of them?

When I grapple with these questions, I find a similar voice in the prophet Jeremiah, and his own cries to God:

*Cursed be the day  
on which I was born!  
The day when my mother bore me,  
let it not be blessed!  
Cursed be the man who brought the news to my father,  
“A son is born to you,”  
making him very glad.  
Why did I come out from the womb  
to see toil and sorrow,  
and spend my days in shame? (Jeremiah 20:14-15, 18)*

As he learns of the devastation that will fall upon his people, and as those very people turn against him, the prophet Jeremiah cries to the Lord. He bares his soul. He proclaims God as king and expresses his praise, but he also offers his pain to God. He thrashes at God. He wails at God. He brings his anger, his hurt, his confusion, his darkest thoughts in honest, tearful lamentations. And even though Jeremiah himself may not have witnessed the end of all sin during his lifetime, time and time again, the Scripture shows us that God sustained him, protected him, guided him.

The pain of the world doesn't go away. The confusion remains. There are times in which I still struggle with guilt through every strange, surreal breath I take. But through it all, I know the Father sees His children. He wants to take this burden that we don't understand, that we tear ourselves apart with, off of our shoulders. That's why He sent Jesus to cleanse our sins, to turn water into wine, death into life. When we are desperate, when we are angry, when we are confused, God wants us to bring those questions to *Him*. He wants us to bare our honest hearts to Him, to turn to Him first when we are angry, sad, upset, distressed. He wants us to seek refuge in Him.

The more I *don't* understand—and there are so many things

about me, about others, about my life, that I still have no idea about—the harder I cling to the God who does, so that with confidence, I can rejoice and say to Him, *I have not run away from being your shepherd, nor have I desired the day of sickness. You know what came out of my lips; it was before your face.* (Jeremiah 17:16)

\*\*\*\*

*Why won't this pain go away, God? If I'm saved, why does my heart still pain me? Why am I still lonely? Why am I still depressed? Will I ever be healed?*

Depression doesn't always go away. Loneliness, insecurity, and the residue left by my experiences have left my heart scarred, and over those scars are more scars. Life is still a battle. A battle against my sin. A battle against my brokenness. A battle against the trauma in my heart that seizes me during my weakest moments and tells me that I'll never be good enough, that I'll never change, that it might be better for me to leave this world than be in it.

But when I stumble, when I doubt, I remember. I remember, I remember, I remember. I remember because I am made new.

The apostle Paul declares, *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* (Galatians 2:20)

\*\*\*\*

Though we were alive, we were dead. I was dead. Though my flesh moved, my soul was defeated, powerless to its decay. But now, I do not live by my own power. I continue on this earth through the power of Christ alone, the sole reason I have life today. I was dead, and the unimaginable power of Christ's sacrifice, his brutal crucifixion, revived me in His goodness when I was bankrupt of my own. And so, though I live in the flesh, I surrender to a life powered by faith in my Savior.

Because of His love, I am free to shout my story all over the earth. I am free to rejoice. I am free to love others, and to find the others who are broken, lost, weary, on the edge, like me, because there is a great, great love that surpasses anything anyone can ever imagine. There is a Father who waits for us with His hand outstretched.

\*\*\*\*

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters.  
He restores my soul.*

*Eyes by Briana Johnson '20*

*This painting is a reflection on identity conflicts I faced growing up, when I would spend a lot of time wishing I was more white at moments or more black at others. At one point, for example, I wanted blue eyes, and I asked God why He had given me boring and dull brown eyes instead. But Genesis 1:27 says "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him." So how can God's brown eyes be dull or boring, or any less beautiful than blue ones? He made me in His image. What I see in me is also Him, and He is beautiful.*



*He leads me in paths of righteousness  
for his name's sake.  
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me. (Psalm 23:1-4)*

\*\*\*\*

In God, our souls are restored. He embraces us when we run home to Him. And when we cling to Him, He leads us in paths of righteousness. These paths are not easy, and the shadow of death creeps on us again and again, but even then, God is watching over us, rod and staff in hand. He comforts us, protects us. Hardships are strong, but so is God's peace. Having God's peace doesn't mean that life's problems disappear. God's peace doesn't equal pleasant tranquility forever. It is knowing that, even as suffering continues, God renews us. He cleanses us of our darkness. He restores us to the reflections of His image, unblemished by sin and free of pain, we were meant to be.

On the cross, Jesus Christ restored the whole world. And now, in the present, even through my pain, through the hardships of living in my fallible, imperfect human body, He restores me every single day. There are days when depression returns. Loneliness returns. Insecurity returns. But the Lord is constant in His peace.

The Father waits for *you*.

\*\*\*\*

*The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance toward you, and give you peace.  
Numbers 6:24-26*

*Karis Ryu is a sophomore concentrating in History.*

# A Psalm

Naomi Kim

Though I wander so often and so far,  
You walk with me always.  
Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.<sup>1</sup>

When I cry out in the desert,  
Your footsteps bring forth streams  
And turn wastelands into green pastures.<sup>2</sup>

When I tremble before raging rivers,  
Your breath stills them into quiet waters.<sup>3</sup>  
You teach me to walk upon the seas.<sup>4</sup>

You give me rest; you restore me.<sup>5</sup>  
You anoint my head<sup>6</sup> with the same hand  
That set the moon and the stars in place.<sup>7</sup>

As I marvel at the work of your fingers<sup>8</sup>  
Adorning the skies, you draw up water for me  
From the wellspring of your own heart.<sup>9</sup>

My dry bones leap and live,<sup>10</sup> and my cup overflows<sup>11</sup>  
As I bring it to my lips, and drink deeply,  
And never thirst again.<sup>12</sup>

*Naomi Kim is a sophomore concentrating in English.*

- 
- |    |                             |
|----|-----------------------------|
| 1  | Psalm 23:4 (ESV)            |
| 2  | Isaiah 43:19, Psalm 23:2    |
| 3  | Psalm 23:2                  |
| 4  | Matthew 14:28-29            |
| 5  | Psalm 23:3                  |
| 6  | Psalm 23:5                  |
| 7  | Psalm 8:3                   |
| 8  | Psalm 8:3                   |
| 9  | Proverbs 4:23, John 4:10-14 |
| 10 | Ezekiel 37:1-14             |
| 11 | Psalm 23:5                  |
| 12 | John 4:14                   |

# Justice & Renewal: An Interview with Jermaine Pearson

Kathy Luo



*Born and raised in Chicago, Jermaine Pearson graduated from Columbia College Chicago in 2010 as a Public Relations major originally intending to enter the entertainment industry. However, after working with incarcerated youth through a non-profit organization, as well as working as a guidance counselor, Jermaine realized he was called to ministry as a campus pastor. Jermaine graduated from seminary at Emory University in 2016, started working as the campus pastor at Loyola University that December, and began his position at Brown as the Associate University Chaplain for the Protestant community in September of 2017. Interview has been edited for clarity and length.*

## **For starters, did you always feel like your faith would be a big part of your job?**

No. Faith has always been a part of who I am, but if you're talking about faith being integrated into my job, I didn't think about that probably until I moved to LA, ten years ago. Oftentimes we look at spirituality as separate from other areas of life—it's rare to see ourselves actually working and exercising in the area where faith and spirituality is tethered to your profession and career. I didn't start seeing that until after I had the year of service at the non-profit, where I knew I couldn't go back to just doing anything.

## **Working with students now, do you see similarities between struggles students have now and your experiences? Especially with Christian students, it seems like a lot of us are still struggling to understand how to integrate purpose and faith into our careers and the school sphere.**

I do. A lot of the things I do are career planning and soul-searching, especially with juniors and seniors. You all come here, very smart, and could major in anything that you want. But maybe on the path you chose, something just doesn't feel right—and it doesn't feel right because God is not equipping you to do that, or God is developing other gifts inside that would lead to a more fulfilling life.

