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LIVING SCHOOL ALUMNI
Q U A R T E R L Y

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ISSUE 3

A NOTE ON FORMATING

We set out to create a digital publication that felt like it was in print. We heard from many of you that the experience of sitting down with a cup of coffee and reading about your beloved Alumni community was preferred. So, we created this format to resist distraction and invite attention. If you're reading on a desktop or laptop, expand the "landscape" version to full screen and turn off your notifications; or if an iPad or tablet is handy, enjoy this most book-like of reading experiences in either the "landscape" or "portrait" versions. The Table of Contents is clickable, allowing easy navigation to every section of the quarterly. We've also included a link to return to the TOC on every page, so it's easy to find your way back. Hyperlinks are in red type and underlined; click these to open webpages in your browser. We hope you enjoy this new format. If you have any questions, please email us at support@cac.org and we will help as soon as we can. Peace, CAC Design Team

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Dear Living School Alumni,

Addiction is, among other things, the experience of never enough. The cycle of substance dependency tantalizes us with euphoria but leaves us often despairing, alone, and broke, with relationships and lives tattered. It's a miserable way to live, with desire itself turned against us. Contemplative psychologist and writer Gerald May puts it this way in his classic *Addiction and Grace*: “[Addictions] enslave us with chains of our own making and yet that, paradoxically, are virtually beyond our control.”

I've been humbled to hear from alumni whose lives have been altered by addiction—some of us are addicts in recovery ourselves; others of us have family members and friends who have been devastated by addiction. And even if addiction is not actively destroying our lives, that does not let the rest of us off the hook. All of us have addictive tendencies, from our coffee to our cherished nightly wine or the jolt of dopamine that I get when I check my smart phone. Addiction affects us all and might be, as Fr. Richard suggests in *Breathing Under Water* a “very helpful metaphor for what the biblical tradition calls sin.”

This Quarterly leads us into this complex theme through multiple avenues: you are invited throughout to encounter paintings, artist Kyle Steed's *Stations of Jonah*, as a way of personally engaging with your own “belly of the whale” experiences of suffering and addiction. James Finley guides us, as only he can, in a video reflection on mystical sobriety. I interview neuroscientist Judith (Judy) Grisel ('18) about her recent book *Never Enough* and her own recovery process. Kristi Walsh ('19) shares the direct recovery experience of four men she works with at the Santa Barbara Rescue Mission. Tim King ('18) opens our eyes about America's opioid crisis. Then there's Ali Kirkpatrick's ('16) new “Monk in Midlife” column, Debonee Morgan's ('15) film corner, and more.

Yours in addiction and grace,



—Mark Longhurst ('15)

Monk in Midlife

Ali Kirkpatrick ('16)

When Mark invited me to write this column, I threw out the title as a joke.

It stuck, but I don't want to mislead anyone.

I am in midlife, but I am not a monk.

I am a woman, and I'm definitely not celibate.

I do live in community, but only with my husband and anywhere between one and all three of our 17 to 22-year-old children, depending on their school and work schedules.

I am a Catholic, but probably an excommunicated one if the Vatican cared enough to investigate my beliefs or activities.

I made vows to God, but I've made them to my people too, so the liturgy of my hours follows the rhythm of family life, which is probably more monastic than most monks imagine. We have communal mealtimes, regular waking and sleeping hours, plenty of menial chores, ongoing education, enlivening intergenerational discussions, and a shared faith life. All of these elements were in place before I even took an interest in Centering Prayer and contemplation, but over the last fifteen years those practices have deepened and enriched our lives together. In the words of Paula D'Arcy, one of my favorite teachers, "This is the day that lies before me. These are the hours. This is my life." I would not change it for anything.

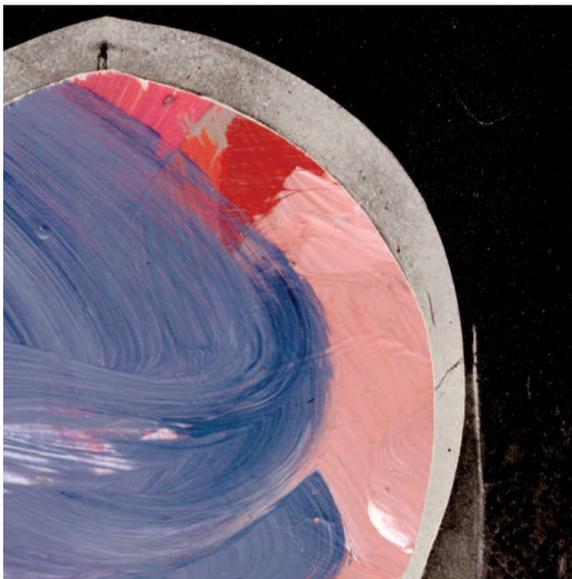
But in the midst of the many, the One is always there. One God, One Center, One Love. It is the first vow, the one I didn't even know I had made (I was so young when I made it), which makes the rest of my vows possible. The mutuality of that first intimacy, "I am Yours and You are mine," strengthens, lengthens,

