



Life's a
JOURNAL

[a spiral-bound account of a life being lived]

A MotherHen News Publication



Designed in Small Town, Canada

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[a spiral-bound account of a life being lived]

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Life's Anecdotes & Assiduities



Have you ever experienced the Proust Effect?

You get a whiff of something—for better or for worse—that suddenly makes you feel as if you're ten-years-old again:

Or, you're racking your brain trying to figure out why that unusual smell seems almost familiar—and suddenly you're inundated with memories of a time or event that had been long ago forgotten:

When I wrote *Making Scents of My Childhood*, I pulled up a couple-dozen aromas that came to mind quickly and rhymed easily; however, how could I not make mention of fresh-mown grass? French fries and wood shavings, reminiscent (see what I did there?) of our small-town Fall Fair? And what of Photo copy ink? Or those glossy pages in our third-grade readers? Turns out, the area of our brain that processes scent also processes emotions and memory: God made us like this on purpose—every one of us, to some degree or other—and there's really nothing (all that much) wrong with me, after all: Phew!

You might say that we're all just a bit scent-imental :)

P.S.: I started reading Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*. I was enjoying the read; but it's a big book: A REALLY big book: And it was just taking too long to pull me in:

I only read at 183 WPM, and this book boasts 1,259,089!

I did the math, put the book aside (for now), and picked up something else: Something decidedly and considerably smaller.



MAKING SCENTS OF MY CHILDHOOD

Gas and old leather—Dad's shed.
Crisp wind-dried sheets—my bed.
Home-made jam, sweet and runny.
Fresh baked bread with Bugs Bunny.
Scent-memories, straight to my head!

Lilacs—the fragrance of May.
Wild roses in June soon make way
For dill, savoury, and mint
And the smell of the wind
On kids who've played outdoors all day.

Oil n' tar (from those trips to Tranquille).
Skidoo gas and that light-headed feel.
An old book—worn and musty;
Wood stove heat—warm and dusty.
Christmas trees and the holiday meal.

These smells, they transport me through time;
So, I still hang my sheets on the line,
Ride behind a skidoo,
Buy old books (not a few!)
Plant a garden, and bake fresh bread for mine.



A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF WALTER KITTY

An Original Story



Chapter One—Walter Comes to Stay



Walter didn't always live with the Kings. In fact, the earliest part of young Walter's existence remains quite a mystery. Ah! But I digress! Let's simply start at the beginning—the beginning that we *know*.

One cool autumn morning, the pretty young florist at the Country Flower Shop, stepped out the shop's front door to display her sandwich boards of daily deals and promotions. As she backed away from the building to surmise her freshly sketched posters, she heard a faint *me-ow* from the truck parked on the street side behind her. Me-ow...me-ow.... where was that coming from? Then she saw him—a wet and bedraggled tuxedo kitten, sitting on the wheel of a large yellow pickup truck. Guessing that the unfortunate creature had just very recently experienced a gruelling ride into town in the well of that wheel, the pretty young florist did the only thing she knew to do. She rescued the poor little kitten.

Carrying him into the shop, she gently cleaned the mud from his nose and paws, and then ran next door to Marshall's Department and Grocery, where she purchased a tin of cat food. When the small kitten had settled down enough to enjoy the dinner she provided, the pretty young florist scribbled a note of explanation, which she then secured under the windshield wiper of the yellow pickup truck.

Now, why the farmer in the yellow pickup truck only snickered at the note from the pretty young florist, and why he then crumpled it up, threw it in his pickup box and drove away, will likely remain a mystery. Perhaps he was glad to be rid of the kitten. Or perhaps the kitten wasn't his in the first place, belonging to a neighbouring farm; and the driver of the yellow pickup truck was not even aware that it had endured such an expedition that cool autumn morning.

Whatever the reason for this set of circumstances, it soon became clear to the pretty young florist and the shop owner that a flower shop was *no* place for a curious and playful kitten! But what could be done? Soon another

sandwich board was added to the plethora on the sidewalk—this new one announcing the little lost kitten, and his desperate plight. Would someone recognize the kitty, and return him to his home? Or might there be another answer to their dilemma?

By mid-afternoon, both the pretty young florist and the shop owner had run themselves silly, trying to keep an eye on and care for a kitten who wanted to explore everything in a shop filled with wonderful things to explore! Just as the two women were deliberating the dilemma and possible options—one which might have seen the kitten taken to the veterinary clinic and the possibility that they would find him a new home—into the shop walked Mrs. King.

Now, Mrs. King was quite a regular in this particular florist shop—for several years, and for several reasons. Firstly, she liked flowers. All kinds of flowers. And lots of flowers. Mrs. King grew gazillions of flowers in her own gardens at home, and would sell flowers from her garden to the Country Flower Shop. Secondly, she also really liked the pretty young florist and all the beautiful ways she arranged and decorated with the flowers which she cut in Mrs. King's garden.

So, when Mrs. King walked into the flower shop that autumn afternoon, and when she saw the dilemma the pretty young florist and the shop owner were in, all the while attempting to do their work and run a business, what do you think she did? Well, she just scooped up that little kitten and, tucking him into her sweater, announced that when the rightful owner was located, the kitten could then be found at her house.

Now, quite truthfully, Mrs. King never had wanted anyone to come and claim that small kitten. And quite providentially, no one ever did. In one afternoon, young Walter (for that is what she named him) had become as much a part of Mr. and Mrs. King's home as their own children had been when they had first come to live there, so many years before.

