

Reader Response: Artwork Submission

Did you and/or your kids try out Brandon Atwood's [series](#) of seven art lessons?

Are you planning to do so in the near future?

We would love to see your work. We will begin showcasing them on our site at the beginning of August.

Scan and send your submissions to us at ramblingeveryon@gmail.com.

Along with the picture/pictures, tell us the name of the artist and his or her age.

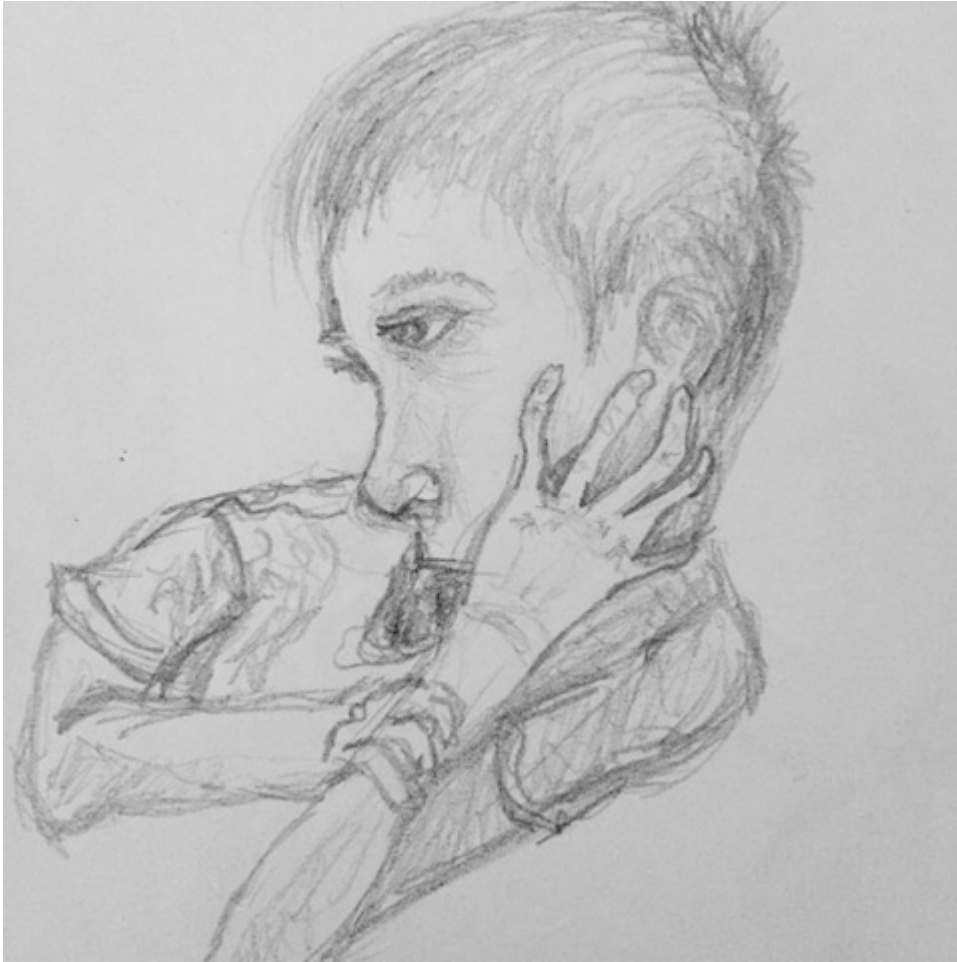
Drawing 101: Lesson Seven

Anybody can draw. I realize that is not the common view but I stick by it. If you want to learn how to draw, you can. You just have to practice and have some confidence in yourself. Here are seven "lessons" that will help you get there. I've been drawing since I was a kid and had art lessons in high school. I've also read a few books on drawing. I'm taking ideas from all my experiences and reading to help you learn how to start drawing. I recommend doing no more than one lesson a day. It takes some time to learn to draw. Just like anything else, you have to practice on a regular basis to get there.

Lesson Seven

This last lesson will bring together everything you've learned in lessons 1-6. Time to put your skills to the test! Recruit a family member who will sit for you. They need to sit in the same basic position for about 15 minutes. I drew my 4-year-old son as he sat and watched television. He stayed in pretty much the same position so it worked. I thought the way his hand was resting on his face was interesting. Try not to just draw a person looking straight at them. That is kind of boring wouldn't you say? Look for an angle that feels interesting to you.

