



Oregon Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Images in this booklet are the work of Sandra Roumagoux – www.roumagoux.com
Sandra's work is available through the Blackfish Gallery in Portland, OR.
www.blackfish.com

Poetry and text are by Bishop Dave Brauer-Rieke,
Oregon Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
This booklet was compiled in conjunction with an art show created
for the 2012 Oregon Synod Assembly in Sunriver, OR. April 27-29, 2012.

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Oregonizing for Mission with the Arts

Hope and Holiness



King's Valley

We used to be rural
 My family and I
Denizens of dirt we were
Children of the kingdom

There
In that place
The kingdom of heaven was like seed
 Or wheat
 Or wind

We threw rocks into rivers
Epitaphs into emptiness
Our demons into darkness

Now we live in glass houses
 Me and my friends
Our heads are in the clouds
Children of change we are

Here
In this place
The kingdom of heaven matures
 Like money
 Or fine wine

We motor yachts down rivers
Eddies into empires
Building bigger barns

Dave Brauer-Rieke 10/24/2011



Trestle Tome

Yaquina River Trestle - Sandra Roumagoux
60" x 72" oil on canvas

Growing from beneath
Unseen
A message
Mirrored on my mind

The emergence of meaning
A bridge towards tomorrow
Weathered by wind
Rippled in yesteryear

Once again the fall
Red and gold upon the present
Green the trees that ever are
Cold the water resting

Dave Brauer-Rieke 10/24/2011

The Oregon Synod Council read Phyllis Tickle's The Great Emergence this past year. Phyllis writes about a pattern of religious reformation that surfaces every 500 years or so. She claims that we are in the midst of such a reformation today. Some find these times exhilarating.

During religious reformation foundational faith assumptions, language and basic, core values all come up for re-examination. Ours is a challenging time to be the Church. The Spirit speaks with sighs too deep for words.

The Arts are a gift during such seasons of change. They help us re-image and re-imagine the questions before our culture. The Arts bring the ancient and the immediate into a new relationship. They set the table for a fresh feast of faith.

Sandy, by her own admission, delights in the "paradoxes of faith" and the "divine absurdities of existence." This is what makes her work powerful. She is not afraid to image what is, without having to explain it. She lets the tension stand and trusts the Word to find its own way.

In addition, Sandy's landscapes faithfully carry the deep healing and hope that has inspired them. Through color and composition she lifts up the holiness all around us. Grounded in the gifts of holiness we need never lose our way.

The final image shared here is called "Yaquina Bay Trestle." It reveals something that was, proudly standing in the midst of something that is. Displayed in this painting are the remnants of an old train trestle found in Yaquina Bay, just south of Newport, OR. It makes for a beautiful scene.

As I was reading The Great Emergence I took time to pray this painting. The conversation between what has been, and what is yet to be, helps shape the holy. In the love and respect that listening offers, something new begins to emerge. Will we trust that which the Spirit brings to birth? In times like ours we must decide, and then we can act.

Oregon Route 223 runs along the western edge of the Willamette Valley, cutting through a small slice of heaven called King's Valley. An old barn there caught the imagination of our 2012, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Oregon Synod Assembly artist in residence, Sandra Roumagoux. Seeing that barn, Sandy knew she had to paint it. The result is the beautiful landscape pictured here. It is simply called "King's Valley."



King's Valley – Sandra Roumagoux
40" x 40" oil on canvas

Meditating on Sandy's work I reconnected with my own rural roots. My great grandfather was a German born, Lutheran missionary who pastored in a number of rural communities around eastern Washington during the late 19th century. His sons started a bank in Cashmere, WA, serving German speaking farmers who didn't know English. Church, family, land and language have always been one in the same reality for me. Memory, interest and my own family story gave birth to another King's Valley - a poem. Perhaps poem and picture will find a home in you as well.

The art and poetry in this booklet were brought together for a show called "Hope and Holiness" created for the 2012, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Oregon Synod Assembly in Sunriver, OR. Thank you to Sandy Roumagoux for her willingness to inspire and question with us. The poetry and writing here are mine.