That winter, following Walter's arrival, was an exceptionally difficult one for Mrs. King, who had fallen sickly and house-bound. While Mr. King went whistling off to his job at the paper mill each day, Mrs. King would curl up in her favourite chair, a cup of coffee in her hand and Walter on her lap.

Three naps a day.

Three naps a day was plenty of time for poor Mrs. King to dream about springtime, being well again, and working her garden plot to its usual state of perfection. It was also plenty of time for young Walter to dream about what he might become and what adventures might be had.

(To be continued)



good Crafternoon!

Why I LOVE owls!

1. they're fluffy and so cute!
2. they like to take naps.
3. they are very wise.
4. they are quiet and don't always talk about how wise they are.
5. if you don't like them, they don't give a hoot!

HERE'S A FUN ONE
FOR YOUR PRESCHOOLERS

You can make this cute little owl using an empty toilet paper tube, paint, glue, and crayons. Don't forget the googly eyes!

My pattern and instructions are on the next page!

WHEN YOU VISIT ME, YOU CAN FIND EACH OF THESE OWLS IN MY GARDEN SHED!



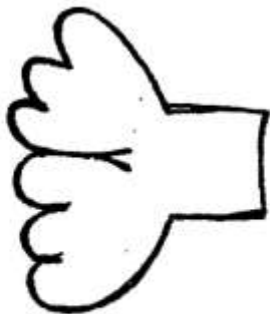
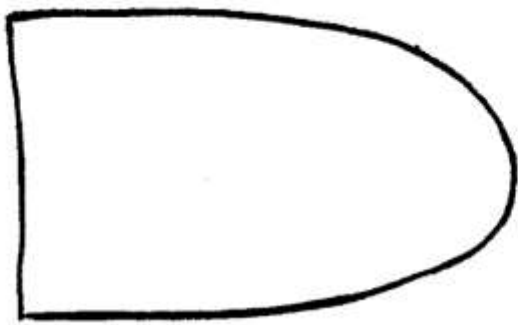
Step 1
Print this page or copy
the pattern pieces onto paper

Step 2
fold the paper tube in,
to create the owl's ears.
A dab of hot glue works well,
here!

Step 3
Littles love to paint the
Paper tube and colour the
pattern pieces

Step 4
cut out the pieces and
assemble the owl

Step 5
don't forget the googly eyes!



Reading the Classics



JANE OF LANTERN HILL

By Lucy Maude Montgomery

A well-known Canadian author, Lucy Maud's writing career took off in 1908 with a series of novels, beginning with the publishing of the beloved *Anne of Green Gables*. In addition to this series, she has 20 novels, 530 short stories, 500 poems, and 30 essays to her credit. Wow!

Okay, so, on second thought, I won't even attempt an introduction beyond that. But I *will* leave you with the [Dictionary of Canadian Biography: L.M. Montgomery](#) as recommended reading.

As a kid, I wasn't a reader; as in, at all. I really only learned to enjoy a good book while reading to my own sweet babies; and on discovering the joys of classic literature, I haven't been able to stop.

Lucy Maude Montgomery's *Jane of Lantern Hill* is a completely enjoyable story—mellow enough for just-before-lights-out and yet engaging enough to draw me in, making me want to read just one more chapter. In this regard, I would say that her writing style is contentedly similar to that of Jan Karon, my favourite contemporary and comfort read.

So, in a nutshell . . .