Lightly and quickly draw the outline of their face, hair, facial features, neck, and shoulders. You are not going for perfection, you can erase any lines you don't like later. Just make adjustments to your lines as you go. Draw any shapes that you see caused by the light. Draw exactly what you see. Fill in the shaded areas. Fill in the hair with the texture that you see.



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Drawing 101: Lesson Six

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Lesson Six

Lesson Six introduces you to portrait drawing. Don't freak out! Most people seem to think they can't draw faces but that isn't true. Drawing realistic faces is all about scale. I'm going to give you some tips to help.

Start by getting an egg and drawing a line down the middle vertically and across the middle horizontally. If you are looking straight at the lines, draw a circle on either side of the vertical line just above the horizontal line. Now draw a nose with half of it on each side of the vertical line with the top of the nose starting at the horizontal line. Draw a line for the mouth below the nose. Turn the egg in different angles and notice how the appearance changes. From now on this needs to stay in your mind as a reference point for drawing faces. If you are looking straight at a face, the lines will be straight. If you are looking at it from an angle they will appear curved.

Now draw an egg shape on your paper. Lightly draw the vertical and horizontal lines. Now draw the eyes, nose, and mouth outlines. This lesson is not meant to get you to the point of drawing a realistic face but rather to start putting together the necessary pieces. Next draw the hair. Hair is long strands so draw long fluid lines. Look in the mirror for reference. Now look in the mirror and draw your eyes, nose, and mouth onto the face. It doesn't have to be perfect, you are just starting to learn how to draw a portrait.

The last phase for this lesson is to find a picture, any picture, of a face. Now turn the picture upside down and draw

all the lines and shapes you see. Don't think about what you're drawing, just focus on the lines and shapes as you see them. When you're done, turn the picture right side up. Notice how you were able to draw a realistic face because you focused on the lines and shapes instead of what you think it should look like.



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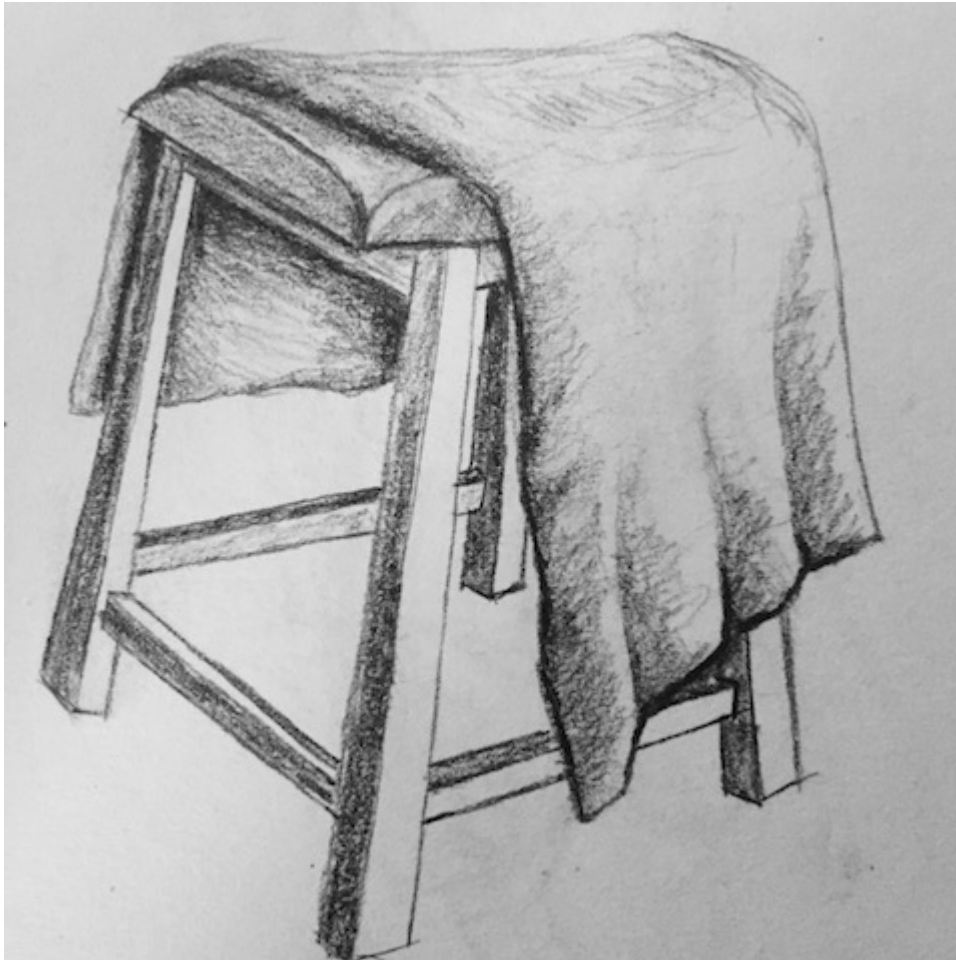
Lesson Five

