



The Windhover

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LAUREN K. CARLSON

Apophatic Theology

Some say God is light
and what is lit
isn't what is
but is God's reflection.

And what if light is rocket,
bomb-jacket, fire, explosion

and what light brings is rubble,
dust, blood-soak;

not God but the image of God.

Some say God is light but I say
dark moving water.

For light's reflection
enters the eye one way—
pupil, retina, optic nerve—

but hearts beating in darkness
live many ways, all unseen.

So I say God is senseless

and whatever undiscovered forms
move within dark water

are not the image of God,
but God.

Some say God is light but I say
shadow, night sky, river, valley;

the pupil when the eyelids close,
a child's hiding place

and what it holds.

KAREN AN-HWEI LEE

On Souls Flowering at Two Hundred Degrees

Not an orange lozenge—pekoe is the youngest leaf,
a pre-floral balm for healing.

Steamed bowls of rose hips and shaved chicory
flesh-bark.

*If you desire to test our souls, drop us
in a bowl of hot water.*

Only twelve degrees short of boiling,
two hundred Fahrenheit.

Globe-amaranth lashed by kite string,
a grenade explodes,

a thousand-year-old *fangshan* tea-tree
asks why—sightless,

we blossom in trial by fire,
black chai fermented then baked in sun.

See if we flower.

MATTHEW LANDRUM

Imprecatory Psalm

It's too much, Lord, to pray for the destruction of my enemies. Sure, they have afflicted me, and in the friction and jar of everyday life, I have been sorely irritated. But to wish for them to be blotted from the sight of the sun, their seed and lineage wiped from the face of the earth, it's all too much. Rather let them suffer by inconvenience. May they get flat tires or lock their keys in running cars and wait in February cold for the AAA tow-truck for hours on end. May they stand in long lines at the Secretary of State in unforgiving shoes. For those who text at stoplights, holding up my commute, and those who take leftovers then replace the empty to-go box in the breakroom fridge, let them mix up conditioner and Nair, groping blindly in the shower. Let them also nick their jawline with rusty razors. May chilblains and sunburn afflict the hands of the unrepentant laundromat customers who leave their clothes in the washer all afternoon. Let them be catfished on Ok Cupid. May Russian cyber-criminals steal their Social Security numbers. Punish also those who nap on the subway, sprawled and splayed across three seats. May they father colicky babies who grow up to be sullen teenagers, refusing to come out of their room at dinner and listening to newfangled rock music at unacceptable volumes.

DAVID ATHEY

Those Who Can, Preach

Mrs. Gleason plopped down on her cushioned teacher's chair and slammed a copy of *Banned Books* on her immaculate desk. In two minutes, the tenth graders at Gator Lakes High would stagger through the door, their glazed eyes skimming the surface of their phones.

"I forgive you..." Mrs. Gleason said, her voice buried under the ringing bell. Adjusting her black-framed glasses, she glared at the quote-covered wall separating her class from the principal's office. Of the seven quotes nearest to her vision, six were chosen by her, and one was chosen by a student.

Assume a virtue, if you have it not.

—William Shakespeare

Let your performance do the thinking.

—Charlotte Brontë

The absolute good is not a matter of opinion but of nature.

—Cicero

Where so many hours have been spent in convincing myself that I am right, is there not some reason to fear I may be wrong?

—Jane Austen

I can believe anything, provided that it is quite incredible.

—Oscar Wilde

The quantity of civilization is measured by the quality of imagination.

—Victor Hugo

There's a gator in the bushes. Lord, he's calling my name.

—Molly Hatchet

On the other side of those quotes, Mrs. Gleason had spent her lunch break receiving verbal reprimands from the principal and of one his assistants in which they basically threatened her with termination if she didn't start teaching Flannery O'Connor "the way we expect her to be taught."

"They damned my pedagogy," she muttered. "How dare they?"

Mrs. Gleason turned to face the commotion at her door and offered a welcoming smile perfected by forty years of practice. Mesmerized by what was trending, the students jammed the entryway before realizing changes in shapes and dimensions. A boy in jeans and a *Black Sabbath* t-shirt squeezed through

his peers, entered the beige room, and said to his favorite teacher, “Hey, Glea.”

