

TAUG

To An Unknown God: A Journal of Christian Thought at UC Berkeley

TREASURE

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

As the waves of our lives ebb and flow, granting tides of new challenges and beginnings, this magazine reminds us that life is a gift, a treasure. This issue will ask you, reader, what do you value in this world? What makes something, or someone, worth treasuring? Together, we contemplate the deceiving nature of material riches and its glittering allure that slips from our grasp.

Societal conceptions of beauty, morality, and prosperity are ever-changing. Yet, amid the uncertainty of temporal treasure, the authors and artists in this publication believe in the ministry of one Man who sacrificed himself 2000 years ago. The contents of this Spring's issue, *Treasure*, reflect on navigating identity within a world of fleeting desires.

Embark with us in search of the real treasure, the absolute truth. The beauty of the Christian faith is its steadfast, enduring journey onward. Onward into the unknown, through shadows of the deep sea and glimmering light of the morning sun. Our theme relies heavily on the passage Matthew 6:19-21, which implores the reader not to store treasures on earth, "where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal" (Matthew 6:19). These lines close with verse 21, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." As the Editor-in-Chief of this issue, I encourage you to meditate on where your heart lies. Who or what magnetizes your affection, your attention, your heart?

As you flip through these pages, may this magazine be a place of comfort and a platform for curiosity. Journey with us as we communicate the highs, lows, and bleak periods of our lives. While at moments, time seems to pass violently in urgent beckoning, in other seasons, we are left with eery silence and anticipation. Thus is the voyage to treasure, the riddled expedition on sea.

For this issue, I beseech you to read *Treasure* with reflective introspection and serenity within your heart and mind. I extend an invitation to an odyssey in search of treasure.

With gratitude,



Charis Lee
Editor-in-Chief





"Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you."
—Acts 17:23

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*Not photographed: Jenny Han, Reba Sy, Abigail Chan

TAUG

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Looking Up

WORDS ANONYMOUS



"If I find in myself desires nothing in this world can satisfy, I can only conclude that I was not made for here."

I first came across this lyric from the C. S. Lewis Song by Brooke Fraser while browsing through my prized pink iPod Nano during a family road trip. As a 9-year-old who thought she was really mature for her age, I obviously didn't comprehend the gravity of it—only that it was deep enough to feed my sad girl aesthetic (along with a generous amount of Lorde). Eventually, I grew out of my obsession with this song (though not out of my penchant for playing sad music in the car), and it's only recently resurfaced in my mind as I've started to think more deeply about what I want, both for the present and for the future.



Growing up in church, I was taught that God is all we need, and that we shouldn't focus on the temporary things of this world. I never really questioned these teachings—they sounded nice, and they *are* true. But looking back, I can't say they truly manifested in my life. As a high schooler, I was plagued by a single-minded determination to get good grades and excel in extracurriculars so I could get into a prestigious college. I realized that I wasn't exceptional at most things—whether it was piano, or sports, or art—and so I figured I should at least be smart; that would make me feel better about myself. And at first, it did. Once college decisions rolled around, I relished being able to tell people which schools I got into. Even when I entered college, where I knew I was going to be surrounded with incredibly intelligent people, my craving for academic validation persisted. This time, though, I wasn't just looking for good grades, but for a picture-perfect college experience. If I just had the whirlwind adventures and cool experiences I saw others were having, I would be happy. Of course, when college life didn't turn out as thrilling as I had imagined, I was left with a nagging sense of disappointment despite my efforts to remind myself of everything God had blessed me with. Somehow, I had reduced His role in my life to whatever suited my emotional whims. God was my benefactor when things were going well, my comforter when they weren't... and that was about it. There were many times when I felt distant from Him, felt a gnawing emptiness growing with that distance, even as it was becoming abundantly clear that *He* was what I needed.

Thankfully, God has paved a way for me to draw closer to Him, as I've delved deeper into His word than ever before and become more integrated in fellowship. As I read the Bible, I am reminded of His wondrous character—relentlessly faithful, perfectly righteous, abounding in grace. And I am continually encouraged by the people in my fellowship to grow in my imitation of Christ and His selfless love. But the question remains: What about God himself? Is He actually the one I cherish above all? How can I tell? The most obvious sign, perhaps, would be the disproportionate

amount of time I spend online. Admittedly, I probably spend more time thinking about where I want to live and how I want to decorate my future home than I do thinking of Christ. When I'm scrolling through social media, I'm inundated by enticing displays of lifestyles, aesthetics, experiences—all of which get added to an ever-growing mental list of everything I want to do and be. These things are not inherently bad, but they occupy so much of my headspace that I have to wonder if they're getting in the way of Christ. I'm aware that they cannot and will not satisfy me, not eternally, but it would just be so *nice* to have them. Yet I don't find myself desiring Him in the same way—certainly not as much as I entertain these lofty but frivolous aspirations.

I realize that my eyes are not fixed on the treasures of heaven. Given the choice between meditating on God's word—in which there is infinite wisdom and truth—and doomscrolling, it's all too easy for me to do the latter. When I picture my future, I get swept up in imagining all the ways in which I can experience the joys this world has to offer, rather than all the ways in which I might live sacrificially and for the glory of Christ. While those two things aren't necessarily mutually exclusive, the patterns I default to signal a deeper issue: I cling too tightly onto my own visions of comfort, enjoyment, and fulfillment, and I find it hard to be content with my life. But maybe the point isn't to be content with my life, to just stay where I am and how I am.

I want to delight in Christ all the more, to enjoy Him fully, not just His blessings. I want to constantly rejoice in the fact that He dwells in me, and I in Him.* His riches are boundless and unfathomable, yet He has freely made them available to all who believe, and all who ask.¹ I know I can't turn my eyes toward heavenly things on my own, however much I try to, so I'm learning to ask Him to transform my restlessness into a desire for Him. Despite my tendency to chase after my own notions of happiness, He is gracious to remind me every time that it is not enough. After all, I was made for *Him*.²



*Paul, in writing about the mystery of the gospel: "To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things" - Ephesians 3:8-9

¹"This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him." - Ephesians 3:11-12

²As the Apostle Paul wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." - Galatians 2:20a

Dearest Time...

WORDS CHARIS LEE

Doomed from the start, the clock ticks against my will. Time is fleeting in my vain attempt to fall asleep.

10 pm. 12am. A slight conception of slumber, murmurs of sleep edging me closer into—
I'm startled awake. 3 am.

My head feels itchy. Didn't I just shower before bed? It's the crawling sensation of alertness when the world is dead asleep.

5 am.

Light shyly creeps from the window to the wall, its blush of soft glow tiptoeing in the darkness. The palette of this hour is a hazy blueish-gray, a bit grainy.

That sudden strike—I have to wake up in a couple of hours for a morning class.

Sheer silence bleeds into the night; the absence of chirping birds, humming cars, and clicks of heels against the concrete sidewalk.

My closest friend calls this odd hour “naked time.” It is this peculiar in-between that beckons our most vulnerable memories, deepest insecurities, and reflections on our life’s regrets. Eerie stillness seems to provoke the volume of our innermost thoughts. My every rumination swells with greater noise and intensity—but without fail, the emerging morning greets me with grace, and I’m reminded to cherish my fleeting time on earth. To put it simply, my mind’s clamor submits to peace. Perhaps the trick is to walk hand in hand with Time; a friendship that salves painful memories and inspires us to move forward. Tick, tick, tick, one step after another.

Just before the sun rises, the world comes to a standstill, debating its position between night and day before yielding succession into the morning.

The world's in-between; the border between darkness and light.

I look out the window. As if trying to inhale its tranquility, I breathe in... and slowly out. *Whew.*

8 am. The world begins to stir.

Charis Lee is a third-year graduating this semester and contemplating what it means to find balance; what it means to enter into darkness in order to be the light.

finding You in transit

WORDS PHOEBE CHEN

Father
As I flew home today
Thousands of feet above the horizon
I encountered you in the sky
And here you confronted me
About truths and realities
I was not yet ready to face
The world had become my treasure
All amounting to a grand total
Of naught
But you held my hand
And led me
Slowly back into your arms
Back to the first love of my soul
No riches compare to Your great love
Even amidst question's unanswered and prayers confused
I know one thing is for certain
The eternal glory found in You
Pays dividends my soul cannot presently comprehend
So let me rest in the blessed assurance
That Your Love is already running to me
Before I landed, You found me here
And once again met me in the starlight
Thousands of feet above the horizon.

I AM BARRABAS

WORDS PHOEBE CHEN



God, make me a woman of Your own heart. Reveal in me the ways I've fallen short and give me the strength to change.

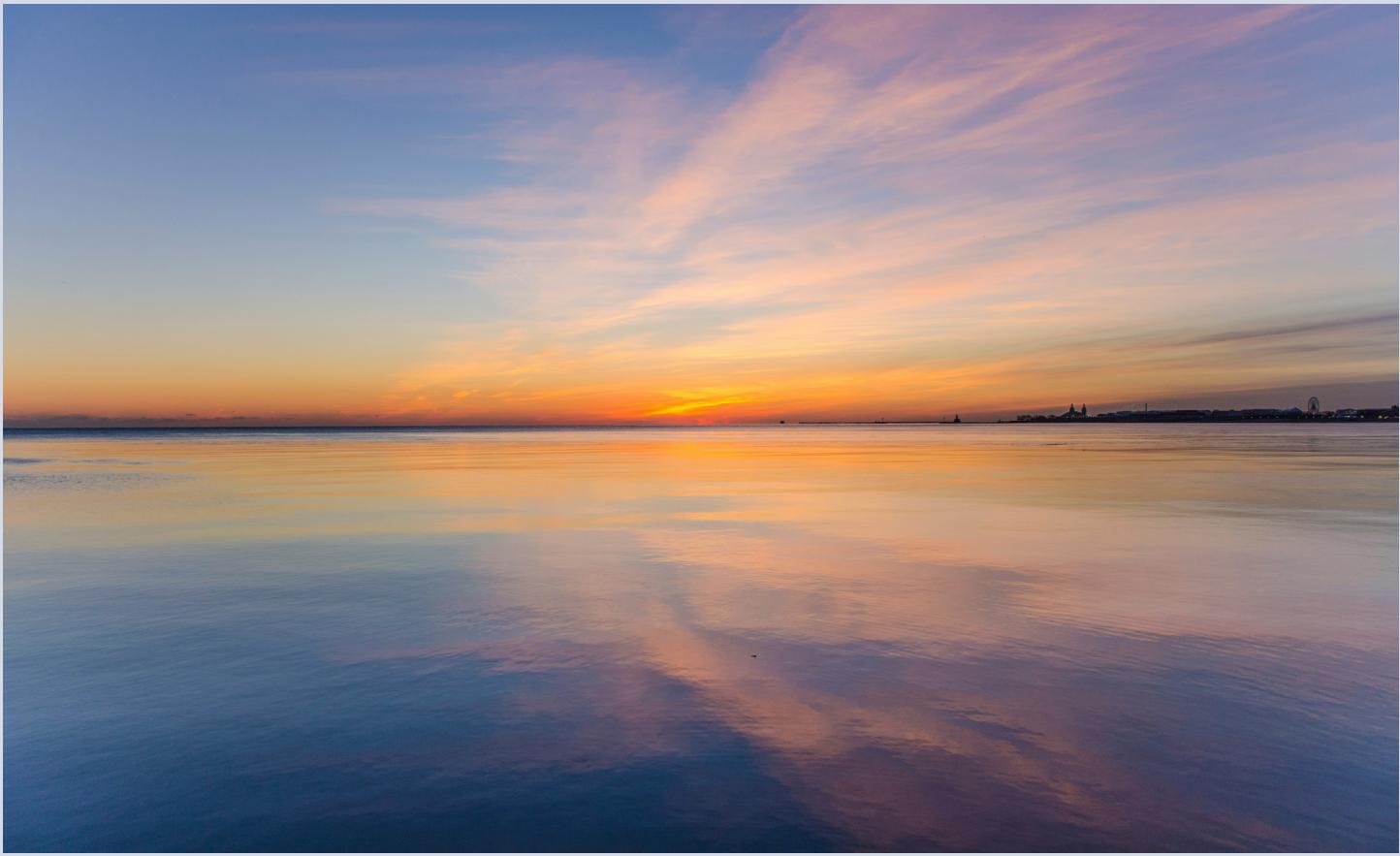
Sitting in this prayer and meditating upon His presence, I find peace in the uncertainty of my current stage of life. College has been just that—uncertain, and with this constant low grade anxiety that washes over my every moment. I've had my fair share of mental health struggles, and that was only exacerbated by being alone in a new city at the age of eighteen. It felt strange when I first moved to Berkeley. As someone who had constantly craved independence, I thought I'd finally feel at home. But all I felt was alone.