This lesson is going to use many of the same techniques from [Lesson One](#). However, this will take what you've been practicing and kick it up a notch. Choose a chair or stool in your house and drape a blanket or throw something similar over it. Place it in a direct light source. Start by drawing the outline. Then draw the negative space. Remember, the negative space is what shapes you see inside the object. For instance, if you're drawing a chair, what shapes do you see forming between the legs? Draw those shapes. This is a technique to help you make sure the parts of an object are in scale.

After you have your outline and your negative spaces then begin drawing the edges of the chair surface. You will get to practice perspective drawing in this lesson. Some lines will be parallel with the floor but other lines will be at an angle. This is just beginning drawing so we won't go into a big lesson on perspective. Simply draw what you see.

There should be lots of good areas of shading to work on. Typically there will be a strong contrast of dark areas and really bright areas. Use the side of your pencil to shade

those in. Finish by putting details into the blanket. This is a good still life to practice because blankets have good texture. You want to start practicing adding in texture details.



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Drawing 101: Lesson Four

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Lesson Four

You might be noticing that many of the steps are the same. Good job! This is drawing 101 and practicing the basics with different subject matter is how you learn! A side note: these basic lessons are in black and white. This is also known as monochromatic. I suggest practicing monochromatic before you start using several different colors.

For this lesson find some flowers in your house or yard. No need to arrange them. Just draw them as they are. This is good practice because it takes the shading skills you've been working on and develops them a bit. With flowers you will have even more levels of shading. Mastering your shading skills is what will take your art to the next level. The better the shading, the more interesting and realistic your drawing will be. The way that light plays on objects is what catches the eye. Shading is basically capturing the various levels of light.

As always, start with the outline. Roughly sketch the flowers, stems, leaves, and background. This is your first picture with

a background. So far you have just drawn the object itself. For this drawing, fill up the entire piece of paper. With most flowers there will be negative space. Look at the space between the flowers. What shapes do you see? That is the negative space. Carefully observe what those spaces look like. As you draw multiple objects, scale becomes important. Making sure the negative spaces are correct will help you with your scale. For instance, if there is a diamond shape between two flowers and you draw the stems to make a circle shape then you have the positioning wrong.

Next, start filling in the outline with the shapes that light is making. Drawing flowers is a good practice because there are lots of details and textures. You will spend more time on this step based on how much detail you want to add. In my drawing I chose to draw each seed on the top of the coneflower. That took time, but it made it look more realistic. So start adding the details that you see.

Lastly, take the side of your pencil and shade in the darker areas. Stems are round so I shade both sides and leave the middle lighter. Leaves are folded in all sorts of shapes. Think about something that is folded. The crease where it folds is going to be darker. It is important to slow down and really look at the way the light is projected on the object. This will guide your shading process. Start with the darker areas and then move to the lighter places. Go back and keep adding to the dark areas until it looks like what you see.



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Drawing 101: Lesson Three

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Lesson 3

Look out of your window and find a tree that looks interesting to you. I'll admit, I love drawing trees. You can get so much good drawing practice from this. The picture of the tree that you see below is one across the street in my neighbor's yard. I thought it was a cool tree and started drawing it.