and expands my commitment to Love, no matter what form it takes: saying “I do” to my husband at twenty-two and again after twenty-five years, with all the joy and heartbreak in between. Nursing one baby after another at my breast only to watch them become young adults who take my breath away with their courage and capacity to be themselves. Falling to my knees in grief for the hurt caused by my unconscious words and actions and making amends however possible. Always the One is here, often in silence, but also in my husband’s touch, my children’s eyes, my friend’s kind words, a stranger’s need.

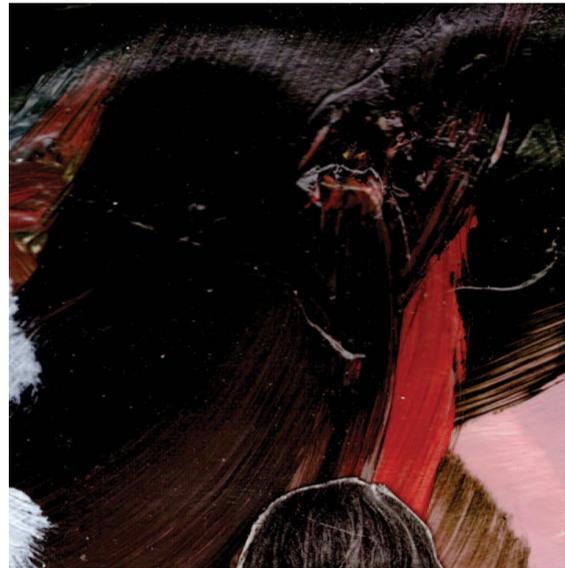
In my parochial childhood, I grew up thinking that a monk’s life was special, that he (always a he!) was chosen, set apart from the world to love God, given special orders about how to live and work and pray. But the One is the air I breathe, the water I swim in, the energy in whom I live and move and have my being, so perhaps our lives are not so different after all—the monk’s, yours, or mine. That’s the hope, anyway—that together we can celebrate the simple, sacred, everyday lives we lead in the presence of the One who loves us.

Stations of Jonah

For this Quarterly's contemplative practice, readers are invited throughout to linger and pray with an artistic rendering of the Jonah story, *Stations of Jonah*, by artist Kyle Steed. Curated by CAC staff and used in 2018 at the CONSPIRE "Path of Descent" conference, these paintings illuminate the descending journey of addiction and recovery. Let go of the need to "get," "understand," or "know" everything. Descend into the belly of the whale and trust that you are being led by God into the mysterious, dark depths of your true becoming.



1. God summons Jonah to Nineveh. *God calls us to live as our true self, and we feel drawn toward Love.* But Jonah flees toward Tarsus on a boat. *We doubt and are afraid, so we rebel against God and ourselves.*



2. God sends a great storm. *God and the Universe will always conspire together to keep us from a diminished life.* The sailors become afraid and confront Jonah. Our relationships mirror the dissonance inside ourselves. *What is the storm—the tension—that batters me?*

I stood to my feet in the midst of the cosmos,
appearing outwardly in flesh.
I discovered that all were drunk
but none were thirsty,
and my soul ached for the children of humanity,
for their hearts are blind.
They cannot see from within.
They have come into the cosmos empty,
and they are leaving it empty.
At the moment you are inebriated,
but when freed the effects of wine,
you too may turn and stand.

—Gospel of Thomas, Logion 28, trans. Lynn Bauman,
from *The Gospel of Thomas: The Wisdom of the Twin*

Never Enough—The Neuroscience of Addiction

Interview with Judith Grisel ('18)

Judith (Judy) Grisel is a neuroscientist, a 2018 graduate of the Living School and has written a recent book entitled Never Enough: The Neuroscience and Experience of Addiction.

Mark Longhurst: You are a neuroscientist and a professor at University of Bucknell, and you also share quite frankly in the book about your own journey as a recovering addict yourself. How did the experience of being a former addict lead you to the experience of writing this book?



