

Week 2

I've been meaning to ask... where does it hurt?



Seen

by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Inspired by 1 Samuel 1:1-18

Digital painting with mixed media collage

When I first started creating art for this series, I began by painting a collection of small abstract pieces using acrylic paint, pastel, and graphite. I cut small squares of canvas, taped them down to my art table, and began painting—moving intuitively from one piece to the next. My goal was to capture the emotional landscape of courageous conversations. The colors represent moments of warmth and connection, as well as dissonance and contrast. Like our voices, each hue bleeds into the next. The marks and textures evoke the rhythm of dialogue—rambling, sputtering, persuasive, bold. In these visual

orchestras, I see fluidity and possibility. After I took photos of each painting, I used my stylus and Ipad to digitally draw imagery inspired by each scripture—placing my subjects in the midst of these emotional landscapes.

In Hannah, I see a woman who has been mocked, shamed, diminished, and ignored. However, she refuses to be silenced. In the presence of her pain, she grits her teeth, pours her heart out before God, and insists that we see her: “Just look at my pain and remember me!” (1 Samuel 1:11) I decided to render her body as fading into the scene to symbolize the invisibility she feels, and also the vulnerable transparency she exudes.

When I look at this image, I remember when I have been Peninnah. Whose pain have I mocked? I remember when I have been Elkanah. Whose pain have I questioned? I remember when I have been Eli. Whose pain have I dismissed? And then I remember when I have been Hannah, and I look for who is screaming in my own midst.

Where does it hurt? When I ask this question, I'll remember to also say: “I see you.”

—Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity