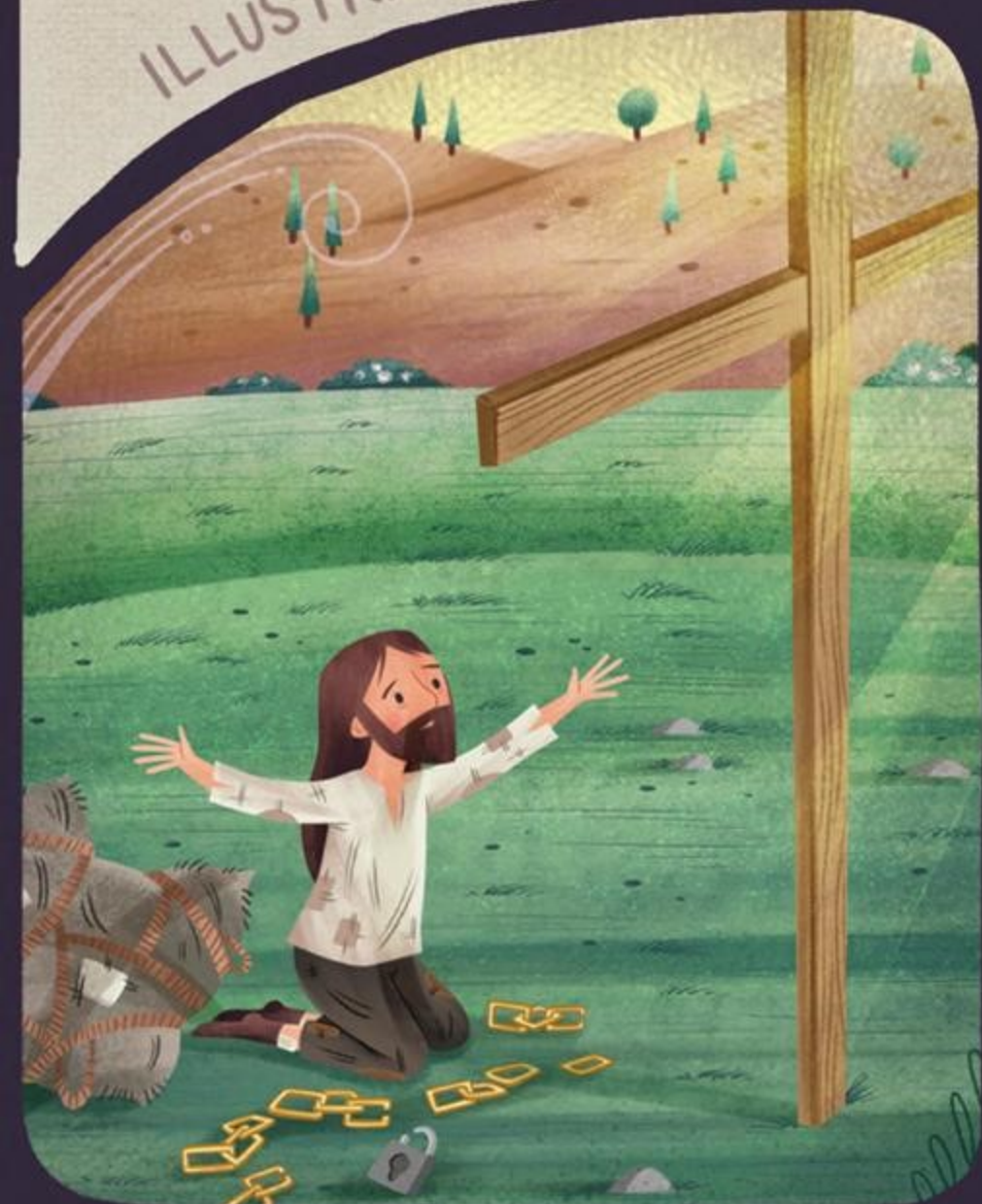


A POETIC RETELLING OF JOHN BUNYAN'S CLASSIC TALE

The Pilgrim's Progress

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KATYA LONGHI

BY ROUSSEAU BRASSEUR



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1

INTRODUCTION : THE CITY OF DESTRUCTION

*My guilt has overwhelmed me
like a burden too heavy to bear.*

PSALM 38:4 NIV

AS I WALKED THROUGH the wilderness of this world long ago,
My legs were growing weary and my pace grew quite slow.
So I sat down to rest in a den near a stream,
Where my heavy eyes shut, and I there dreamed a dream.

Now I saw in my dream a poor man with a Book.
Every time he would open its pages to look,
He could see himself clear, as if looking into a mirror,
But the reflection that appeared made him shudder with fear.
For his heart, like his clothes, was both filthy and black,
And there grew an unbearable burden on his back.
Still he read what his Book said again and again,
Yet his burden grew greater—for this burden was his sin.

Guilt and shame weighed him down, his heart grew heavy too,
Till he broke out with a dreadful cry, "Whatever shall I do?"
In his mind there flashed visions of fire from the sky
That destroyed his whole city, and this caused him to cry.