“Hello, Dude,” she answered, and gave the poor kid—truly named Dude by his weedy parents—a maternal nod. Mrs. Gleason allowed the students to call her Glea (only on Fridays) because Glea had been her mother’s pet name and when that glorious sound filled the air (even in a cacophonous, multi-odorous schoolroom) it reminded her of a peaceful, bread-scented home two thousand miles away and ages ago.

“A Good Man is Hard to Find,” Dude said, skinny-butting into his seat in the front row. “I read the whole story, Glea, all the way to the crazy end.”

Twenty more sophomores entered and suffered their desks. Murmuring and sighing, they stuffed phones into backpacks and pulled out barely-touched textbooks.

“We do not text... books,” Mrs. Gleason was famous for saying. “We devour them.”

Dude, considered the biggest loser at Gator High, grunted a laugh and rubbed his pimply face on his *Black Sabbath* shirt. “Good one, Glea.”

Grunts and groans resonated from the back row—Goth girls and jocks finding common ground—while a few studious girls in the middle section clawed open their books to the proper place and chomped their gum nervously, knowing this would be an excruciating class, perhaps the worst of all time, because the juniors had warned them about Flannery O’Connor.

“I forgive you...” Mrs. Gleason whispered just beneath human understanding. The principal and his assistant had asked her several times to remove “A Good Man is Hard to Find” from the curriculum, but she always refused their requests, staring angrily at their peacock faces as if her next move might be to start plucking their feathers. At lunch that day, they’d eventually backed down and agreed not to kill the story. “But you must teach O’Connor properly.”

Growl. Mrs. Gleason’s stomach gave them a proper response. How dare they mess with her lesson plans? Seriously, she’d been trained by nuns.

The administrators, however, including the assistant principal who was fresh out of grad school at Emory, wanted her to ignore the metaphysical aspects of the text—“All that weird stuff about Jesus causing an imbalance”—and concentrate on grammar.

“Common Core is here for keeps,” the principal added. “And this school will never be accused of bringing down the national average. Do you understand? From now on, stories exist for grammar.”

“I forgive you...” Mrs. Gleason said. Not waiting to be dismissed, she stood and stomped back to her room.

The final bell caused the last straggler to leap through the doorway as if tenth-grade lit were life itself. “I’m here, I made it,” Pedro Victorio said, crashing upon the remaining seat in the front row. “I’m not tardy, I’m totally here on time! Don’t mark me late, I’m totally here!”

The other students ignored him and made their own noises, whispering about weekend plans, thumbing out a final text, and more than anything, sighing. Huge sighs were always antecedent to “A Good Man is Hard to Find.”

Leaning back in her chair, Mrs. Gleason squinted through her thick glasses over the cliff-edge of the desk, blinking at the academic kingdom stretched out in unruly rows. She thought about an ancient phrase, “Let few of you be teachers,” and her old heart began to pound and she took a great suck of breath, stood, wobbled slightly, and began the lesson.

“The administrators of this institution expect you to achieve higher test scores, especially in grammar.”

Groans, sighs.

“And so we shall,” Mrs. Gleason said, flashing an angry smile. “We shall proceed according to their rules.”

“Terrectly,” Dude said. He hid his face and laughed while a Goth girl spoke with an angelic voice, “What the hell did he say?”

Glea raised a grey eyebrow. “Did you read the story, Elizabeth? If you had read the story, then you would understand the reference.”

Click. The two-way intercom signaled the presence of a listener (or two) on the other side of the wall of wisdom.

“After we excel in grammar,” Mrs. Gleason said, raising her voice for the surveilling suits, “then we shall move on to semiotics.”

“Semi-robots,” a jock said, reclining near the window. “I’m sick of robot stories. Why do guys like O’Connor keep pushing robots on us?”

A smart girl in the middle row whispered, “The trans-human sans human plot is a universal archetype.” She turned to the jock. “Even in primitive cultures.”

Dude guffawed into his *Black Sabbath* shirt with such force that his watery eyes began making stains on Ozzy Osbourne’s Jesus hair. His laughter sounded like weeping to the men who were listening in.

“What sort of class is this?” the principal hissed at his assistant, and Mr. Hennock peeped for all to hear, “Beats me. I haven’t read ‘A Good Man is Hard

to Find' since tenth grade. I don't remember the robots."