I draw trees from the bottom up. Start at the ground and draw the outline of the trunk. Once you get all of the trunk and major branches, then you can start on the top half. A trick that helps me with the top half of a tree is to find the pattern of the smaller branches. Most trees have a general direction that the branches are going. Think about that. What are the differences between a pine tree and a willow? Can you imagine the general pattern? Once I see the pattern I quickly start using the point of my pencil to make those kind of directional scratches. Don't go for deep, bold lines. Light scratches are perfect for this. I will tell you to draw what you see but when you are drawing the top half of a tree, go with the feel of it. Not every single little branch or leaf has to be right.

The second step is to shade the darker areas and then shade the lighter areas. Look for places where a big branch juts out. Almost always that will be a darker spot for shading. Then look for curves in the trunk. Those will require shading to look realistic. Typically, I shade both sides of the trunk darker and leave the middle lighter. That gives the impression that the trunk is round.

The last step is to draw the bark. I never draw individual

pieces of bark unless it's an extreme close up of a tree. I find the general pattern and start making light scratches. Look for places in the bark that are darker lines and use the point of the pencil to make that line more bold. Then fill in blank spaces with light lines that match the pattern of the bark. Some bark is straight and some is curvy. Fill in most of the empty space on the trunk and branches with the appropriate lines.



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Drawing 101: Lesson Two

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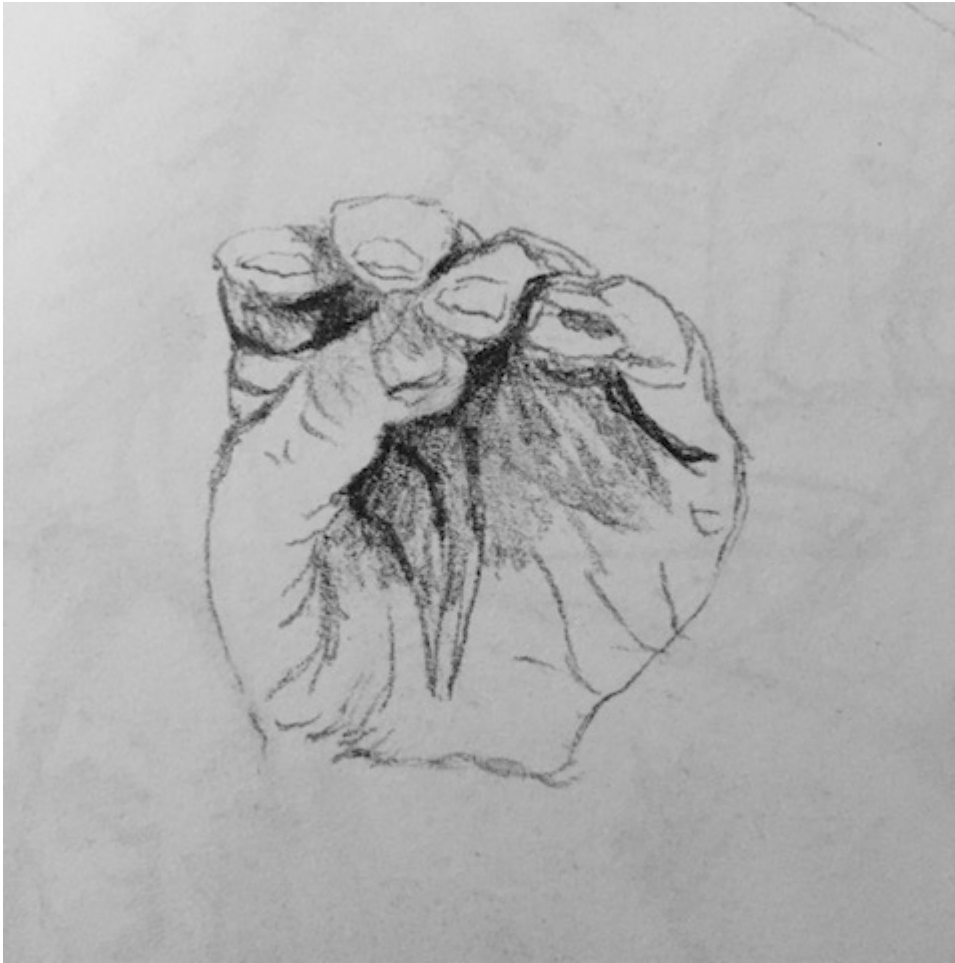
Lesson Two

Hold up your hand, close it a little bit, and point it toward yourself. (I'm right handed, so I drew my left hand. If you are left handed, draw your right hand.) I will tell you the point of this lesson right up front: let go of what you think something is "supposed" to look like. Honestly, that is one of the keys to learning how to draw. You have to practice so that you draw exactly what you see, no matter what.