My testimony is one that is difficult for me to put into words because it never truly finished. I find myself today still grasping the true glory of the good God who created me. I find myself, ten years after I first met Jesus, in full awe and wonder of who He is and what He has done. In the same way, I find myself today still stumbling upon the same spiritual rocks that I did as a mere preteen.

But His goodness is pure, isn't it? The all-forgiving, undeserved nature of good Grace. So I make it my life mission to embody and plead to become like He who saved me. This unending process of sanctification is still a lesson I struggle and strive to grasp with every fiber of my being. And like a faithful Father, he holds my hand, leading me back to the place of my true Treasure. Open arms. Onward. Back Home.



Phoebe is a third-year Business major who has a love for the world and the people in it, despite its flaws and brokenness. She enjoys volunteering, baking for her friends, and reading nonfiction.



A Soul On Fire

WORDS NICOLE FONG

In the fight to find ultimate joy in the Lord, to labor for His glory and not our own, may we fix our eyes on Christ and persevere to our eternal rest in Heaven.

Berkeley attracts a particular kind of student—ambitious and driven, often crumbling under self-inflicted pressure to capitalize on every opportunity for fear of falling behind. Yet this temperament comes with the tendency to experience burnout: a poisonous concoction of discouragement, lethargy, and lack of zeal. It is the state of giving and performing while running on empty and questioning if work really matters, ultimately leaving one overly exhausted and unfulfilled.

There are a myriad of ways one can attempt to mediate burnout: vacation days, using substances to numb the pain, or adopting a “work hard, play hard” mentality. However, sustainable change occurs by addressing the root of an issue.

Dear Christian, **burnout is characterized by a lack of joy in God. It is a consequence of loving created things over our Creator.** We swim in an environment that idolizes academic achievement and career success; it is easy to wear all-nighters like badges of honor and neglect to fuel our bodies with food as we labor for temporal treasures. However, we often forget that **we are embodied souls whose physical bodies are inseparable from our spiritual lives.¹** Fighting sin takes effort, effort is sustained by energy, and food and sleep are fuel our bodies need to thrive. Hence, routine exercise, nutritious meals, and regular sleeping schedules function as trusty safeguards against sinfully anxious thoughts and nihilistic grumbling. Hobbies can provide mental breaks from strenuous activities and are good gifts from the Lord given to us to enjoy.²

Anecdotally, the interconnectedness of our bodies and souls rings true. My patience runs thin as my stomach grumbles, and my tolerance for inefficiency dwindles when I become hangry. Sleep deprivation turns hills into

¹ Christopher Ash, *Zeal Without Burnout*, pg 35

² James 1:17

But dear Christian, our inheritance is not on earth, but rather in heaven, where moth and rust cannot destroy... In Heaven, our work will be unhindered by decay and fatigue. Our toil will be refreshing, productive, and un thwarted, without futility and frustration—how it was always meant to be.

mountains, and my fight for joy amidst unideal circumstances is much harder when I am tired. The prophet Elijah found the interplay of our bodies and souls to be true as well. While fleeing from Queen Jezebel who sought to kill him, he collapsed underneath a tree, discouraged and weary, and pleaded for God to take his life. However, a few nights of rest and a freshly baked cake were enough to sustain him for 40 days as he traveled nearly 250 miles to Mount Horeb.³ We, too, need food and sleep just as much as this beloved prophet.

By boasting about our accomplishments despite our habitual lack of sleep and starving our bodies from the nutrition we need to function, we ignore our limitations as creatures who come from dust⁴ and futilely labor after treasures that inevitably pass away. However, we are created beings who wholly depend on our Creator for life and breath and are made to find our ultimate satisfaction in Him.

Because we are embodied souls, burnout is not merely physical, and we should not ignore the spiritual undercurrent of this condition. When we delight in created things—academic accolades, prestigious internships, financially stable careers—over our Creator, our happiness rises and falls with our successes and failures. Existential crises arise, and we are tempted to wallow in despair when our efforts produce lackluster results.

But when our affections are fixed upon Christ, rejections and closed doors are God's grace to us. They remind us to treasure Him, our heavenly Father and Giver of all good things. Treasuring Christ replaces the temporary security and fulfillment found in our vocations with true purpose and everlasting joy.

With this framework, I can see my coursework as a way to marvel at our Creator's intentional design of every chemical reaction and signaling pathway. I can see my grad school acceptance as a God-given opportunity to

use the talents He has given me to uncover scientific mysteries embedded in unelucidated illnesses. I can truly enjoy a day seven sabbath, instead of “resting” while anxiously worrying about my unfinished work, for I know He is my Sustainer and Provider. Sabbath becomes a tangible way to repent of my self-reliance and humbly display my dependence on God.

Resting to merely perpetuate our selfish ambitions is a catalyst for burnout, for transient treasures can never fully satisfy our deepest longing for purpose and joy. But establishing rhythms that help us see and savor Christ reorients our hearts to joyfully rest in Him, allowing us to sustainably build the Lord's kingdom and not our own.⁵

Our treatment for burnout holistically addresses all facets of our lives: **nourish our bodies and souls with food, fellowship, and frequent reminders that our truest delight is found in our heavenly Father.**

The world will tempt us to push ourselves to the edge and sell our physical, mental, and spiritual health for perishable treasures. But dear Christian, our inheritance is not on earth, but rather in heaven, where moth and rust cannot destroy. In the fight to find ultimate joy in the Lord, to labor for His glory and not our own, may we fix our eyes on Christ and persevere to our eternal rest in Heaven.⁶ In Heaven, our work will be unhindered by decay and fatigue. Our toil will be refreshing, productive, and un thwarted, without futility and frustration—how it was always meant to be.⁷

⁵ Psalm 127:1-2

6 Hebrews 4:9-11

⁷ <https://www.epm.org/resources/2010/Feb/4/what-does-hible-say-about-heaven/>

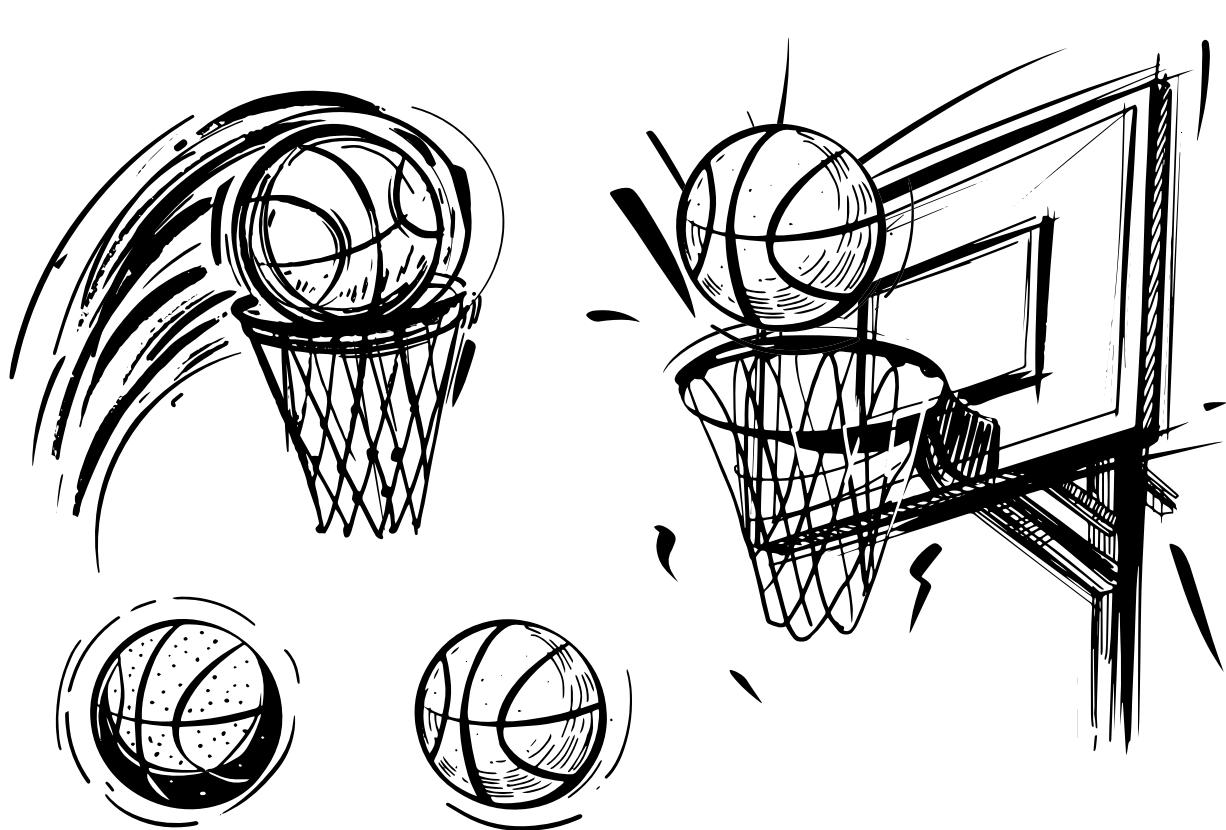
Nicole is a fourth-year bioengineering major who loves sweatpants, drinking matcha, and running, despite it being her archnemesis for years.

³ 1 Kings 19:1-8

⁴ Genesjs 2:7, Genesis 3:19, Psalm 90:3

ARE YOU VALUABLE?

WORDS JACOB OEI



Leading up to the winter season of my senior year of high school, I basically lived and breathed basketball. On top of daily team practices, I spent hours shooting on the hoop in my driveway, lifting weights, and dissecting film. Every day, I made sure that I ate an extra meal before bed so I could get big enough to avoid being pushed around in games. For months I trained like my life depended on it, and by the time season came around, I felt ready to make a statement: Jacob Oei is a baller. I was ready to show everyone my skills, how much better I had gotten, and how much I could contribute on the court. I was ready to show the world my worth.