An eruption of harmonized laughter alerted the eavesdroppers that they'd been overheard. But rather than click off the intercom, the principal blew on the mic as if testing its volume, and began giving a speech on the merits of using Miss O'Connor's writing for the purpose of statistical achievements.

"Hey, Gators!" he shouted. "Hey, Gators! Hey, Gators! This is your pal the prince of pull—heh heh—and I'm pulling on your brains this afternoon; in fact, I'm dragging your little brains into deep water."

"For a death roll," Goth Girl said, rolling her eyes.

"Hush," Mrs. Gleason said, glaring at the intercom.

"As I was saying," the principal continued, "your cortex plus deep water equals good grammar. And that's good math, too."

Whump!

Pedro Victorio's phone rang with the sound of Messi heading a soccer ball for a goal, repeated three times. Whump! Whump! Whump! But what the principal thought he heard, verified later by an expert witness at the trial, was a large male alligator in the mood for mating: Grunt! Grunt! Grunt!

Click. The principal shut off the intercom.

"Hello, yo?" Pedro answered his phone, believing that Glea wouldn't get too angry about the infraction on a Friday—a day typically full of grace—and besides, it was his mother calling, a VIP in that classroom because she'd placed a full-page ad for *Victorio's Technology Solutions* in the school's literary arts journal, *The Big Gator*, which Mrs. Gleason kept barely alive.

"She's gonna kill you," Goth Girl said. Part of Elizabeth wanted to witness Pedro's death, but another part wanted to date him. "Hey, better hide the phone."

Click.

"Glea won't kill me" was the first thing the administrators heard during their second attempt at surveillance. "Glea is a lover," Pedro declared. "She's not a killer."

Click.

At the trial, the principal testified that he didn't really want to know what was happening in the classroom—in case it was something that could lead to a trial.

Glea took a threatening step toward the cocky boy. "Put that damn phone away, Pedro." And by *damn phone*, she meant a very expensive, experimental prototype that was supposedly a miracle-working solution for all technology

problems.

“No, ma’am,” the boy said.

“What did you say?”

“No, ma’am,” he repeated.

“I’m warning you, Pedro. Put that phone away.” Mrs. Gleason opened her mouth wide, exposing all of her teeth.

“What ya gonna do, bite me?” the boy said, knowing his response would garner enough laughs to make up for any punishment. And there would be years of additional laughter whenever he’d regale his friends with the hilarious story about how he drove his English teacher to commit a crime.

A few students giggled at the brashness while the whole class leaned over their desks to get a better view of Old Glea—who was one year from retirement—move slowly toward Pedro as if floating in rage across the floor. The boy thought it was really funny and decided to play for bigger laughs. He held out the glittering phone near the face of his teacher, almost touching her scarred and wrinkled chin. The voice of his wealthy mother wafted through the air, saying something about Georgia Tech and the importance of engineering, and with the swiftness of a mama gator, neck stretched and teeth gleaming, the teacher bit down on the phone, breaking a front tooth that flew and landed on Goth Girl’s desk.

Glea shook her head violently from side to side (“as if going for the kill,” a witness said at the trial) gnashing and fracturing the phone, covering it with spittle-blood until it loosened from her jaws and went sailing over Dude’s head into the middle row and smacked the eye of a pretty girl who shrieked as if she’d been shot.

Click.

Worried about his future promotion, young Mr. Hennock sprinted from the surveillance room to the hallway where he slid on the slippery floor, smashed into some lockers, and ignored the principal’s practice of “plausible deniability.” Making a strange peeping noise, Mr. Hennock burst into tenth-grade lit as if it were life itself.

And there was Old Glea, blood flowing from her mouth, leaning over Pedro who was blubbering something about dropping out of school. “Oh, you will be learning about the Misfit,” she lectured. “You will be learning about everything being off balance. You will be learning—”

Click. Click.

Mr. Hennock put her in handcuffs.

* * *

At the trial, representing herself, Mrs. Gleason felt discombobulated despite having served on jury duty many times and being familiar with the sights and sounds of the courthouse. Standing before Judge Jill Angley, known as “Hangin’ Angley,” the teacher thought: *Perhaps I should have suffered a lawyer. Perhaps I should have joined the damn union.*

Old Glea in a grey dress stood accused of having committed two separate felonies: destruction of personal property; and causing personal injury. Her lips, never known to tremble, were quivering as if kissing the face of death.