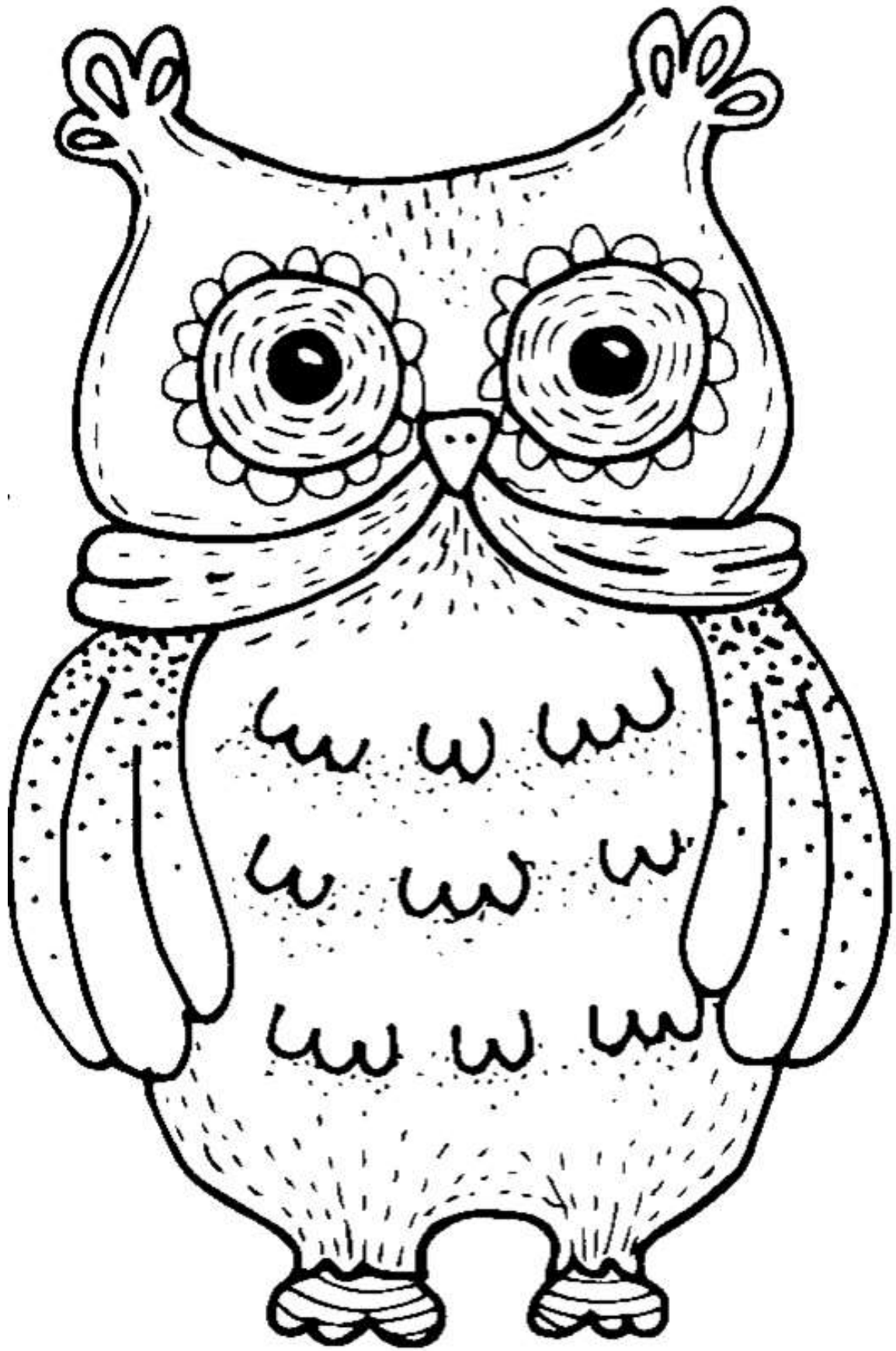
Young Jane lives with her mother and grandmother in Toronto, having been led to believe that her father is dead. When she learns that this is not the case—that he is indeed alive and well on Prince Edward Island and desirous that Jane spend the summer there with him—her lifelong yearning to know her dad and to be loved and accepted by him is finally realized, and what fun it is to watch this little girl blossom into a capable and confident young lady.

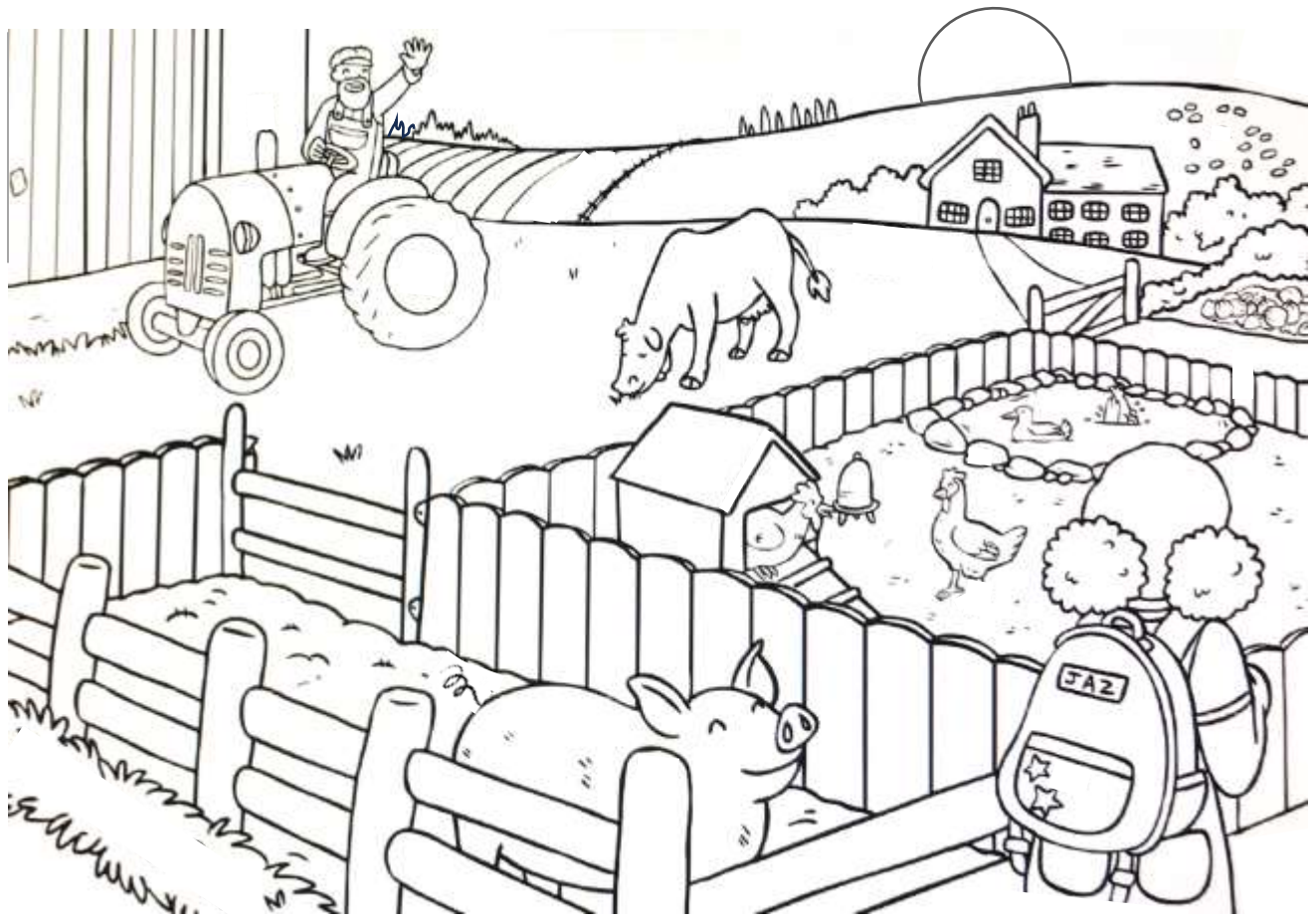
This story boasts a malicious old woman, a meddling aunt, and a sweet and deserving orphan, who each, in turn, get their comeuppances. And all this, wrapped up in an ending that absolutely warms the heart.