Judy Grisel: My first good drink was at thirteen and for about ten years I took as much of every drug that I could get my hands on. As a result, I was in pretty poor shape by the time I turned twenty-three. Shortly after my 23rd birthday, I ended up in treatment, kind of by mistake. I didn't know exactly what I was getting into and learned that there was this disease of addiction, and that I had it, and that if I had any hope of living, I needed to be abstinent. Like most addicts, I was so determined. I thought at my ripe young age, "Don't tell me what I can do. I'm not going to quit using drugs. Drugs are the best thing in my life. They're really the only thing that gives me any solace at all."

I thought somehow that I would solve the problem of addiction, and then I would be able to use. And so this is my backdoor. It's a testament to the tenacity of every drug addict rather than anything about me being strong or smart. But I managed after taking seven years to get my undergraduate and seven years in graduate school to become a professor, to study the neuroscience of addiction. I do genetics and pharmacology.

Mark: What's going on in the brain that leads one to addiction, that experience of never enough?

Judy: Surely everyone is familiar with the physiological balances that we maintain. Like our body temperature, which is about 98 and a half degrees. If we get too hot, we sweat; if we get too cold, we shiver. Losing heat or generating heat. Same with energy and water balances.

Well, it turns out that it's the same principle, homeostasis, that drives that affective or feeling state. If we try to inflate our feeling state to feel really great all the time, which is what addictive drugs promise (i.e., you'll feel better no matter what's going on, you're going to be on top of the world), it is very compelling, but it doesn't work for the brain.

The brain needs to have a baseline because if it doesn't have a stable, set point of feeling then it can't really tell what's going on. And so it proposes that point by counteracting any stimulant that changes their feelings state.

By taking cocaine regularly, originally I felt really euphoric. Without cocaine, eventually I just felt very dysphoric because the cocaine itself made life bearable. And I think maybe people relate to that with their coffee habits. If you drink coffee all the time, it no longer really makes you super peppy. It just makes you capable of getting through the day. Adapted to caffeine, my body is lethargic in the morning, finds it difficult to put a sentence together, can't really have a conversation or read a paragraph and focus until I get coffee. So then the coffee makes me feel normal. And that tolerable dependence due to the brain's adaptation is what makes addiction.

Mark: As an alumna of the Living School, what role does contemplation play in the addiction recovery process, and how have you engaged contemplation in your own work and recovery?

Judy: The Living School played a really important role in the book. The book's been kind of in the works for about ten years and, in a way, I just couldn't get myself out of the way to finish it. As it turned out, even though the original intent was to talk about some of my experience, that was really difficult to do compared to talking about the science, which I could do ad nauseam.

I had a friend who would say to me, "Okay, so contemplate and then write and then contemplate and then write." But I didn't get that input until I got to the Living School. As I realized that this book might actually see the light of day, my prayer became, "Let this book flow through me. Let it be helpful. Let me get out of the way so that the information and hopefully wisdom that is not of me could come out." And really, until the very end, I admit I was terrified.

I had to come to the plate because I had no other way, since I don't use drugs. You know, contemplation is the first non-dead end I've tried, the first strategy for living that has helped, that feels like it opens up my life rather than narrows it after awhile.



3. Jonah tells the sailors to throw him into the sea. *We find the courage to face our shadow, ego, projections, and failures, and we finally fall through our fear of the unknown.* Sailors throw Jonah overboard; he is swallowed by a fish; the sea grows calm. *What must I recover, release, or accept in myself now?*

Mystical Sobriety

James Finley



WATCH FULL VIDEO

<https://vimeo.com/348247117/9292b9524d>

VIEW FULL TRANSCRIPT

<https://cac.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/JimFinleyInterview.pdf>

Broken, Redeemed

Kristi Walsh ('19)

Currently, I am the Clinical Supervisor of the one-year residential treatment program for substance abuse and mental health at the Santa Barbara Rescue Mission. It is the most satisfying work I have done in my forty years of clinical practice as a psychoanalyst. I interviewed four staff members who found the Mission as addicts seeking treatment. What they received was redemption. Allow me to make introductions:

Eddie has been sober for twenty-one years and works at the Mission as a Residential Treatment Specialist. He has been the tracker (sober coach, counselor, accountability monitor, mentor) for countless men. He was the tracker for Gabriel and LB. We call him Big Daddy.

Gabriel is the Residential Coordinator, the gentle drill sergeant of the program. Gabe makes sure the residents are following the rules and getting to where they need to be. Think of the RA of a college dorm, but a dorm of addicts. He has been sober three years.