“The Misfit,” Mrs. Gleason said after the expert witnesses had testified and the evidence was stacked against her. “The Misfit is accused of being all sorts of things.”

“Objection,” the prosecuting attorney said.

Judge Jill sighed. “On what grounds?”

“On the grounds that nobody came here for tenth-grade lit.”

The judge, like many great keepers of the law, had been an English major in college. She raised a rhetorical eyebrow. “Isn’t tenth-grade lit a matter of life and death?”

Dumbfounded silence filled the court.

“Proceed, Mrs. Gleason.”

“Thank you, Your Honor. I shall proceed... terrectly.” The old teacher paused, wondering if she’d be considered contemptible in court, but Hangin’ Angley flashed a commendatory smile.

“Good one, Glea,” Dude whispered in the front row of the observation area. He buried his face in a *Molly Hatchet* t-shirt and tried to be quiet.

“Some scholars have claimed,” Mrs. Gleason said and suddenly stopped. She swayed in front of the jury as if she might fall. Her glasses had slid down the bridge of her nose and she glanced down to see that her Sunday dress was all frayed and wrinkled. “Some scholars claim, um, that...”

“You can do it,” Goth Girl murmured in the back row. “Preach it, Glea.”

Before the prosecutor could holler his objection, Mrs. Gleason continued with more confidence. “I believe the Misfit is the Grandmother’s conscience, locked up for many years, aloose to confront her for a final moment of grace—I’m guessing on a Friday—to show her that natural law is like a killer.”

“Objection!”

“On what grounds?”

“Your Honor, there are young people present in the courtroom. I ask that

the accused, I mean the defense, refrain from using images of violence.”

“The Violent Bear It Away,” an angelic voice said. Everyone turned to see Goth Girl in the far corner slouching in a chaos of dark clothing—with Glea’s broken tooth protruding from her nose. “Heaven suffereth,” the girl said.

“Eeww,” the jurors replied. The old gentlemen were not keen on piercings.

“Order in the court, order in the court!” Mr. Hennock yelled. “Look at what happens when we depart from approved lesson plans! I will not stand for this! I will not stand for it!”

Click. Click.

The bailiff cuffed the assistant principal and began dragging him to a place worse than the principal’s office.

“Hang him,” the judge almost said, but caught herself just in time.

“Proceed.”

“Thank you, Your Honor,” Old Glea stammered while beads of sweat dripped from her forehead. There were many more theories about The Misfit to which she wanted to testify, but she hadn’t the will or linguistic nubility to show how those theories would prove her innocence. A blush of humility covered Glea’s face like a veil and she turned toward the observers, bowing slightly at the Victorio family. Mrs. Victorio had a murderous look that suggested the literary journal was doomed, and Pedro was watching Messi defeat Man U on yet another new phone. Next to them was the pretty girl with a patch over her eye. Toward her, Glea bowed even lower, causing drops of moisture to splash on the tile floor, and the old woman nearly slipped and fell while straining to regain her stature.

“Guilty,” she rasped at the judge while her mind was shot through with all the theories: The Misfit is a Conscience, the Christ-Haunted South, The Devil, Lupus, A Warped Prophet, A Carpet Bagger, A Love Child, A Bad Dream, A Bad Trip, A Prophecy of the Internet, Nothing but a Literary Device, Oliver Cromwell, Human Development, Pop Music, The Civil War, Jesuits, Cain, Everyman.

“Guilty,” she repeated, but nobody heard because Dude had left his seat and approached the pretty girl who was yelling, “Git away, git away!” Dude reached out and pulled off her patch, causing Mrs. Victorio to yell as well, “*No es bueno, Molly Hatchet!*” Ignoring the noise, Dude pointed at what should have been a hideous wound in the girl’s head... but was actually the prettiest, bluest eye.

“Guilty,” Mrs. Gleason said for the third time, but the disorder in the courtroom, compounded by the gavel of Hangin’ Angley, overwhelmed her

confession.