Bishop Dave Brauer-Rieke

*M*ilton-Freewater, OR, lies at the center of the Walla Walla Valley. Apples, grapes, asparagus and peaches all grow there. This is where my wife Gretchen and I raised our children. The rural rhythms, the people and the pace of life were much like Cashmere where I spent summers visiting my grandparents. After 18 years in Milton-Freewater we finally moved to Newport, OR. There we rediscovered rain and sandy beaches.

Oregon beaches are public land. For some reason they seem to attract old fires. "Ocean Front Property" is a large piece, painted over a base coat of metallic gold. The gold sparkles 'in, with and under' its subject of ecological devastation, resulting in a surprisingly pleasing and disturbing image.



Ocean Front Property – Sandra Roumagoux
60" x 84" oil on canvas

One dog
bad dog
mad dog
sad dog.

Dead dog
Red Dog®
hot dog
had dog.

This one has a funny tail.
This one had to go to jail.
Say! there a lot of dogs for sale.

Yes. Some are cute,
until they puke.
I kicked this one,
with my boot.

Some are sad.
And some are glad.
And some are very, very bad.

The Arctic's hot,
my foot is cold;
I can't find work,
my teeth are gold;
My hat is cocked,
my arms they fold;
And now my story is all told.

Dave Brauer-Rieke 2/27/2012



If You Go to Hell It's Your Own Fault, II
Sandra Roumagoux
48" x 60" oil on canvas
(re-painted for the Oregon Synod Assembly)

One fish
two fish
red fish
blue fish.

One fish, two fish

(With apologies to Dr. Seuss!)

Wed fish
said fish
no fish
true fish.

This one has a little lead.
This one's smashed all round its head.
Say! what a lot of fish are dead.

One man
two man
black man
blue man

Yes. Some are red.
And some are blue.
Some are fresh.
And some are stew.

Head man
said man
front man
Fed man

Some are sad.
And some are glad.
And some are very, very bad.

This one has a silly hat.
This one blew apart his cat.
Say! there a lot of men like that.

Yes. Some are black.
And some are blue.
Some might even
lie to you.

Some are sad.
And some are glad.
And some are very, very bad.

Like Newport, the New Testament city of Ephesus was on the sea. Unlike Newport it housed a temple for worship of the Greek war goddess Artemis. The city was also a center of world trade and silver smelting. A letter to the Church of Ephesus in Revelation 2 warns of laxity in the midst of unsettling realities. The lampstand of love is easily extinguished when the Church doesn't address the realities around it – like tires. Apparently they aren't made of rubber anymore.

Ephesus by the Sea

Phenols fused with aldehyde
Resins for the glut roadside
Sulfur compounds, steel wires
Make those wide track, white walled tires

Zinc, titanium, carbon black
Fatty acids, nylon wrap
Aromatic, naphthenic
Paraffinic petrosick

Warranted for sleet or snow
Muscle cars or power tow
Deeply grooved for all terrain
Siping cuts in case of rain

Artemis behind the veil
Rubber gods for off road trail
Ephesus beside the sea
Smelting fierce apostasy

In your midst the lampstand dims
All because of alloy rims
Now for sale, the spare is free
Beach front, cherished property

Dave Brauer-Rieke 2/25/2008

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands: "I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance. I know that you cannot tolerate evildoers; you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them to be false. I also know that you are enduring patiently and bearing up for the sake of my name, and that you have not grown weary.

But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

Remember then from what you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

Revelation 2:1-5 NRSV

Up and down
High and low
Angels may know where to go
but I am lost, confused, and slow.

Pipes and wires
Creeping cords
Optic fibers in the boards
Flying fires in the walls
Lazered lies my life blood stalls

Up and down
High and low
Angels may know where to go
but I am pummeled in the flow.

Cities spreading like the phage
Sharing their disease and rage
Duplicating without age
Absent sage
Sacred page

Grab a rock now, go to sleep
Find a place outside the keep
Give me bread and clothes to wear
Vows of abstinence I'll swear

Pipes and wires
Creeping cords
Optic fibers in the boards

Bethel bears my destiny
Surely seraphs hear my plea

Up and down
High and low
With the holy cragsman go

Weave your way through tangled web
Angels will bear up our dead

Jacob came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the LORD stood beside him and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place-- and I did not know it!" And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called that place Bethel; but the name of the city was Luz at the first. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that you give me I will surely give one tenth to you.

