

PLUM

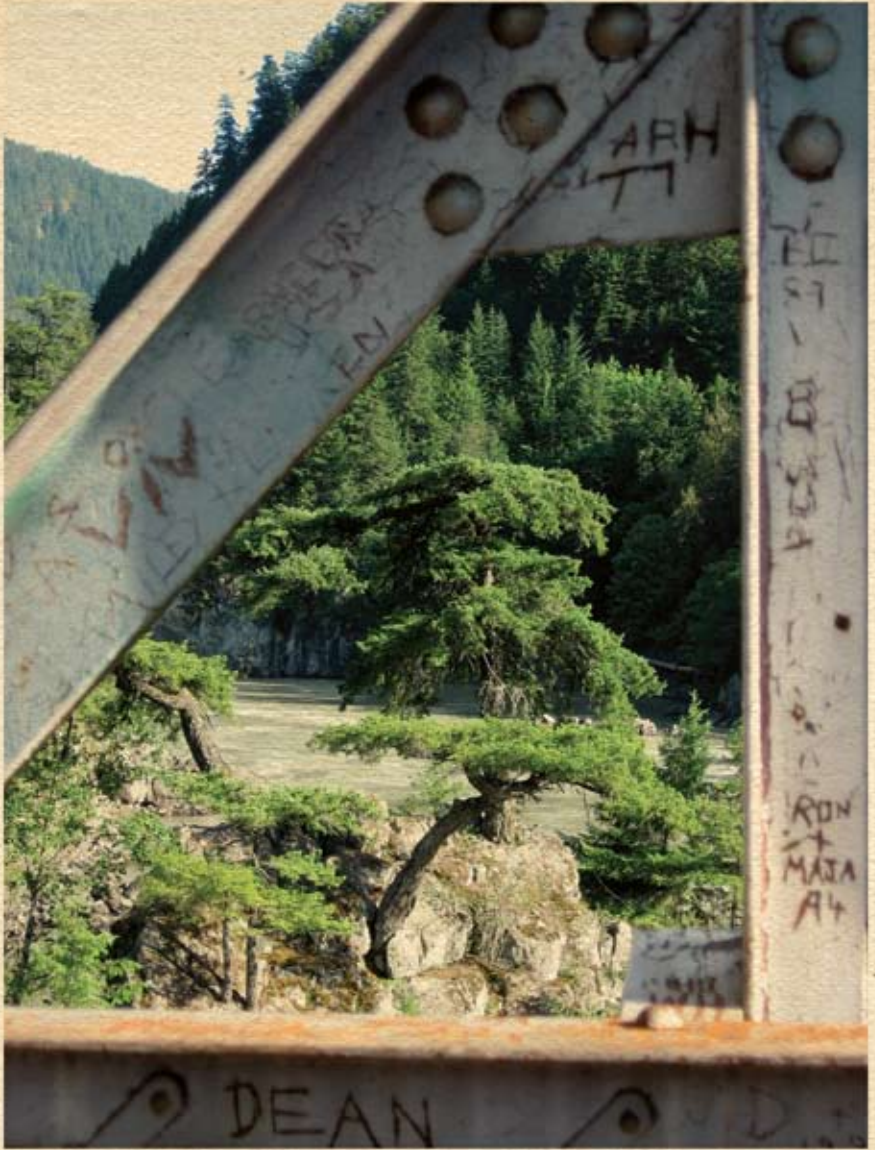
an arts journal



green

fall//winter 2009





cover image: dark cityscape sprout, ink and digital media by Kai Jansson,
www.kaijansson.com
above: alexandra bridge, photograph by Amanda Wagner

PLUM
an arts journal

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editors note:



It has been a long interval since our last issue was published. You might say we're blooming late in the season; or that we represent "old growth"; or that our field was fallow. Use whatever metaphor you like. We're a little late.

That said, it is exciting to see this issue finally come to fruition. When one of the members of our planning group planted the idea of "Green" over a year ago, we thought of all the beautiful directions artists and writers could take us: environmentalism, jealousy, love of money. We did not, however, foresee the economic meltdown and subsequent worldwide recession we are now experiencing. Interesting, too, that one of the first casualties of this economic downturn is environmental initiatives. (Local Arts journals are a close second.) The carbon tax is a non-issue, and economists in Canada are worried about a decline in worldwide demand for oil because of the effect it will have on our national economy. Jobs before climate. Greenbacks before greenspace.

This issue takes "Green" in a number of senses: environmental stewardship, growth, finance, fragility, newness of life. Essay by Rick Faw; fiction by Jacob Credo; poetry by Christina Manweller, Debbie Okun Hill, and Michael Lee Johnson; and artwork and photography by Kai Jansson, Rosalyn Vath, Amanda Wagner, Wendy Anderson, Forrest Wagner, and William Dereume, all provide fresh, thoughtful, and often ironic spins on "Green".