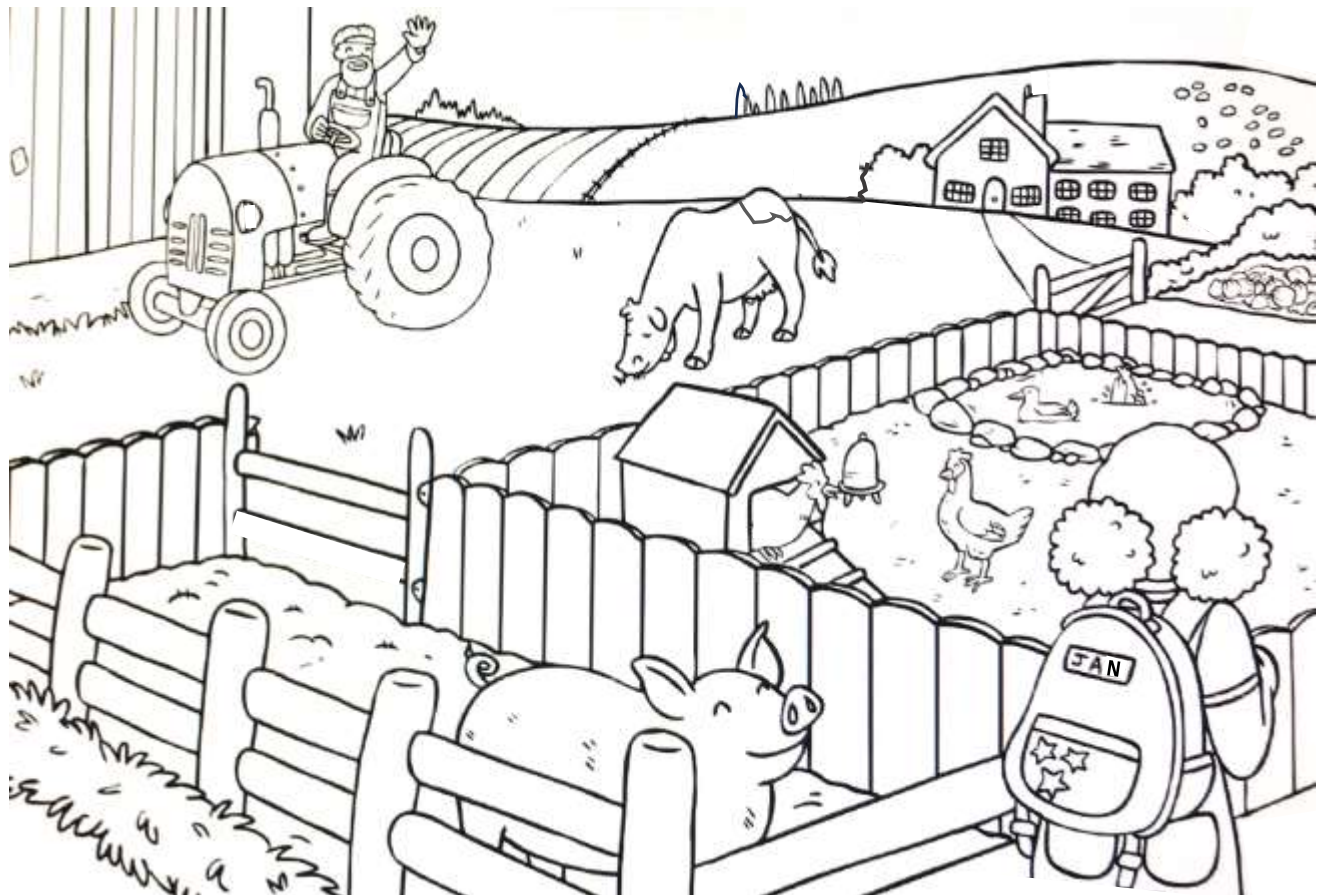
*When you re-read a classic, you don't see more in the book than you did before;
you see more in yourself than there was before;*

—Clifton Fadiman





Can you spot 24 differences between these pictures?





CRACK THE CODE!

