

When the Trees Refused to Hurry

I don't go to the woods to pray.
Some people do. They talk about hearing God in birdsong and sunsets and waterfalls. I usually just hear my own worries echo louder with fewer distractions.
But there is a tree I pass every day.
It's wedged between a parking lot and a chain-link fence, roots fighting their way through concrete that never wanted them. No scenic overlook. No mountain view. Just exhaust, gum on the sidewalk, and this stubborn bit of green that refuses to take the hint. For years I didn't really see it. I walked past, checking my phone, thinking about emails, groceries, bad news, good news—everything but the ground under my feet.
Then one winter, I hit a wall.
Not a dramatic one. No big tragedy. Just the slow grind of too much and too little all at once. Too much noise, too little hope. Too many things to fix, too little of me to go around.
I remember standing at the bus stop one gray morning, feeling completely wrung out. The wind was sharp, the sky low and heavy. I was angry at God in that tired, quiet way you don't admit out loud.
If You're here, You hide well, I thought.
That's when I noticed the tree.
No leaves. Just a dark, twisting skeleton of branches reaching up into a sky that didn't seem to care.
It shouldn't have moved me. But there it was: still rooted. Still reaching. Not demanding spring. Not pretending it wasn't winter. Just...waiting.
Not dead. Not blooming. Just there.
I looked at it and thought, You're doing what I can't.
You're not rushing the season.
Francis called the sun his brother and the moon his sister, but what got me that morning was the idea that this tired tree might be my teacher.
Because here's what it was preaching without saying a word:
You don't have to feel alive to stay planted.
You don't have to see the fruit to keep reaching.
You don't have to enjoy the season to survive it.
Since then, I've started paying attention to the small wild things I used to ignore.
The pigeon with a missing toe who still struts like the city belongs to him.
The weed that shows up in the same crack of sidewalk after every attempt to scrape it out.
The way the sky keeps changing moods without asking my permission—storm, light, storm again—like a reminder that nothing, not even this feeling, gets the final word.
I used to think seeing God in creation meant escaping somewhere beautiful.
Now I suspect it might mean letting a stubborn tree on a dirty street corner tell you the truth:
You are not the only thing that has ever felt worn out and leafless.
You are not the only thing asked to endure more winter than you wanted.
And you are not abandoned just because the landscape looks empty.
If Francis could praise God with "Brother Fire" and "Sister Water," maybe I can learn to praise Him with this cracked bit of sidewalk and this one tree that refuses to hurry through its hard season.
I don't have a tidy lesson to end with. I still get overwhelmed. I still complain. I still wish God would fix things faster.
But on the days when prayer feels impossible, I stand at that bus stop, look at that tree, and ask for just enough grace to do what it's doing:
Stay rooted.
Keep reaching.
Trust that spring is God's job, not mine.
That's what creation is teaching me now.
And for today, it's enough.

- RHYAN SCORPIO-RHYS

✧ CHRISTMAS 2025 ✧

This has been one rollercoaster year. But, if you are reading this, you are blessed. Regardless of what is going on in the world right now. We can still be grateful for making it through to another Christmas season. The reality is, not everyone has a family, not everyone has a home to go to, not everyone can afford to go and buy something that they wanted for themselves. But, just give God thanks anyway. Maybe next Christmas things and your situation would be better.

- RW

STREET VOICES

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Community Newsletter

Good Morning! This week we have poetry from Henry Yee, a short story from Dominic, writing from Jane, work from Rodney Wise, a short story from Rhyan Scorpio-Rhys, poetry from Joey Richardson, work from JF, a piece from RW, scripture reflection from Mercedes, and artwork from Honesty and Khari.



TRIVIA QUESTIONS!

Be the first person to correctly answer all three trivia questions and win a gift card.

What ancient civilization used chocolate as currency?

What everyday item was originally invented to help people stop chewing on their pencils?

What animal can sleep standing up and run shortly after giving birth?

Answers to last weeks trivia questions.

How long does it take the Earth to orbit the sun (marking one calendar year)?
Answer: About 365.25 days

What everyday food was once so valuable it was used as currency in Europe?
Answer: Pepper

Which country has more lakes than all other countries combined?
Answer: Canada

*If you declare Wirth your mouth,
"Jesus is Lord," and believe in your
heart that God raised him from
the dead, you will be saved.*

ROMANS 10:9



Drawing by Khari

FRANCISCAN 360 IS OPEN!

WHAT: Case Management, Computer Access, Mailing Address

WHERE: 144 W. 32nd Street

WHEN: Monday - Thursday, 8:30am - 4pm
Scheduled appointments only on Friday from 9am - 4pm

WHO: All are welcome!

If you have any content to share for our newsletter please see one of the Breadline staff. **We are in need of content such as a poem, lyrics, writing, thoughts, questions, image of your artwork or anything uplifting or informative.** Anyone who contributes content for our newsletter will receive a \$10 gift card.

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“The Detour”

The oxygen lottery beeped red again. Jax sighed, the sound rattling in his cheap synth-lung. Outside the Hab-unit window, the neon-drenched smog of Sector Zero choked the last rusted spire of old New York. Today was his eighteenth. Induction Day. The official end of childhood, the beginning of the endless gray servitude in the Chromium pits.

He stood by the intake vents, watching the armored Enforcers herd the new recruits below.

“Enjoying the view before the shackles go on?”