There are three types of careers, the three Ps: [the first is] careers that are practical, stuff you do because you gotta make money. There are careers of passion: what would you do if money wasn't a factor? But there are also careers of purpose: what is it that God is calling you to do? I think many of us only operate out of one, maybe two of those angles. But if you get a chance to have a job that is practical, that you're passionate about, and that is purposeful, then you really got it. And it doesn't always happen in your first 5 years post-undergrad. I'm here at Brown, at 35, and I'm finally at a point where I feel like I'm hitting all those buckets.

## **I feel like that leads into the thought, then, of what the purpose overall is for a student at this time in their lives. A lot of students are very interested in this concept of justice—but how do you tie those things into the mission of student while they're still on campus?**

Okay, your first role is to get this degree. I think we all get so caught up in other things that we tend to neglect the fact that you came here for a reason. Because Brown has a lot to offer, you can actually get lost here. You can end up doing everything else except the work you got to do—so number one, get your degree.

Number two, find ways to infuse justice into your passions. If you know you're passionate about music, join an organization or club that focuses on social justice music or raising awareness about certain issues. Social justice is extremely important, and you all are the game-changers for the world—not necessarily for the future, but for now. You don't have to wait until you graduate to at least start making change.

You all [at Brown] are lightspeeds ahead of where I was when I was in college. Like, the kind of conversations that I listen to you all have, whether in regards to social justice

or spirituality and Christianity and faith, we were not having these discussions when I was 19 or 20 years old. I think it'll help propel the work that you all will do in the future.

**What should the term justice mean to us, especially in a biblical sense?**

I'm going to say not equality, but equity. I think my Christianity should be a platform to advocate for what's equitable for all people. There's this picture [online] I saw of a fence—imagine a fence being the same height, and you have three people. They all have footstools of the same size, but one person is six feet, and one person is four feet tall, another is five feet tall... So the footstool is equality, but equity is when everyone can see over the fence. When people have the same opportunities or resources like everyone else to get ahead, to do things and not be pigeon-holed or discriminated against because of socio-economic status, their religion, their race. That's what I call equity.

**What do you think that would look like in the long-term? Especially for Christians who feel like they want to do something, what could be a good starting point?**

I got this from one of my professors—he said in order to change the world, start with the people who are closest around you. He took a measuring tape and he said, start with the people who are within six feet of you. If you can start standing up and having a voice when you see certain things happen, when you see micro-aggressions, when you see discrimination, when you see inequalities, when you see small forms of oppression, that is a huge start.

**Do you feel like you've encountered difficulties doing that? What are some of the hurdles you've faced?**

Backlash. Being ostracized. Have I experienced difficulties? Yes, I have. But to me, my moral compass supersedes that. I'll tell you, [one time] I was in the gym, and I was listening to two teenagers boasting about how many “women they'd had.” In something that he said, I could see one of them was

going down the path of toxic masculinity... he had made a statement like, “I lost my virginity when I was seven years old.” I had to say, “Listen, if you lost your virginity when you were seven years old, you may not see this, but you were probably sexually assaulted. While you're bragging about this, I suggest that you really seek some counseling for it.”

And immediately he said, “Oh no, I didn't, I'm just joking.” But I could see he was on this path of toxic masculinity, and I had to say something. I was the lone person of the men in the locker room. They were all laughing, thinking it was funny, but I said no, it's not funny. I could've gotten into a fight, I could've gotten cussed out, but I just wanted him to be aware of the ramifications of what he was saying—and if he wasn't, let's talk about it.

I think my Christianity should be a platform to advocate for what's equitable for all people.

It's certain things you know? We [all] know when something is definitely going wrong, and something just kicks in. But what about those times when something may not be wrong, but something just doesn't feel right?

The nuanced moments, the murky areas, where you're like, should I really step up and say something? That's what justice is—speaking up when no one is really looking, when there may not be blatant acts of discrimination, but when something just doesn't feel right.

**We've talked a lot about the idea of justice, so maybe we can go onto the theme of renewal now. How do you see a link between those two things, and how can those things come together in the university?**

Much of the work that I do, it's tiring—but in the process, I am renewed. Especially when [I'm] operating in [my] passions and [I'm] operating in [my] purpose, and it's practical. I'm advocating on behalf of the marginalized, for the individuals who have been left on the outskirts. I'm advocating for things that people wouldn't normally advocate for. Yes, it's tiring. However, when you see things being moved, it's refreshing—it's like, oh, God, it's happening.

For me, justice and renewal go hand-in-hand. If you do the justice work and you see the outcomes of the justice, you're going to be renewed. There's this feeling of refreshment that comes when you see the labor, when you've been toiling at this all day in the vineyard, and then you see the benefits, when people start to reap the benefits. Because we all know that the work we do is not for us, it's for others.

**How would you encourage those, then, who are maybe still waiting on reaping the fruit? Or they've planted the seed, but they're tired, or it seems like the justice is not coming?**

Keep the faith. As cliché as that sounds, keep the faith, and continue doing the work that you've been called to do. One thing that I've learned from working in nonprofits is that oftentimes, we look for validation and affirmation. But don't expect to get applause from the people you're supporting... if you go into the work looking for applause and affirmation, you won't get it, and you'll be highly disappointed. Because the calling is greater.

However, I do think it goes back to the whole seeds being planted. You may not see the benefits right then and there, but the work that you're doing matters. It definitely matters. You just have to keep the faith. And trust and believe that God sees you—because God does see you. And I guarantee you, there are long-lasting positive ramifications of the work that you're doing.

**Do you have a hope for what Brown can do while you're here, or things ministries can do to see some results in our time here?**

Before I answer that question, I want to talk about something. Oftentimes, we talk about what isn't. But I want to talk about what is. Having worked in several types of institutions, I have to tell you all that Brown University is beyond blessed. I know we have our share of issues, but the way Brown supports its students with its resources, and the resources that you all have, is amazing. The fact that you all are here, and there are multiple Protestant ministries available—that's huge.

So my goal for the Protestant students is that we can work together to do some great work. We have the Veritas Forum, which is good, but I think there are some areas where we can come together and not just host a speaker, but come together and do service for the Brown, Providence community, and let them see Christians from all backgrounds, conservative or liberal, regardless of your race, come together and do something that's going to highlight Christianity in a positive way.

If you want to talk about justice, ministry is justice. It is. Rewarding and tiring, and you may not see the fruits of your labor in the moment. I get that we have our reward in heaven. But honestly, sometimes we want to see it now! So I'm blessed to work with you all. I'm blessed to be your Protestant Chaplain. Because as much as people say I had an impact on them, you all don't know how much of an impact you've had on me. You all keep me on my toes. And this has been the best working experience that I've had in my adult career.

**Any closing thoughts?**

Run your race. Don't get caught up in running someone else's race... If you're running a race and God has you on this path, just know that you're meant to be on that path, and don't compare yourself to others. If God has instilled in you seeds relating to activism or social justice, or if not, if it's just being an engineer, then focus on that. Run your race and don't worry about what the next person is doing.

Speaking to an English major—I'll tell you, I was an English major as well. And I would get jealous of all of my friends in these high-power internships, right, and I'm like, "I'm still working at the Gap over summer breaks." But I learned not to get caught up in someone else's race, because eventually, my English degree led to an internship at the Chicago Tribune, which led to open doors for other areas. So just continue to run your own race, whatever that race is. Because I think there's victory on the other side when we run our own race and do what God has called us to do.