	1		2		3	4	P	5	A	1	6	R	7	8	9	2		
10	11	1	1	12		8		11		8		11				5		
	7		5		13	9	11	14	4	11	15	16	11	17				
18	5	1	3	19		15		15		13		8			20			
	14		3	11	20	11	1	5	7		5	21	13	11				
22		3		14		9		16		21		13			9			
5	7	4	19	5	10	11	16		7	13	15	C	11	E	9	N	16	T
1		5		2		23	24	24		5		16			13			
18	8	15	1	24	9		24	4	11	1	5	16	24	1				
19		11		9		13		4		16		11			11			
24	9	15	11		11	9	25	24	12	11	17		17					
13		1		2		26		3		1	5	17	8	24				
3	18	5	7	7	22	1	13	8	16		9		5					
11		22		13		5		16		3	15	24	1	11				
	5	16	16	11	18	4	16	11	17		11		12					

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

LORD, GIVE US TODAY

Our Daily Bread

PIZZA CRUST

Combine:

1 Tbsp instant yeast
4 Tbsp sugar
1 tsp each—basil, oregano,
& garlic powder

1 tsp salt
2 Tbsp olive oil
2 cups warm water

Add 4 cups flour, adding up to 1/2 cup more, until dough is workable but not dry. Knead for 5 minutes, cover and let rise for at least an hour.
Enough crust for 2 large pizzas.



When I was growing up—or, during my teen years, at any rate—we ate a lot of pizza: Mom loved it, and she knew it wasn't junk food, as many might have believed, back in the day: Veggies, mostly home-grown, on a homemade wholewheat crust; occasionally there was meat—ground beef, salami, or something else:

Perfectly balanced nutrition:

Now we use this quick-rise instant yeast which requires no soaking, speeding the crust-making process along: But still, it does require a bit of rise time, which always seemed at a premium for Mom, back then: Her pizza crust was often pulled from a batch of bread dough that was already on the rise, and even more often it was a simple biscuit-type dough that could be ready in a hurry: Either way, it was always delicious:

The last Christmas Eve that we and our kids spent together with Mom in her own little apartment, I asked her what we should bring—what was she hungry for? She didn't have to think long:

"Pizza: Could you bring pizza?"

And so we did :)



TRAVEL & ADVENTURE



The Ancient Forest in North Central British Columbia sits on traditional First Nation territory and is BC's newest park.

Located mid-way between Prince George and McBride, it's a perfect day-trip from either end, and a must-stop for those traveling this stretch of the iconic Yellowhead Highway.

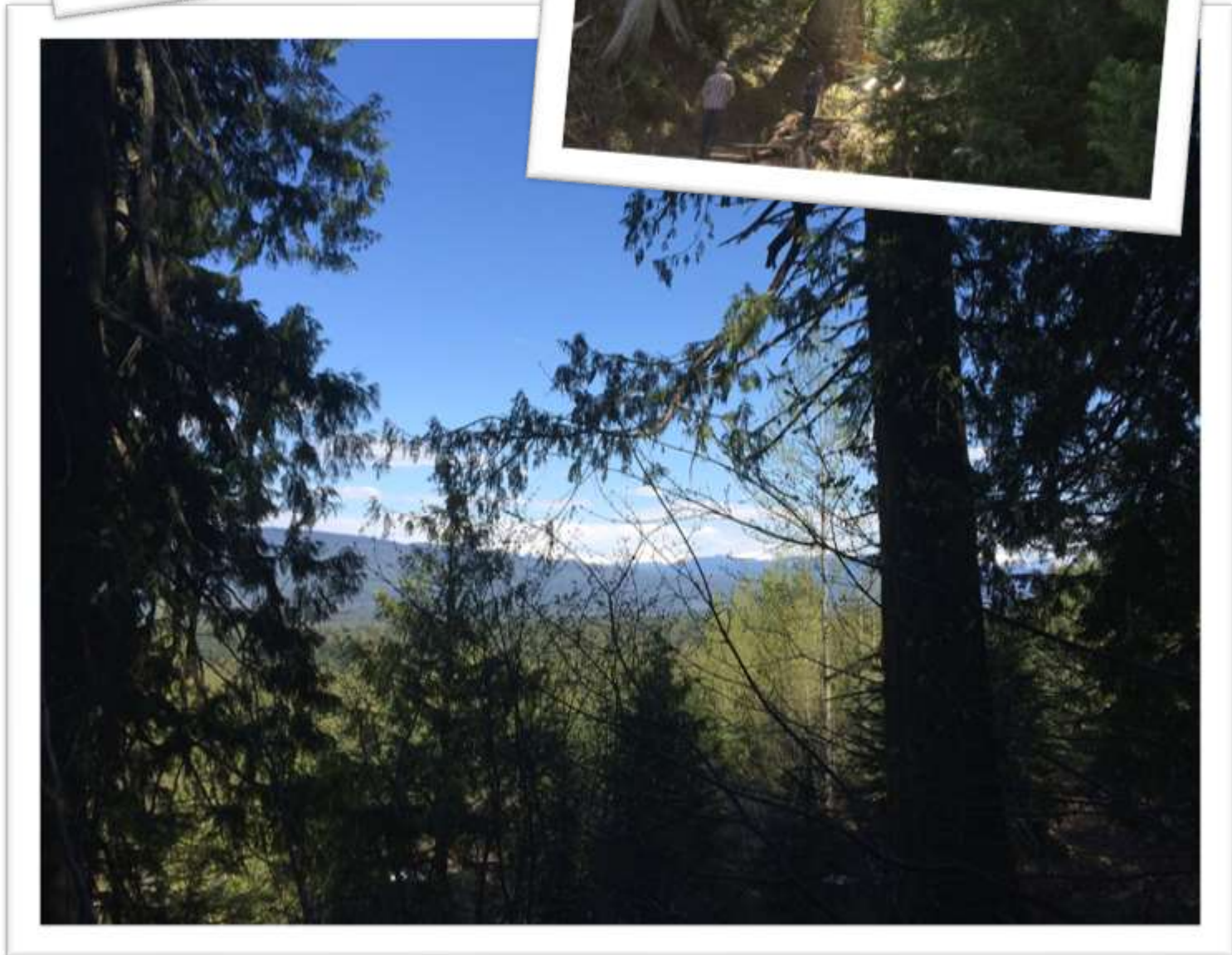
It's been almost a decade since our visit in May 2015, and looking at the photos other travelers have posted online, I'm thinking it's time for another trip—in the summer, this time, when the undergrowth is more lush. However, the 1000-year-old Western Red Cedars are undoubtedly the same awe-inspiring wonders, no matter the season!





