



# Little Francis Falls Asleep

**BLOG CONTENT: INTERVIEW WITH PIP CRAIGHEAD**

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## WRITING RELATED QUESTIONS

### Who are you? Tell our readers a little bit about you.

My name's Pip Craighead (short for "Philip"), I'm a writer and illustrator from LA (by way of Australia, which is where my folks are from). By day, I do copywriting for a variety of brands, and by night I draw as much as possible! Little Francis Falls Asleep is my very first kids' book, and I'm very excited to share it with people. I hope people enjoy it, and I hope to follow it with many more books!

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### Where did the story of Little Francis Falls Asleep come from?

I've always loved children's literature, and especially have a fond spot for books about sleeping and nighttime adventures. I love the way a great kids book can depict a vast world filled with awe and wonder, while also sharing a heartfelt, intimate story and a sense of openness and warmth. I originally wrote and illustrated an earlier version of Little Francis while still in college. Upon later revisiting the story, I feel like I saw there was a deeper lesson which I myself could take away from it, one relating to identity, fear, anxiety, and where true and lasting rest is ultimately found—a lesson just as relevant to an adult as to a kid.



**Were they any challenges in writing the story? If so, what were they?**

I actually wrote and drew the story years ago, but re-drew and rewrote part of the story when submitting to the publisher, Patrol. I then did a second round of revising the story, and re-drew the artwork again. So there's been several iterations of this, incorporating feedback from the publisher and seeking to arrive at a pleasing, clear end-result.

**What excites you about doing a kids book in particular?**

I know how deeply I connected to the books I grew up with as a child, and the way certain images remained in my mind even until today. The idea that a kid might read Little Francis Falls Asleep and have something of that same connection is so exciting to me. I feel so blown away by the notion that someone would read this book to their child at night, and that Little Francis might have a place on the family bookshelf. That's a high honor indeed!

**Rest is not a popular topic, though productivity is. Why is it that you decided to write a book that emphasizes the need for rest?**

We live in a world which encourages us to work hard to find ourselves, one that tells us to “work hard, play hard.” But we don't often hear much about “rest hard”—because rest is hard, and often requires self-reflection and a deep foundation for rest. It's countercultural. But we all know the feeling of lying awake at night, unable to sleep because our mind is racing or our heart is hurting.

It's at night that many of our deepest fears and anxieties pop up, since it's one of the few times we are undistracted. So rest is important. Rest requires us to remember that we are creatures who are not ultimately in control of our lives. That's part of what I think the Sabbath is about —relying on God, relinquishing the claim to be the author of our lives. As a Christian, I believe that only Jesus offers true and lasting rest, a peace that passes understanding — and that is something to continually remember and rejoice in.



### **What do you hope readers will get out of the story?**

My hope and prayer is that the story points people to Jesus, and conveys a sense of childlike joy in simply knowing that we are loved by God and that he is in control. I hope readers enjoy the adventure and that one of the characters in the book brings a smile to their face. My favorite kids books I've read are those with a sense of irrepressible joy, an indestructible kind of innocence and comfort which cuts through the brokenness of the world and reminds you of the beauty of goodness, the wonder of God. If I successfully communicate just a tiny glimpse of that, I've succeeded.

### **Why do you believe it is important for people to understand this concept?**

Well, I certainly know it's important for me to keep learning and remembering this over and over. Through the process of writing and illustrating the book, I feel like God brought this concept home to me, reminding me that my worth is not in being an artist or successful or whatever — it's in being his child and remembering that he is good, he is in control, and he loves us. In a hectic culture of news, entertainment, stress, and constantly being told we need to earn our place in this world, it is something I think we'd all do well to remember daily. And hopefully, this book serves as a reminder that God is in control, that he cares for us, and that our individuals problems and struggles won't ultimately have the final word.

### **ART RELATED QUESTIONS**

#### **What are your influences regarding art?**

Lots of cartoonists —from Carl Barks and Don Rosa to Crockett Johnson, Frank King, and the French artist Herge (who did the Tintin books). When it comes to children's books, I'm especially enamored of Gyo Fujikawa and Richard Scarry. Margaret Wise Brown's touching book Runaway Bunny is a particular favorite of mine as well. Beyond that, I love a wide variety of artists, especially landscape painters like Caspar David Friedrich, as well as midcentury design and architecture.

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#### **There is a childlike, joyful feel to your artwork. Why is that?**



I like to think of art as kind of like a kid playing in a sandbox, delighting in the gift of creativity which God has graciously given us. My goal with my art is to communicate a sense of joy and wonder, whether the context is a children's book like Little Francis or a commission or a sci-fi story aimed at an older audience — because I find that's something I long to see more in creative works. I think it ultimately relates to my belief that art is a form of worship, and I personally aim to communicate a sense of innocence and boundlessness, because those are things that I connect deeply with and which reflect who God is.

### **Briefly tell us a little bit about your process.**

When I'm working on something like Little Francis, I often sketch ideas for the placement of characters on a page and the way a scene will be set up. For the finished piece, I will sometimes lay down roughs in pencil and then draw over those in pen, but at other times I will simply charge forward in pen and see what happens.

Then I scan the artwork and clean it up and color it digitally. When working on other art pieces, like my daily doodles or little cartoons I put online, I generally like to charge forward in pen, discovering what the finished result will look like as I go along. It's fun, and keeps things fresh for me; I feel like a kid playing with legos who doesn't quite know what he's building until it's done.

### **What ignites the urge to doodle everyday?**

For me, art is a form of enjoying and celebrating God, a way to delight in being alive. It's one of those activities that feels far more gratifying than you'd expect it would—it ends up feeling like more than the sum of its parts. I think that's because it's a form of experiencing the wonder of creation and existence and being human; at its best, it's a way to delight in God himself.

### **There is a lot of joy in your work, and that seems to be a theme. Have you ever drawn happiness while experiencing sadness?**

Most certainly. And I've drawn sadness while feeling happy. I think it's important to honor the full spectrum of human emotions, as demonstrated



by the broad range the biblical Psalms depict. But I also find myself drawn mostly to joy when I'm sketching. Ideally, art portrays reality itself, including emotions we may find unpleasant. For me personally as an artist, I want to honor the subject matter I'm drawing about, but I tend to be attracted to portrayals of joy, wonder, mystery, and longing, because I don't always see those depicted within contemporary culture in a way that feels honest and authentic. My hope is that my work depicts these feelings—and joy in particular—in a way that feels real and heartfelt, not superficial or forced.

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