We hope you enjoy this issue of *PLUMb*. When you're finished with it, do your part by keeping the journal out of landfills: pass it on to a friend instead! Even though this journal is completely recyclable, we'd rather see Green—ahem—read.

Blessings,

Handwritten signature of Mark Smith in black ink.

Mark Smith, editor

PLUMb is semi-annual, not-for-profit arts journal providing encouragement and exposure to emerging Christian artists and writers. We are funded entirely through private sponsorship and group orders. To enquire email us at plumbplumb@gmail.com.

Submission guidelines can be found at plumb.ca. We accept submissions of poetry, short fiction, non-fiction, critical essays, photographs, or visual art. For interviews, or book, movie, or music reviews please query first. Help with query writing is available on our website, plumb.ca.

how to make money grow in tough times

// photo essay by Mark David Smith
pithosmith.com



ENJOY YOUR MONEY!
NOTHING COULD BE SIMPLER!



worshiping god by going green: why gardening, recycling, and water conservation are part of christian discipleship

//by Rick Faw
arocha.org/ca-en/index.html

As A Rocha's Education Director, Rick Faw has an opportunity to speak in many different venues. This past winter the Christian clubs at the University of Calgary collaborated on a week-long outreach held in the school's Student Union, called "Jesus and the End of..." Week. Each day focused on topics like global slavery, HIV/Aids and environmental degradation. In this context, Rick spoke on "Is Christianity to Blame for Environmental Degradation?" The following is small excerpt of his thoughtful talk.

If Jesus were to move into your neighbourhood, would he be "green"? Would he care about composting and oil sands and endangered species? Mass media references to environmental issues are increasingly common, but have you ever heard a preacher commend taking transit as a way to worship the Creator, or sustainable farming as kingdom work? Does one's faith affect one's care of creation at all? Should it? The answer is a resounding "Yes!" according to 25 leading UK environmentalists that were recently asked "What will save the planet?" Number two on their top 50 list was a plea for the world's faith groups to "[remind] us that we have a duty to restore and maintain the ecological balance of the planet." Are

In the Bible, the dominion given to humans over the rest of creation is a dominion of service and care. We're called to exercise our authority in such a way that the rest of creation is able to thrive and blossom.

Christians you know characterized by a prophetic, winsome, worshipful care of God's creation? Regrettably, in my experience, this is not the case. Why not?

While it's true that many Christians have read the Bible in ways that justify unsustainable, planet-degrading lifestyles, far better interpretations exist, interpretations which are much more consistent with the whole Biblical story. In the Bible, the dominion given to humans over the rest of creation is a dominion of service and care. We're called to exercise our authority in such a way that the rest of creation is able to thrive and blossom.

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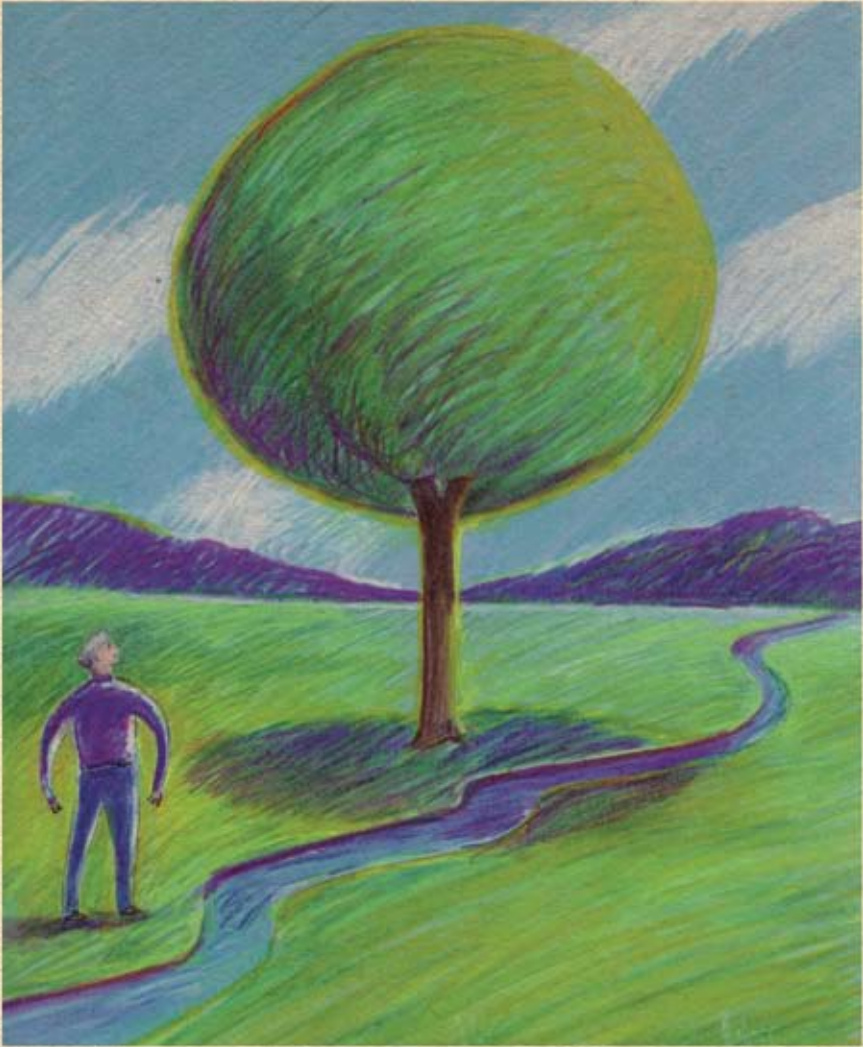
While humans are clearly given authority in the first chapter of the Bible, Genesis 2:15 unpacks how this authority is to be exercised. We are called to “work” and “take care of” creation. Elsewhere, these same Hebrew words (“abad” and “shamar”) are translated “serve” and “protect”. A contemporary parallel might serve to elucidate the intent of these words. In modern society the just rule of law is, normally, welcomed as a necessary pre-condition and foundation for the cultivation of vibrant, lively communities. We instinctively acknowledge the inappropriateness of harsh, dictatorial policing. Perhaps, then, we can understand that by analogy people are to be the ‘benevolent cops of creation’ that make possible the growing and flourishing of creation.