Just imagine my disappointment on learning that this exquisite little spring flower, blooming so gracefully on the edge of a sparkling mountain stream, is actually called Skunk Cabbage!





This particular road trip will always make my favourites, since it's the last one we did together with both our adult kids prior to them acquiring families of their own.

It's also the one on which I badly injured a knee by descending the mountain trail with knees locked, thereby forcing my patella (or kneecap) over my femur (that's the thighbone).

Word to the wise, here: always keep a slight bend in the knees when walking downhill. Trust me on this.



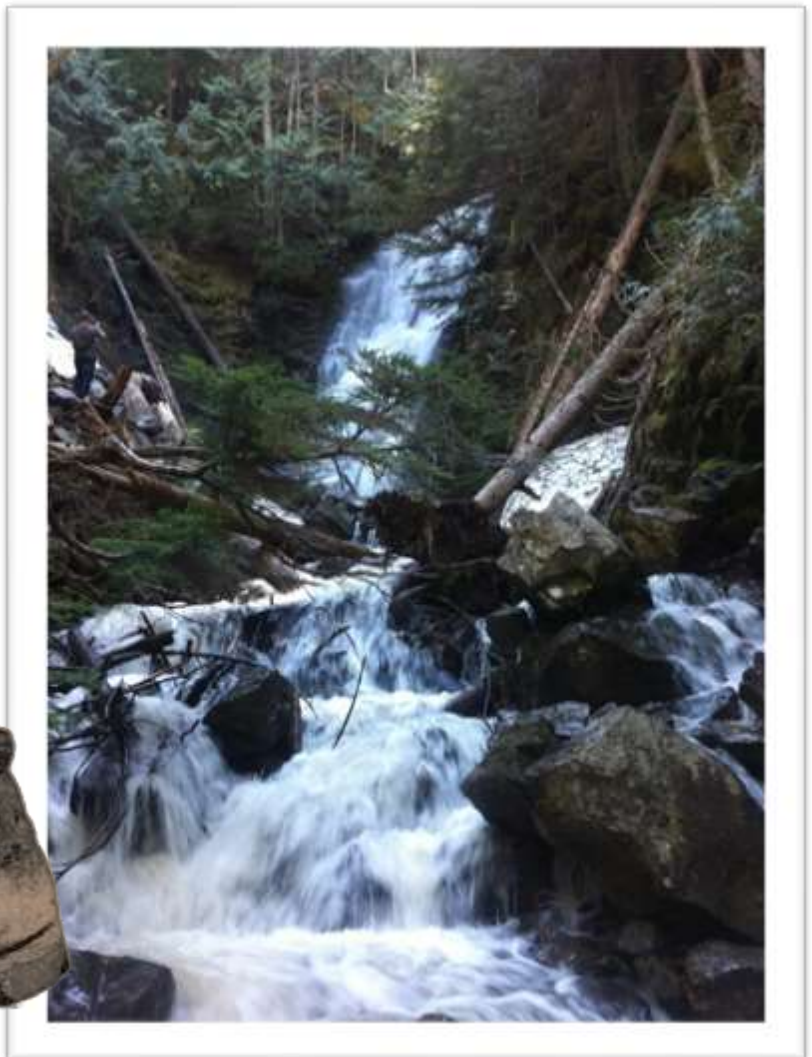
WANT A CLOSER LOOK?

Check out these links!

[VisitNorthEastBC](#)

[IheidliTenneh](#)

[TripAdvisor](#)



My husband and I were both brought up to re-use things: Indeed, the hunt and the refurbishing afford us pleasures untold: That said, I would credit the trait as much to genetics as to training—half our own children have acquired the gene: The other half is still in training :)

One day, my daughter called: "Is Dad at home? And would he mind picking up a gun cabinet from the dump?" I answered that he was at home and wouldn't mind at all: Now, I know that I really shouldn't answer for him like that: It's been my undoing on more than one occasion: However, in my defense, it's not like I'd just promised he'd fetch a 700-pound piano: But that's a story for another time:

When my daughter and her dad arrived home with the cabinet, I was in shock: I thought, "What was she thinking? I certainly would have left it right where it was!" But after Dad had replaced some wood, hung the doors back on their hinges, finished the inside back of the cabinet with 3-inch wood slats, to create the look, and daughter had brought me up to speed with a few images on Pinterest, I began to catch the vision: And since said gun cabinet was already sitting in my garage, I offered to do the restoration work, which offer she graciously accepted:


There wasn't any glass in the doors, which was just fine, since she wanted chicken wire in them, anyway: I removed the heavy bolt-type lock and filled the holes: also filled in holes where the original handles had been: Actually, I filled in a lot of holes and irregularities—I seem to be quite practiced with paintable silicone and spackle:

I wish now that I had a photo of it while it was still laying, like a corpse, in the pickup box: Just picture, if you will, dark brown wood stain and general wear from use and storage over the years, as well as general damage from falling off the back of a pickup truck onto the wood pile: However, my daughter's search for a cabinet that would fit her kitchen, rescued this piece from the rubbish pile: and the repairs, silicone, spackle, cute little bun feet, chicken wire, and a couple coats of Fusion Mineral Paint in Inglenook gave her dump find new life! I love that!!

things we keep



I cannot ever restore an item like this—rescued from the rubbish pile—without a keen sense of awe and gratitude to my saviour, Jesus, who rescued me and fixed me up, giving me hope and purpose. And I am eternally thankful!