For a very long time, he could do nothing but weep,
And he knew that the nighttime would bring him no sleep.
But at sunset he knew that soon his family would worry,
So he stood, wiped his tears, and set off in a hurry.

"Where have you been?" his wife asked. "You've been gone all day long."
But the grief on his face told her something was wrong.
He opened his Book and tried hard to explain,
Yet his family seemed to think he was going insane.
"Go to sleep!" his wife said. "Rest will settle your brains."
"I cannot," he exclaimed, "or we'll perish in the flames!
Oh my wife! Oh my children!" the man cried as he quivered,
"We must go now and seek out a way to be delivered!"
"Like Mom said," his son echoed, "a night's rest is all you need.
Besides, Father, you can't believe everything that you read."
"Head to bed with all speed!" his youngest child agreed,
"Sweet dreams will indeed help to soothe you—guaranteed."
With fear in his voice and tears bursting from his eyes,
Christian said between sobs, although he tried not to cry,



“But I’ve read that this city will soon burn up in fire!”
But they ignored him and left him and called him a liar.

Behind his burdened back, his family scoffed at him and sneered,
“Dad is being ridiculous; there’s nothing we should fear.”
“Our city’s safe and secure, there is no danger here!”
“It’s obvious that Dad is just not thinking very clear.”
Thus his family, with disbelieving hearts and harsh words,
Disrespected and neglected the Book’s words they had heard.
Yet Christian prayed for them daily as he wandered alone
In the fields near the forest not far off from his home.

When his eyes finally dried up, he would read more and more,
Though each day was more troubling than the day just before.
Day by day, night by night, until days turned to weeks,
But still tears for his sin flowed like streams down his cheeks.
Townsfolk mocked him and his Book; they were all misbehaved,
Yet he read still and cried, “What shall I do to be saved?”
Christian cried out to be saved, both his life and his soul—
Till a man named Evangelist came to him with a scroll.





2

UNROLL THE SCROLL : EVANGELIST

Who warned you to flee the coming wrath?

MATTHEW 3:7 NLT

STROLLING OUT FROM the forest, a fellow appeared
With a warm friendly smile, pointy moustache, and beard.
Evangelist inquired, “What causes all your tears?”
Christian: “I am burdened by sin, and my heart is full of fears.
For this Book I am reading has shown me my sin
And the danger that I, as a sinner, am in.
I have prayed night and day for some way to be saved,
For this burden will soon sink me lower than the grave.
But where I can hide or save my life, I don’t know—
Please help me, good sir, I don’t know where to go.”

Then Evangelist pulled out with his finger and thumb
A scroll that unrolled, and read, “Run from the wrath to come!”



Christian: "But where must I run to escape from this wrath?"

Evangelist: "Fly to the narrow gate down this narrow path!

Discipleship Path was carved out by the Lord

So that we might be rescued, transformed, and restored.

The journey will be perilous, as you will soon see,

But far more dangerous is the wrath from which you must flee!"

Then he rolled up the scroll and tied it with a string

As he whistled a minor tune and began to sing:

This world, so dark and full of sin,

So soon shall pass away—

In fire the Lord shall come again;

Prepare for that great day!

His holy kingdom is at hand—

Soon fire will devour this land;

Before His throne you too will stand!

The Judge is at the door!

This world's cheap pleasures shall not last;

Eternity draws near.

The thundering of the trumpet blast

Shall ring in every ear.

Fly from His wrath and run with haste!



Prosperity

Vain
GLORY

Flatterville

VANITY
FAIR

Conceit

*For shortly you must see His face—
The Judge is at the door!*

*Today you may with your own eyes
See Christ come in His wrath—
This warning you must not despise.
Fly down this narrow path.
The danger you are in is great!
Run quickly to the narrow gate—
One minute more you must not wait!
The Judge is at the door!*

Believing the truthfulness of what he had heard,
Christian rushed from that place without one more word.
His footsteps were heavy as he stumbled down that track
With the Book in his hands and the burden on his back.
Christian's neighbors and children and even his wife
Heard him cry as he ran, "Life! Life! Eternal life!"
But without looking back, as fast as he could,
He fled from the city and into the dark woods.



3

TROMP THROUGH THE SWAMP : DISCOURAGEMENT

*He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
out of the mud and mire;
he set my feet on a rock and
gave me a firm place to stand.*

PSALM 40:2 NIV

NOW TWO NEIGHBORS of Christian's ran chasing him down
And tried hard to persuade him to come back to town.
Sir Stubborn inquired, "What's with all this fuss?"
Mr. Fickle then echoed, "Come back now with us!"
"Not a chance!" replied Christian, "for that city is doomed,
And with fire from heaven it will soon be consumed!
If I turn back, I'll never reach the kingdom of heaven,
Or be freed from my burden, or have my sins forgiven."
"You would leave all this world," Sir Stubborn rudely said,
"For a make-believe kingdom you've made up in your head?"