Draw the outline of your hand. Now draw the lines between your fingers and the lines in your palm. These lines might seem off to you at first. Just keep drawing. Try not to think about it too much. Next draw the fingernails. If there is any light being cast on your hand, draw the shapes you see. Make sure to use the point of your pencil to add any small details, like cracks in the skin.

The last thing is to fill in all the spaces that darker. Remember that all things have varying degrees of light and dark, so you will want to capture that. Close one eye. You will notice that the lines between your fingers are the darkest area. Start adding shade to those areas with the side

of your pencil.



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Drawing 101: Lesson One

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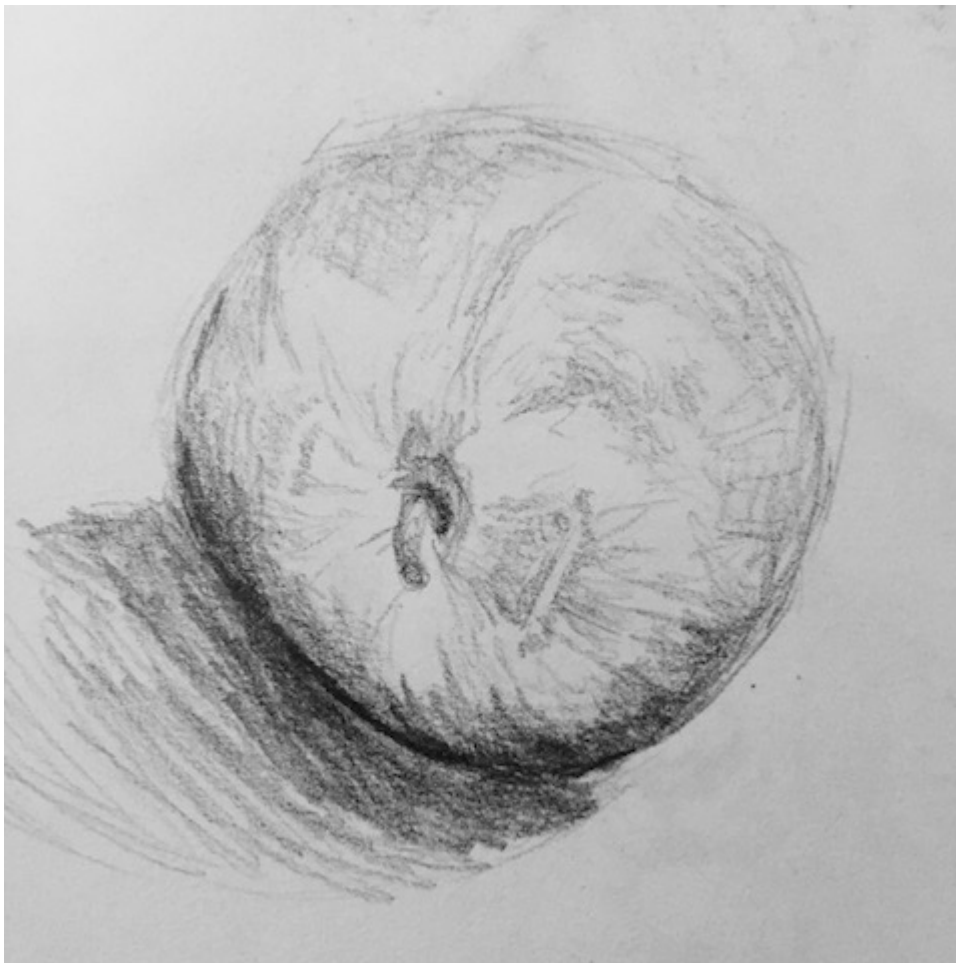
Lesson One

Lay an apple on a table in front of you. Make sure there is a source of light shining on it. Putting the apple near a window so sunlight is shining on it from an angle is best. I recommend drawing with a pencil to start with. You can use other mediums later once you practice more. Honestly, the kind of pencil and paper don’t matter that much. I’ve used all kinds of pencils and paper and they are all fun to use. You just have to decide which kind you prefer. Grab whatever you have at your house.

