

Legacy of my Heart



A Journey of Faith and Art

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Beyond the Gate, Watercolor

Beyond the Gate

Sitting in the coffee shop this morning, I am aware of the TV monitor bombarding my brain with non-stop negative news. Outside, the assault of noise from snorting engines and unwanted music accompanies me while I pump gas. As I drive, electronic billboards flash above the highway, distracting my attention. The constant barrage of clamor and visual stimuli overwhelms my spirit and makes me yearn to disconnect from the chaos.

Silence and beauty are hard to find, but I must search and plan for it! So I pack up my “Red Chariot” (the Hyundai) with life’s essentials—my camera, sketchbook, paints, journal, and Bible—and drive to an unfamiliar location to explore, discover, and let my “eye gate” fill with beauty and my ears fill simply with silence. I love to board a boat and cross over to a an island—any island! The actual physical distance from land isn’t important to me, nor is the size of the island. Somehow detaching from the mainland to a smaller patch of earth translates into my soul and spirit, and I reconnect to what is really important within and without.

My husband, Al, and I find ourselves on Monhegan Island off the rocky coast of Maine for our anniversary getaway. It has been a haunt for many famous artists over the years. With its quintessential lighthouse reaching upward, the majestic surf smashing against the solid rock coastline, its dirt paths (with no cars and only occasional bikes), and its picturesque landscape, inspiration abounds!

We book a room with a view of the lobster boats bobbing on the water and dropping their sea-weathered wooden cages. Soon we are leisurely sipping our morning coffee surrounded by lush gardens. My eye is immediately captured by the charm of a simple, quaint picket fence and gate. Beyond the gate, a meadow is drenched in sunshine while the foreground lies in deep shadows. In my mind’s eye, I see myself as a little girl about the age of seven, flinging the gate open, my long tresses flying in the wind as I happily run hand in hand across the fields with Jesus.

His invitation is to come out of hiddenness and step into the visibility of His light and truth and experience the freedom of who He created me to be. In this place of silence and beauty, away from the cacophany of interferences, He helps me get in touch with my heart. He knows my deepest thoughts, has planned my destiny, embraces me today, and will be my Companion and Friend through all my tomorrows.

I open the gate of my heart, stepping into my future, confident that He sees me with a tender heart of love. I choose to trust Him and enter the abundant life He has prepared for me.

But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it (Matthew 7:14).

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise (Psalms 100:4a).

Pass through, pass through the gates! (Isaiah 62:10a)



Nine O'clock In the Morning, Watercolor

Nine O'clock In the Morning

This still life combines some antique family mementos. The pocket watch was my paternal grandfather's. The Bible belonged to my father; the eyeglasses to a great aunt from around 1910. Notice the clip, which was put in her hair to keep the glasses in place. The cup and saucer was a gift from my sister. The sun is casting long shafts of light across the Bible, symbolizing the Holy Spirit; without Holy Spirit revelation, it's just another book of story and history. This painting conveys the importance of the Word in my life. I love the Word! When God touched my life, He opened my spirit to discover that the Bible was so much more than the Sunday school stories I knew. God was speaking personally to my life. I underlined verse after verse in that first paperback Living Bible. The Word for me is the plumb line of my life and an anchor to my soul. For over forty years I have aligned my heart with its truth in a time when truth has become relative. I discover in its pages the Father's heart of love for me. I have found direction, comfort, and encouragement for life and living as I have consistently retreated to the secret place with my Bible. I encourage you to open it up and ask the Holy Spirit to teach you its truths and principles for living and loving.

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth (John 17:17).

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth (John 16:13a).

These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people" (Acts 2:15-17).



Secret Place, Watercolor

Secret Place

I love gardens! There is something about a garden that refreshes and heals the soul with its profusion of color and extravagant beauty. God put the pinnacle of His creation—man—in a garden that contained every pleasurable provision to satisfy his needs.

Meandering through the gardens that tumble out the back door of a southern New Hampshire bed and breakfast, I come upon a bench secluded, tucked away. This simple seat invites me to retreat from the “maddening crowds,” the noise, and the distractions. It bids me to still my mind and settle my heart in His presence. It suggests an interlude of undisturbed intimacy with my Friend. In the Bible Jesus says, “I call you friends.” Again He says, “My sheep hear My voice.” We are the sheep of His pasture and He daily calls us to come, rest, and learn the discipline of listening to His voice. Will I choose today to respond to His gentle call? Will I decide to prioritize moments of quiet and solitude into my days and determine to know the God who loves me so passionately?

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty (Psalms 91:1 NKJV).

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends (John 15:15).

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me (John 10:27).

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).



His Church Eternal, Watercolor

His Church Eternal

Flying by at seventy miles per hour, I spot a church off the interstate highway in Ohio. I am instantly gripped by this isolated, yet solid and stately structure. There it stands, alone in a barren field with a barely discernible cemetery off to the right. Though it is buffeted some days by wind, rain, or snow, *this* day it is bathed in sunshine. We are traveling to Wisconsin, so I determine on our return to capture this alluring architecture on film.

I am living in the anguish and despair of losing our beautiful daughter at the age of twenty-three to cancer. My mind is awash with grief, doubt, and unbelief. After following hard after God for thirty-five years, now I am questioning everything I have ever believed. The questions rage through my mind: Where is God? Who is God? After all I've done for Him, how could He let this happen? What about taking care of us and watching over our family? I had believed with all my heart that she would be healed and she wasn't—at least not in the way I wanted. I demand answers so I can make some sense of it all.

Through the process of creating this painting, God reestablishes Himself in my heart as the *One who is sovereign* over all my days. He is *still* the One on whom my existence and future depends. In the midst of my emptiness, this beacon of hope appears with promise. This solid and stately architecture symbolizes for me *His church eternal*.

In the end, I simply conclude that *God is God, and I am not*. He never asks me to understand or to like His ways but to simply trust that He is always motivated by a heart of love. In the midst of life's trials and tragedies, He is here to walk through the valleys of life with me and heal my heart in the process.

Be still, and know that I am God (Psalms 46:10).