

"Under Construction"

By Anne Shearer

"Two things will bring you to God, inspiration or desperation. For me, it was desperation."

How would you describe your faith life now?

"Constantly under construction."

"Find a higher power," someone told Sid. Sid realized the empty feeling was God's vie for attention, and he looked down to see the mess.

He started losing track of time in a church pew to sort through layers of rubble, and found they covered a foundation poured and prayed over by his mother. Growing up, he had first sprinkled that foundation with ash from cigarette butts he smoked during hooky from CCD. Drinking flooded it past recognition. He doesn't name the other materials bulldozed over the foundation, but they piled on in hopes they could cover the loneliness that refused to be buried.

That loneliness was God, Sid now says, sending a warning against the increasing debris.

Back in the pew, he dug and dug and found the foundation was still intact. Since burying hadn't worked, he started to build. He's been building since.

Some days the building rises steadily, other times he finds he's not actually working. He knows it'll never be perfectly finished, anyways. Without an end result to anticipate, he can only take pleasure in the rate of progress.

He says it's just doing right and staying away from bad that makes him feel good, but who ordered those desires?

He goes to the gym to keep busy. If he's not on task at his work site, he wanders off of it, and he doesn't like the debris he drags back when he returns. Though it's enticing to take a break, he finds he no longer enjoys time outside of the orange fencing he's set up. The layers he shoveled off lie outside that fencing, begging for attention. But, he's resolved: it's man's duty to keep your head down and work. *"Just take care of my family and, you know, do the right thing."* He's old enough to know where the sidestreets end, and he hopes his daughter studies the map drawn from his experience.

The gym has another perk: it's where he finds all his subcontractors. They each have their own construction sites, but they sweat together and compare projects, telling each other to try this siding or that flooring. His project is different with its CCD cigarette butts, but *"everybody has a little insight which helps."*

Artist Statement

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The Written Word

By Anne Shearer

I first heard of Sid as the silverback gorilla who gave my friend the workout of a lifetime. I now know him as the gruff, Bostonian gym rat who will become your third grandfather if you end up at the gym when he's there. You can find him at the Bennett Center every morning. I want to appreciate that he is neither faculty, staff, nor student. He is a community member by proximity only, but nevertheless is an enriching part of life at Gordon for those who know him.

This piece was created as part of the Gordon College Student Arts Collective in Spring 2024. Artists were tasked with telling the story of a Gordon community member through a medium of their choice. In selecting a Gordon community member for this project, I interviewed Sid because he had alluded to his faith life before, and I was curious to hear more. I asked him, "have you ever felt like God was trying to tell you something?"

Portraits of Subject and Artist by [Eden Grace Creative](#)

