

Hope: Three Triptychs

Hope in three words, three scriptures, and three triptychs - with a prologue. And an interlude! And an epilogue?

I have long been captivated by triptychs; interested and inspired by their visual artistry that communicate a story bursting from each frame. These below, are clearly not triptychs in the traditional sense, as they are not connected or dimensioned in the classical form. Perhaps though, if not considered classic, they could be considered modern and still convey the same spirit as the originals do.

What is clear, is that I have tried to work in the order of three. Three titles for hope: Unless, Until, and Unveil. Each title has three sections: scripture, (triptych) picture, and written word.

All the pictures were taken by me, save one. The stained-glass window, which is found in the chapel at the University of Winnipeg, is very dear to me. However, I could not find even one of the handful of photos I have taken of it over the many years of admiring it. So, I found one on the internet to match it: <https://www.glassincanada.org/our-archives/jesus-blesses-bread/>

Grace and peace
Dave Birrell

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Hope: A Prologue

For it is you who light my lamp; the LORD my God
lightens my darkness. - Psalm 18:28

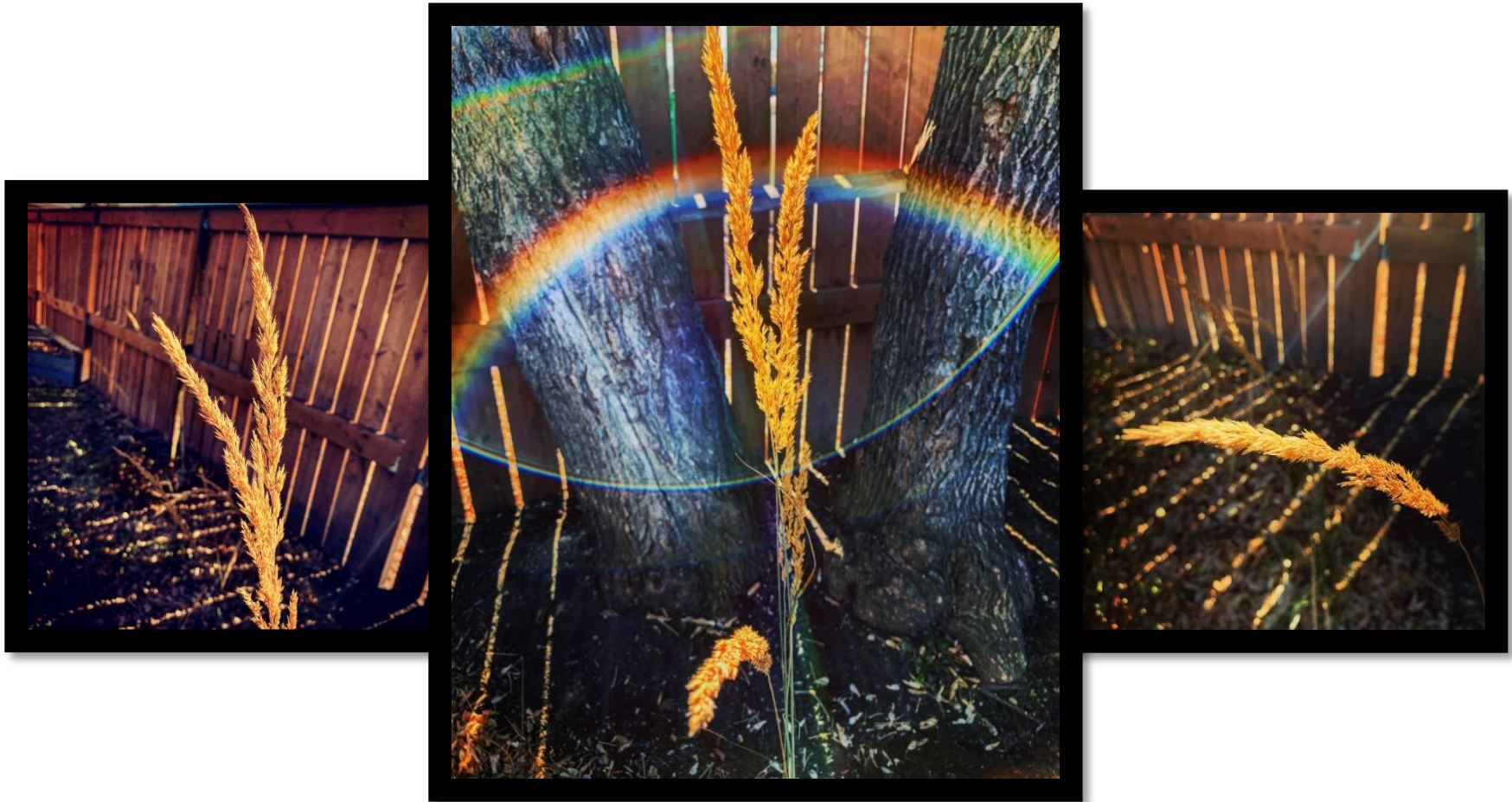
Writing:

Hope is a candle, a small lamp, a thread of light. It
says, darkness is not over all and through all and in all.
It says, light is real, true and will fully come again. Hold
on to hope.



Unless Hope

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. - John 12:24

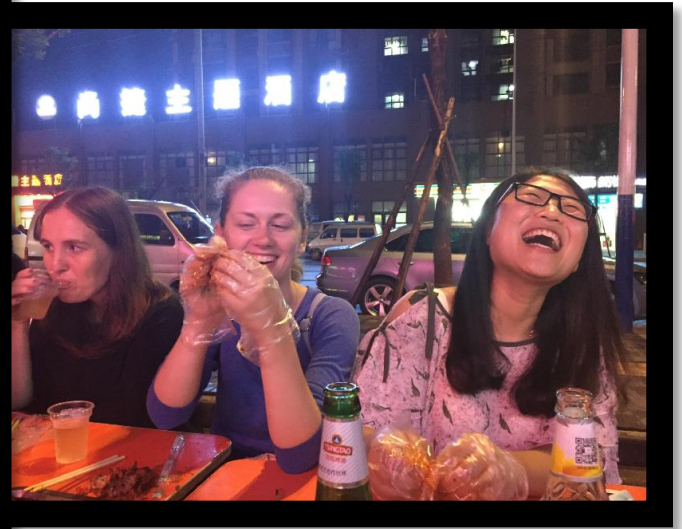


Writing:

Hope is found in mud. It is beneath our feet. Fallen seeds of past beauties. But it is there, beyond the deep winter burial. It is there resting, changing, taking on new form and substance. You know the drill. Summer leads to fall leads to winter leads to spring. Hope grows and is reborn from frozen earth. Hope is found in mud.

Until Hope

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. - 1 Corinthians 11:26



Writing:

Hope is a table. Plates. Knives. Forks. Spoons. Chopsticks. Your hands. Cups. Glasses. Warm, fragrant food. Pass the veggies please. May I have some more butter chicken? Who needs more injera? Conversation. Relationships. Sharing. Remembering. Re-enacting. And new enacting too, with new people, more people, more chairs, more plates. Hope is a table.

Hope: An Interlude

Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off. – Proverbs 23:18



Writing:

Hope is present. Powerfully present at times, if not always initially seen or felt or believed. What hope is there in ruins; in old stone walls? In past strength and former glory? Hope escapes from within and beyond stone walls, through worn down and worn out windows and doors. It fills spaces behind and beyond what's right in front of us. Hope is present.

Unveil Hope

But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. - 2 Corinthians 3:16-18



Writing:

Hope shines. Moses shined but we weren't ready for it. Are we ready now? Do we see hope break forth on faces of friends, family, loved ones? Does it emerge as love and grace, mercy and care, is extended? Hope glimmers in bright eyes. Hope shimmers through smiling faces. Hope shines.

Hope: An Epilogue?

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. So now, faith, hope, and love abide... - 1 Corinthians 13:12-13



Writing:

Hope has no need of an epilogue; cannot have an epilogue. It rises out of the water, re-born in this new person, re-born in that faith-filled community. It is alive in the words of affirmation, in the practices of daily steps of faith that lead to next steps of faith. Hope has a home in one small voice, whispering yes, okay, I will. And hope has a home in the mighty chorus of a thousand strong singers singing hallelujah and amen.

Hope, as it is written, abides. Hope never ends.