*Kathy Luo is a senior concentrating in English and Sociology.*

# Just Breathe

Jared Jones

In, Out.  
In, Out.  
In, Out.

Just breathe.  
Focus,  
Concentrate,  
Relax,  
And just Breathe.

Stand up straight or  
Sit up straight.  
Close your eyes,  
Close your thoughts,  
And Breathe.

In, Out.  
In, Out.  
In, Out.

Be still,  
Do not worry,  
Do not fret,  
Do not be anxious about anything.  
I know it's hard to do,

But I know you can.  
You just need to Breathe.

In, Out.  
In, Out.  
In, Out.

This is different:  
You're not saying anything,  
You're being silent,  
You're just breathing.  
And as you breathe,  
Let your mind grow silent,  
Clear all thoughts,

And just Breathe.

In, Out.  
In, Out.  
In, Out.

Breathe and Prepare yourselves,  
For you are entering into  
A Space with the Almighty.

It is a Special Place,  
One that is only shared  
Between you and the Almighty.  
And together,  
You will Breathe.

In, Out.  
In, Out.  
In, Out.

Treasure this Space.  
Breathe into this Space.  
For thoughts will appear,  
Attempting to distract  
Attempting to shake your focus,  
Attempting to steal you from this Space.

But if you only focus on breathing,  
You will remain in the Space  
With the Almighty,  
And He will give you what you need.

Maybe He will Speak to you:  
When you seek His guidance,  
He will be there,  
Telling you His plans, His dreams,  
He will be there,  
Telling you His plans, His dreams,  
Answering Your Questions,  
Leading you, guiding you

Wherever your Life takes you.

Maybe He will Comfort you:  
When chaos surrounds you  
And it's becoming too much to bear,  
He is there to Strengthen you,  
To ease your burden,  
So that you may have the Strength to go  
Wherever your Life takes you.

Maybe He wants to Breathe Silence  
upon you:  
When Life is too Loud,  
When we ourselves are too Loud,  
He will Breathe upon us  
To be Silent,  
So that we may rest in His Silence,  
So that all we do is Breathe.

With Him, all of these things are  
possible.  
You just have to begin:  
Close your eyes,  
Close your mind,  
Close your thoughts,

And Just Breathe.

In, Out.  
In, Out.  
In... Out.

*But it is the spirit in man, the breath of the  
Almighty, that makes him understand.  
Job 32:8 (ESV)*

*Jared is a freshman concentrating in Political  
Science and Public Policy.*



*Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the  
oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless;  
plead the case of the widow.*

Isaiah 1:17 (NIV)

# My Soul Calls Out

Kaitlan Bui

I am so distant from You, Lord,  
But solely You I look toward.  
My soul calls out Your precious name  
Because I'm broken, blind, and lame.      John 5:3, 2 Cor. 4:8  
And I know that I have been living      (ESV)  
Recently without thanksgiving,  
Just shuffling around my mind—  
But Christ turned water into wine!      John 2:9  
So, God, I desperately pray  
You'd change my heart in the same way,      Psalm 51:10  
That scales would fall out of my eyes,      Acts 9:18  
That even when the sun doth rise,      Matthew 5:45  
And even when the rainfall starts,  
I would remember in my heart  
That I have always been Your child,      1 John 3:1  
That You prevail e'en in the wild,      Isaiah 43:19  
That now my life is sacrifice      Romans 12:1  
And I can't live under a guise—  
But bursting forth from fire and flame,      Daniel 3: 26-27  
Living each day to praise Your name.  
So take me from my world within      Romans 14:8  
And give me strength to now begin  
A life that holds the joy of You,  
The love, peace, patience, kindness too.      Galatians 5:22-23  
For You have said, "Abide in Me;  
I am the Vine, you are the leaves."      John 15:7  
John 15:4

*Kaitlan Bui is a freshman intending to  
concentrate in English.*

# What the Bible Doesn't Say About Human Origins

Hope McGovern

The modern atheist claims that religion is a cultural artifact of ancient history. When ancient peoples spoke of “God,” they imagined a personification of natural processes that modern science has long since rendered obsolete. Like the Ancient Greeks inventing Zeus to explain lightning, the Ancient Hebrew people crafted their god, *Yahweh*, to explain the supernatural origin of the cosmos. These myths were necessary to their understanding of the natural world because they did not have the proper conception of evolution or cosmology, and should now be promptly discarded. They continue today only in the hearts of those who prefer to cling to fantastical fairy-tales rather than scientific facts about human origins.

These claims have incited rebuttals from many fundamentalist Christians. Although this group expresses a spectrum of beliefs, the loudest opinion in this arena belongs to six-day Creationists such as Ken Ham and Doug Phillips, who espouse a literalist view of creation (that the “days” described in Genesis are actual 24-hour periods) or a semi-literalist view (that they describe different eras of pre-human history).<sup>1</sup> Their opponents are the self-dubbed “New Atheists” like Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens, who believe that statements about God’s existence as revealed in the biblical texts can be tested (and disproved) by the scientific method and, in doing so, adopt a metaphysical stance that exceeds the bounds of scientific inquiry.<sup>2</sup> There is also a third path, Intelligent Design, to which we will come presently.

Since the Scopes “Monkey” Trial of the 1920s first vaulted the issue into the public eye, it has become clear that both those in scientific communities and in fundamentalist religious communities increasingly view science and faith as deeply irreconcilable. In this landmark court case, the Tennessee legislature upheld a state law which, on religious grounds,

1 *Answers in Genesis*, answersingenesis.com

2 Dawkins, Richard. *The God Delusion*. Mariner Books, 2008.

banned the teaching of evolution in state-funded schools.<sup>3</sup> This same tension is painfully evident in the 2014 film, *God’s Not Dead*, in which a college student defending his Christian faith before an atheist professor feels he must first cast doubt on Darwin’s Theory of Evolution before he can argue for God’s existence.<sup>4</sup> The evolution-creation debate has become so incendiary that it has become the “third rail” of faith for modern Christian intellectuals. The tense atmosphere surrounding these topics has created a dichotomy for people in communities of higher learning who consider themselves both scientists and Christians: they either learn to suppress what they believe the Bible claims about human origins while learning evolutionary biology; or, finding the task of intellectual reconciliation to be too great, they live as if they’ve found out Santa Claus isn’t real but must play along so as not to ruin the younger kids’ world of make-believe.

This is a brittle faith that will invariably lead to either impenetrable ignorance or utter disillusionment. It is central to the Christian worldview that the God of the Bible is a creator God—if humanity is not made in God’s image, not only does any Christian argument for intrinsic human value fall away, but there would be no need for a Savior if humanity as a whole has not been cut off from its source of life and creative power. Therefore, seeing that this topic is of utmost importance, I urge those of faith to boldly pursue answers to questions of human origins for the simple reason that if we believe that the biblical message holds up to scrutiny, we must allow it to be scrutinized. Put another way, if we find the story of God’s redemption plan for humanity through the person of Jesus Christ to be more beautiful and more compelling than any other explanation of the human condition and ultimate purpose, then we should not live in fear of new

3 “The Monkey Trial.” *Ushistory.org*, Independence Hall Association

4 Cronk, Harold, Willie Robertson, David A. R. White, and Shane Harper. *God’s Not Dead*. 2014.

revelation from scientific or historical evidence. If there is anything unshakeable in our faith, it will remain when our false interpretations are stripped away.

