

A HOROSCOPE FOR 2024

by CHAD ASHBY

It was right before my twentieth birthday, and I was off to the coast of Maine to visit my then-girlfriend's family on vacation. I was introduced to "The Oaks"—the old summer cottage—and all their little summer haunts: the Granite Hall Store, the Salt Pond, the Cupboard. But the thing that struck me most was the stars. When night fell on New Harbor it was pure, unadulterated darkness, scattered with an impossible number of twinkling lights. The Milky Way looked thick enough to stir with a spoon. *I was quite literally starstruck!*

In *Theaetetus*, Plato tells a fable about an astrologer who fell into a well. The story goes that he was so intently searching the heavens that he tripped into a cistern. As he splashed about, a servant girl standing nearby jeering at him for being so eager to know the things in the sky that he couldn't even see what was right before his feet! Another mocked, "What use is it to read the stars, when you can't see what's right here on the earth?"

The story has many interpretations, but here's the spin of a 37-year old. Your twenties are the time of idealistic stargazing: *The sky's the limit! Reach for the stars!* But there comes a time when you've tripped and fallen into one too many wells. The pressure of compromised ideals has taken its toll. The mockery isn't on the outside anymore, it's within: *Who did you think you were? What good was that high-mindedness? You were bound to fall . . . in a fallen world!*

The cares of life pile on, and it becomes hard to look up anymore with shoulders bent so. The street lights shine urgently on earthly troubles, and the stars that once shined so bright become obscured by an electric foggy glow.

But not every idealist's story ends in pragmatic despair. In fact, the Bible puts its own spin on the "astrologer and the well" fable—and it tells the part that *usually gets left out!* If I recall correctly, there was a young man who was jeered at by his brothers for being a bit too starstruck (Gen 37). In fact, it landed him in a well too. And for a while, things did take a horrifying turn for the worse. But in the end, his horoscope all came true, and the story climaxes with the stargazer seated on a throne, distributing life-saving bread and forgiveness to the world, and having the last laugh.

The crazy thing about all those stars in the Maine night sky is that they're there all the time. For some of us, the reason we don't see them is because *we never look up*. We become so focused on the earthly matters—the budgets, the logistics, the trends, the fashions—that we have no time to gaze at things eternal. We get so caught up with little fires that will fizzle out before nightfall, meanwhile, a sky filled with eternal lights is beckoning us—"Seek things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (Col 3:1).

But for others of us, we can't see the stars because our lives have been filled with such an electrified haze that our whole horizon is one light-polluted blur. I wonder, what artificial lights needs to be dimmed in 2024? What feeds, what ideas, what fears, what distractions, what voices are so ever-present that they've kept your eyes from even being able to pierce the earthly ceiling? Do you ever have moments that make you marvel? When was the last time your upturned eyes made your heart leap: "When I look at your heavens . . ."? (Ps 8:3).

The world can have its laugh for now. But what's worse: falling into a few wells or never knowing there is Someone beyond this fallen world? *I wonder, will we ever see earth clearly if we never lift our faces to the stars?*

POETRY CORNER

BACK TO SCHOOL

by Griffin Ashby (age 13)

Going back to school is so annoying
We must get up at six in the morning
The teachers say, "Welcome back!"
I think I'm gonna have a heart attack
Going back to school is what we hate
There is no reason to celebrate
However,
it is our fate

DAY THIEF

by Chad Ashby

Tomorrow arrives
Disguised as Today,
Then hides in stolen
Clothes called Yesterday.



black & whites (jan 11)



chocolate chess pies (jan 25)

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HOPES FOR THE . . .

by CAROLINE ASHBY (age 7)

Not sick
Extra candy
Wishing for ice skating
Yummy meringues
Eating apple pie
And ice cream
Reading Baby-Sitters Club



apple pies
(jan 13)



raisin danishes
w/ vanilla crème pât
(jan 20)