Danny is a Residential Treatment Specialist, sober for fourteen years. He has mentored hundreds of guys through the program. A delightful, tender soul, Danny is wet-eyed through most of this interview.

LB has been sober for fifteen years. He is the Director of the Men's Program at the Mission. He and Danny are the best of friends, in the way we rarely see men relate these days.

There is an enormous amount of acceptance among these four. Sure, they have their conflicts and disagreements, but they seem to live under the daily awareness of the grace they have received, and consequently, pay forward.

Kristi: What was your life like before you found the Mission?

Eddie: I was either using or in depression. I lived fifteen years in progressive drug use. I lived with my mother until I was thirty-six years old [because] I couldn't live life on life's terms.

Gabriel: From 1978 to 2003 I was in and out of incarceration. I tried to hold jobs, but I was just getting high all the time. When my ex and my son moved to Georgia . . . I just lived on the street for eleven years. I was fifty years old when I came to the Mission.

Danny: *I was in and out of incarceration and homelessness. At twenty-three, I found myself at drug court [because] I just [rotated between] committing crimes, homelessness, and jail. Between ages thirty and thirty-four I tried a few rehabs but the life of crime and drugs was just too powerful.*

LB: *My life before the Mission was one of living in motel rooms, committing crimes just to buy drugs, and then selling drugs. For years. My existence was all, and only, about drugs.*

Kristi: Do you feel that God was involved in you becoming sober?

Eddie: *I had no faith before or during using. And yet I was always arguing with Something. I knew I shouldn't be doing this, and I had many opportunities to get clean. Many angels were sent my way, but I always walked away. Now, God is a force that pulls me into action. I am able to walk into things that are far greater than me. . . . I feel that pull to act, like to just have a talk with the guys and the right pieces come out. I didn't have that confidence before I had faith. I don't think it's really about bravery, because I am not a brave person, but I end up doing brave things. It makes me grateful. I am being transformed every day.*

Gabriel: *I should have died over and over. In 2003, I got lymphoma. I've been shot at twice. I've been stabbed. I've been in jail for attempted murder . . . but I walked out. God was directing me here. I had to go through everything I went through to get here, to get to where I am, connected to God. I have zero resentment [about what it took to get me here]. The day I knew God was for real . . . I was saying my same ol' prayers, and one day the obsession [to use] was just gone. And it never came back. Being here [at the Mission], doing the Steps, all of that was clearing the wall between me and God.*

Danny: *I was raised Catholic, but I cursed God from age fifteen on, due to a tragedy in my life. I went to juvie at fifteen, and I knew I was an addict. I knew I should be in jail. I would talk to God all the time while cursing God. One day I said, "If you're real, show me." One hour later I was arrested, and all I could feel was relief. I had just walked away from the truck I had stolen to commit burglaries. They didn't know I had stolen it, so I wasn't linked to it. Later, they found a lot of drugs and a firearm in that truck. I could've done a lot of time for that. I was spared so much. Sitting in jail, I just wrote out step 1 every day over and over. Here at the Mission, people just loved me. That love was God.*

LB: *We were not a church-going family growing up. God was not a topic. Yet throughout my using I talked to God. In the midst of the madness, I always had*

a dialog going with God. [For so many reasons] I should not be here, shouldn't be alive or free. Finally, after years, I had exhausted myself and my options. I was in the county jail and I just prayed, "I surrender." God met me then, and all I can say is something magical happened. I was a broken man. I didn't even know it, but I was doing the first step in the county jail. I was willing to accept God's will over mine and not try to manipulate whatever that was. And God has met me every day since. My relationship is imperfect, but it is personal. I just talk to God. I don't overcomplicate it. All the rabbit holes of theology—I don't go there. My faith is based on the fact that God presented himself to me and my life is a miracle, a fairy tale . . . one I could not have had without him.

Eddie helped LB get sober, who helped Danny get sober, and all three mentored Gabriel into sobriety. Lives soaked in shame and guilt transformed into multipliers. They were met by Christ. They still meet Christ every day. They are the incarnate Christ to the clients they now serve. I have had the privilege of working with them every week for the past five years. Without a doubt, they have been Christ to me.

Canoeing with God

Lynn Johal ('18)

My name is Lynn, and I'm a recovering alcoholic. There are approximately twelve million people with Alcohol Use Disorder in the U.S., and I'm one of them. I may not seem a likely candidate: I have a Masters of Science, three lovely daughters, and a husband who is a professor. I've been a biologist, a Social Justice Coordinator in the Catholic Church, and a Food Pantry Director.

