



ISAIAH
THE STORY BENEATH THE STORY

"Fear is not a Christian habit of mind"



Marilynne Robinson

...my thesis is always the same, and it is very simply stated, though it has two parts: first, contemporary America is full of fear. And second, fear is not a Christian habit of mind.

Who is blind but my servant,
or deaf as my messenger whom I send?
Who is blind as my dedicated one,
or blind as the servant of the LORD?

42:19

The LORD was pleased, for his righteousness' sake,

to magnify his law and make it glorious.

But this is a people plundered and looted;

they are all of them trapped in holes
and hidden in prisons;

they have become plunder with none to rescue,
spoil with none to say, "Restore!"

vv. 21-22

Who among you will give ear to this,
will attend and listen for the time to come?
Who gave up Jacob to the looter,
and Israel to the plunderers?
Was it not the LORD, against whom we have
sinned,
in whose ways they would not walk. . .

vv. 23-24

When you pass through the waters, I will be
with you;

and through the rivers, they shall not
overwhelm you;

when you walk through fire you shall not
be burned,

and the flame shall not consume you.

43:2



John Calvin

The Lord has not redeemed you so that you might enjoy pleasures and luxuries. . .but so that you should be prepared for enduring all kinds of evils.

When I am afraid
I put my trust in you
In God, whose word I praise
I shall not be afraid.
What can flesh do to me?

Psalm 56:3-4

Fear not, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from the east,
and from the west I will gather you.
I will say to the north, Give up,
and to the south, Do not withhold;
bring my sons from afar
and my daughters from the end of the earth,

43:5-6



Martin Luther

*I almost lost Christ in the waves
and blasts of despair and
blasphemy against God. But God
was moved by the prayers of the
saints and took pity on me and
rescued me. . . .*



Martin Luther

God joyfully uses the faith of others to sustain the faith of the suffering.

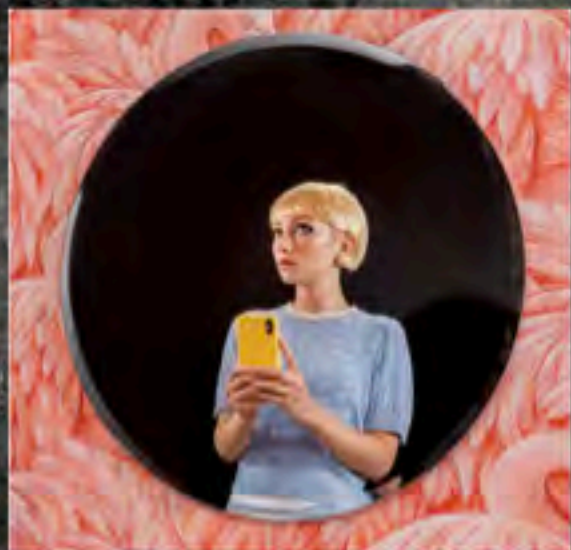
For I am the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.
I give Egypt as your ransom,
Cush and Seba in exchange for you.
Because you are precious in my eyes,
and honored, and I love you,
I give men in return for you,
peoples in exchange for your life.

vv. 3-4

But now thus says the LORD,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are
mine. . . .

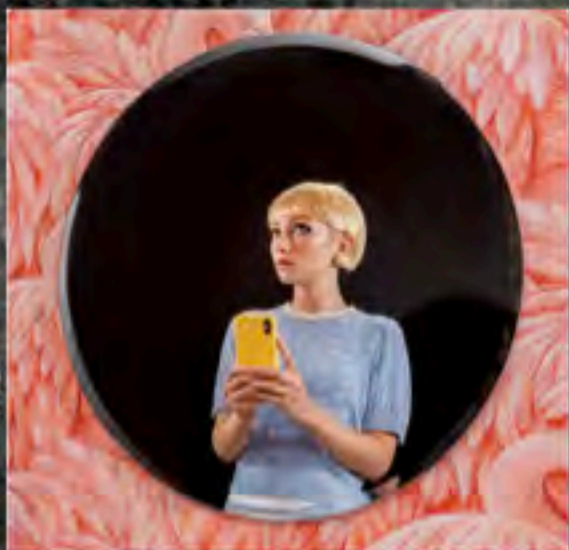
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made."

v. 1, 7



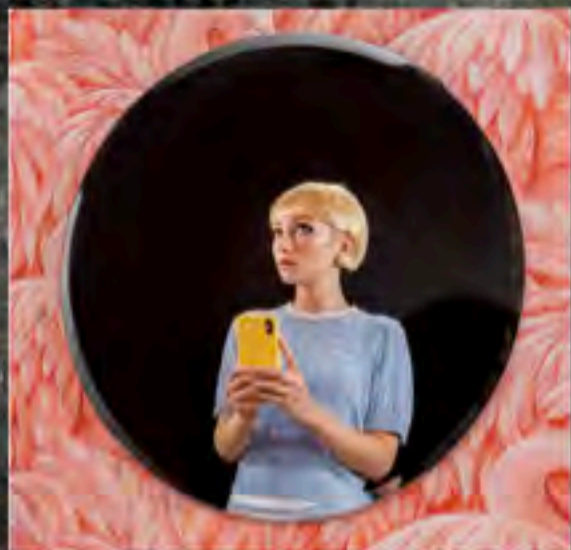
Tavi Gevenson

This cycle of judging and being judged is a black hole in which time disappears, in which I and the people I encounter are all frozen in our profiles. . . .



Tavi Gevenson

It is where I nourish my insecurities over the millions of past versions of me that float around like old yearbook photos and where I still judge people I don't know for reasons I can't even remember. . .



Tavi Gevenson

After countless adventures through the black hole, my propensity to share, perform, and entertain has melded with a desire far more cynical: to be liked, quantifiably, for an idealized version of myself, at a rate not possible even ten years ago. I think I am a writer and an actor and an artist.



Tavi Gevenson

But I haven't believed the purity of my own intentions ever since I became my own salesperson, too.



O. Alan Noble

You can't cease being useful to God because you were never useful to begin with. That's simply not why He created you and why He continues to sustain your being in the world. It was gratuitous, prodigal.



O. Alan Noble

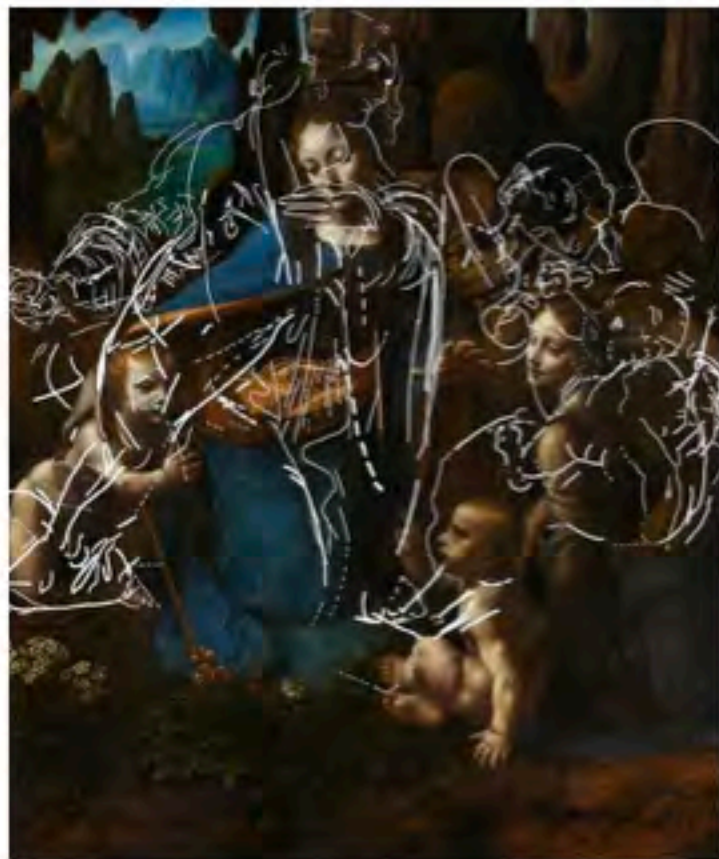
He made us just because He loves us and for His own good pleasure. Every other reason to live demands that you remain useful, and one day your use will run out. But not so with God. To God, your existence in His universe is an act of creation, and it remains good as creation even in its fallen state.



O. Alan Noble

The task before us is to hold each other up, to remind one another of the truth that is truer than our deepest misery, to attend to the gift God has given us, to accept that it is good even when we do not feel that goodness at all.

"The Virgin of the Rocks"
Da Vinci, c. 1486



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