BOOK REVIEW

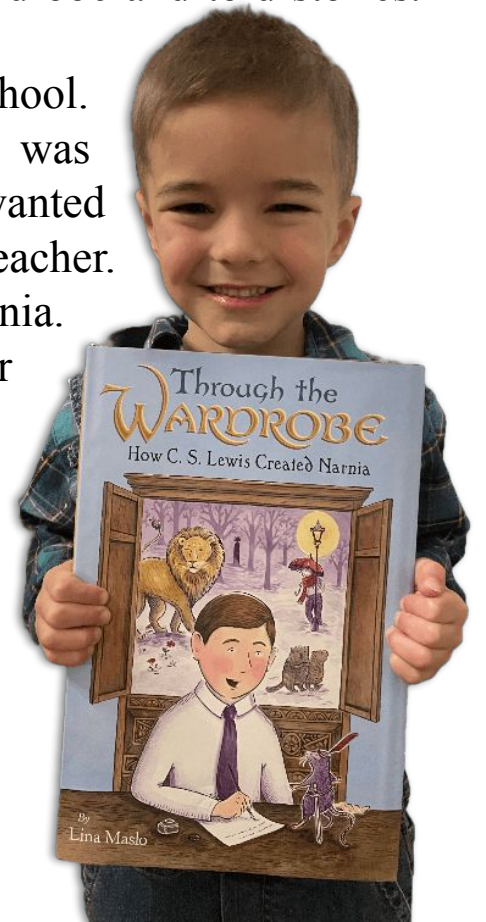
***THROUGH THE WARDROBE:
How C.S. Lewis Created Narnia***

Linda Marks

by DAVIS ASHBY (age 5)

He doesn't like his name, he goes and changes his name to C.S. Lewis. He wrote books. He biked and saw wild animals, no, a bunny, two squirrels, a raccoon, two mice. His friends went into a wardrobe and told stories. His mom died, and he went to boarding school.

They wanted a war was going to happen. He wanted to help. He became a teacher. He wanted to write Narnia. He thought of the four lost kids. Apples can heal people. He fell in love with someone, uh, the door, uh, the end.



MINDY'S PICKS

***ALL CREATURES GREAT AND
SMALL (SERIES)***

by James Herriot

Storied recollections of a Yorkshire farm vet from the mid-twentieth century. Heartwarming veterinarian misadventures and endearing characters fill the lovely scenes of British countryside. The books have an overarching narrative, but the episodic chapters are great for reading before bed. I also recommend the children's version!

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**JANUARY
SCHEDOODLE**

THURS JAN 11
Black & White

Cookies

(\$3 each)

SAT JAN 13
Apple Pies

(\$24 each)

THUR JAN 18
Almond Macaroons
w/ Ganache (GLUTEN-FREE!)

(\$3 each)

SAT JAN 20
Raisin Danishes
w/Vanilla Crème Pât

(\$4 each)

THURS JAN 25
Chocolate Chess Pies

(\$22 each)

SAT JAN 27
**Cinnamon Sugar
Donuts**

(\$16 for half-dozen)

THURS FEB 1
**Maple
Marshmallows**

(\$4 a bag)

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to make sure you get
one!

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FEATURED COOKBOOK



Cookbooks are like the hymnals of the kitchen. Sure, you can bring screens into the equation, but if you are trying to build family traditions and a legacy of meals that sing, you need those recipes bound in hard copy, in all their tattered, spattered glory.

If you are just beginning to build your kitchen library, Ina Garten is an absolute must. Her recipes resist fads and introduce you to new flavors without too much fuss. Besides, they are always filled with beautiful photos.

Modern Comfort Food introduced us to pistachio meringues, brown sugar shortbread, the best bowl of barley and oatmeal, chicken with lemon orzo, and several other Ashby standards!



Snowy Scene (watercolor & pencil)
by Teddy Ashby (age 9)



almond macaroons (jan 18)

KITCHEN ESSENTIAL



DUTCH OVEN



cinnamon sugar donuts (jan 27)

CHAD'S CLASSICS

LEISURE: THE BASIS OF CULTURE

by Josef Pieper

I just got this for Christmas, and I can already tell the ideas in this little tome will have an outsized impact on my perspective for years to come. In a post-WWII Germany where the nation is straining with every nerve to “rebuild the house” of culture that Nazism destroyed, Pieper has the audacity to advocate time and space for *leisure*.