At the heart of the perceived deep rift between modern science and ancient religion is the doctrine of biblical inerrancy—the idea that the Bible is without fault or error in all it teaches. Some in fundamentalist communities today understand the doctrine in terms of an arbitrary inerrancy, especially when it comes to the topic of human origins—that the biblical texts are authoritative not just in matters of faith, but in matters of science and history as well.<sup>5</sup> But biblical inerrancy should not be taken a statement about science or history. Rather, it means that we can know with certainty that God is as He has revealed Himself to humanity in Scripture and that He is faithful to fulfill the promises He makes therein. This is not a modern opinion, but an old one: St. Augustine of Hippo, who lived nearly 1600 years ago, cautioned the early church against “throwing [themselves] head over heels into the headstrong assertion” of a literalistic interpretation of the story of Genesis, lest they be proven wrong by modern astronomy and geology and, in their foolhardy fixation on proving their own interpretations correct, would turn others away from the hope of resurrection promised in the Gospel story.<sup>6</sup> In 1963, Dr. Richard H. Bube, a Providence native and Brown-educated scientist, wrote an essay very reminiscent of Augustine’s argument for an association of evangelical Christian scientists in response to claims that its members were rejecting biblical authority by accepting modern science:

“If it is assumed, without due Scriptural support, that the purpose of revelation is to give mankind a source-book of information on all phases of physical, mental, spiritual, sociological, artistic, and scientific life [...] then we have the greatest difficulty in maintaining the doctrine of an inerrant Scripture. If, on this stand, we adopt the position of ‘arbitrary inerrancy,’ we essentially jeopardize the whole

5 “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy.” *Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals*

6 Mark, Joshua J. “St. Augustine: from The Literal Meaning of Genesis.” *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, Ancient History Encyclopedia, 28 April 2019

truth of Christianity by attempting to balance the great wealth and weight of God’s revelation in Christ upon our ability to show that the words of Scripture can be judged inerrant even when we examine them on the basis of criteria they were not written to satisfy.”<sup>7</sup>

Throughout the Bible, we find language appealing to dated ideas of anatomy, cosmology, and biology. Verses about the “pillars of the earth” (1 Sam 2:8, Job 6:9, ESV), “the dome of heaven” (Gen 1:6-7) and “the face of the deep” (Gen 7:11) all reference a picture of the cosmos completely unrecognizable and irreconcilable to our own. Common among ancient Egyptians, Babylonians, and Israelites was a cosmology of a flat Earth surrounded on every side by cosmic waters and a solid, hard dome of the sky, which, in addition to housing the sun, moon, and stars, was the only protection against the waters above.<sup>8,9</sup> If scientific accuracy is taken as the metric by which we evaluate the Bible’s truth, it fails miserably. There is a mass of writings online and in print by people attempting to explain away these discrepancies, but the biblical texts never claim absolute accuracy in these statements—they never intended, nor need to. The Christian church has never taught a “divine dictation” view of the writing of Scripture; instead, it maintains that the divine inspiration of the biblical authors was not a heightened state of consciousness or omniscience, yet remains something that cannot be reduced to mere human insight.<sup>5</sup> The Bible is a collection of texts telling one unified story of God’s self-revelation and intervention in human history, culminating in the person of Jesus. It is a story of the Divine, transcendent of time and culture, told in the words of man, who is bound by both. Written by a decidedly pre-scientific society, the Bible has nothing to say of modern science and we cannot look to prove it on non-existent claims of enlightened scientific knowledge. As a result, attempts to either validate biblical texts with scientific evidence or to define the role God plays in biological and physical processes

7 Richard H. Bube, “A Perspective on Scriptural Inerrancy” (1963)

8 “Deep Space and the Dome of Heaven - Articles.” *BioLogos*, biologos.org/articles/deep-space-and-the-dome-of-heaven.

9 Greenwood, Kyle. *Scripture and Cosmology: Reading the Bible between the Ancient World and Modern Science*. InterVarsity Press, 2015.

are fundamentally misguided, because scientific revelation is simply not the aim of the Bible.

Rather, the accounts of the creation of the universe found in Genesis chapters 1-2 belong to the Ancient Near Eastern literary genre of Jewish meditation literature.<sup>10,11</sup> Relying heavily on symbolism and poetic imagery, their main intent was *not* give a scientific account of how the world came to be, but rather to invite the reader to grapple with the nature of evil and the lived experience of human brokenness. Through intentionally vague and surrealist imagery, the authors illuminate the tragic irony that humanity was intended for paradise—harmony with each other, with nature, and with God—but instead creates for itself a world where the environment is consumed and widows, orphans, and foreigners live in persecution. Thus we see that, viewed within their correct literary context, the creation narrative cannot be appropriately understood along scientific lines. Instead, it is a statement of literature that offers less so an explanation about the past as about the present state of humanity.

To examine the story of Adam and Eve in more detail, consider the claim that Adam is formed from dust (Gen 2:7), and not clay, whereas biblical protagonists often refer to God as the Potter and humanity His clay (Isaiah 45:9, 64:8, Jer 18:2-6, Job 10:9). This linguistic contrast strongly suggests that neither material is meant to be taken literally—instead, what is important about the fact that Adam is formed from dust is that it is to dust he is destined to return. The punishment Adam and Eve receive for breaking the terms of their covenant with God is not one of physical death, but one of spiritual death. We see dust used in the metaphorical sense for physical death again in the New Testament, where the Apostle Paul contrasts our present earthly bodies with the transfigured ones promised by the hope of resurrection: “As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man

10 “Read the Opening to the Book of Genesis with Fresh Eyes.” *The Bible Project*, [thebibleproject.com/explore/genesis-1-11/](http://thebibleproject.com/explore/genesis-1-11/).  
11 Solomon, Marty, host. “1: Trust the Story.” *Bema*, 08 Sept. 2016. <https://bemadiscipleship.com/session1>

of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven” (1st Cor. 15:48-9). For this reason, we can say that inasmuch as Adam was formed from the dust, so are we, and as he returned it, so too shall we one day return to dust. The narrative of Adam’s creation is clearly, at least to a degree, metaphorical. Nonetheless, by virtue of his inclusion in Jewish genealogies, we know that Adam was also held in Jewish tradition as a historical figure.<sup>12</sup> Ultimately, Adam functions both as a symbolic archetype of humanity and a historical figure in ancient history as one of the first humans to live in covenant relationship with God. The story of Adam and Eve in the Bible is not scientific. But in the same way that scientific inquiry exists to uncover the patterns that underlie the workings of biology and physics and anatomy, so too do these narratives invite us, from the outset of the biblical story, to dwell on the pattern of human fallibility and its tragic consequences echoed throughout human history.

**If we want to take seriously the claims of our Christian faith, we must be willing to sacrifice the idol of our perfect interpretations.**

At this point we must return to the “middle ground” of the evolution-creationism debate: Intelligent Design (ID). This view espouses that a supernatural designer is the only explanation for “gaps” in evolution theory.<sup>13</sup> On the surface, this may appear a palatable alternative to the hardline positions of six-day Creationism or New Atheism, seemingly allowing for both a natural and supernatural explanation of human origins. One major objection (which, while being rhetorically simple enough remains tiringly controversial) is that ID is not a viable scientific theory, as it claims, because it fails to meet the definitional requirements of observability and repeatability, unlike the theory of evolution, which has passed many litmus tests across multiple fields including paleontology, biogeography, and molecular genetics.<sup>14,15</sup> Beyond this evident

12 Walton, John H. *Lecture On Human Origins*, February 2, 2016. San Francisco, CA.

13 “What Is Intelligent Design?” *Intelligentdesign.org*, <https://intelligentdesign.org/whatisid/>

14 Lynch, Michael. “Intelligent Design or Intellectual Laziness?” *Nature News*, Nature Publishing Group, 18 May 2005, [www.nature.com/articles/435276b](http://www.nature.com/articles/435276b).