“Innocent,” the jury declared, ten minutes later. Their deliberations had consisted of a few strong sentences uttered by an elderly gentleman who pointed out, as only a respectable gentleman can, that the devious girl had not been injured and the expensive, experimental phone did not have three-dimensional capabilities and therefore the case should have been tossed (or flung by gator teeth) and never gotten this far. “That good ol’ teacher deserves a raise, not a trial,” the gentleman said to his fellow jurors, all respectable citizens. “Listen, boys, I oncet met Miss O’Connor, and I daresay she’d not put up with pretty girls pretending to be one-eyed. There’d be some hell to pay for that.”

The gentlemen nodded. Case closed.

When the verdict was announced, Old Glea stood all sweaty and swaying and wallowing on what felt like a muddy embankment. Glasses barely straddling the bridge of her nose, she squinted and blinked at the blurry shapes setting her free. She could feel the smug beneficence of the gentlemen jurors, their faces glowing with satisfied smiles that seemed to be hissing the word innocent as if they’d finally found a good woman to admire who was not in desperate need of repentance and/or three bullets to the heart.

“I forgive you...”

LUCI SHAW

Attending

(Simone Weil called this “prayer”)

Begin with a singular gaze into any thing, any other. Witness the moment. Practice the discipline of detail. Focus with the steady regard of access.

—Pebble. Bare Twig. Raindrop hanging from twig—a lens for landscape.
—Blue hyacinth, an invisible fragrance drowning the air as I open the door.
—Thunder, so unambiguously itself, unfurling its sail over heaven, giver of rain and green lettuce.

The color orange, downtown vagrant, school bus, priest’s Sunday homily before Eucharist; let each be present, each leaving a track, a trace of insight, a crease in memory. Inhabit it all with charity, and find there a wholeness of intention.

JULIE L. MOORE

Hope

It's the Iris bulbs my mother excavates
when her house sells in early December,
salvaging the purple & yellow flags
she wants to see waving
on my lawn come June.

It's every uneven form,
rough & robust & ugly
as any root you can name—
rutabaga, radish, turnip, or beet—
ready to ripen in a pot of stew.

It's each small space I hollow,
swinging wide warm-autumn weeds,
lowering life like a pail into a well
where it stays till it feels
the tug, then rises.

CONTRIBUTOR NOTES

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MARYANNE HANNAN has published recent poetry in *Adanna*, *Gargoyle*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *Oxford Poetry* (UK), and *Rabbit* (AU). Several poems have been reprinted in anthologies, including *The Great American Wise Ass Poetry Anthology*, *St. Peter's B List: Contemporary Poems Inspired by the Saints*, and *The World Is Charged: Poetic Engagements with Gerard Manley Hopkins*. This is her sixth publication in *The Windhover*, and she is delighted with the journal's continuing evolution. A former Latin teacher, she lives in upstate New York. Her website is www.mhannan.com.

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CARRIE HEIMER believes poetry is a way to enact the scriptural imperative to love one another. Her best work always bears a silent dedication and strives to reflect another back to herself with compassionate honesty. “I see you,” she says again and again. “You are not alone.” Her poems appear in the current issues of *Dappled Things*, *The Comstock Review* and *Rock & Sling*, and on her website: poetryissalt.com. She teaches advanced high school English in Fairbanks, Alaska.

ED HIGGINS’ poems and short fiction have appeared in various print and online journals including *Monkeybicycle*, *Word Riot*, *Triggerfish Critical Review*, *Friends Journal*, *Commonweal*, *Christianity & Literature*, *The Christian Century*, *The Mennonite*, and *Radix*, among others. He and his wife live on a small farm in Yamhill, Oregon, raising a menagerie of animals including a whippet, a manx barn cat, and an alpaca named Machu-Picchu. Ed is Professor Emeritus in the English Dept. as well as Writer-in-Residence at George Fox University, south of Portland, Oregon. Ed is also Asst. Fiction Editor for *Brilliant Flash Fiction*, an Ireland-based online journal.

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TOM C. HUNLEY was once the world's forgotten boy but is now God's lonely man. He teaches in the MFA and BA creative writing programs at Western Kentucky University, directs Steel Toe Books, fronts a rock band called Night of the Living Dead Poets Society, and tries to keep up with his four active children. He co-edited *Creative Writing Pedagogies For The Twenty-First Century* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2015), a nominee for a CCCCs Outstanding Book Award. His recent poetry collections include *Plunk* (Wayne State College Press, 2015) and *The State That Springfield Is In* (Split Lip Press, 2016).