Pieper resists the “totality of work” mentality that swept up modernity—and invaded our classrooms, filling them with “intellectual workers.” Man is made to work, yes, but man’s superpower is his ability to see that there is more to life than work. Leisure invites us to celebration, festival, and worship with the Transcendent.

This book is a great intro to philosophical works—profound yet readable!



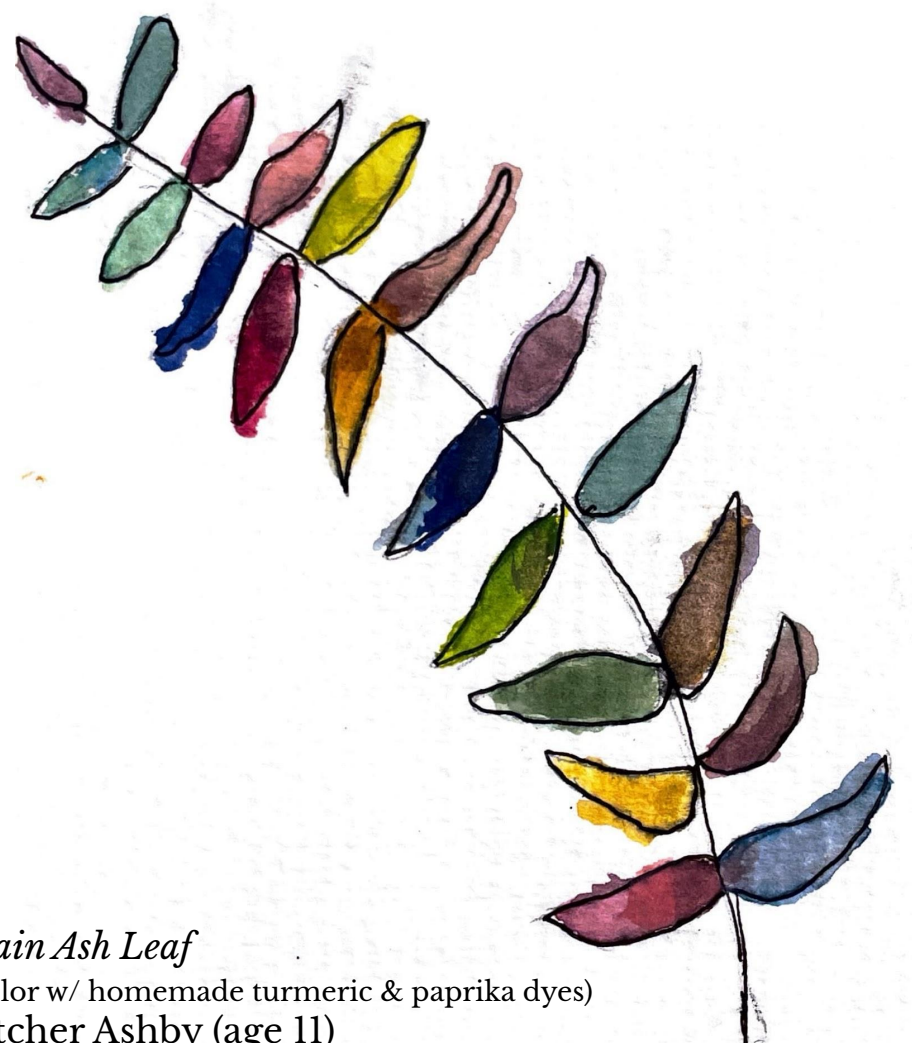
The world remains outside the cosmic garbage can of nothingness, not because it is such a solemn necessity that nobody can get rid of it, but because it is the orange peel hung on God’s chandelier, the wishbone in His kitchen closet. He likes it; therefore, it stays.

Robart Farrar Capon
The Supper of the Lamb



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ABOUT US: The Ashbys live in Greenville, SC, where Chad is instructor of Math, Lit, and Theology at Greenville Classical Academy. Mindy has been homeschooling for 9 years. The Ashby kids are Griffin, Fletcher, Teddy, Caroline, Davis, and Peter.



Mountain Ash Leaf
(watercolor w/ homemade turmeric & paprika dyes)
by Fletcher Ashby (age 11)