15 “What Is the Evidence for Evolution? - Common-

cause for dismissal, we shall go further to claim that such a distinction between natural and supernatural as is delineated in ID (and for that matter, New Atheism) was a concept alien to the society from which the biblical creation narratives sprung. Adam's creation and fall from grace in the book of Genesis is not a claim of supernatural intervention in the natural world nor is it merely a poetic description of a natural process. It is a literary statement conveying profound underlying truth about the experienced world—that something in our relationship to the divine has been broken beyond repair. We have no need of a pseudo-scientific argument to force religion to accommodate a modern framework with which it was never in conflict in its source texts.

This may be unsatisfying to some, but we must understand that fixating on “what role God plays in biology” is fundamentally the wrong question to ask of the Scriptures. The distinction between God and nature is not as clear in the Bible as we would like it to be because no society pre-Enlightenment (early 18th century) had such a distinction at all.<sup>11,16</sup> While this view still differs from pantheism in an important way (namely, that the Christian God is transcendent above creation as well as working in it and through it), it's also closer than we may be comfortable with. Ultimately, this is not a call for us to stop trying to find answers about the interplay between God and natural processes—but it *should* stop us from expecting to find them written out plainly in the Bible.

All this is to say that any scientific explanation of the origin of the cosmos and the human race does not preclude any truth from biblical creation narratives, or the biblical message as a whole. Plainly, accepting science does not require rejecting the Bible. Let us then swiftly denounce any attempt to base scientific theories on biblical texts. And let us rejoice in doing so, because when we cease trying to force science to validate or disprove the Bible and instead consider them as equally valid but distinct lenses for interpreting the world, we can see that they render strikingly beautiful parallels. A biblical worldview

---

Questions.” *BioLogos*, [biologos.org/common-questions/what-is-the-evidence-for-evolution](http://biologos.org/common-questions/what-is-the-evidence-for-evolution).

16 “Deep Space and the Dome of Heaven” *BioLogos*, [biologos.org/articles/deep-space-and-the-dome-of-heaven](http://biologos.org/articles/deep-space-and-the-dome-of-heaven).

says that God created a good and ordered world *ex nihilo*, but it is always and forever decaying away from perfection; a scientific worldview may say that from the moment of the Big Bang, the universe has been rapidly expanding—by the law of entropy growing in chaos every second. Painfully fitting, then, is the Bible's saga of a humanity relentlessly searching for permanence and perfection in a cosmos bound to decay.<sup>17</sup> Far from granting credence to claims of scientific enlightenment in biblical texts, these parallels should compel us to stand in amazement at how masterfully God has wrought all things in the world and in His written word to draw us to Himself. Therefore, let us approach the Scriptures in the way that Augustine begged of his fellow Christians—with humility. We know that the Spirit of God moves even through imperfect people with flawed understandings in order to bring revelation.

If I have left the reader with the impression that the framework I have presented here is the only correct reconciliation of Christianity and science, then my point has been sorely missed. Indeed, if there is one thing I can claim with certainty, it is that some of the beliefs I hold today will be refuted and remolded by the knowledge I gain tomorrow. But just as certainly, there are things that our current understanding of science has gotten wrong and, dare I say, things that our practice of religion has also gotten wrong. The apostle Paul has said: “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1st Cor 13:12, KJV). Thank goodness that the hope of our salvation doesn't lie in the orthodoxy of our beliefs but in the person of Jesus Christ. Therefore, if we want to take seriously the claims of our Christian faith, we *must* be willing to sacrifice the idol of our perfect interpretations. For now, we see but a murky reflection of Reality as we peer through a thousand different lenses, but let us long for the day when we will see clearly.

*Hope McGovern is a senior concentrating in Engineering Physics.*

---

17 Hope McGovern, “A Lesson in Thermodynamics,” *Cornerstone Magazine*, Spring 2017, Volume V, Issue 1

# Night

Julius Gingles

*...the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. Psalms 139:12 (NIV)*

You are the owl of the night.  
Your radiant beautiful eyes reflect a light that pierces through the darkness.  
Why is it so hard for me to see what you see?  
Why does life become as pitch-black as the hour I sit in?

But even at night, you guide me and instruct my heart  
to rest under the protection of your wings and lie down in peace.  
I would have been lost if not for your guidance through the darkest of nights.

You invite me into the protection of your armored wings,  
Yet I am tempted to turn away from your embrace,  
Sifting through your feathers for another glimpse of the dark...  
But it never fulfills me.

Your embrace overpowers the grip of darkness  
You always draw me back into the comfort of light  
Reassuring me that the night is nearly over  
And the day is almost here.

*Julius Gingles is a sophomore concentrating in Middle Eastern Studies.*

# Ask Me How I'm Doing

Joseph Delamerced

*Jesus wept.*  
John 11:35 (NIV)

“It is an honor and a privilege to tell someone, ‘I am going to miss you.’ For the seniors here, I ask that this honor is one to reserve for the families you’ve been given and the ones you’ve forged.”

I pause and wait for applause. It’s short, it sounds polite, and I’m not too surprised. As I step down from the podium, I hear something else.

“Yeah! All right, Philip!”

Lizzie’s the only one to stand, proudly, with an applause louder than any section in the chapel. My face breaks out into an infectious smile.

“Thank you,” I mouth.

“You’re welcome,” she whispers. She gives me a thumbs up. People begin to stare at her, and she lets out one more loud, brief “*Whoo!*” to spite the judgmental eyes.

I’ve always liked the idea of giving a Chapel Talk: an opportunity to talk about any topic or value close to my heart. It was hosted in our school’s chapel, a place that most people found refreshing — as long as they could sleep while they sat there.

While only a few seniors decided to do it, these speeches often felt one-dimensional, written more like shoutouts rather than personal reflections. How was I supposed to listen to something not addressed to me, full of inside jokes and personal references that I’ll never understand?

I knew I wanted to deliver a Chapel Talk, even when I didn’t

yet have the necessary confidence. I wanted to say something that everyone could understand and take to heart. The speech went through a number of drafts, edits, and changes, but the core message stayed constant: I wanted to say what family means.

I thought that football might be a good way to connect such an abstract idea to something popular and relevant. I figured that if people laughed, they would have to stay awake. They might listen. I tried starting off that way.

“Do you know what it’s like to be a fan of the Cleveland Browns?”

I hear a familiar laugh. I look up and see Lizzie trying to muffle her giggling with her hand. Even still, her eyes are beaming back at me, encouraging me to keep going.

“Maybe after you’ve thrown four interceptions,” I continued, “People have left your life and thought you weren’t valuable. And maybe people tried re-entering your life after you improved and scored the game-winning touchdown.”

More people started to laugh. Hopefully, they don’t just remember the jokes. It’s not that big of a joke.

Do they think *I’m* a joke?

\*\*\*\*

“Philip, you can’t keep thinking that way.”

“It’s a legitimate question.”

I grin at Lizzie, half-sarcastic, half-serious. She looks at me, scrunches her face, and groans. “Dude, just write! People will laugh.” She quickly adds: “At the *joke*, not you!”

We laugh together. There's a rhythm playing in the room: a beat of silence, a sudden drumming of keys, a melody of conversation, then a harmony of laughter. It becomes comforting ambient noise, and it's helping me write. But even when I know what I want to say, I'm having trouble expressing it well for the talk.

"I'm worried, Lizzie." My hands rest at the keyboard. "I'm nervous. I've never given a speech before." The familiar feeling of fear seeps into my body. "And I have no idea if people will care, or if anyone will even listen." Doubt creeps in, and my hands shake again.