And then came the first game. I played a whopping three minutes. And then the second game. Four minutes. And then the third game. Zero minutes.

The constant ups and downs of basketball played a big role in my self-perception growing up, and even outside of basketball, the lurking notion of my value being subject to change at any given moment has stuck with me. I have wrestled with measuring my value as a person my entire life, even though I was not always aware of it. There have been a lot of different things I have found my value in during different periods of my life.

Throughout grade school, my worth was in athletics. My coaches, teammates, and I would find me valuable because of what I could do on the court or the track. There would be days when I would run a personal record or play a good game, and I would feel that I was valuable. But what about the times that I cramp in the middle of a race, or go five games straight sitting on the bench, doing nothing more than retrieving water for my teammates? What is my worth then?

Then came college. I felt that I had found a higher place to put my value in: academics. No longer was I foolishly investing myself into a trivial sport, I was setting myself up for long term success by learning at one of the top universities in the country—UC Berkeley. So I began looking to school and intelligence as the thing that could fix my value. Scores on tests, competence in the lab, and ability to articulate my thoughts became benchmarks of not just my success as a student, but my value as a person. When I understand derivatives and molecular bonding, I am valuable. But what about the times that I bomb my midterms despite doing nothing but studying for weeks? What about the times when no matter how hard I try, I just can't wrap my head around how to perform seemingly elementary lab techniques? What is my value then?

Now there are a lot of other things that a person may find their worth in, and I don't mean for this list to be exhaustive. But any of these things that we may put our worth in fluctuates, and they cannot be reliably stable. Athletic ability disappears with just one twist of an ankle, grades rise and fall with every midterm, intelligence oscillates from hour to hour, our closest relationships can fall apart with one fight, discipline vanishes in a single wave of laziness. When your value is determined by your success or competence, you are nothing more than a glorified stock on Wall Street.

So this leaves us with the question: is there anything that makes us truly valuable?

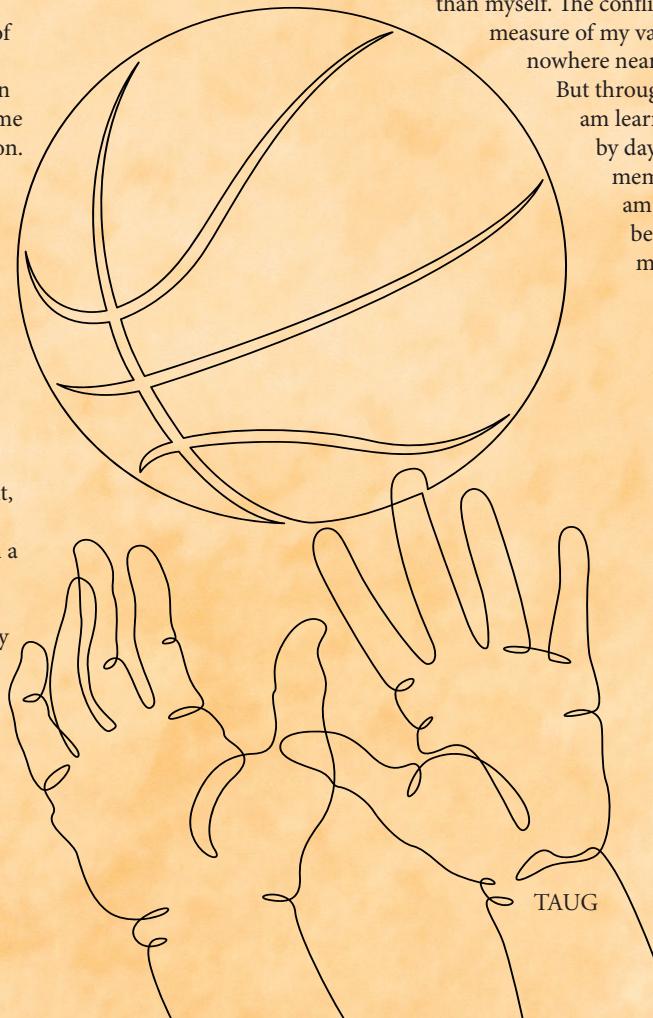
In the grand scheme of things, we are worthless. Our most significant accomplishments are like grains of sand on the shore. Our greatest contributions mean nothing before God, who set the earth into motion and put galaxies in the sky. To the God of the universe, me scoring twenty points in a basketball game or getting an A in Chemistry is an infinitely small thing. He has absolutely zero need for us. Our most hard-fought efforts are like dirty rags to him.

But I have amazing news for you. In spite of our abject worthlessness and infinite insignificance, God, who has supreme authority over everything, has declared that we are infinitely valuable. So much so that he sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, to this earth to die a painful death for our sake so that we can have eternal life with him. Even though he knew that there is nothing we could possibly bring to him, God chose to love us and make us his prize. Nothing—school, sports, coaches, professors, not even I get to decide that I'm worthless. God has declared that I am valuable, so I am.

This reality is amazing. It has freed me to see academics as an opportunity to study and soak up information because I want to learn, rather than doing it out of fear of incompetence. It has freed me to exercise and play sports for the joy of using my body and improving, rather than trying to prove to myself that I'm good enough. It has freed me to pour love into the people around me because I know my heavenly Father loves me, rather than trying to get validation and approval from people. How freeing it is to know the unconditional and irrevocable love of God!

But to be completely honest, I don't always feel the realness of God's love for me. I still often find myself putting my worth in my resume, my relationships, my body, and my intelligence. I still often slip into trying to make myself something valuable, rather than recognizing that my

worth has been fixed by someone endlessly greater than myself. The conflict of the measure of my value is nowhere near resolved. But through it all, I am learning day by day to remember that I am treasured beyond measure.



What Started as A Little Treasure Chest

WORDS BRIANNA NAVA



I have a declaration to make; the greatest purpose in my life is to know and love God and to help others know and love Him too, though I haven't always believed this. Growing up I had my own little treasure box of trinkets and things that were precious to me. It was a wooden box with a tiny metal lock, covered with adorning swirls and lines that had been engraved on dead organic wooden material. Within the box were small sparkling jewels I had picked up from the floor, animal stickers, patches shaped as butterflies, and a load of other pretty things that I had collected as my own treasure. I hid it under my bed in the furthest corner behind another box, locked and hidden away from anyone who could possibly take it from me. I was around eight years old when I did that, and it made me feel like I had ownership of something I put together through my efforts alone. Now at the age of 22, I see how I've made different little treasure chests in my heart at different points of my life, holding on to treasure that is fleeting, easily stolen by thieves, and where moth and rust can destroy it.

Even as a Christian, I believe that our naturally unfaithful hearts towards God are not immune to finding faux-treasures to fill the spaces we haven't yet entrusted to Jesus. There have been several periods in my life where I wrestled with God about what I wanted for my future, and if it didn't turn out my way I would take that as proof that God wouldn't give His best to me. Unashamedly, I've come to the feet of Jesus crying out like the same little girl with her treasure chest in the corner that someone, maybe even God Himself, had moved it. I've come asking

and begging the Lord to make a way for my way in this life with career choices, university options, friendships, family relationships, romantic relationships, preferences for life, and just about everything else on the list. Sometimes I'd accept His ways, and other times I'd selfishly demand for my way, inevitably leaving me with the consequences of those choices. There were even times I thought that if I didn't bring something to the Lord through prayer, I could do things my way because technically God didn't see or say anything about it. Oh, what a silly perspective to have of such a loving Lord that fully knows me and sees me before I even know and see myself. I found myself in this dance of falling deeply into the loving arms of Jesus, learning more about who He truly is as Lord. I would adoringly listen to Him speak, watch Him move, and give Him His rightful place as King until I didn't enjoy being subject to His rule. Then I would fearfully jump away mid-twirl as if I've burned myself in the fire, feeling like God was cruel to take and not just give what I desired. I felt like His plans included consistent and inevitable disappointment and from my limited perspective my way began to look a lot more appealing over God's way. This led to wanting His blessing and relationship with Him, but only in the parts and places I wanted to give Him territory over. I'd shut parts of my heart off from His spirit just for Him to whisper gently to me, "Beloved daughter, I want that part of your heart too, would you let me touch you and transform you? Beloved daughter, would you trust me with this thing you keep running away from me with? There's nothing I don't understand, there's nothing I do not see, there's nothing I do not

know. I loved you before it, through it, and after it." It has only been in the moments where I've said "Yes," to Him and given Him the rightful territory of my heart that I've found where the treasure lies.

The treasure of my life lies within the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that's where it should lie for every person who professes that Jesus is their Savior. The gospel revolutionarily changes who we are starting with how John sublimely states in 1 John 3:1, "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God and so we are." Now we have become new people, citizens of heaven, sons and daughters, ambassadors for Christ—all of this makes us look and value life differently. We become like trees planted by streams of living water that will never run out.¹ Now as His children in a relationship with our Father we begin to bear fruit that He has empowered and planted in our hearts. He is the most tender gardener of all time who stirs the soil of our hearts and prepares it for what is to come. He compassionately grows what He wants to flourish and mindfully prunes what He knows isn't bearing good fruit, and this all begins in secret. If I could manage to attempt to speak about the depth of peace that settles within the bones of my body when I say 'yes' to Jesus, I'd miss the mark every time, for there are no human words that can satisfactorily describe His peace that surpasses all understanding. There is no experience, accolade, relationship, or affirmation that could fabricate what it's like to be fully known and loved by Jesus. The God of the universe knows the things that keep you up at night and that you're afraid to say out loud, and yet delights in you as His precious child who was created to extend the same goodness He has so sweetly lavished upon you.

Once I understood what great news the gospel truly was, I realized that this newfound treasure was one to be eagerly shared to change others' lives. The little treasure chest that I used to hold and hide was not big enough to hold the true treasure I'd found. This chest now required a full refurbishing of wood, golden clasps, and ornate embellishments to be engraved—very similar to the renewal of our hearts and minds that we need to continuously experience in Christ.² Though it wasn't just the size of the chest that needed adjustments, it was the entire value and usage of the treasure in the box that needed transformation too. From trivial trinkets to everlasting riches. What a sweet truth we get to hold as His children that we can trust Him when we're without money for our student loans, without a plan for our careers in the last semester, without perfect physical or mental health, and without the things we thought we'd have by now. We have a God who's taught us to treasure His truth. Meeting with Christ and doing things for the kingdom isn't about achieving an outward appearance. It's not about accomplishing deeds that may affirm the image of self-righteousness. It is about doing these things when no one but God is watching and for that to be enough. It is about having an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ that provides joy, hope, healing and transformation to our lives that would make us people that are more like Him. That in the blessing and the breaking of this life Jesus is worthy and He wants to use you and me to bring heaven to earth.