In my early fifties, my addiction began to have serious consequences. My husband and I were on the verge of a divorce. My youngest daughter developed an anxiety disorder called trichotillomania; she was literally pulling her hair out of her head. For two years I lived in a constant state of anxiety, self-loathing, and despair. I'd pray each morning, begging God to help me stay sober, but by noon I'd be pouring a drink. Although I went to rehab eight times, I couldn't stop drinking for more than a few weeks at a time. It baffled me that I, a person of faith, was unable to stop. By 2013 I'd accumulated three DUIs & spent a few nights in jail. Finally, I drank on house arrest, which landed me briefly in maximum security prison.

Who had I become? I was the church lady gone BAD! Richard Rohr says there are two primary paths to transformation: one is great love and the other great suffering. In my case it was great suffering.

By this time I'd attended a few AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) meetings and learned Centering Prayer. During lock-down I'd meditate, then in the jail block organize AA meetings. In AA we worked the 12 Steps. It's a spiritual program. Although the primary purpose is to maintain physical sobriety, it has completely changed my life, offering me emotional sobriety & spiritual growth.

In AA I learned that the faith I claimed was highly conceptual, all up in my head! The steps told me the type of faith I needed was a surrender of the heart. It's challenging to explain "surrender" in words. It's the sensation of letting go. It's the difference between tight fists—trying to force change with my own will—and open arms—surrendering to Divine Flow.

As a Canadian teen, my girlfriend and I frequently canoed a local creek. She was bossy and insisted on the rear seat, which is the steering position. I'd have to paddle to move the canoe forward, to do some of the work. If I tried to steer from the front seat we'd veer off course and I'd waste energy working against the flow. At times we'd see a Great Blue Heron ahead and she'd instruct me to stop paddling. I'd rest, trusting her to steer.

This is my metaphor for cooperation with God. I need to let God steer! At the Living School (LS) in 2016, I shared this

metaphor with LS staff member Gigi Ross. I asked, “How do I know when I’m supposed to paddle and when I’m supposed to rest?”

Gigi said, “How did you know with your friend?” Aha! We communicated. The key is prayer and meditation (AA’s step 11).

I must work the 12 Steps by surrendering to God my fears and resentments and acknowledge the people I’ve harmed (steps 4 and 5). I must humbly admit my character defects and become willing to surrender them (steps 6 and 7). Then I make amends (steps 8 and 9) and serve the alcoholic who still suffers (step 12).

The Promises of AA says, “We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past or wish to shut the door on it.” AA saved my life and has given me new purpose. I now work at a recovery center, take AA meetings into the local jail, sponsor women, and lead a Recovery Meditation group. The Living School has reinforced all I’ve learned through the steps and is moving me to a new level of consciousness and spiritual depth.

My name is Lynn and I’m a grateful recovering alcoholic. Who knew that my canoe was floating on an ocean of mercy all along?!



4. Jonah finds peace in the depths and sings to God. *Our soul rises to the summons even in the terror of the unknown. In the deepest and darkest hour, there is a peace that defies understanding. Can I recognize the threads of resilient hope in my life?*



5. The fish spits out Jonah. *We are released from the prisons of our own making. What new shores am I exploring?*

What the Opioid Crisis Reveals About Us

Tim King ('18)

The first wave of America's overdose crisis started in the 1970s when service members returned from Vietnam addicted to heroin. The rate rose to 1 per 100,000 people. In the 1980s the rate hit 2 per 100,000 people with the rise of the crack epidemic.

In 2017, the rate hit 21.7 per 100,000. For comparison, the European Union is a little over 2 per 100,000.

The driving force of these deaths today is opioids, specifically illicit fentanyl.

During my time in the Living School, I thought about this reality a lot. It was during this time I told my story of struggling with opioid addiction publicly for the first time.

I was back in my home state of New Hampshire, a place with one of the highest per capita overdose rates in the country. As I saw the death toll climb I knew I needed to tell my story.

I didn't want to just share my experience but see if I could better understand the forces at work. What happened in the United States to see such a dramatic rise in overdose deaths over such a short period of time?

The cause of an epidemic can be looked at in two different frames. First, the introduction of something new into an environment.

In this case, a new class of opioids had been advertised as minimally addictive in the mid-'90s, dramatically increasing the supply. Then potent and readily available heroin spread across the country, and when people were cut off from their prescriptions, they turned to illegal sources of the drug. Finally, the incredibly powerful opioids fentanyl and carfentanil made their way into the supply and increased the risk of overdose for anyone already using.