"Hey." She nudges my shoulder. "*Hey.*"

I look up at her.

"You're not just writing for them. This is for you, too." Deep breath in. I'm hesitant. "But what if they still don't care?"

Lizzie smiles at me. "Well, I do."

There's a moment of pure comfort that our eyes exchange. We don't need to say much, but I feel reassured. I'm determined to finish.

Deep breath out. I begin to type.

\*\*\*\*

"An important aspect of family is giving the same love, trust, and respect that you receive. People's words, care, and love are not consumable items; they're real forces that can shape us."

I wanted to share what family meant.

"I am better off with every experience I've had, both good and bad, thanks to those that share in my struggle and my joy."

But this speech was also for me. I wanted to tell people about

the type of person I've become.

"I've learned that the world will challenge me in many ways. That is the way of life: peaks and valleys. But family, especially the one I've forged, eases that burden. When there's a lot on my mind and not enough space to hold it all, family provides comforting and tender relief."

I hope people can tell how much I've grown. OK, not physically—I'm still pretty short, but...

I should include that joke in another speech. Maybe she'll think it's good, too. I should run it by her.

\*\*\*\*

*March 28*

Dear Lizzie,

Before I left, I wrote you something. It is a letter of love. This is not because I want someone. No, love is different.

It had only been a semester, but I couldn't wait to come home. I pulled up to the parking lot as the street lights switched on. I leapt out of the door, and I ran out of my car to see you. I smiled. And then I cried. And somehow, that was joy.

I have to tell you that I can't even remember which moment was the last one we spent together. All the experiences we shared have crashed into one. Whenever that kind of joy comes now, only one moment returns and steals my thoughts. Taunting me, it makes the emptiness more evident and the joy more painfully ironic.

It is always this moment.

I am still young, but I am experienced. I walk past the gates. I trudge through the grass. And then I stop. I leave a flower. I try to pray, but I can't remember how. I look down at my hands and notice they are shaking.

Deep breath in. “I miss you,” I whisper.

And then it becomes quiet. No buzzing of insects, no gusts of wind, no muffled sobs. There is no rhythm in the air.

Deep breath out. The ambient noise returns.

The sun sets. It is time to say goodbye. I get in the car, and I watch the graveyard shrink in the rearview window.

I have changed since that moment, but I have hurt all the same. When I left home for college, it was hard to open up, to listen, to learn. The walls you tore down to help me be vulnerable and intimate—I rebuilt them. I didn’t know any other way to figure anything out. I was lonely still, and I was afraid. I was scared that people like me weren’t out there.

I had heard all sorts of the same things: that college would be exciting, that I would be fine, that I should not be afraid. But it was really hard without you.

While I have had many conversations, too many were with myself. My insecurities ate at me. I felt misunderstood. I was not an imposter, nor a liar, nor a cheat; I was simply alone. My identity was my own, and there were none with whom I could share it. So after a while I realized my fears, once more: I was scared that people like you weren’t out there.

But friendship is risk. It is uncertain and incomplete. As a learning process, it grows, it builds, and it listens. It is a safe place where love can grow. It spreads the weight of my burdens and reminds me of what I can learn and how I can help. The words we shared together gave me hope.

I fell in love with our common bond and our trust. No matter what experiences we shared, trust tied our sacred bond of friendship together, held close by our joys and our tears. Trust made love evident and bright. A friend felt like a second self, one that knew my reflection, my flaws, my joys, and my fears. I thought I knew what love is: to be with like-minded people and to share with people who understand.

But that is not why I am writing this letter — to tell you an incorrect definition of a four-letter word.

I’ve been talking to myself, and still I wonder if I am addressing someone else. *How could this be? What should I do now? Why does no one hear my cries?* My questions have led to fractured arguments — never with you, but always with God.

*Is this a test? Or is this arbitrary?* I have despaired. Such thoughts often feel far too removed from the reality of what happened. They push me into a reality where I am forced to decide on what it was supposed to mean.

People ask me, “How are you doing today?” These binaries to questions frustrate me: “good” or “bad,” “meaning” or “meaningless,” “moved on” or “mourning.” What should my answers be? Some days it is one, others it is another. It is confusing, blurry, and frustrating. So I cried out and asked God the same: “How do you feel? Are you hurting like me?” For a long time, my heart was closed off, and I did not listen.

Yet still, He whispered back to me. “I had a friend,” he said. “He became sick, and I was too late. They had already buried him. I thought I knew what to say and what to do. I wept. How else was I supposed to feel?” He paused. A heavy silence overtook him.

“I loved him. As much as you loved her.”

Love isn’t wanting someone, nor is it when you find people like you, and yet it is not something to fear. No, love is different; I know it. It must be. Before love, fear enveloped my heart. I had believed that God did not care. I had been so scared to face if that was true. I grew fearful to talk to Him. He asked me to trust Him, and that terrified me. How could I trust that love could return after you had left?

Yet the only way I am able to love now is because I am convinced that God had to love you as much as I did. His heart broke like mine. But He was steadfast in his love for you

and for me. He put his hand upon my shoulder and reminded me that He never left. In my anger, sorrow, and pain, He met me where I was and loved me still. And somehow, as I wept with God, I grew closer to Him and to you. I knew love because He loved us.

I reevaluated how I'm supposed to live with all these broken moments. I missed you, and at times, it felt unbearable. But I am guided no longer by fear or by pain; love moves me to heal, to learn, and to write.

That is why I am writing. When I am able to write the words, when I can express how it feels, when I can finally talk and say what I want to, I'll no longer be so helpless. I know the truth about love now. Perfect love should drive out fear, not invite it. And so I desperately need to talk to you about all of this, or even about none of this, or just about anything.

It feels like there's only one place and time for me to do that. It's the same one that comes to mind.

It is always this moment.

But it has always been the same one that reminds me of love.

Lizzie, I've been meaning to share this with you for a long time. I know you'd want to know how much I've grown. I know you'd want me to leave this letter with you, on the dust and earth, right by your tombstone. I know you'd want to read it.

And not a day goes by when I wish you could.

After you left, I wrote you a letter. A long, drawn-out letter to remind us why we became friends in the first place—

Sincerely,  
We Loved.

\*\*\*\*

This moment is familiar, but different.

28 Fall 2019

The spring air fills my lungs as I hear the rhythm of the morning begin. The ambient noise is comforting as I walk past the gates. I step through the grass, and then I stop. I set down a flower, letting it rest upon the earth. I sit, and I pray. I remember all that we shared and all that we could not. I smile. My eyes begin to swell.

"Hey, Lizzie," I whisper. "There's a lot I've been meaning to tell you." My words come out in stuttered bursts. My hands start to shake. My chest feels heavy.

"It's been really hard. I miss our talks. You know, I even miss all the unsolicited advice." The tears fall between my smile, my words, and my memories. They sting.

"I miss your laughter." I feel my heart shattering, again. The sobbing hurts my chest. "I just miss you." I pull my hand to my face and try to wipe the tears away. The noise around me quiets until the only noticeable sound is a muffled cry.

I pause and take a deep breath. I try to clear my face, and then I reach into the pocket of my raincoat. I take out the letter. *To My Best Friend*, it reads on the envelope.

"I made this for you. I know you must be surprised," I joke, "Considering you were better at writing than I ever was." I laugh alone. Another deep breath. I lean forward, and I place the letter next to the flower.

"I miss you, Lizzie." The sun begins to rise, and I feel its warmth. The light reaches where I stand.

"And I love you so much."