So here's my call to action to you, dear reader: would you trade the little treasure chest in your heart for the treasure of heaven that can only be found in Jesus? If I told you that this treasure requires secret moments with the Father that would fill you up beyond what you could imagine so that you can fill others too, would you say yes? If I told you it means listening to the stories of your classmates who have no hope for tomorrow, even when it gets in the way of your bCal scheduled

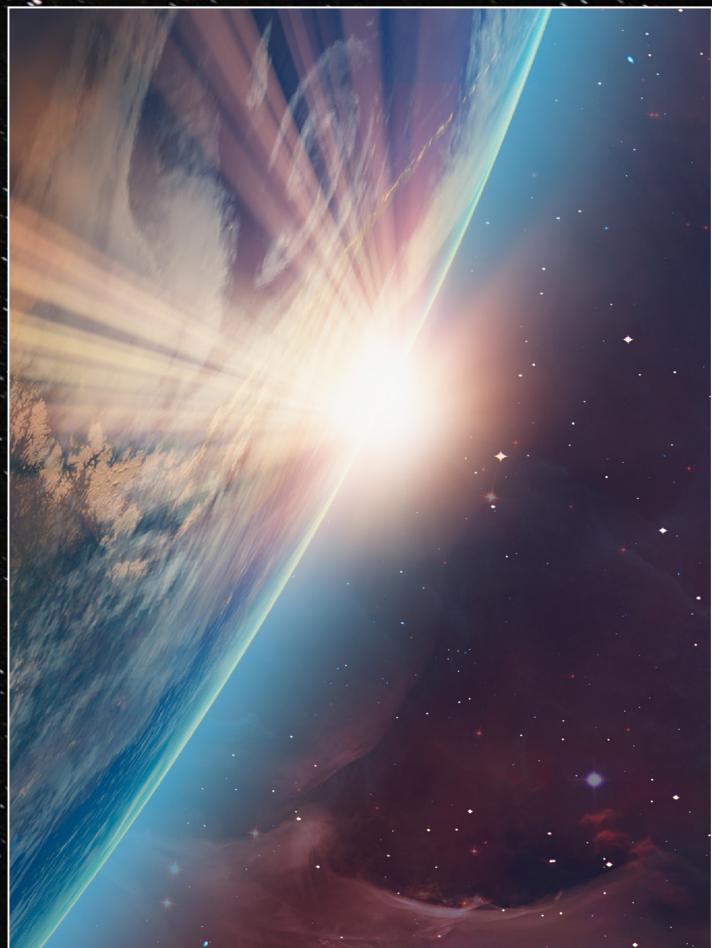
freetime, would you sit with them? If I told you it means giving away your time, money, effort, and love to bless someone else, would they be worth it? If I told you it means less of you and more of Him, would that be enough? Indeed it will mean to pray for our family, friends, campus, and strangers in faith that Jesus would use you and others to touch the hearts of Berkeley and beyond so that they might be reconciled with Christ. Yes, Jesus wants to use you, but He really wants to *know you*. This then requires spending time with the Lord, in secret, seeking Him first, saying yes to Him and watching Him do exceedingly and abundantly above what you could ask or think.³ Sometimes I find myself looking back at my little wooden treasure chest when I forget what richly dwells within me, but then I remember that I need to keep my eyes fixed on Jesus, who saw us as the greatest treasure and therefore endured the cross for you and me. So keep on in faith, saints.

Brianna Nava is a fourth-year graduating this semester who's basking in the illustrious light of being a fully-known and loved daughter of Christ; that this was designed for His glory and our good.

1. Psalm 1:3

2. Romans 12:2

3. Ephesians 3:20



Heart's Desire

WORDS HANNAH KUO

Notes:

- List of preparation:
 - *Book of Legends*
 - Provisions
 - Seven men
 - Weapons
 - Money
 - Notebook (for map and for journal)

- Bios:
 - John: treasure hunting expertise
 - Tomo: John's hunting partner
 - Anson: oceanographer
 - Ben: survival expert
 - Javi: weapons expert
 - Yu Wen: linguist
 - Hawk: biologist

Day 1:

The time has come. I've spent the last seven years researching and preparing for this *one* journey. The journey of a lifetime. My heart quickens at the thought of being the one to find the Heart's Desire.

Some have asked me what exactly it is I'm looking for. To be very honest, I'm not sure. There's a reason why Heart's Desire is the legend of legends, the rarest of the rare. Ancient documents have hinted at it, other explorers have lost their lives for it.... All that is known about its location is that it lies at the end of a rainbow, its guardian a clever little man. Wise men of the ages have philosophized and claimed it was metaphorical; I think otherwise. The journey is said to be futile, the possibility impossible. After all, how do you chase down a rainbow? You can never predict where the next one will appear.

But I'm hopeful. No, hope is for those with weak hearts. I am *confident*. This type of challenge is nothing new to me. Many big-name subjects of lore have my name stuck to them. *John Lee Finds the Fountain of Youth! John Lee Charts a Path to El Dorado! Camelot's Holy Grail: John Lee once again!*

So then, *John Lee*, what stands in your way? The Heart's Desire is just another treasure to be discovered, and if anyone can find it, it's me and the team I've assembled. No treasure is found alone.

I've studied the *Book of Legends* my entire life. Contrary to popular belief, I think this book just might hold an element of truth. Just as some lullabies and nursery rhymes are keys to deeper secrets, the *Book of Legends* could be the key to realizing my lifelong dream. Now that I've some experience under my belt, it's time to fulfill my destiny.

Day 7:

Well... we've reached something unexpected. Surprises along the way are part of the search, but no one could've guessed we'd run into *this* big of a surprise.

We found Atlantis.

It happened when we were crossing one of the obscure beaches lining the Atlantic Ocean, practically in our backyard. We didn't mean to find it, but the *Book of Legends* had mentioned "living water." What better place than the ocean? Yu Wen tripped over a log that triggered some complicated mechanism and the sand shifted to reveal some old stone tiles with foreign writing. Anson had studied Atlantis back in college and recognized the ancient runes scribbled on them, and the shards of sea glass. The city is still underwater, of course, but Anson has found enough evidence of Atlantis's existence and location to convince the press. Although he'd originally committed to finding the Heart's Desire, his childhood dream has come true, and that's enough for him.

We're down a man, but success is still possible with six. I should've known that the living water meant to be found is not in the Atlantic Ocean. Of course, my mind then flies straight to the Fountain of Youth, and I would've set course for it had it not been for my previous encounter with its water. Everlasting youth does not mean everlasting life. Prolonged, yes, but not everlasting. And what's the use of living longer if you are to meet your end anyway? No, "living water" is not referencing the Fountain either. This clue is a dead end.

Ben has restocked our provisions and we'll be flying towards the Tibetan forests soon. Magical things always happen on the other side of the world where rivers of belief and imagination flow stronger. See, other hunters have followed a step-by-step process to finding this rainbow. That, there, is their mistake. The rainbow is unpredictable, hence the path to finding it must also be.

Day 8:

Ben is an intimidating creature. He's much bigger, much taller than Javi, but refused to accept a friendly spar before security confiscated their weapons. When I asked why not, he said, "The world is out to get you. If you want to live, you keep a good head on your shoulders and pick your battles."

What a guy.

We'll be boarding our flight to Tibet in an hour, and Ben and Javi are making sure Hawk doesn't offer the nice monks some wine. I'm sure that'll establish a lasting friendship between the men.

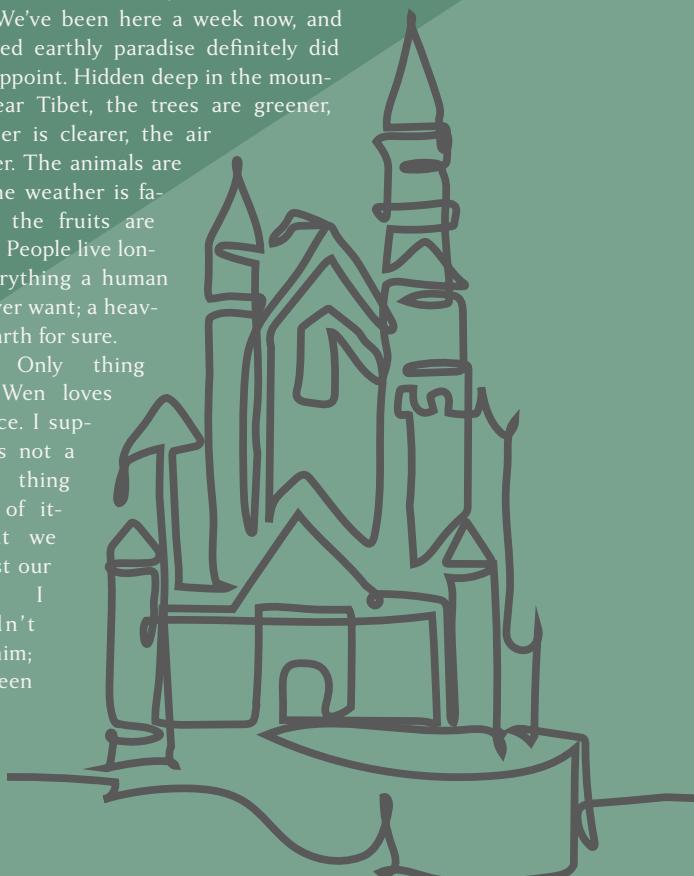
Day 32:

It's been a month of journeying, and I believe we're getting closer. We haven't found it yet, but more treasures have turned up, which must mean we're on the right path.

In other news, we found Shangri-La. We've been here a week now, and the famed earthly paradise definitely did not disappoint. Hidden deep in the mountains near Tibet, the trees are greener, the water is clearer, the air is crisper. The animals are tame, the weather is favorable, the fruits are sweeter. People live longer. Everything a human could ever want; a heaven on earth for sure.

Only thing is, Yu Wen loves this place. I suppose it's not a terrible thing in and of itself, but we have lost our linguist. I shouldn't blame him; he's been

Atlantis



absorbed in their beautiful language since the moment we've arrived, drawing charts in his journal and training his own tongue to speak the language. He claims it's foolish for a linguist to leave a treasure like this, but I know the deeper longing that ties him here. The people here are extremely kind and warm. There is no such thing as violence, and no government that enforces it. Kindness and hospitality function like another body part in this society. Most of all, family is a subject of joy, not pain. Community is as easily found as stones on the street and extended to foreigners like us who only understand the language of food and music in their land. This desire to find family was what pushed Yu Wen to enter his field in the first place.

The journey has suddenly become a lot more difficult without our translator. We'll be a lot slower without someone to interpret signs and speak to locals, but it doesn't matter. People always drop out of the journey in its early stages; this comes as no surprise to me.

I must have misunderstood the *Book of Legends*. There is an abundance of illustrations in it about the beauty of nature, about the heavens, the skies, the flowers, the winds...² The water here must be from the same source as the Fountain as well. I thought Shangri-La was it. There aren't many places I would admit to being heaven on

earth. But something is missing for sure. I can't put a finger on it. Is it the too-perfection of everything? Is it the fact that this is a hidden pocket in the world, its beauty only reserved for the select few? I've talked to the people (at least I tried to), and they don't seem to have any sort of desire to go into the outside world. I don't think being sheltered is a bad thing, but something about this place just... for some reason, it falls short of what I expected for Heart's Desire.