But the second frame to understand an epidemic is to see if something has changed with the host. Are there any new vulnerabilities that would make people more susceptible to a particular form of addiction?

There are a lot of ways to answer that question. But to start it is important to understand what opioids mimic: a sense of love and connection.

Opioid addiction is a particularly powerful kind not because opioids are foreign to our brains but because we have a long developed and important system designed to receive our bodies' natural equivalent: endorphins. In the 1970s, researcher Eric Simon named certain molecules he discovered in the brain *endorphins* as a mix between the words *endogenous* and *morphine*. They are endogenous because they originate inside us, and he used the word *morphine* because of the striking chemical similarity between the newly discovered molecule and morphine.

Endorphins are a powerful chemical and one we have in common with many other creatures on the planet, all the way down to single-celled organisms. Endorphins can ease pain, both physical and emotional, and are key in many functions we never even think about: from our heart rate to our breathing and the working of our intestines.

One of the most well-known functions of these endorphins is to bond mother and child. They help bond sexual partners and produce the euphoria experienced by bungee jumpers, sky divers, and extreme sports enthusiasts everywhere. “That was such a rush!” is the exclamation of a person in the throes of this powerful chemical. Endorphins have been called the “molecules of emotion.”

The amazing capacity of the human brain to ease our pain, find comfort in distress, regulate our body’s systems, bond with other people, and find pleasure in the daily experiences of our lives—this is the same capacity that allows us to become addicted to narcotics.

The systems of our brain that respond to opioids are not tangential to who we are. They are a part of our daily lives and flourishing. When they go astray, we go astray. Gabor Maté, a Canadian addiction specialist, says it this way: “Addiction to opiates like morphine and heroin arises in a brain system that governs the most powerful emotional dynamic in human existence: the attachment instinct. Love.”

Addiction always mimics something we need. Opioids can provide a temporary boost for a natural system that can ease our pain. At their worst, they take over that system, narrowing our field of vision and disrupting our capacity to feel that love we so desire.

While dire, the situation is far from hopeless. My own story took a turn not because of punishment but because I was shown empathy and understanding. It is grace that transforms us and it is grace we are called to be for a world in desperate need.

This article is adapted from Tim’s new book Addiction Nation: What the Opioid Crisis Reveals about Us.

Centering Prayer and Prisoners

Interview with Prison Contemplative Fellowship Founder Ray Leonardini and Dennis McCain ('15)



WATCH FULL VIDEO

<https://vimeo.com/330554514/3f8655419f>

VIEW FULL TRANSCRIPT

<https://cac.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/DennisRayInterview.pdf>

Rocketman

Debonee Morgan ('15)

The very first thing you see is a glorious red devil bursting through doors, feathers falling from wall-to-wall wingspan, striding toward reckoning with fiery determination. We meet the ego of Elton Hercules John, finally ready to meet himself in the crucible of recovery.

Rocketman is a raucous tour of the transformation of young piano savant Reggie Dwight into the much-bigger-than-life persona Elton John. The film is an imaginative, sometimes surreal, celebration of some of the best music in rock and roll history, and the people who made it. It's fun and bright, with choreography that may just make you want to jump into the middle of a pub brawl.

And like most compelling art, it asks us to align with Great Love & Great Suffering. Young Reggie is a darling soul who tries his best to be good enough. He wants to be worthy of love. He longs to be seen and held by the Beloved Parent.

As the adult Elton John, he develops the talent to make himself seen and heard. Stardom becomes a satisfaction machine, manufacturing all that passes for "love" in a world of consumer transactions and exploitative relationships. All the while, the costumes and theatricality of personality protect his fragile, yearning heart from true Encounter.

Eventually the devil becomes ready to pay the dues and Elton enters substance abuse recovery. He begins, symbolically dismantling the flamboyant fallen angel outfit piece by piece, as he remembers lifelong failed attempts to connect with something bigger than himself. He becomes aware of his addiction to his own way of thinking, and is able to see the powerful gift of powerlessness. (Was that a copy of *Breathing Under Water* in the pocket of that demon jacket? ;) Spoiler alert: He finds redemption in accepting the whole of his life, embracing the hurt as part of the inevitable path to deepening, and reconnecting with the Love that was always there. Bring tissues.

His resurrection, finding him "still standing" sounds universal and familiar to us. . . .

And did you think this fool could never win?