Jax jumped. A grizzled man stood in the shadows of his room, face hidden by a high-collared sleek-suit. His voice held the gravel of deep-earth mining.

“Just wondering if it ever gets better,” Jax whispered, clutching his Induction notice tightly enough to whiten his knuckles. The stranger laughed, a bitter, hollow sound that cracked the air. “It doesn’t. The pits take your lungs first, then your memories. You forget the sun ever existed.”

He stepped into the light. He was wrecked, deeply scarred, his eyes reflecting a lifetime of ash and regret. He shoved a device humming with unstable energy into Jax’s chest. It felt like pure kinetic potential.

“What is this?” Jax stammered, terrified.

“A detour,” the man said, his voice trembling. He pulled down his collar, revealing a jagged, star-shaped birthmark on his neck—the exact twin of Jax’s own. “Don’t get on that transport, kid. I did. It took me thirty years to build this vortex just to come back and stop myself.”

The temporal displacement field flared, dissolving the old man into light as the Enforcers banged on Jax’s door.

He looked at the device, then at the transport below. His childhood died right then, but hope, terrifying and violent, was born.

- DOMINIC

THERE'S A WAY THAT SEEMS RIGHT TO A MAN, BUT THE END IS THE WAY TO DEATH.

This verse is mentioned twice in the book of Proverbs in the old testament.(Proverbs 14:12, 16:25).I don't know, but maybe God is trying to show people that He means what He is saying, and He trying to stress a point that He is making. Today, man is full of himself. Arrogance, Cocky, self centered, prideful, conceited. They think that they are on the right path. Doing their own thing. Mathew 7:13-14 says “Enter through the narrow gate, for WIDE* is the gate and Broad is the way that leads to destruction”. Jesus Christ is the way. He is not just the way to heaven but, he is the way to Life.

- RODNEY WISE

Who is like you among the gods?
There is no one like you, Jesus
Who hold the earth like a grain of sand in the palm of your hand?
Mountain melt like ice under sun in your presence
Clouds are dust underneath your feet before you created anything
you were there from eternity past
There are no words to describe you other than holy!

- HENRY



Colored pencil drawing by Honesty

This life is so short, but so important to the growth of our souls and our salvation. Despite our time here on earth being incomparable to the time we will spend in eternity, regardless of where we end up, it's probably the most important amount of time of our soul's journey. This is the time that will define our eternities.

This is the time we have been given by God to prove ourselves worthy of entering His kingdom and living with Him once again. As far as we know, it's the only time we will be given this chance to prove ourselves. Our God is a merciful one and despite our many sins, He has given us the opportunity to be holy and live according to His word. We have this once-in-a-lifetime chance to right our wrongs, repent for our sins, and accept Christ into our hearts; accept Christ as our savior and the one who died for our sins, allowing us the possibility of entering the kingdom of heaven. Each of us is one of many spirits roaming this world; we are one of many of God's children, but to Him, each of us is important. He considers each of us daily; He guides each of us daily towards the path of salvation and eternal life. While this life is not easy, God is always there to ensure we push forward in the face of hardships and continue toward the path of righteousness despite the feeling of wanting to give up and succumb to the wrongdoings of the world. We must use this time that we have been graced with wisely. We have a limited amount of time to recognize the grace God has bestowed upon us and act accordingly- so let's not waste it!

- JF

Bird's Nest

One year ago, our hands met,
A promise the city won't forget.
We stand here, Black and bonded, bright,
Our love a strong, enduring light.
You call me your rock, steady and true,
But your soul is the sky, a clear, endless blue.
My Bird, my heart, with your wings unfurled,
You gave me my safe place in this wide world.
A candle, a cake, a shared gentle kiss,
One year of perfect, unquestioned bliss.

- JOEY RICHARDSON

Today's Bible verse is Romans 10:17.

Romans 10:17 *“Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.”*

Read your Bible and go to church. We can't follow God's word if we don't know God's word. So we have to read God's teachings and the Bible and also go to Church and Bible Study and listen to our pastors as well. Study God words well so that you can live his words everyday and know that Christ died for your sins and is the only way you can enter heaven.

- MERCEDES

The journey of life is long and irregular, but we keep persisting anyway. We continue to push through all of the obstacles that obstruct our path toward whatever end goal we seek to reach. We fight the adversaries, both natural and spiritual, that seek to limit our connection with God and halt our progress. Everyday is a battle, but we carry on. We all desire to reach the point of “nirvana”, so to speak; that point in life in which we finally feel as though we've “made it”. That point in which we've accomplished our life's goals, have the careers we've strived for for so long, have a happy and stable home and family life, and whatever other endeavors we yearned for and attained. Every morning we wake up with that end goal, whatever it may be, in mind. Every action we take, productive or not, takes us one step closer to the life we are to live. Will our lives ten years from now reflect our fantasies or will we have disappointed ourselves? It's important to be considerate in every movement made. Remember who you are and what you want out of life. Ask yourself this question frequently throughout the day: are the choices I'm making today conducive to the life I have pictured for myself? Be honest with yourself when answering; the greatest minds are able to self-reflect and internally criticize themselves for the purpose of personal growth and achieving their goals. Don't forget to also pray to God, the one who gives us all that we have and the one who is truly in control of our fates. With God at the forefront of all that you do coupled with your own willingness to carve your own path regardless of the barriers you're facing, you will surely find the success you seek.

- JANE