So I press on. I am incredibly grateful for Tomo, Ben, Javi, and Hawk, for their faith in something I'm promising them that I barely understand myself. I know a couple of them might leave in the coming months, but we'll find the Heart's Desire in time.

Day 35:

Anson is famous. Someone in Lhasa, Tibet recognized us as we were boarding a plane to Europe and showed us the latest news. OCEANOGRAPHER FINDS ATLANTIS.

I hope he enjoys the recognition.

Day 67:

I'm at a loss for words. I'm torn. On one hand, I am deeply convinced I'm in the right direction. Never mind my crazily scribbled notes on the pages of this journal. I've pored over every legend in this book, down to the

placement of the commas and apostrophes and I cannot see how I can be interpreting this incorrectly. On the other hand, I don't think we've gotten past square one. Everyone relies on me and the knowledge I have because *I'm* the one they're following on this perilous journey. Yet so far, it's been one dead end after another.

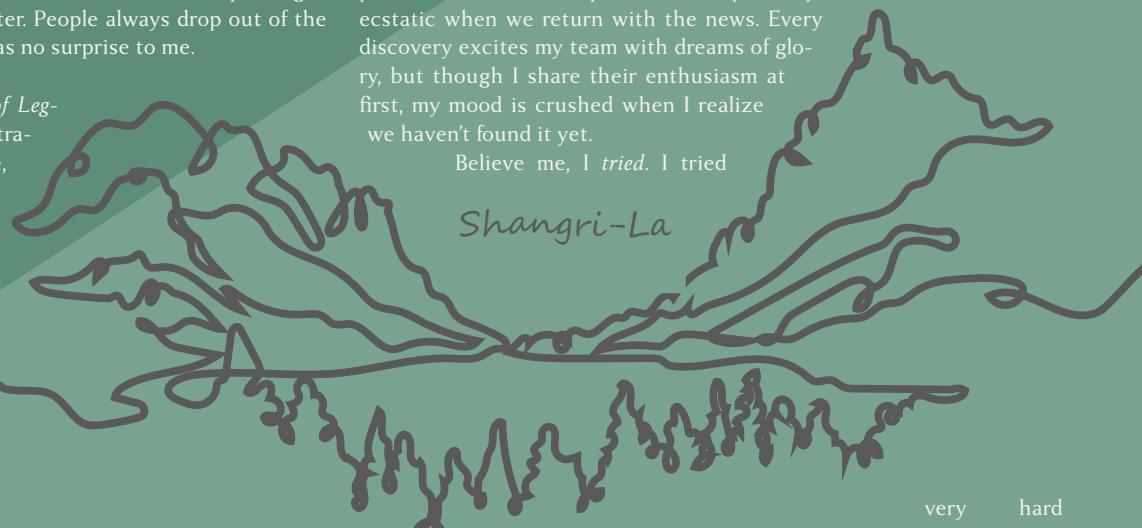
But I must admit, of all the glorious wrong turns, this is the most glorious of them yet. The *Book of Legends* had mentioned having faith that could move mountains,³ as well as help that would come from the mountains.⁴ The forest and oceans were a bust, and I was optimistic that I was narrowing down all the possible places to search.

For what it's worth, we found Mount Olympus.

Like with Shangri-La, I should not be disappointed. The Greeks in particular will probably be ecstatic when we return with the news. Every discovery excites my team with dreams of glory, but though I share their enthusiasm at first, my mood is crushed when I realize we haven't found it yet.

Believe me, I *tried*. I tried

Shangri-La



very hard
to believe that

Mount Olympus was the
destination—we're among gods after

all—if not for the *Book of Legends* naming a greater being as King above all gods. Zeus is the obvious answer, but I just came from a dinner with him and he's so... *human*. Mighty? Yes. Supernatural? Of course. But *godly*? Hmm... Is being immortal the only qualification to being a god?⁵ Doesn't that come with some responsibility as well?

I can discuss my lack of faith in these gods another time. All that's important is that this is another false lead. A treasure found, for sure, but not the ultimate treasure.

Another update: Hawk has decided to stay. I half-expected this. He can't pass up the offer to hang out with the gods, and they've taken a liking to his collection of bird feathers. He amuses them. Hawk had mentioned to me on this trip that along with the interest in nature, he became a biologist to make life-changing discoveries, like plants or animals that hold the secret to better health. It's an admirable mission, but Hawk... doesn't exactly have a reputation of making the best choices. On this trip alone, Javi and Ben have had to hold him back from the pleasure of wine, the appeal of women, and the glory of war. I most definitely would not have chosen such a troublesome youth to join this mission if he hadn't been the best in his field. Hawk is young; he wants to explore the world. I suspect a life where mistakes make no impact on your mortality (or perhaps one where you're even immortalized for them) is especially appealing to a man such as Hawk.

Our team shrinks yet again, but I refuse to be discouraged. Hope is for the weak, and I, John Lee, am anything but.

Day 73:

I had a conversation with Javi today. He asked me what I was looking for. "You're the face of all the discoveries of the century," he'd said. "Not to mention that from this journey alone, you'll have everything you could ever want when you go home—fame, money, glory... you could



easily retire
early with
a special
someone
and comfortably
watch your future kids grow
old."

"But that's not what I'm looking for," I replied. We'd been trekking through the deserts outside of Greece, and I remember tripping over the edge of a sand dune here. "I don't need everything."

"Then what do you need?"

I wasn't sure how to answer. "There is always more," I told him simply. I kept marching on, leaving the interpretation up to him, but Javi's words dragged some buried doubts into the open.

What if this doesn't exist? What if I can't find it?

What am I looking for?

I think back to my life at home — a life of luxury, comfort, publicity, safety, and a name that will remain for generations. I really did have everything I needed for beyond my lifetime.

But perhaps having everything means I have nothing at all.

Day 131:

I've finally found some paper to write. It's been a couple months, and I believe Tomo and I will remain here for a little while longer.

I lost my journals shortly after leaving Greece and only managed to save the few pages attached above. I'll recap the missing time here.

The last couple months were the most challenging yet. We flew to the Americas shortly after leaving Greece. Since then, we've been ambushed by bandits, had a rather close call with an indigenous tribe somewhere in Brazil (Ben accidentally wandered into their territory and gathered some fruit. Javi sharpened his swords on their sacred banana tree... at least, to the best of my knowledge, that's what happened), and fell down a ravine, where we lost most of our remaining things, including my journals. We were even pickpocketed in a nearby marketplace. Pickpocketed, of all things!

Strangely, the first thing I made sure to keep safe was the *Book of Legends*. Am I admitting that I'm beginning to hope its contents spoke of something true? Absolutely not!

Javi fell ill for a short while after sneaking a handful of some berries, which set us back a good three weeks. I could see the morale of the team weakening. When tension is high and the only remaining members of the team (aside from your hunting buddy) are a survival expert and a trained warrior, sleep is also out the window.

Fast forward to a couple weeks ago. Since we were stuck in the jungle and feeling worn out, I brought us once more to El Dorado, the only place on Earth with streets of gold.⁶ I know that this place doesn't contain anything worth investigating again, but what's currently more important is being able to rest, rejuvenate, and heal not just physically, but mentally as well. Ben nearly lost a leg to an alligator crossing that cursed ravine, and despair is slowly making its way into my team. This isn't even the worst of it.

Unfortunately, turns out Ben is a fan of shiny things and a life of comfort. He's gone. Gone as in "he serves the Gold King now," I should clarify.

And of course, her. We ran into a fearsome Amazon in the Amazon Rainforest, can you believe it? How in the world does a seven-foot ancient Greek woman warrior end up in the *Amazon* of all places? Locals had some pretty wild theories for how she ended up there, but in any case, Javi's in love.

The tough steel-and-blood with the little knives and the dramatic scowl *fell in love*. She followed us here and now that there's civilization, they're getting married. So he's gone too.

I don't even have the heart to congratulate. El Dorado is the worst.

At least Tomo feels the same way.



El Dorado

Day 142:

I am now alone.

Tomo and I got into a bit of a fight. The argument went something like this:

Tomo: You know you're crazy right?

Me: Crazy to believe this exists? Not really.

Tomo: No, crazy to believe the Heart's Desire is still out there and searching for it after running into Atlantis, Olympus... we've been to El Dorado twice now. That's two more times than anyone on the planet!

Me: El Dorado is junk.

(Here we stop walking because Tomo starts throwing an adult tantrum.)

Tomo: Junk? Are you really calling the Land of Gold *junk*?

Me: Jeez, what's the matter? You were there for the first expedition. The wonder of it hasn't worn off yet?

Tomo: No, actually. But it seems like it's gotten into your head that the world lies at your feet.

Me: Don't be ridiculous.

(Now he gets up in my face.)

Tomo: I don't like this, John. This Heart's Desire... it's changed you. This obsession has changed you.

Me: You know I get like this on our hunts.

Tomo (shaking his head): No. You've been unhappy for sure, but never this hungry. All those treasures we've run into? Have you even

thought about the possibility that those are all Heart's Desires? El Dorado was Ben's Heart's Desire. Aella was Javi's. Atlantis was Anson's.

Me: Who in the world is Aella?

Tomo: *The Amazonian!* Heavens, John, did you never learn her name?

(I fumble for a quick response but can't think of one, so I begin slashing through some undergrowth instead.)

Tomo: Whatever you're searching for doesn't exist, John! Even if it did, it's probably one of those relics that corrupt the heart and soul. Look at what the journey itself is doing to you!

Me: Oh, so *you're* the master of the legends now?

(I begin striking at the plants harder than I need to.)

Tomo: No. Just someone who knows when to leave a hunt.

I don't understand why Tomo is so childish. I admit, my temper got the better of me, and I said some pretty nasty stuff, but Tomo of all people should know that legends go deeper than what is written. For years, people have thought the *Book of Legends* was just filled with stories and some fabled lessons, but Tomo and I knew there was more.

Until now.

I guess these months of seeing no fruit got the better of him. We stopped at a nearby city to restock and he booked the first flight home.

It's just me.

Day 150:

It hit me.

All of these treasures all have some sort of component of everlasting. Everlasting *life*. Why did I never realize it before?

These must all be emulations of life everlasting. Heart's Desire must be just that.

I'm getting closer.

Day 155:

I'm still thinking about the possibility of everlasting life.

I've never needed or wanted to live forever. This life is enough. Outliving the lights in your life and remaining in eternal suffering? This world isn't worth living forever for.

The *Book of Legends* can't be wrong. I couldn't have searched all these years, dreaming all these years, only to find that this treasure isn't even real. I hope there's more to what I don't know.

I'm getting weak. I will never tell Tomo this, but his logic is starting to get into my head. I thought hope was for those who didn't want to see

reason, who had no confidence in themselves. Am I daring to say I'm starting to become desperate?

John Lee doesn't get desperate.

John Lee doesn't get desperate.

John Lee doesn't get desperate.

I'm not done until I am done.

Day 171:

Alright, I'm done.

My journey has ended. I haven't found it, but I'm heading home.

At first it was because Tomo's words finally sank in. Maybe I really *was* just wasting my time. It's already a miracle I haven't died on this journey. There is still honor in confirming that a treasure doesn't exist.

