

List of Artworks

1.

Nescht (Caregiver), Kapp (Zealot) un Bannert (Posturer) and Bascht (Vain)

Wool Yarn (77 Warp Strings); Goat Hair; Bonnet (Given To My Sister By My Grandmother); Prayer Kapp (Bought By My Grandmother); Twigs And Sticks I Picked (From A Pine Tree); Wood My Dad Cut Down (That My Grandparents Could Have Touched); PLA (I Printed)

2022

2.

Naame (Reputation)

Linen Warp (As The Bible Instructed); Wool Yarn; Fine Gold Rayon (Knot Easy To Work With); Acrylic Blend Yarns; Bible (John 3:16, I Corinthians 12:8, John 6:37, Revelation 22:21, I Corinthians 7:19); Highlighter; Colored Pencil

2022

3.

Creamed Beads (Wilma's Rope)

Wool (Felted To Ropes); Plastic Beads (Green Like Peas); Pots And Strainer (Taken From My Grandmother's Kitchen Decorations); Merino Yarn; Wool And Rayon Yarn; Cords Of Affliction (Twisted Monofilament)

2022

4.

Barbed Yarn (Wallace's Ladder)

Virgin Wool (Sheared from Grandparent's Abandoned Lamb); Cotton Yarn; Monofilament (Spiraling); Wire; Reclaimed Nails (Old And Rusted); Rayon; Cords Of Affliction (Twisted Monofilament)

2022

Purgatory
Chad Troyer
Senior Thesis

Purgatory is where my grandparents are. Purgatory, often described, is this halfway point between heaven and hell. It is for those who never knew god, those who did not live a good life, or those who still need to be purified (or are incapable of achieving unity with god). It is an easily accessible place: the living can still have impact on the deceased (through plenary indulgence), or the dead can work their way to heaven by good deeds. Purgatory is the last place to gain redemption for earthly sins. Once the deceased are redeemed, god extends an escape rope, or Jacob's Ladder, with which they can climb to heaven. If their earthly sins are not redeemed, then they must go to hell and suffer eternal damnation apart from god. Purgatory offers its loiterers a binary path, one of redemption and salvation, the other a path of destruction and damnation.

In their earthly life, my grandparents were as foreign to me as the god they worshiped. I never truly knew them, nor them I. They were fables and mythologies told to me by my parents. Their lives fit very well into the Christian mythos that was my upbringing. Most of what I knew about their life, and my life with them is second-hand. Even in times when we were together, I have no memories of communication or connection; there was a veil between us. This veiled connection, their mortal sin, is the reason for their loitering in purgatory. The binary path that I am presenting to my grandparents is one final chance to either connect with me or fade from my view and be put to rest. Damnation; being apart and out of my grasp.

It was only in their passing, that I was able to construct an identity for them: to ascertain who they were. No matter what story I concocted, they would never and will never be able to prove it wrong. I am only able to present the fragmented reality of their life, that I witnessed and know to be true: my grandmother's bonnet, her prayer kapp, her hair that I only ever saw down once, my grandfather's name tag, his bible, his sheep, the language they spoke, the food she cooked, the vegetables he grew, the flowers she cultivated, and the house that was left behind after their death. From these fragments, I can craft them into their identities. These identities are their venial sins that compose their being.

Nescht (Caregiver) Kapp (Zealot) un Bannert (Posturer) and Bascht (Vain) is a textile construct consisting of a series of three objects sitting on a shelf. The central weaving that is twelve feet long drapes through these objects and hangs off the edge of the shelf. In the end of the weaving there are six baby chicks tangled in the hair. *Bascht (Vanity)*, the weaving, represents the literal venial sin of vanity and illustrates how it wove itself through my grandmother's subjective identities. *Bannert (Posturer)*, the black bonnet, is my grandmother's subjective identity at its most formal. It sits on the wooden shelf, at the cleanest, squarest part. *Kapp (Zealot)*, the prayer kapp, sits in the middle of the shelf. It represents her quotidian subjective identity, using her most quotidian dressing. It sits on the shelf over a split knot, breaking the formality of the shelf to its left. *Nescht (Caregiver)*, the nest basket, represents my grandmother's most intimate subjective identity. It is a wrapped and coiled basket made to look like a nest. It sits on the farthest right of the shelf, the raw edge of the wood, knotted and with the bark remaining. The nest, a place to caregive and provide for others, is unavailable. The nest is overwhelmed by hair, tangled and

overflowing, entrapping six of her children. Knotted and unwilling to let go, she holds onto her children afraid that letting go will mean that she isn't the virtuous caregiver that everyone thinks she is. It is her vanity that allows her to tie her children to her, to not let them go.

Naame (Reputation) is the physical recreation of my grandfather's nametag enlarged by tapestry weaving. His nametag was worn with pride almost daily. Even after his shift at the granary elevator driving his oil truck was over, he would continue to wear his uniform late into the day. His reputation as the oil truck driver also became large as well, and it is through seeing him drive the truck around Hartville that I saw him most frequently. His name was so iconic that my father would be nicknamed "Wall" by his friends and after my grandfather's death, they named the oil truck after him. *Naame (Reputation)* also references biblical scripture and textiles in its making. The warp is linen, and most of the weft is wool, something familiar to both my grandfather the pastor and my grandfather the shepherd. The letters of his name are woven with a fine gold rayon and strips from a bible. These passages were hand chosen and then highlighted or underlined. These passages were chosen either due to their significance to my grandparents, or because of the significance to me. The nametag itself is too large to be able to wear, making it cumbersome due to not only its size, but also its implied fragility. It is suspended from a yoke; made from the same wood the frame it was woven on was made of. The yoke allows for the nametag to be transported with more ease; however, it is not the yoke of Matthew 11:30: it is *not* easy, and the burden is *not* light. This is the yoke of *Reputation*, and it is burdensome and heavy after 40 years.

In Matthew 16:25, Jesus commands his disciples to take up their cross and follow him. I command my grandparents to take up their sins and climb out of purgatory to meet me. I extend to each of them their own equivalent of Jacob's Ladder. A ladder was revealed to Jacob in a prophetic dream, establishing god's desire for a connection to Jacob. Jacob's Ladder is the foil to the Tower of Babel: Grandma and Grandpa's futile attempts to build a relationship with me, doomed to fail.

Creamed Beads (Wilma's Rope) is the representation of my grandmother's escape rope or ladder. It is a textile construct of multiple ropes hung from the ceiling. It represents one of my favorite foods that she made, creamed peas. It also uses decorations from the room that we spent the most time in together. Creamed peas are the strongest connection I have with her, and so the most familiar rope I could craft is one that resembles that connection. *Creamed Beads (Wilma's Rope)* starts as twisted monofilament descending and supporting the strainer. From this strainer, a transition begins: from a wool and shiny rayon blend yarn, resembling the monofilament, it meets with dyed felt ropes in a pot, and then finally cascades into another pot on the ground with the hand felted beaded ropes. In the pot, the ropes are easily accessible but not tainted by the earth. The pots and strainer were taken from my grandmother's kitchen, where she hung them as decorations. These reinforce the familiarity to my grandmother, as to not alienate her from the rope.

Barbed Yarn (Wallace's Ladder) references both Jacob's Ladder and the barn where my grandparents' sheep lived. It is a 15 foot weaving hung to resemble a ladder. The barn being where I spent most of my time with my grandfather feeding the livestock stale bread; it had an old ladder that I wasn't allowed up. One of my last memories is of him feeding the sheep in a wheelchair, for the last time. The side rails are two two-inch warp faced weavings. The weaving is

woven with a fine rayon and reclaimed nails, becoming reminiscent of the barbed wire that contained the sheep. The rungs are made of wool. Below the ladder is the virgin wool sheared from one of their sheep. The wool becomes cloudlike, reminiscent of when I would cloud gaze at their house when I had nothing else to do, and also acts as a barbed wire fence, or a rule saying you're not allowed in or near. This sheep had to be brought inside the house, as she was abandoned and no one would feed her. This lamb spent most of the first four weeks of her life being nursed in the same room that my grandfather was dying in. This wool still bears the memory of my grandparents' touch on it. In a way, this is the last way that we would be able to touch each other, making it fit as a ladder made to meet me.

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I have spent my life thus far thinking. I will continue to spend my life thinking, but if anything, this semester I have started making; I hope to continue that. I have spent a lot of time sitting at a loom, and weaving, which often leaves room for thoughts to trickle down and into existence. My work, my textile constructs, are imbued with these thoughts and exist in this space between perception and tacit environment: Imagination, my *Purgatory*. Metaphor and Allusion combine, and twist becoming Representation, becoming physical, becoming my grandparents, becoming my relationship with them, becoming more than that, and less than that, becoming a mélange of all that I create and all that I can say they were and are and could have been. I have experienced creation synonymous with God crafting Wally and Wilma from Mud and Spit like Adam and Eve, their equivalent being wool and thought and time. Warp is literally time: I will literally spend more time with a foot of warp than I will with a foot of Weft. Weft is literally thought: it bends to my will, but also has a mind of its own. It is conversation, it is self-reflection, it is presentation, it is the shape you see when you look at a tapestry. And my Textile Constructs have all of these, and are so much more than that, yet all they can be are just these tiny threads I crafted and wove, to try and get my grandparents back.

"Most of our lives we live closed up in ourselves, with a longing not to be alone, to include others in their life that is invisible and intangible. To make it visible and tangible, we need light and material, any material. And any material can take on the burden of what had been brewing in our consciousness or subconsciousness, in our awareness or in our dreams... The finer tuned we are to it, the closer we come to art."

- Anni Albers, *Material as Metaphor*, 1982