Keeping me in

STITCHES

← This particular Dresden block was stitched by my Gramma Elias, back in the late 60's or early 70's. I think that maybe she had begun stitching them when she lived with Dad and Mom; Then, many years later, Mom gave us girls each one of Gramma's originals along with the instructions and enough fabric scraps to each make our own quilt. Surprisingly, I stuck with it and sewed together another 11 blocks (there should have been at least twice that many to make any sort of impression) and backed my quilt with a piece of fabric my mother-in-law sent to me from Bolivia in 1985.

This, my first feeble attempt at quilting—and it's really rather ugly, to be honest—is still a special keepsake. I love it, I hate it, and I can never let myself get rid of it!

Since recently discovering that some of the fabric is literally worn out and tearing apart, I now keep the quilt secured in a duvet cover—where I don't ever have to look at it



Not to be discouraged

by that first attempt, I pieced together a few more quilts for my kids over the years; though finally admitting that piecing at a machine was just not ever going to be my thing.

That said, I LOVE the hand-quilting—especially when it includes sisters, a pot of coffee, and a whole lot of singing.



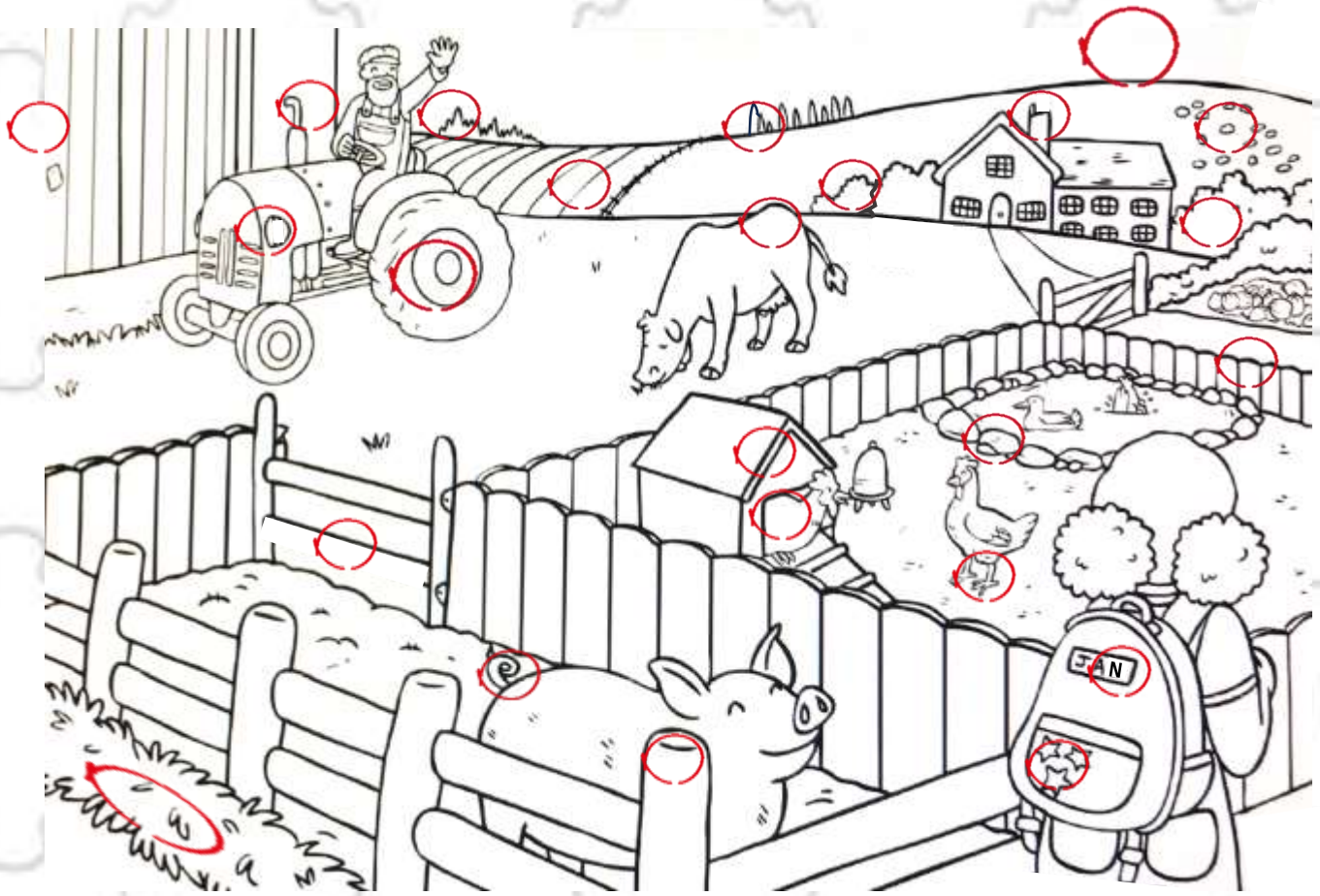
Lord willing, there will be more of that before the last of us can no longer see to thread a needle!