But then, as I was packing my things, something tickled the edge of my mind and I flipped through the *Book of Legends* once again. And the answer was there. Not clearly written as it had been with its descriptions of living water and streets of gold. It was in the *picture*, the *story* of it all.

I'm not making any sense.

In all of my adventures, I've searched for buried treasures, hidden from the taint of the world to preserve its purity. I've spent this entire journey living in the words of these pages and not bothering to learn the name of the woman that softened my friend's heart.

As I reread my notes and the circled hints, it was clear.

Up.

Look up to the mountains.

A new city of gold.

Heavens and skies declaring the work of the King of gods.

The thing about treasures... they're left behind by someone. These wonders of the world *had* to have been left by some greater being. And who is more qualified than the King of gods? The One who holds the source of the living water and promises a new city of gold?

It couldn't be that simple, I'd thought to myself. So I decided to journey north to follow this clue. Eventually I arrived in the land of ice, and as I was lying down, nearly freezing to death and thinking of all the ways this hunt went wrong, I risked a glance up. It was a clear night and the stars were out. Nothing new; but then, I saw the most *beautiful* thing.

Colors began to paint the sky, as if a divine Artist chose a dark canvas to bring out the brightness of the stars. They danced and swayed, alive in the sky.

Aurora Borealis. The rainbow.

And a whisper in the wind: *I am with you.*

And so I began to weep. I'd believed in the stories and in the gifts, but had never acknowledged the Giver. There wasn't a little green man guarding this treasure. At the end of the rainbow was a simple gift: a message from the King of gods and a taste of Heart's Desire.

When I had stopped crying and my eyes cleared, I was not surrounded by glaciers and the wind wasn't eating away at my flesh. The air was cool, the grass in the field was green, and just in the distance, there was an icy fog. *Ireland.* I immediately set a course for home.

I have yet to know this God, but this journal shall serve as a testament and proof that there is another journey ahead of me—one that will probably be much more perilous, but if there's anything I've learned from treasure hunting, it's that every trial makes the end that much sweeter.

But first, I have a wedding to attend and a friend to make amends to.

Hannah is a third-year Computer Science and Linguistics major who likes the little joys of life.

[1] John 4:10, John 7:37-38, [2] Psalm 19:1, [3] Matthew 17:20, [4] Psalm 121:1-2, [5] Psalm 95:3-5, [6] Revelations 21:21

Fishing For Forever

WORDS ISAAC LIU

As with all good stories, this one starts off with a dead fish.

No, let me rephrase—I was dead, *playing* fish

Let me back up a bit.

Last fall, a new card game snuck into my church fellowship, and all it took was a weekend in the woods for it to completely ravage the group. The game, as you may have guessed, is called “Fish.”

It sounds like a fun variation of the innocent “Go Fish,” but don’t be fooled—this game is all about having perfect memory and reading others’ minds, both of which are skills I’ve yet to master. Just a couple short rounds and your brain will be all but fried filet.

A few Fridays ago, I was up past midnight watching an intense round my friends were playing. When it finally finished, one of them was totally drained, and he called me to sub in. Reluctantly, I took his seat and asked that we play a slower-paced, educational round so I could learn strategy. Everyone agreed, partly because it was getting pretty late and none of us had much brain left.

My team proceeded to get annihilated.

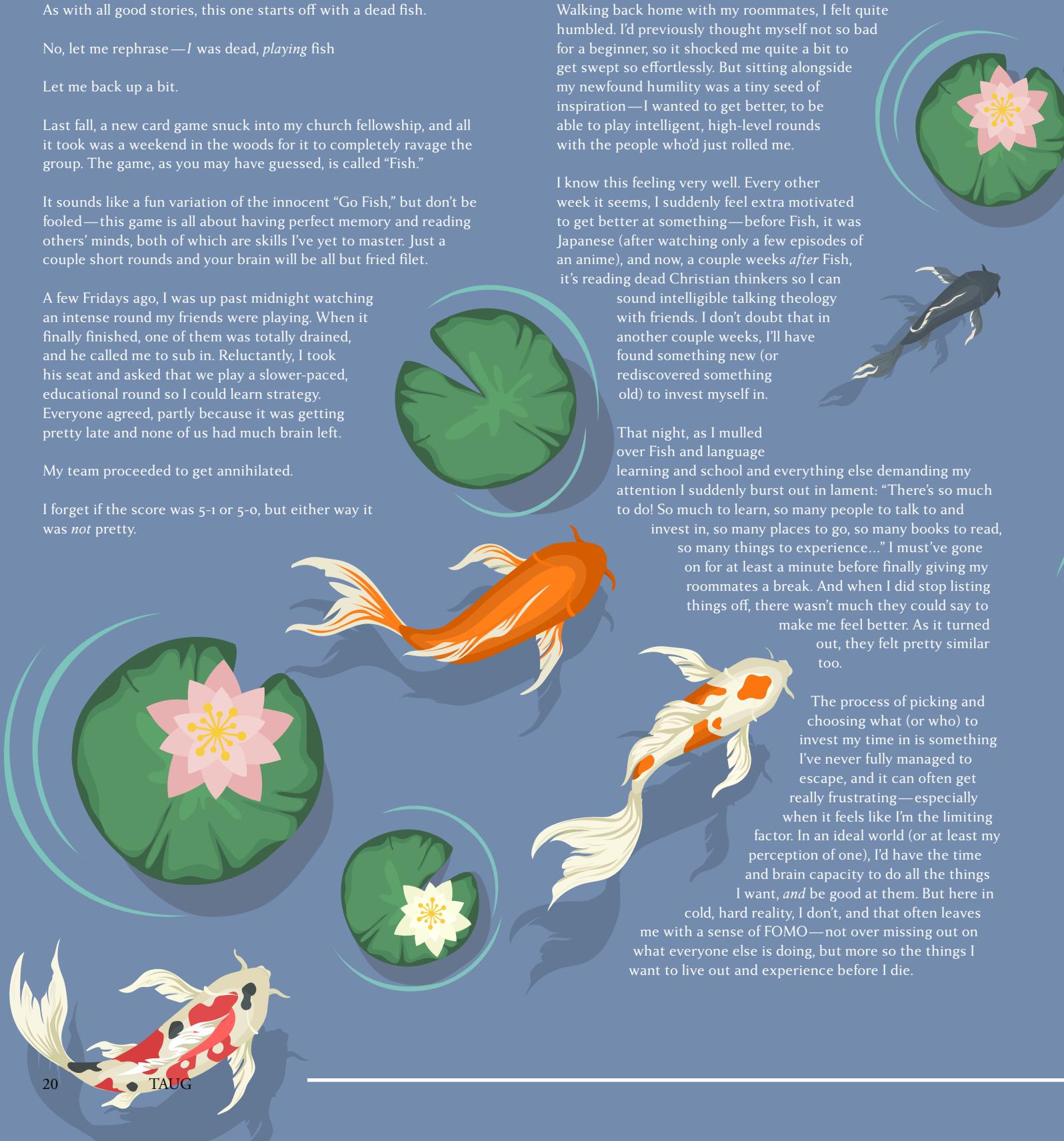
I forget if the score was 5-1 or 5-0, but either way it was *not* pretty.

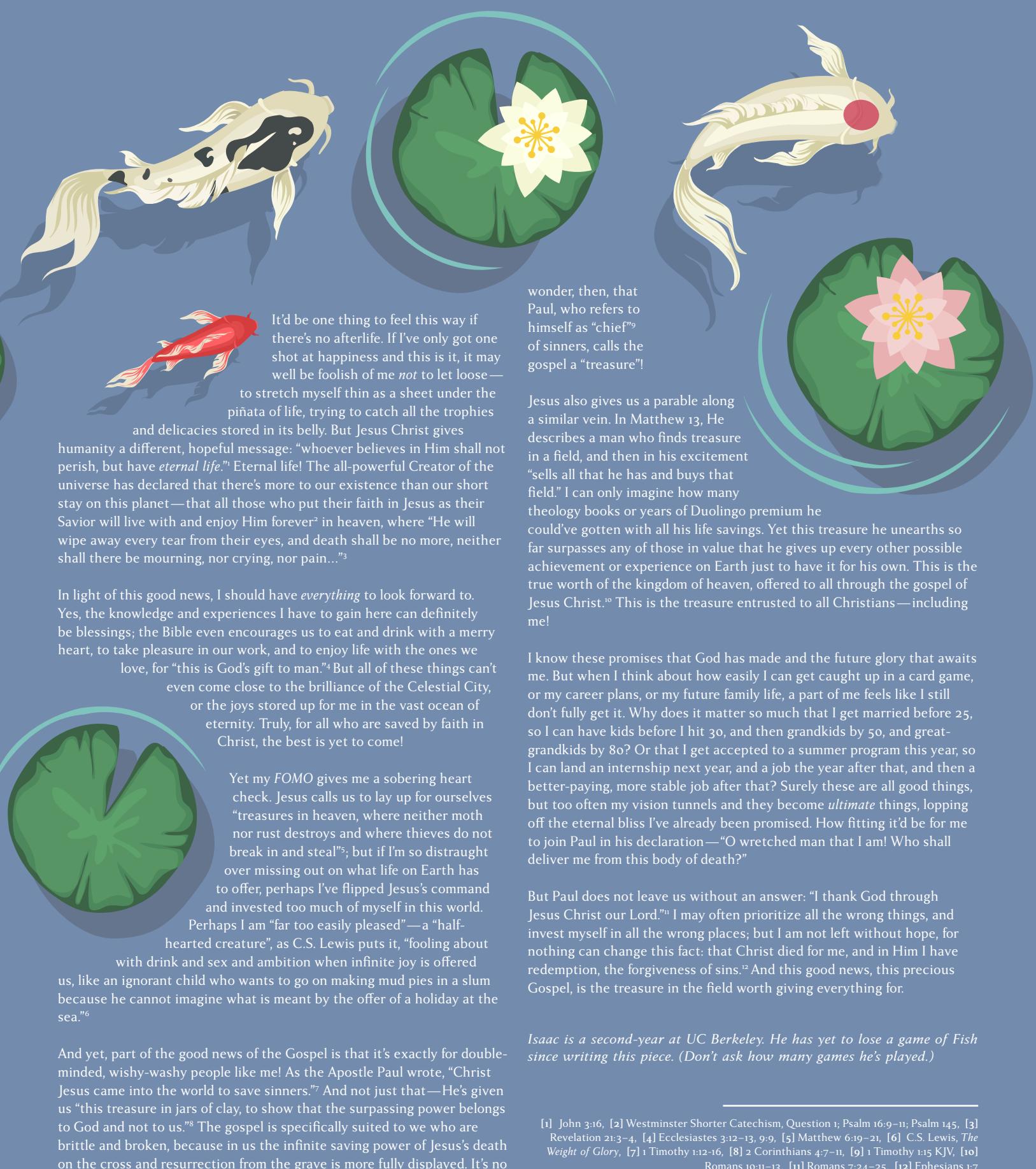
Walking back home with my roommates, I felt quite humbled. I’d previously thought myself not so bad for a beginner, so it shocked me quite a bit to get swept so effortlessly. But sitting alongside my newfound humility was a tiny seed of inspiration—I wanted to get better, to be able to play intelligent, high-level rounds with the people who’d just rolled me.

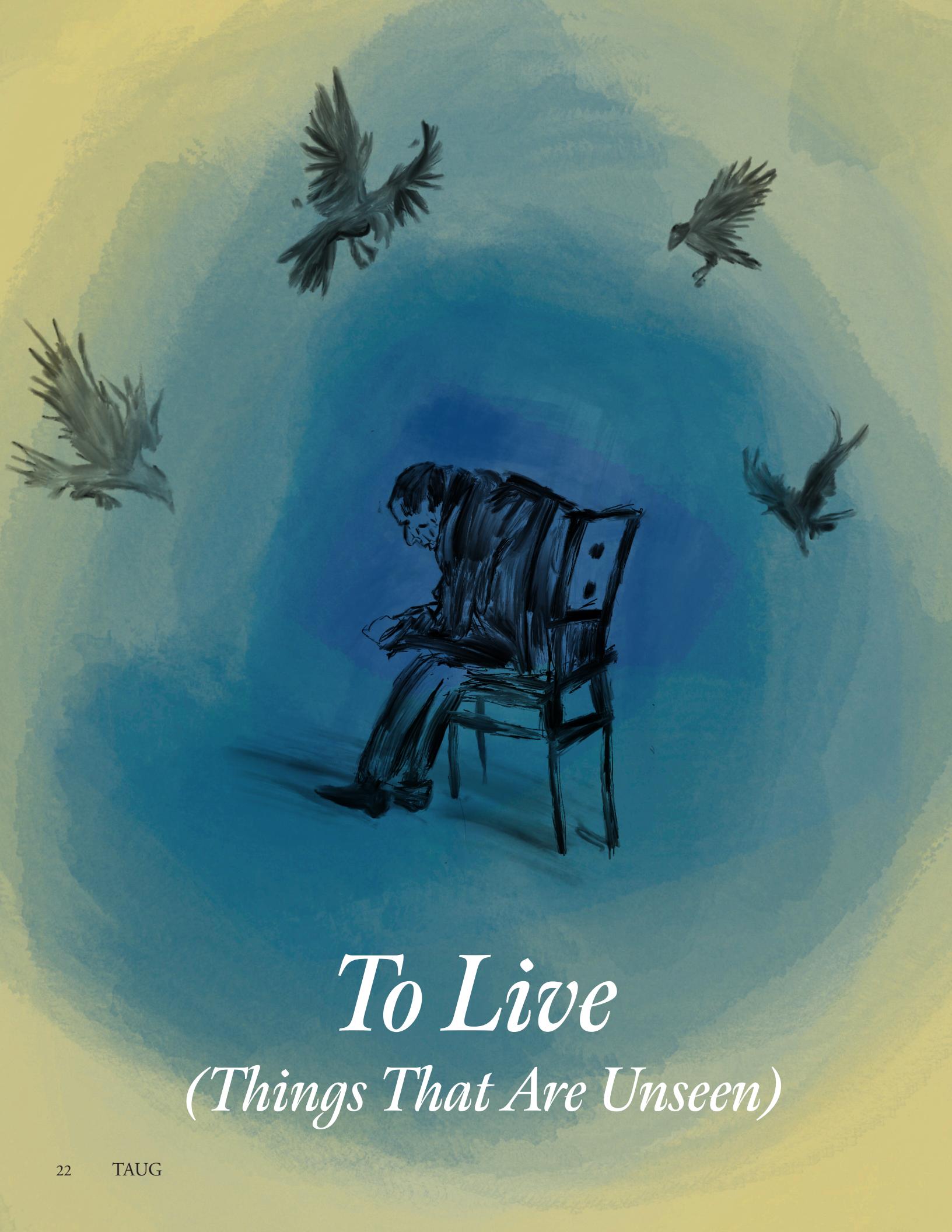
I know this feeling very well. Every other week it seems, I suddenly feel extra motivated to get better at something—before Fish, it was Japanese (after watching only a few episodes of an anime), and now, a couple weeks *after* Fish, it’s reading dead Christian thinkers so I can sound intelligible talking theology with friends. I don’t doubt that in another couple weeks, I’ll have found something new (or rediscovered something old) to invest myself in.

That night, as I mulled over Fish and language learning and school and everything else demanding my attention I suddenly burst out in lament: “There’s so much to do! So much to learn, so many people to talk to and invest in, so many places to go, so many books to read, so many things to experience...” I must’ve gone on for at least a minute before finally giving my roommates a break. And when I did stop listing things off, there wasn’t much they could say to make me feel better. As it turned out, they felt pretty similar too.

The process of picking and choosing what (or who) to invest my time in is something I’ve never fully managed to escape, and it can often get really frustrating—especially when it feels like I’m the limiting factor. In an ideal world (or at least my perception of one), I’d have the time and brain capacity to do all the things I want, *and* be good at them. But here in cold, hard reality, I don’t, and that often leaves me with a sense of FOMO—not over missing out on what everyone else is doing, but more so the things I want to live out and experience before I die.







To Live

(Things That Are Unseen)

He had been thrust into a pitch-black room while he awaited his execution, with nothing to entertain him except for his thoughts. His consciousness was overwhelmed. There were too many thoughts to take in, so his body turned toward instinct. He didn't care to control it anymore. Maybe this was anger. It came in a rush, intense and consuming. For once, something genuinely troubled him. His limbs were paralyzed and heat rushed through his skin. His face burned. It was unlike anything he had felt before.

As quick as it came, it dissipated. He forced it to. He could think clearly again. This was his fate. He had accepted it. He couldn't protest the decision. It was fair. Somewhere along the line he had failed the one rule that everyone abided by: Prove your worth. Life would be granted to those who contributed to society. It meant everyone had a fair chance. Everyone could live.

Thanks to breakthroughs in stem-cell technology, his body never slowed and his mind never dulled. Yet he had never stopped to think about it, nor appreciate it. He had never doubted his future, never imagined it would be taken away. For so long he had pressed onward, never doubting his sense of purpose. So when exactly did he lose it? When had he lost the qualifications to live?

He quickly realized he despised it all. How many lives had he lived? How many years had he toiled? He had long ceased counting; it seemed pointless after all. All that time, yet he had never slowed down to appreciate his life. One might expect that after so many years he'd have more wisdom, more memories, more of everything. But it wasn't enough—none of it brought him any peace; and regardless, society would go on. All he could do was look at himself. He was going to die and all he could do was wait.

Suddenly, the door to his cell opened and light flooded his eyes, pulling him out of his worries and back into the present. He was finally on his way to execution. It was the only way people died these days since life had become indefinite. Two guards strapped him to a gurney, binding his arms to the metal sides with leather straps. He felt the fabric, which was worn and cracked at the creases, scratching at the exposed skin of his forearms. The guards pushed the gurney along the lacquered linoleum through the maze of hallways. He felt every bump and every crack in the floor. He noticed the way the wheels locked up whenever there was a bit too much dirt that made the wheel seize. He gazed up at the fluorescent lights. They flickered across his eyes, darkness and then light on a loop, neverending. He blinked once, and then once more, both times slow and deliberate. He felt the weight of his eyelids pushing against his eyes and then forced them open after it felt long enough.

Resigned, the man took a deep, labored breath and looked at his attendants. The left one had sunken eyes and a crooked neck. The guard sloped forward ever so slightly and his gaze was always cast downwards, avoidant and distant. The man stared at him for a while, but there was no change. The guard was stern. He stuck to his orders. Even if inside the guard wanted to protest, he wouldn't.

The guard's bony hands tugged against the cold metal. He walked quickly—too fast for the other guard, so he ended up ahead by a foot. The guard was no longer pushing but dragging the gurney and the man along. His olive uniform hung loose at his sides and seemed to just hold onto his frame like a battered scarecrow. The guard moved with a sense of urgency, not because he had somewhere to go but because he didn't want to think about what he was going to do. He had forfeited choice. After all, choice yielded doubt, and he couldn't think of anything scarier than that.

The other guard was a fair bit younger, a freckled, twenty-some-year-old with tousled curls and sharp eyes. He must've been assigned here. No one would choose this job on their own. But he seemed different from the rest of the guards. His eyes darted around. At some point, they caught the stare of the man's eyes. He looked at him earnestly, without the usual look of pity or disgust. He did not turn away. His neck twitched slightly, and the muscles around his jaw tensed for a moment before relaxing again. And then surprisingly, he spoke.

"Do you have any regrets?" he brazenly whispered.
The man snorted weakly. "Who doesn't?" he said despondently.

"Was any of it worth it, then?" the boy asked, though he wasn't sure if he wanted to hear the answer.
At this the man turned his head away. He tried to compose himself, but when he spoke there was a slight tremble in his voice. "I wish it was."

The boy's eyes softened, and he tightened his lips before managing a small nod. They had finally reached the end. The man lay defeated as they reached the steel doorway. The boy held the door open and the older man pulled the gurney in. The older guard pulled the man's skin taut and briefly looked for a major vein before sticking the needle into the pit of his elbow. He was now connected to an intravenous drip that went through a cement hole in the wall. Ever so slowly, a clear liquid began to flow through the tube. Only a few seconds remained now.

He didn't deserve it, but he wanted to live again—to be given another chance. But death had come for him. He was guilty. He couldn't deny it. He had thought he was ready. But, at this moment, all he felt was regret.

Kyle is a fourth-year EECS major who enjoys swimming and hanging out with friends.

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a bright blue sky filled with large, white, fluffy cumulus clouds. One prominent, rounded cloud formation is centered in the upper right quadrant.

JESUS I MY CROSS HAVE TAKEN

Lyrics by Henry Lyte, 1825

1. Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee.
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my all shall be.
Perish every fond ambition,
All I've sought or hoped or known.
Yet how rich is my condition!
God and heaven are still my own.

2. Let the world despise and leave me,
They have left my Savior, too.
Human hearts and looks deceive me;
Thou art not, like them, untrue.
O while Thou dost smile upon me,
God of wisdom, love, and might,
Foes may hate and friends disown me,
Show Thy face and all is bright.

3. Man may trouble and distress me,
'Twill but drive me to Thy breast.
Life with trials hard may press me;
Heaven will bring me sweeter rest.
Oh, 'tis not in grief to harm me
While Thy love is left to me;
Oh, 'twere not in joy to charm me,
Were that joy unmixed with Thee.

4. Go, then, earthly fame and treasure,
Come disaster, scorn and pain
In Thy service, pain is pleasure,
With Thy favor, loss is gain
I have called Thee Abba Father,
I have stayed my heart on Thee
Storms may howl, and clouds may gather;
All must work for good to me.

5. Soul, then know thy full salvation
Rise o'er sin and fear and care
Joy to find in every station,
Something still to do or bear
Think what Spirit dwells within thee,
Think what Father's smiles are thine,
Think that Jesus died to win thee,
Child of heaven, canst thou repine.

6. Haste thee on from grace to glory,
Armed by faith, and winged by prayer.
Heaven's eternal days before thee,
God's own hand shall guide us there.
Soon shall close thy earthly mission,
Soon shall pass thy pilgrim days,
Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight, and prayer to praise.

Aspirations

WORDS ABIGAIL CHAN & ISAAC LIU

Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee.