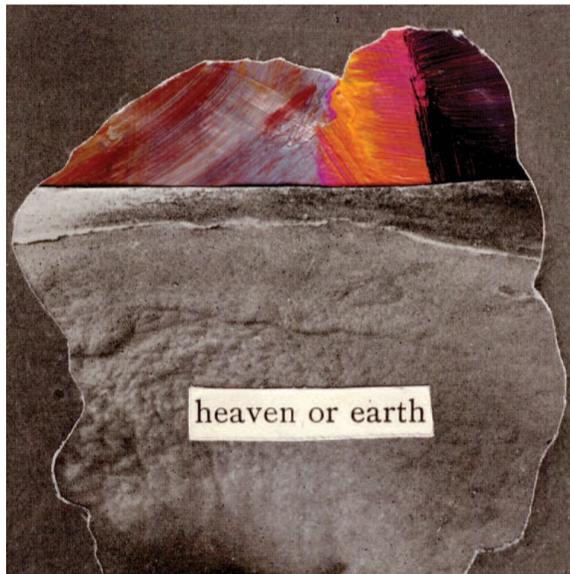
Well look at me, I'm a-coming back again

I got a taste of love in a simple way.

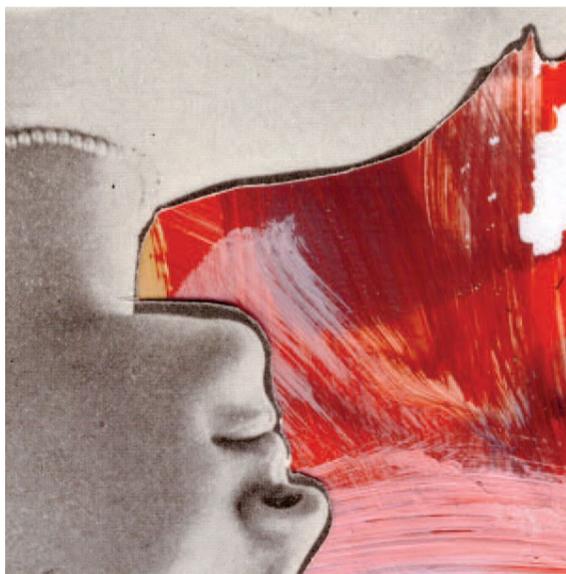
Debonee Morgan ('15) is a psychotherapist, spiritual director, and film-lover living in Atlanta, Georgia.



6. Jonah goes to Nineveh and preaches to the people; they repent. *We finally step into the resonance of our vocation. We begin to experience our true self in service to something greater than ourselves. Where is my greatest gift meeting the world's deepest need?*



7. Jonah wants God to punish Nineveh, but it doesn't happen. *We are shocked that following our vocation doesn't go the way we planned! It takes daily commitment, practice, and struggle to learn not to identify with outcome but surrender to and trust Love. Where is my frustration or expectation blocking an unforeseen outcome?*



8. Jonah receives one more lesson from God: the withering plant. *Letting go of our expectations is costly. Through our struggle and surrender to the Unknown Mystery, we die to our false self. This is the process of our becoming. How am I being invited to let Love have the final word about who I am?*

ELIZABETH JARRETT ANDREWS ('18)

Elizabeth's book on revision as a contemplative practice, [Living Revision](#), received the silver Nautilus Award. She is grateful for the clarity that came with her Rhythm of Life—that her work as a writing instructor is to reframe creative writing as a transformative practice—and to have it recognized by the Nautilus community.

MELISSA AUTEN ('17)

Melissa is establishing a Reconciling Ministries in her United Methodist Church. In the wake of upheaval in the United Methodist Church over the issue of LGBTQIA inclusion, she has been involved in establishing a chapter of Reconciling Ministries in her local congregation. Thus far 137 members have been recruited to work toward building a more inclusive church. Melissa is also involved in a project with several other spiritual directors to create a spiritual direction program in Eastern North Carolina that hopes to receive its first students in the Fall of 2020.

THE BARMEN TODAY DECLARATION

The statement reached 20,000 signatories and can be read and signed here (<https://www.change.org/p/we-want-to-remain-faithful-to-both-the-divine-which-we-seek-to-understand-and-the-love-which-we-seek-to-live>). Barmen Today was drafted by students and alum of the Living School.

KEVIN BLISS ('16)

Kevin was at this summer's Wild Goose Festival. He gave a talk on Ken Wilber's "Waking Up and Growing Up" paths and came away more convinced than ever that in those two paths he has a blueprint for where he is going to focus his attention in the years ahead. He says, "The world needs both paths, and ASAP, if we're going to address the daunting challenges ahead."