In recent years, I've taken up English Paper Piecing. I've always liked hand stitching, and thanks to my girl for getting me started with this method—she just might make a quilter of me, yet.

In fact, she and I are doing this project together: Whenever we cut out pieces for a hexie flower, we cut out two—one for each of us. In the end, we'll have matching quilts! :)

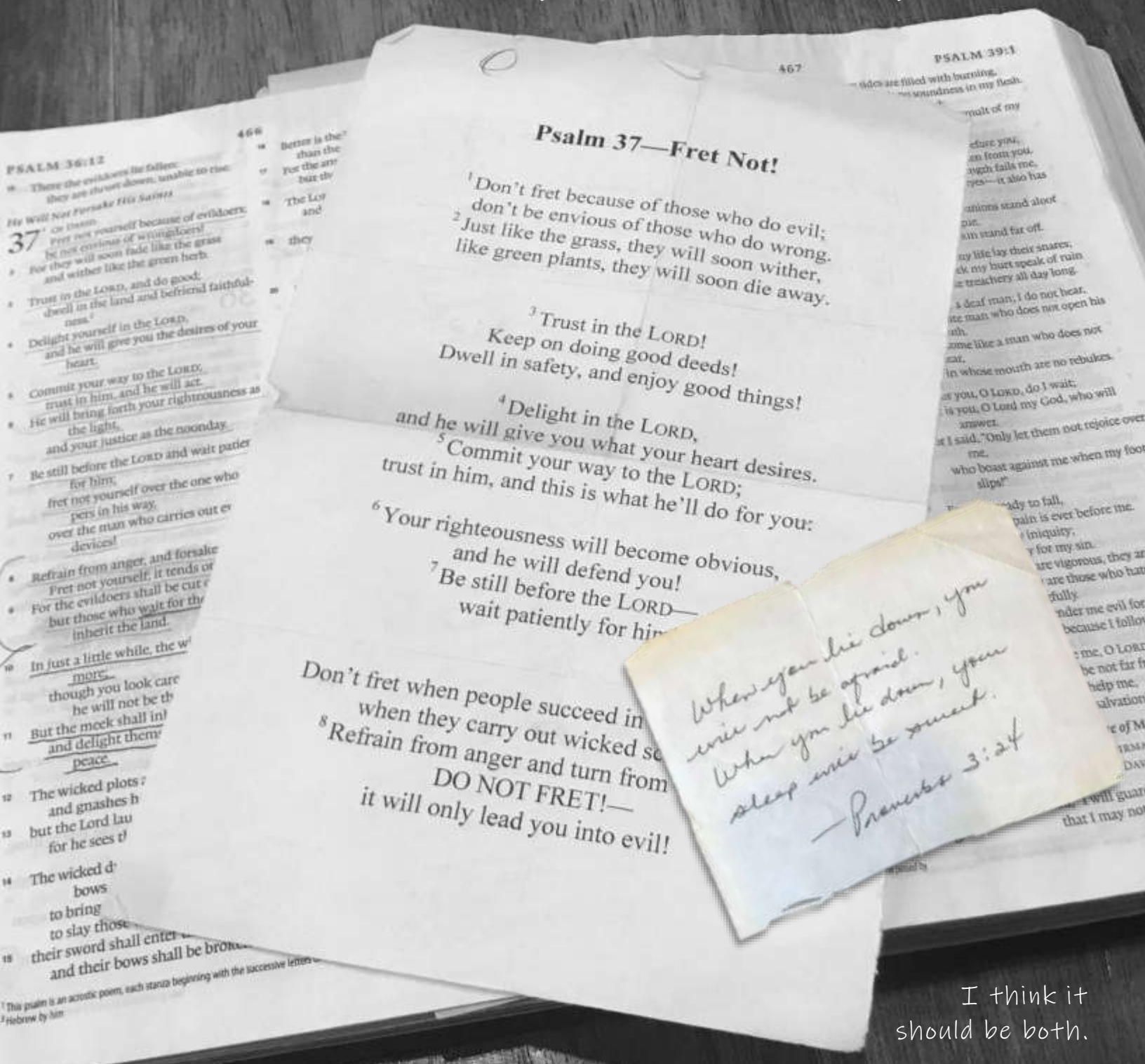
Solution to Spot the Differences on page 11



Solution to Crack-the-Code on page 13

1=R, 2=G, 3=S, 4=P, 5=A, 6=K, 7=L, 8=I, 9=N, 10=B, 11=E, 12=Y, 13=U, 14=X,
15=C, 16=T, 17=D, 18=M, 19=H, 20=V, 21=Q, 22=F, 23=Z, 24=O, 25=J, 26=W.

I once witnessed a preacher, in a spontaneous object lesson, snatch up a Bible from the front pew and, holding it over his head, shake it open. The woman to whom the Bible belonged gasped and turned several shades of red, as a plethora of papers, Kleenex, and book marks fluttered to the floor like so many feathers from a goose. The flustered preacher turned his own shades of red as he fumbled with the now-empty book, finally stammering, "Is this a Bible or a filing cabinet?!"



When you lie down, you will not be afraid.
When you lie down, you will sleep in peace.
—Proverbs 3:24

I think it should be both.

As well as a notebook, a cross-reference, and a memoire. It should not only be free of dust, it should be fairly worn from use. If I were on trial for being a Christian, and my Bible were an exhibit, I hope it would provide enough evidence to convict me.