*Jesus, I my cross have taken,
Yet these weights still cling to me.
Always short of Thy good calling,
Sin and shame are all I see.*

Destitute, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my all shall be.

*Destitute, despised, forsaken,
How my Savior suffered these.
Yet, my fickle heart betrays me,
Fearing man in thought and deed.*

Perish every fond ambition,
All I've sought or hoped or known.

*Perish every fond ambition,
comfort, future, and my pride.
These desires so oft entice me,
Lord my God, cast these aside.*

Yet how rich is my condition!
God and heaven are still my own.

*Yet how rich is my condition!
O, how seldom I recall.
Turn my eyes to Christ, my treasure.
Jesus, be my all in all.*

Abigail is a fourth-year bioengineering major. Her favorite cookie is chocolate chip without the chocolate chips.

Isaac is a second-year studying English and Music. He cooks peanut butter noodles every other week.

In Pursuit of Longing

WORDS DAVID HE

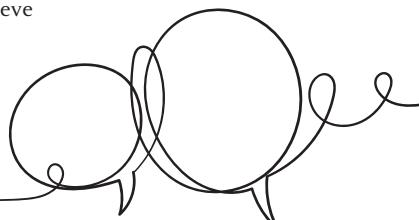
"It's not enough," I groan, turning over to get another five minutes of sleep.

"It's not enough," I grin, clicking on the "Next Episode" button as the sky begins to brighten.

Pant, gasping intensely as I sprint one more lap than I probably should. Grumble, opening my fifth practice exam for the day. Frown, watching the likes and comments on my posts taper off. Weep, realizing that all my efforts to be kinder and gentler had only left me more jaded and bitter than before. Whisper, hugging my knees to my chest, no longer knowing the point of anything I've done, or what the sentence even means.

It's not enough.

I think you know the words, and their sentiment, well. Perhaps we surround ourselves with comfort, asking it to shield and cushion us. Perhaps we endlessly pursue, chasing after the next big thing, or many smaller things, or both—entirely sure that though we don't have them yet, they'll fill us once we do, even if in part. Perhaps we finally achieve something we've sought with all our heart, and the high fades and leaves us with an uncanny sense of emptiness. Perhaps we fail to measure up, and our drive crumples as we ourselves collapse.



Humans happen to be incredibly proficient and habitual liars—towards ourselves, that is. On one hand, we know that these things aren't enough, have never been enough. Yet we quite intentionally forget their former betrayals, and instead assuage ourselves with the belief that they will surely be enough eventually, if we keep digging for long enough, hard enough. We dull our pains and pangs, saying that if nothing satisfies us fully anyway, why not be fully satisfied with what we can get? Or maybe we get by with the idea that the journey is its own reward—though that, of course, is just the same as desiring the journey, and therefore falls short in the same ways as desiring its end. We mask our deep-seated unease, insecurity, and hollowness by filling our lives with the constant strivings we tell ourselves are meaningful, because they promise us things that we tell ourselves are meaningful.

Isn't it strange that we so casually deceive ourselves? "Honesty is the best policy" should be embedded into our modern beings. We know, of course, that deception is problematic. But curiously, though I've met a fair number who ardently refuse to lie to others, no one I know has ever been fully honest with themselves about their desires, even if they know full well they aren't being genuine.

Our avoidant reactions take many forms. We turn away, we hide, we compromise. We construct a fortress of comforts and habits, meeting our cravings halfway. Perhaps we even convince ourselves that our half-way-fulfilled cravings are met.

Why, then? What grounds could be enough to both block out our own desires and break so thoroughly our aversion towards dishonesty? After all, wouldn't it make much more sense for humans to recognize and seek out what they long for, and to avoid what they believe to be fundamentally wrong?

Perhaps the reason for this avoidance is a serious, forceful fear—a fear that after we gaze long into the abyss of our aspirations and longings, when we finally see what our hearts actually want and desire, we will find that the hole runs deeper than we ever imagined.

That if we truly understood our hunger, what once appeased us will no longer.

That our hobbies, achievements, abilities, relationships, personalities, virtues, ideals, and even our very identities might fail to hold under the weight of our thirst.

Subconsciously, we already know this to be true. It's why we take so easily to concepts like the importance of being satisfied with what you have and the inherent danger of unchecked desire. It's why we throw ourselves bones, feeding our wants just enough to get them to stop barking while leaving little time to look inside the doghouse—though just a small peek, perchance, to make doubly sure the beast hasn't chewed off its leash. Comfort and busyness, then, become our earplugs against these longings. The human desire is limitless, so best to govern it carefully, lest we lose ourselves.

But then, we have to ask—why does such a ravenous, bottomless appetite exist in the first place? Of course, we hunger because we know of food; we thirst because we know of water. It's hard to imagine ourselves deeply yearning for something we've never possessed, tasted, or known. So what of our endless other desires?

What of our deep emotional longing to understand fully and be fully understood? What of our nostalgia for an emotion we've never even felt when the melody tugs at our heartstrings, when the sunlight glistens over the waves? What of our sorrowful, outraged cries to mend a broken world brimming with hatred, violence, and confusion? What of our countless attempts to reach higher, to create our own worth, to build ourselves up—knowing somehow, for reasons beyond us, that upwards is the right direction to go?

"Isn't it strange that we so casually deceive ourselves?"



Though internally we are absolutely certain of their importance, the world has thus far failed to produce any reason why any of these aspirations, no matter how "noble" or "inspiring", should mean anything to us—after all, who says that the good is good, that the right is right, that the beautiful is beautiful, that the broken is broken? Maybe some have already resigned themselves to this worldview, or to its more dilute variant: that humans are meant to, from nothingness, create their own meaning—despite, and even to offset, our enormous conviction that our existences have intrinsic purpose.

Having failed to answer these dilemmas, the world provides only distractions to ease our resultant dissatisfaction. Though, considering the enormity of said emptiness, it only makes sense that we would buy into the lie that these diversions are sufficient—that if one reaches farther, or for the right item, one will surely be made complete.

Our strivings in this world placate temporarily our ache, though it strangely never seems to remain sated. Find in any of these pursuits your identity and fulfillment, and the slightest damage to it will cripple you with monstrous doubt and confusion. We know full well that none of them linger, and yet we strangely desire a perfect form of them to last forever.

But what if we were, in fact, made by an immeasurable, immeasurably loving God, who gave his own Son to bring your soul into His perfect presence? One who understands every fragment of pain and suffering and joy we've ever felt better than even ourselves? One who created all of nature beautiful, perfect, and good, who fashioned the whole universe in transcendent faultlessness to reflect His majesty? One who embodies absolute love, righteousness, peace, and order, being the unimaginably perfect standard for perfection that, to our heartbreak, our broken world fails to live up to? The highest point in all existence, in whom we find and by whom we are given our very worth?

What if we were created and purposed to enjoy endless life under such a God?

Viewed in this light, every single one of our irrational longings suddenly makes absolute sense. If we were cut off from perfect, fulfilling, endless life with Him by mortal sin and brokenness, of course we would forever attempt to reclaim its image—even if none of us remember it in our minds, we hold it deep within our hearts. In a sense, then, we already know that God exists, simply because we deeply know what we do not have.

Only an infinite, everlasting God can fill a boundless, neverending void. But because we fail to grasp His person, we raise to godhood anything and everything we can grasp, placing each on a pedestal so that in our chasings and triumphs, we forget what we cannot possibly forget.

Of course, this isn't to say that our typical pursuits are always evil. However, if this account is true, even the greatest of them isn't even worth considering relative to His all-surpassing worth. If it's at all possible that God, as all-knowing, all-powerful creator, truly desires to meet all of our longings more perfectly than we could ever imagine, to make right every wrong in and around us, to restore us to His presence where we always knew we belonged, how can it possibly be worth it to say no?

"Follow what your heart desires," we affirm. Society and hell together applaud, pleased that the escape mechanism they've painstakingly fashioned for so long has domesticized yet another. We remember to strive exclusively for the things in front of us, for those spikes of adrenaline or serotonin, for measurables and deliverables, for the things just barely good and kind and meaningful enough to keep us from feeling too desperate for more—settling for less while pretending that we haven't.

"Follow what your heart desires." I concur! But perhaps, when we survey carefully our comforts, we will find our contentment to be a shallow farce, our relaxation anything but rest, our satisfaction nothing like the fulfillment that stems from His eternal faithfulness and goodness. Perhaps, when we honestly examine our hearts, we might find that what we'd truly wanted could never be found in anything apart from Him. Perhaps, when we inspect our priorities with open minds, we might begin to realize that what we'd placed at the top without hesitation was merely the easiest thing to occupy our minds and soothe our consciences with, a mere pretense to keep silent our souls that yearn for better, for home.



David is a third-year Chemistry and Computer Science major with a slowly recovering sleep schedule (fingers crossed).

A scenic landscape painting. In the foreground, a dirt road curves from the bottom right towards the center. The road is surrounded by lush green pine forests. In the background, a large, rugged mountain peak rises, its slopes covered in patches of snow and rock. The sky is clear and blue.

Finding Sanctuary

WORDS KARAH LEE



Sprinting down a steep incline, I zig zagged through the crag until I abruptly hit a flat stopping point. Whispers of birds chirping, downhill traction on the mountain dirt on my feet, soft melodious pattering of rain trickling from the trees. A stillness and peace that I rarely experience at Cal. I cherish the times I've hiked and weed wacked, both with friends and in solitude. Temporarily away from the cacophony of humans, the trails are my sanctuary. Time spent outdoors in greenspaces helps me quiet an inner monologue that's focused on myself and reminds me to rest in the Creator.

Hiking and trail running helped me through a rough patch freshman year. God answered my unrest and questions with a nudge to enter His creation and watch in wonderment. Nature jaunts have helped ease the anxious tendencies and sadness that I often hold.

The workload and demands of Cal can prevent us from finding rest. Engaging with the environment allows us to discern God's presence and turn our eyes to Him rather than our fleeting desires. Experiencing His glory through meditation or prayer outside allows us to find resiliency and peace in trying situations. Interacting with nature allows us to redirect our attention towards the wonders of creation.

Yet as a part of God's creation, we are called not only to enjoy the land, but to steward it as well.¹ Stewardship is a spiritual practice—an acknowledgment of our communion with creation. Since the beginning, God has tasked us with the opportunity to be good stewards. In Genesis, God gives Adam the responsibility to tend the garden and name the animals, emphasizing the importance of land management and environmental responsibility. For us, that could look like spending time outside or reducing waste as a conservation effort.

In a college environment that perpetuates the need for success and tireless work, it becomes vital to prioritize pockets of peace and prayer. Consequently, this benefits our spiritual well-being and also strengthens our connection to something that transcends ourselves. Let us strive to protect and be good stewards of creation, finding respite in the Creator amidst life's obligations.

Karah is a third-year studying Society & Environment and City Planning who enjoys journaling and exploring greenspaces.

¹ Psalms 65:9

TREASURE

- To An Unknown God





To An Unknown God



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<https://toanunknowngod.weebly.com/>

A collage featuring a variety of seashells in the foreground, including a large brown and white striped shell and a large orange and white spiral shell. The background shows a sandy beach meeting the ocean, with waves crashing and a bright, cloudy sky above.

Matthew 6:21

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”