EDIE KAUSCH ('15)

Edie also attended the Wild Goose Festival in July and found herself set afire by the prophetic Spirit-filled words of Rev. William Barber.

MARINELL NEWTON ('20)

Save the Date! Marinell invites alumni, students, and friends to save the date for a special retreat on September 17-20, 2020 with Carolyn Metzler in [Burlington, VT](#) on the theme of "Wilderness Spirituality: The Way In Goes Down." Carolyn Metzler is a priest and spiritual director who has served the Living School from the beginning. She travels around the country facilitating retreats on a variety of subjects and makes her home in the wilderness of New Mexico. Please watch the website www.rockpointvt.org for more information.

DONELLE POLING ('15)

Donelle started a new position as Director of Admission for Saint John's School of Theology and Seminary. Interested in a Masters of Theology, Ministry, Monastic Spirituality, or a certificate in spiritual direction? Let him know! She loves this Benedictine school, the monastic community that guides it, and helping people in discernment. To Living School alumni, he says, "Missing all of you and the times we shared!" You can email Donelle with inquiries about Saint Johns at Dpoling001@csbsju.edu.

JOANNA DAVIDSON SMITH ('17)

Joanna published a short poetry and reflection book on the evolution of her life while taking a class on Theopoetics. She was also ordained by the Church of the Brethren on Pentecost. Her journey has led her into a [healing ministry](#) of Spiritual Direction and body energy work. She says, "My time in the Living School helped give me the courage to step into who and what I was called to be."

JULIE ANN STEVENS ('15)

Julie's creative path in the solitude of the Western Minnesota Prairie materialized as an exhibit and e-workbook entitled [Into Your Heart: A Creative Path to Wholeness and Healing](#).

ELIZABETH WALZ ('18)

Liz led a recent four-day retreat entitled "Ministry on the Margins" for folks in or discerning a call to ministry with a marginalized community. She was joined in a panel presentation by Living School Circle Group friend **Rev. Joan Murray ('18)**. She reports, "It is so encouraging to be among, and helping build capacity, with folks hearing the Gospel call to service and justice!"

KATHY WELCH ('16)

Kathy felt blessed to spend a week at the Chautauqua Institute hearing Fr. Richard Rohr speak every day. She says, "I recharged my battery and loved the opportunity to watch people hear his good news, many for the first time! I kept telling people around me to move up closer and not to miss this chance!"

CONGRATULATIONS TO ROBERTA WITTY ('15)

Roberta received a Master of Arts degree in Transformative Leadership and Spirituality from Hartford Seminary.

YOUR NEWS UPDATES

Have a shout-out, event, project, gratitude, or prayer to share? Send your news updates to mlonghurst@cac.org by November 1.

ALUMNI GATHERING AND CONSPIRE 2020

May 14-17, 2020
Albuquerque, New Mexico
Registration coming soon!

Join our Living School faculty—Richard Rohr, Barbara Holmes, James Finley, Cynthia Bourgeault, and Brian McLaren—alumni, and friends for the final conference in the seven-year series.

ANOTHER NAME FOR EVERY THING

The second season of our podcast with Father Richard on the Universal Christ is well under way. Richard reflects on questions that listeners posed during the first season. In conversation with Brie Stoner and Paul Swanson, he helps us engage contemplatively with our world's shifting needs. Find previous and new episodes at cac.org/podcasts or wherever you listen to podcasts. New episodes air every Saturday through October 19, 2019.

Future Submissions

The Winter issue of the Quarterly will be “Rhythm of Life.” How is yours going, what does it look like, what is working, what is not, and what needs to evolve? Editor Mark Longhurst (’15) invites your articles, personal reflections, poems, photographs, and more. Send your submissions to mlonghurst@cac.org by November 1. To view Quarterly submissions guidelines, visit https://cac.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/2019_AlumniQuarterly_SubmissionGuidline_Final.pdf.

A Special Thanks

To artist [Kyle Steed](#), painter of Stations of Jonah, **Ali Kirkpatrick (’16)** for her new Monk in Midlife column, **Judy Grisel (’18)** for her thoughtful interview, James Finley for his Mystical Sobriety video teaching, **Pauls Swanson and Thompson** for technical support, and to the **CAC Team** that works on the Quarterly: Joelle Chase, Corey Pigg, Nicholas Kramer, and Izzy Spitz.

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