*We love because he first loved us.*  
1 John 4:19

*Joseph Delamerced is a freshman intending to concentrate in Classics and Education Studies*

# Through It All

Lucy Tian

*“I’ve been through too much to not worship Him.”*

*Too much?*

What does that look like?  
Roaring rivers of frustration  
A fruitless search for joy?

Eighteen hour days  
with no achievements to speak of  
The pouring out of time and love and energy  
with no harvest to count on?

When progress isn’t progress  
and healing never comes  
When the sun can’t shine through  
the sky that fractures in the night  
And the world becomes too much  
When even words become too much?

Is it how  
messages sit unsent  
Unread  
How the heart caves into itself  
leaving behind a pulsing crater of  
instability that  
nothing can appease?

I hear I should  
Start with thankfulness  
For the little things  
Little drops of gratitude that gather  
Pooling in the divots of your scarred  
heart

That as slowly and as surely as trees  
green  
Joy will rain  
Peace will flood  
Seeping into the crevices this world  
carved into your soul  
That healing comes with  
thankfulness  
That amidst pain  
I should worship

And I try  
It is so hard but  
God, I’m trying.

When waking up cripples me  
And opening my eyes drains me of  
everything  
I whisper  
Thank you Lord  
for this breath, the next breath  
When I breathe in and  
the frozen air rips through my lungs  
I think  
What a blessing  
To be outside, to feel, to move  
When my feet get tangled up on  
growing tree roots on the sidewalk  
I laugh  
Clumsiness and shame forgotten  
Only the swelling of joy within me  
At the vitality of life peeking through  
broken pieces of the pavement

And as I seek thankfulness  
As I cultivate gratefulness in my heart  
It hurts  
It is so hard  
But I rest in the hope that  
One day  
After going through too much  
One day  
When I look back into the night  
I see myself praising God  
I see myself truly worshipping Him  
because

*Though the fig tree does not bud,  
and there are no grapes on the vines;  
Though the olive crop fails,  
and the fields produce no food;  
Though there are no sheep in the pen,  
and no cattle in the stalls,  
yet I will rejoice in the Lord,  
I will be joyful in God my Savior  
Habakkuk 3:17-18 (NIV)*

*Lucy Tian is a freshman intending to  
concentrate in Biochemistry.*



*Now this is eternal life: that they know you,  
the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you  
have sent.*

John 17:3 (NIV)

# Memory

David Ferranti

I. The late morning sun shines down from a deep blue sky onto the swaying gold-green grassland. A horse races at full gallop across the plain. A knight sits astride the horse, his head bare and his armor whole. Beside them runs a lady, her long hair streaming out behind her. Her feet leave no mark on the grass.

Beside the lady lopes a great hound. There, amidst the green spring of the world, they can outrun the creatures of earth and air. There, they know one another and laugh and do not grow weary. At the edge of the horizon, a mountain grows taller, proud and majestic. The snow that crowns its peak is bright and shining and does not melt.

II. The late afternoon sun filtered through a grey sky blanketed by thick clouds. On the forest floor, beneath the gently waving branches, a tall bay horse trotted at a steady pace.

Beside the horse walked a knight, his body encased in heavy steel plate. Scars marred its gleaming metal surface, running from the greaves to the cuirass up to the great looming helm. One steel hand hung loose at the figure's side. The other hovered above the hilt of the sword that protruded from the knight's hip. On the other side of the horse, a great hound paced, paws silent against the leafy-covered ground.

On the horse's back sat a young woman wearing a simple robe. Her hair was long and unbound, and it rippled in the breeze. The knight paused for a moment. His sword-hand drifted up towards his helm, then froze and returned to its original position. The lady narrowed her eyes and dismounted. The knight began to walk again. He had only taken two steps when his limbs went limp and he began to fall.

Faster than light, faster than thought itself, the lady leapt forward and caught the knight, hands gripping his steel shoulders. Carefully, ever so carefully, she lowered him to the ground. They would make no more progress today. The shadows were already too long.

III. There was a stream not far from where they were. She went and filled the waterskins and dipped her hands in the cool flowing water. The fading dull light made the surface of the stream look like liquid glass. By the time she returned to the clearing, the forest was already in the grey grip of dusk. She knelt by the knight's side and trickled water through the helmet's vision slit.

"Can you hear me?"

No answer. Her fingers brushed the cold metal. She upended more of the waterskin, spilling some of the precious liquid.

"Can you hear me?"

The knight came awake all at once. He made a wordless sound and tried to rise. She put a hand behind his neck and helped him sit up.

It was dark now. The small fire she had started in the center of the clearing threw off some light, but the rest of the forest was shrouded in shadow. The night air was chilly.

"I am sorry," she told the knight. "I did not know you were unwell."

"I feel much better now," the knight said. The looming helm moved from side to side.

"Good." She sat cross-legged by the fire and sipped from the waterskin.

The hound padded to the knight's side and sniffed at him. His hand rose and the steel fingers stroked the thick fur on the hound's back. The flickering flames made his armor dance with bright motion.

"Did you remember anything?"

"No," the knight replied. "Nothing."

“Tell me about your memory again.”

A pulse of motion inside the helmet. The knight had blinked. “What does it matter if you have already heard it?”

She added a stick to the fire. “Sometimes it matters. Sometimes it matters very much.” The flames crackled.

“I was there,” the knight said at last. “I defied the storm and the thunder. I was there.” His hand clawed at the hilt of his sword. “Night fell. A red moon rose in the sky. And then—”

Pity pierced her heart, but she knew she needed to ask. “And then?”

“Oblivion.” The voice of a child. A child alone in the dark.

“You still cannot remove your armor?”

Steel fingers reached up towards his face. Metal screamed against metal as he pulled at the steel cage that concealed everything but the movement of his eyes. What color were his eyes? She could not be sure.

“No,” the knight replied. “I cannot.”

A howl rang out in the forest, reaching up above the trees to the bright shining moon. The hound raised its head. The horse snorted. She added another stick to the fire.

“The wolves sound close.”

“They are not wolves.” Her voice was so soft it barely rose above the crackling of the flames. “They will not trouble us.” “I can remember this too,” the knight said. “I can remember wolves howling in the dark.”

There was silence for a long moment. The knight’s right hand made a steel fist and then opened once more. She rose from where she sat by the fire, and its light shone off her hair, more brilliant than even the moon.

“You should rest,” she said. “I will keep watch. No harm will come to you.” His armor whined in protest as he lay down on

his back. Soon, the knight was fast asleep.

She rose and stretched, relishing the warmth of the fire as she loosened her muscles. She did not sleep, not truly. When she did rest, she was remembering, remembering the forest and the plains, remembering the deer and birds, remembering dancing amidst the green spring of the world. In memory, she could outrun all creatures of earth and air, could outrun the very wind itself. Run, and feel the cool breeze upon her face. Run, and follow the hidden path towards the rising mountain.

Something disturbed her from her memory in the middle of the night. She blinked and shook her head. The fire had died down into flickering embers. Pale moonlight gleamed on the knight’s armor from where he crouched across the fire. The howl shattered the silence of the night, echoed in her ears. She heard the cry of the hunting beast, the rush of the hunt and the crunch of ice and warm blood dripping from fanged jaws. The knight reached for the hilt of his sword.

“No,” she said. “No. Do not be afraid.”

The looming helm did not move. She reached for the knight’s steel hand and held it. The metal was cold at first, cold enough to burn, but soon warmed at her touch.

Silence. The hound had awoken as well, and sniffed at the air before circling the clearing. She watched the hound move, and felt the knight watch it as well. The hound padded back to her side, eyes liquid pools in the moonlight. She let go of the knight’s steel fingers and ran her hands through the thick fur and smiled.