Start by drawing the outline of the apple. Don’t worry about a perfect line. Just start drawing the outline as you see it. You can make adjustments as you go. Don’t erase any perceived mistakes. Remember, this is not about perfection, it’s about practice. I think many people get derailed early on because their drawings aren’t “perfect.”

Now draw the outline of the stem and other shapes you see in the apple. Don’t think about what an apple is supposed to look like. Simply draw any shapes you see in the apple. These are parts of the apple peel and shapes that the light is casting. Something important to keep in mind as you are learning to draw is that you are not going for an idealized version of the apple. Instead, you are going for a realistic drawing of what you see in front of you.

The last thing you will do is draw the shading. This is what makes the object look three dimensional. A good trick is to close one eye and look at the apple. Where are the areas that are darker? Start shading in that area lightly with your pencil. Add only a little bit of lead to the paper. It helps to turn the pencil sideways for this. Don't use the point of the pencil. You can always add more later but you can't take it away. Then look at the way the light plays on the apple again. Start shading in the areas that are different values of light and dark. Just like anything else, the side that is away from the light will be darker. If the light is coming from the right, the left side of the apple needs to be darker. Keep adding layers and layers of shading until you are satisfied that it looks like what you see.



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Sehnsucht – The Art of Christmas



The inner turmoil of Joseph.

What comes to your mind when you think about Christmas art? Santa checking his list? A cozy cottage in the snow? Or maybe you are quick to give the right answer – baby Jesus lying in a manger of course!

I asked myself this question and did a little research. I found art regarding the birth of Jesus is all very similar in style. It's just a variation of a nativity scene. There are the standard pieces: a baby in a manger, Joseph and Mary, some farm animals, and sometimes shepherds or even wise men.

Not that there is anything wrong with that, but I wondered why we don't have more unique expressions about this event. So I decided to create some art pieces about Christmas without recreating something that has already been done.



Mary pondering her newborn son.

When I imagine the birth of Jesus, it gives me the sense of what C.S. Lewis called "sehnsucht." He calls it "the inconsolable longing in the heart for we know not what." I get that longing and aching feeling when I hear the line from the song Mary Did You Know: "Mary did you know that your baby boy is Lord of all creation?" I envision Mary looking up at the moon and stars in the darkness of Bethlehem and taking this all in, awestruck her little baby somehow made all this.



Simeon meets the
Messiah.

When I think about Christmas it gives me that same feeling of wonder and awe. Then I start to connect all the dots of God's great plan through the ages and how he came to earth in the form of a man. It creates in me that longing or aching for the completion of God's story.

So in this Christmas series of artwork, my goal is to capture that feeling of awe and wonder at the improbable story of the creator being born in an animal shelter in the middle of nowhere. My hope is that it joins in with this story that God has been telling.