Moreover, our dominion is supposed to be modeled on Jesus. After all, we are made in the image of God. Jesus has authority over us and our lives. But Jesus doesn’t use his authority to exploit or oppress us. Rather, he does everything he can to enable us to truly live—to be the people we’re created to be, even if it means sacrificing himself to make this possible. Clearly this sort of dominion is a long way from the notion that the ‘ruling and subduing’ found in Genesis 1 is a license for people to heedlessly dominate the rest of creation. In fact, the image of a gardener, selflessly tending and caring for her domain, seems much more consistent with the Biblical expectation.

The Bible is a story about what God is doing in the world. It’s a familiar story: boy sees girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl back. God created the cosmos, including humanity, but humans rebelled and now God is winning back his lost love because the Creator will not abandon his creation. So the motivation for changing our lives is ultimately a response to what God is already doing. Conserving energy and all other aspects of creation care are ways to join the Creator in the healing of creation. It’s worship. This perspective is a far more powerful motivator than simple altruism or a desire for a better life for our children. Think of all the other actions (both good and bad) in the world motivated by the worship of false gods.

Worship is powerful. Within a spirit of worship, we are able to avoid the paralysis that comes from taking the fate of the world on one’s shoulders; the worshiper knows that the Creator has not given up on his creation.

psalm 1 tree, drawing by Wendy Anderson



green
grain
growing
grown
groan
gone

by Mark David Smith //
pithosmith.com //

a life in six

broken and recycled

//by Debbie Okun Hill
federationofpoets.com/biodebbieokunhill.htm

I dug deep, found a corner of your life
like dinner plate fragment
bone china face turned up
earthen ware on your cheeks
the rose faded, mud splattered
eyes turned inward
and when I took a garden hose
spirit-cleansed Earth's soil
behind your ears
you started to shine
reminded me of white gemstone
a cut of rock, waiting to be picked
to be put on display
recycled and admired



untitled
photograph by William Dereume
www.willyborg.deviantart.com



icefields parkway-banff
photograph by Forrest Wagner



the new guy

// by Jacob Credo
jacobcredo.blogspot.com

New guy. Seen him?

Yeah, I seen him. Ain't nothin'.

You ain't heard about J's crew? Put them boys down, he did.

Yeah, I heard. Don't matter.

New guys. All up in there like they own the place. Where do they find these cats, anyway. I gotta mind to lay him out right now, Mister I-can-do-no-wrong-and-I-am-God's-gift-to-this-place. Who's he think he is?

Hey, chill. He ain't nothin'. None o' them new guys ain't nothin'. Ever. They comes and goes, see? But we stay. It's like, he a temp, and we in the union. Know what I'm sayin'?

Hey it's cool, it's cool. Just look at him. He look so soft, makes me wanna break him. But I'm chillin'. Just watchin' him fall hisself, that's all.

Yo, check it. What is homeboy doin'? Flippin tables? Whippin'em all? Man! Dude gotta gasket blown or somethin'. He looks pissed, ha ha!

See, it's like I said. Like they owns the place. Let's go bust his head.

Naw, dog. Relax, okay? We ain't gotta do nothin'. Just watch.

Who dis?

His own peeps is bringin' him down.

Oh, man. That's dope, yo. Yo, check out homeboy now. They bringin' him down... to pin him up! Get it? Ha ha! Pin him up. Oh! There they go! Bang, Bang. Ooooo. That's gotta hurt!

Night-night, sweet prince! So that's that. No more new guy. What'ch'all doin' later?

I dunno. Thought I'd mess wit' blondie's head some more, maybe drop

some lines in the old king's head. What about you?

I'm just gonna make some popcorn, sit back and watch 'em kill each other.

Man, you do that every weekend. Don't you never—hey. You feel that?

Yeah, what was that?

That's like a earthquake or somethin'.

You hear anything about a earthquake for today? Ain't supposed to be no earthquakes today. Somebody's gonna get it for messin' up the schedule.

Oh wait. Look over there. At the hill.

Where?

There. Wit' the stone rolled back. Oh, man. Oh, man. You seein' what I'm seein'? Oh man. Are you seein' this? For real?

The new guy. He ain't stay dead. Aw, [Editor's note: insert colourful expletive here]!



last fortress
photograph by Rosalyn Vath
rosalynvath.com



keats island
photograph by Amanda Wagner

thumbs up for the environment

//by Debbie Okun Hill
federationofpoets.com/biodebbieokunhill.htm

She wears a green thumb
like a politically correct flag
cheering for her environment
waving it at politicians
until it becomes their garden platform
a composted melting pot to transform
the Canadian maple leaf
brown fallen images, ice-crushed
drained of autumn rouge blood
a small bud idea hibernating
turning evergreen in spring
the earthworms excreting
their recycled waste
producing fertile
Planet Earth soil
a better place to eat salad
mixed greens warming
on a small global plate



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good friday

//by Christina Manweller
christinamanweller.com

Stepping into the sun,
the mind rouses at a robin's prompt
eyes break to blue above.

Yet the darkness inside spreads
even now sweat and thorns congregate
in the heart; vinegar scuffs the throat.

The rock is still in place;
the eyes will not adjust
to what is coming, what is not
possible. Even so
see where the grass
inclines to green?

The wind chimes
on the balcony
today,
different
sounds in all
different directions—
my thoughts chase
after them.

by Michael Lee Johnson //
poetryman.mysite.com //

wind chimes



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red rocking chair

//by Michael Lee Johnson
poetryman.mysite.com

A red rocking chair
abandoned in a field
of freshly cut clover,
rocks back and forth—
squeaks each time
the wind pushes
at its back,
then,
retreats.

two in a pew

//script by Mark David Smith
pithosmith.com

Tom: Hey, welcome back from your conference.

John (*seating himself*): Thanks. But I don't remember telling you about it.

Tom: You've still got your Hi-my-name-is on.

John: My badge of honour. I am now a graduate of the "Financial Resource Optimization for Godly Generation of Income and Earnings Seminar".

Tom: The what? Wait... Financial Resource Optimization—FROGGIES?

John: Ribbit, Ribbit. That was our "money-vational" cheer. Say, you wanna buy some meal replacement bars?

Tom: What, you're selling Amway now? That's the Godly Income?

John: Hey, don't disrespect Amway. But no, you can relax. I'm not selling Amway. I'm selling Omway. I'm "On My Way". Get it? Omway? It's like Amway, but smaller. More opportunity for growth. And, actually, the Amway conference was full.

Tom: But why are you even interested in all this?

John: Oh, isn't it obvious. Look, with more money I can give more, do more for the Lord's service.

Tom: Well, I agree you could give more. You haven't been giving anything. You've been bumming bills from me for your tithe every week. Do you really think you're going to start giving more just because you have more? It doesn't usually work that way. Remember the widow and her two mites?

John: The guy running the conference had given away over a hundred thousand dollars of his own personal money. That's something. And he drives a Hummer. It's like the best of both worlds.

Tom: A Hummer? Not exactly the environmental choice. Are you sure this isn't more about envy than giving? Wanting what others have? And I should say an infinitesimal minority—

John: Maybe, but that's money that can do something, make something, change something. I want to make a difference. What good did the widow and her two spiders ever accomplish, anyway?

Tom: Not those kind of mites. And she's supposed to be our example: giving everything we've got. It isn't about the amount in the coffers. It's what the giving does to the spirit of the giver. We're the ones who need to be different. When we change, we're able to make change.

John: Hey, I like that. Catchy. "Make change..."

Tom: I didn't mean coins. Hey are you all right? You're looking a little green.

John: I think I'm going to be ill.

Tom: What, have I shattered your dreams about money?

John: No, it's not that. Remember the meal replacement bars?

Tom: Oh dear. How many did you eat?

John: Let's just say my sales went up dramatically this week.



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LEAD, FOLLOW, OR GET OUT OF THE WAY





reflected glory
photograph by Rosalyn Vath
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