KATIE KARNEHM-ESH earned a BA in writing at Indiana Wesleyan University, then spent four years in Scotland and England pursuing her Masters and PhD in creative writing at the University of St. Andrews. She now teaches writing at Indiana Wesleyan University and blogs about yoga, faith, travel and health at 10pmblog.wordpress.com. Currently she is writing a memoir about the intersection of yoga and faith.

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Contemporary Texas, and in 2013 she was awarded a grant from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor to complete a limited edition hand-bound book entitled *I Build a Lighted House* based on her paintings. In 2015 Helen work was chosen for inclusion in *Her Texas: Story, Image Poem & Song* (a collection by Texas women artists, writers and thinkers), published by Wings.

MATTHEW LANDRUM holds an MFA from Bennington College. His poems and translations have recently appeared in *Agni*, *The Notre Dame Review*, *Image*, and *The Baltimore Review*. He lives in Detroit.

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MOLLY MURRAY is the author of *Today, She Is* (Wipf and Stock, 2014) and the editor of *The Atelier Project* (2015); she currently edits the faith/life blog *Paper Mill*. She achieved an MLitt in Creative Writing from the University of Glasgow and studied creative writing at an Oxford University Summer Course; her stories and poetry have appeared in anthologies and publications including *The Wayfarer* and *The Quarterday Review*. She loves northwest coastlines, and now lives in Portland, Oregon, with her husband Gordon and the cutest baby in the world, their son Jack. www.mollymurray.squarespace.com

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MIHO NONAKA is a native of Tokyo and a bilingual poet. Her poems and essays have appeared or forthcoming in various journals and anthologies, including *Kenyon Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Cimarron Review*, *American Letters & Commentary*, *Iowa Review*, *Satellite Convulsions: Poems from Tin House*, and *American Odysseys: Writings by New American* (Dalkey Archive Press). She teaches English and Creative Writing at Wheaton College.

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ANYA KRUGOVOY SILVER has published three books of poetry, most recently *From Nothing* (LSU Press, 2016). She has been published in many literary journals and anthologies, most recently in *Best American Poetry 2016*, *Poetry in Medicine*, and *The Turning Aside*. Her work has been featured on Garrison Keillor's *The Writer's Almanac*, in Ted Kooser's syndicated column *American Life in Poetry*, on *Poetry Daily* and as an Academy of American Poets *Poem A Day*. She teaches literature at Mercer University and lives in Macon, Georgia, with her husband and son.

VIC SIZEMORE's short fiction and nonfiction are published or forthcoming in *StoryQuarterly*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *storySouth*, *Connecticut Review*, *Blue Mesa Review*, *Sou'wester*, *PANK Magazine*, *Silk Road Review*, *Atticus Review*, *Reed Magazine*, *Superstition Review*, *Entropy*, *Eclectica*, *Ghost Town*, and elsewhere. Excerpts from his novel *Eternity Rowboat* are published or forthcoming in *Connecticut Review*, *Portland Review*, *Drunken Boat*, *Prick of the Spindle*, *Burrow Press Review*, *Pithead Chapel*, *Letters* and elsewhere. My fiction has won the New Millennium Writings Award, and been nominated for Best American Nonrequired Reading and two Pushcart Prizes.

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KENADY TOOMBS is a graduate student pursuing a degree in Humanities and Aesthetic Studies. She is interested in cultural art forms, especially storytelling and poetry traditions, and in purposeful critique of creative work. Kenady believes that story and song are the best teachers of truth, and she writes in hopes that her words will reflect truth to readers, even in small and quiet ways. This is her first publication.

PETER VENABLE has written both free and metric verse for over fifty years. He has been published in *Ancient Paths, Time of Singing, The Windhover, The Anglican Theological Journal, Apex Magazine, Kingdom Pen Magazine*, and others. But poetry is merely a hobby. He is a retired clinician, volunteers at a prison camp, seniors' center, and food pantry. He sings in his church choir and the annual December *Messiah*. He is graced with a happy marriage, daughter, son-in-law, Emma and Yeshua. Visit him at petervenable.com

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