Genesis 28:11-22 NRSV



If You Go to Hell It's Your Own Fault – Sandra Roumagoux
72" x 84" oil on canvas

A gifted artist like Sandy Roumagoux can take your eye where she wants it to go. So can the powers that be. "If You Go to Hell ..." bounces the eye around a Bermuda Triangle of blame. You see the men, who stare at the dog, which stands by the sign (that lay in the house that Jack built.) "If you go to hell it's your own fault." Poor puppy! You want to laugh and you want to cry, but at the same time you're not sure you should. Something is amiss here. Who's responsible for what?

Don't let the whimsy fool you. The blame game is always a deception. The truth lies elsewhere. Something smells fishy here.

Environmental and religious themes often find their way into Sandy's work. "Purification of the Innocents" communicates the spirit of the Pacific Northwest with each stroke of the brush. Yet, it is not a landscape and the work reflects no, one, place or proclamation. The image is a dance. As the salmon cry out, and the wolf circles death and devastation, the Church appears to be on trial. Perhaps as a bishop I am over sensitive - but I sense danger and distrust in this dance. My children continue to wait and watch. Inaction is not an option.



Purification of the Innocents – Sandra Roumagoux
72" x 60" oil on canvas

All up and down the Oregon coast, especially in Newport, cliffs of clay and compact sand rise up from the beach. Wind, waves and erosion cut away at these cliffs, exposing buried debris, drainage pipes and wires. Sandy captures this vision in her diptych "Jacob's Ladder." How the angels got there I don't know, but to find them ascending and descending in the midst of old tires and broken pipes offers hope in the midst of perplexing realities. Jacob didn't know how angels got on his ladder, either, but he was smart enough to realize that he was standing on holy ground.



Jacob's Ladder, II – Sandra Roumagoux
Diptych, 36" x 48" oil on canvas

The imagery and symbolism of this next painting are most interesting. Nature's plea for balance and respect is reaching a feverish pitch in our day and age. It reminds me of a lecture God gave to Job once. Who will hear today? Who will act? My children wait with eager longing for a Church that will respond!

*"Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook,
or press down its tongue with a cord?
Can you put a rope in its nose,
or pierce its jaw with a hook?"*

Will it make many supplications to you?

Will it speak soft words to you?

Will it make a covenant with you

to be taken as your servant forever?

Will you play with it as with a bird,

or will you put it on leash for your girls?

Will traders bargain over it?

Will they divide it up among the merchants?

*Can you fill its skin with harpoons,
or its head with fishing spears?*

*Lay hands on it; think of the battle;
you will not do it again!*

*Any hope of capturing it will be disappointed;
were not even the gods overwhelmed
at the sight of it?*

No one is so fierce as to dare to stir it up.

Who can stand before it?

Who can confront it and be safe?

-- under the whole heaven, who?

Job 41:1-11 NRSV

Who?

Seal skin

Really?

Around your neck

Here

Now

Death as decoration?

Blessing

Really?

You on us

Our sin

Our shame

Purifying innocents?

Really?

Not here

Not now

We've thrown the hook

Leviathan is on the prowl!



Outrage?

Yes!

Us on you

Your sin

Your shame

Protecting innocence

Us!

Power

Pure

In our step

Our sight

Our skin

Death as declaration!

Here

Now

Off the leash

Under the whole heaven – who?

*"In their greed they will exploit you
with deceptive words. Their condemna-
tion, pronounced against them long ago,
has not been idle, and their destruction
is not asleep.*

*For if God did not spare the angels when
they sinned, but cast them into hell and
committed them to chains of deepest
darkness to be kept until the judgment;*

*and if he did not spare the ancient
world, even though he saved Noah, a
herald of righteousness, with seven
others, when he brought a flood on a
world of the ungodly;*

*and if by turning the cities of Sodom
and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned
them to extinction and made them an
example of what is coming to the
ungodly;*

*and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man
greatly distressed by the licentiousness
of the lawless (for that righteous man,
living among them day after day, was
tormented in his righteous soul by their
lawless deeds that he saw and heard),*

*then the Lord knows how to rescue the
godly from trial, and to keep the
unrighteous under punishment until
the day of judgment . . .*

2 Peter 2:3-9 NRSV