IV. The knight watched the lady and the hound for several moments. Then he stretched out once more on his back, ignoring the grinding snarl of the joints of his armor. He tasted the memory of blood and cold iron. The howl. The howl, and the moon of blood.

Before he fell asleep once more, he heard the lady speak. Not to him, but to herself.

“I cannot see,” she murmured. “Are you there? I walked the path. I stood and watched the mountain rise.”

He did not dream. In the morning, when the lady woke him, they went on through the forest. They made good time that day, and the next day, and the day after the next. Patches of blue shone through the grey sky. The trees became thinner and shorter. Soon the trees themselves were replaced by shrubs and bushes. Then there was only grass, endless swaying grass.

“Where are we going?”

They were on a steep stone bluff that overlooked a raging river that twisted and churned its way through the grassland. Massive boulders tumbled through the turbulent water, carried away by the rushing current. The lady narrowed her eyes. “To a safe place. To those who have gone before us, and those who will come after.”

She slid from the horse’s back and stroked the hound’s head. “We should rest here. I want to watch the water.”

He looked up the slope. Danger buzzed in the back of his skull. “As you say.”

The lady walked to the edge of the bluff and looked down at the river. He followed, slowly at first, and then quickly as the hound barked a warning and he realized what form the danger took.

The serpent made a sound somewhere in between a hiss and a laugh when it emerged from its burrow in the soft soil. His hands were steel fists around the neck of an invisible enemy. The air inside his helmet was stifling, choking, unbearable.

Then the lady saw the serpent and flinched back to the very edge of the bluff. Her eyes were wide as they flashed a glance at the foaming river below. Her gaze rose and met his through the vision slit of his helmet and in that single moment he knew this lady who had found him wandering in the woods was an eternity that was not bound in scarred steel.

“Do not be afraid,” he said. “When I say to, step back.”

“Back?”

“I will not let you fall,” he said. “I promise you.”

The serpent hissed again. Venom dripped from its fangs.

Inside his skull, he could hear a howl rising out of nightmare memory, clawing up at a bloody moon. *I cannot see. Are you there?*

The lady made the smallest of nods. The howl faded. His fingers curled around the hilt of his sword. A quick strike. *A path, and a mountain beneath the bright noonday sun.*

“Now!” he shouted and lunged forward.

The scarred blade took the serpent’s head off with its crooked fangs inches from the lady’s forearm. She had stepped back, just as he had told her, trusting beyond all else, and her feet found nothing but empty air.

Steel fingers closed around her wrist. Muscles screamed in his shoulder and back as he pulled her onto solid ground. Below, the river kept churning into white foam.

The lady stood there suddenly, close, much too close. Slowly, painfully slowly, she raised her hands to the great looming helm. He did not move.

The lady pulled the helm from his head and held it, arms trembling beneath the weight.

“Can it be?” she whispered. “Do you remember me?”

He was weeping, and not only because he could feel the breeze upon his face.

“I should not have gone,” he said. “I am sorry.”

“No,” she replied. Her hair gleamed in the sun, gleamed in his memory. “This is our time. This will always be our time.”

V. The late morning sun shines down from a deep blue sky onto the swaying gold-green grassland. A horse races at full gallop across the plain. On its back is a knight, his head bare and his armor whole. Beside the horse runs a lady, her long hair streaming out behind her. Her feet leave no mark on the grass. Beside the lady lopes a great hound. This is the green spring of the world. This is knowledge and laughter and clear joy, and the reflection of sunlight on far-off snow.

*David Ferranti is a senior concentrating in Biology.*



## Senior Farewells

I still remember walking to my first Cornerstone meeting—I knew nobody, had no idea what I was doing, and was unsure if I would even come back. But all these semesters later, I know that Cornerstone has been one of the greatest gifts God gave me for my college years. Thank you everyone so much for all the years of laughs, trials, and making fun of my ridiculous quotes. God's love and faithfulness was shown to me every minute I worked with you all, and I cannot be more excited for what is to come!

- *Kathy Luo '19*

In my first semester as part of Cornerstone, we amended our mission statement to say that our purpose is not only to celebrate the beauty of the Christian Gospel, but also its truth. Every week is a reminder of that mission as we gather together to have fellowship, experience God's common grace amidst our fumbblings, and to make fun of Kathy. Cornerstone has been the single greatest blessing in my college life — it's more than a magazine, and I thank God for the opportunity I've had to follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before me in this publication and pray for those will come after, knowing that one day we'll be united as beauty compels us all to deeper truth.

- *Hope McGovern '19*

I joined Cornerstone because I wanted to deepen the exploration of my own faith and because I wanted to be a part of a community that was seeking the Word of God. Cornerstone became more than just a magazine, more than just writing and editing and a weekly meeting. It became an integral part of my life at Brown, and I cannot imagine how I would have grown as a Christian, a person, and a writer without it. I will always remember and be thankful for the conversation and laughter we all shared, not just as a team creating a magazine, but as a community coming together to paint a vision of faith.

- *David Ferranti '19*

God is so good! Even in my hardest times at Brown, when I have wandered furthest from Him, He has been present, patiently waiting and quietly working for me. Cornerstone has been a huge part of that, a constant presence of faithful believers, patiently bearing with me in much the same way. That joy of fellowship, of a shared commitment to Christ and the expression of the beauty of His gospel, has been a great blessing to me and it is my joy to see that carried forward.

- *Tom Hale '19*



*Divine Providence, Kathy Luo '19*

# Ministry Profile: Brown-RISD Catholic Community

Megan O'Brien Crayne

In the heart of Brown's campus, right on Main Quad, sits Manning Chapel, which also operates as the spiritual home of the Brown-RISD Catholic Community. We have Mass in Manning 6 times a week: twice on Sundays (10:30 am and 8:30 pm), and once a day Monday through Thursday. We also invite a Spanish-speaking priest to campus for Mass in Spanish roughly every month. In addition, we have an hour of Eucharistic Adoration every Wednesday night at 7 pm in Manning.

Alongside our prayer in Manning, we have 10 small-group Bible studies that meet weekly, including one in Spanish. A grad student reading group meets every Tuesday night in the GCB, focusing on topics ranging from philosophy and theology to Scripture and the lives of the participants. A group also travels to a local Catholic elementary school to help with tutoring every Tuesday evening.

Once per week, outside of Mass, we gather as an entire community in The Underground for "Munderground" from 6-8pm every Monday. Munderground includes different types of prayer, a free (often homemade!) dinner, and time to learn about and discuss something that is both theologically and personally significant. Past topics have included self-care and

mental health, vocations, friendship and dating, and interfaith engagement. We close our time together with Compline, a prayer centered around the singing of the psalms.

We also have a number of opportunities for explicit intellectual engagement with the faith. We partner with the Thomistic Institute for 8 theological lectures a year, engage with the thought of Thomas Aquinas in small groups at "Tea with Thomas," and organized two Catholic GISPs last year — the first on Aquinas and the Fathers of the Church, and the second on Catholic Social Thought. We also have a short (4 weeks) and long (all school year) course for students seeking to receive sacraments or learn more about the Catholic faith.

In addition to these regular events we have two student-led retreats each year, as well as a semesterly camping/hiking retreat. The Pastoral Council, our student leadership team, also plans other events such as our Christmas Party and Spring Banquet, and various other prayer and social events.

Any and all, from the committed to the curious, are welcome at any of our events, and Megan and Fr. Albert are always willing to talk and eager to make you coffee. Email [catholic@brown.edu](mailto:catholic@brown.edu) for more information!

*He turns a desert into pools of water, a parched land into springs  
of water.*

Psalm 107:35 (ESV)