Imagination inspired



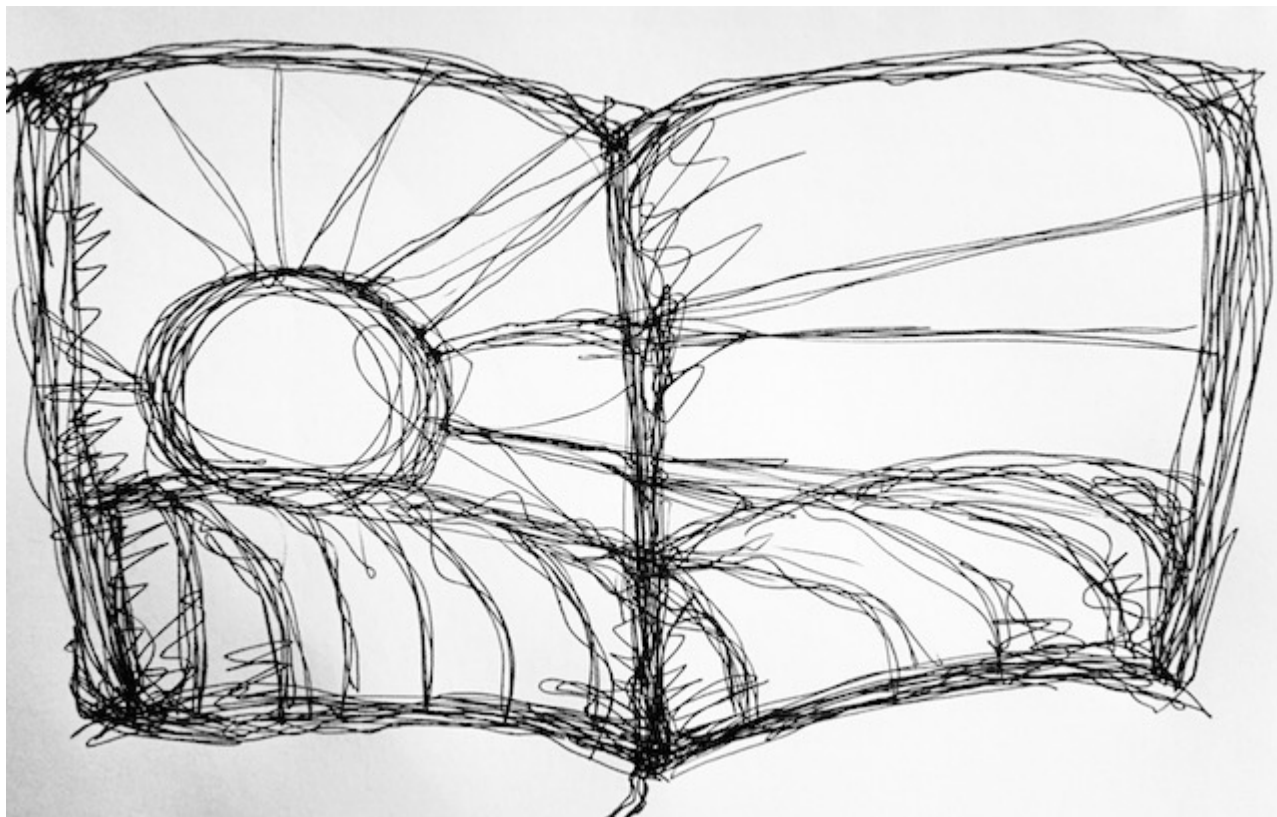
The earliest art project I can remember is a drawing I did in 3rd grade. The medium was crayons on paper. The assignment from the teacher was to listen to a piece of classical music and then draw whatever inspired the imagination. Without really knowing why, I drew planets, stars, and a spaceship. Maybe one of the reasons I remember this drawing is because I won first place! I wasn't trying to win or trying to make my drawing look like anything in particular. I just started coloring from the ideas that the music generated in my mind.



I still like to draw all these years later. I enjoy listening to music even more. Sometimes my grown up art projects are a direct result of the music I've been hearing. Music is one of the strongest inspirations for my art. For me, there aren't many things that evoke emotion more than music. That is especially true of the music I've enjoyed most in these last few months. The great musical art that I'm referring to is The Burning Edge of Dawn by Andrew Peterson. This is not going to be a traditional review. We already have a great review [here](#) on the site.



Instead, this is a series of drawings I've done based on this great album. I've never been great with words anyway. I'll leave that to those who are gifted with eloquence. I'm more comfortable creating with my art supplies (or my guitar, for that matter). These drawings were born from hearing this beautiful and haunting album over the last few months. Keep in mind that 3rd grade project; just as I can't explain with words why I drew space and a rocket, I can't precisely explain these pieces either. It reminds me of poetry that I like; the words strike me with a sense of mystery and elusiveness.



I don't use crayons anymore. (Maybe I should.) Now I mostly use pencils, pens, and paint. The style I've chosen for these drawings is based on the feeling of *The Burning Edge of Dawn*. Peterson's album evokes deep emotion, sometimes pain but also abiding joy. I don't really know why, but this style intuitively emerged. It is pen on paper. I drew each picture without lifting the pen off the paper for the duration.

