

& **THE ANSELM HOUSE NEWSLETTER** *Ampersand*

Anselm House is delighted to host an exhibition of the NYT-bestselling author and illustrator John Hendrix this November. To mark the occasion, we're taking creative liberties with this edition of the Ampersand. Instead of our typical feature essay, we've selected an excerpt from John's book *The Mythmakers: The Remarkable Fellowship of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien*. The spread highlights the unique intellectual hospitality of The Inklings writing group that Lewis and Tolkien led. We found this section to be a moving illustration of what we offer to students, faculty, and staff at the University of Minnesota—conversation that is widely curious, warmly hospitable, and firmly planted in Christian faith.

-Geoff Ayers, Communications Manager

JOHN NOV. 11-26 HENDRIX



EXHIBITION

"WORD & IMAGE: THE ILLUSTRATIONS OF JOHN HENDRIX"

OPENS TUESDAY, NOV. 11

CLOSES WEDNESDAY, NOV. 26

WEEKDAYS • 8:00 AM-5:30 PM

OPENING RECEPTION

TUESDAY, NOV. 11 • 5:00-7:00 PM

ARTIST LECTURE

"THE ENCHANTED INTERSECTION:
MYSTERY, CLARITY, AND MEANING IN ART"



TUESDAY, NOV. 11

7:00-8:30 PM

REGISTRATION REQUIRED!

STUDENT WORKSHOP

"DRAWING IS FOR EVERYONE"

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 12

3:00-4:30 PM



ALL EVENTS AT
ANSELM HOUSE @
MELROSE STATION
720 WASHINGTON AVE SE



AH, YES. THERE IS JUST FAR TOO LITTLE OF WHAT WE ENJOY IN STORIES!

IF I MAY, WHAT WE ALL WANT IS "ESCAPE AND RECOVERY." I'M WORKING ON A LECTURE ABOUT THESE IDEAS IN FAIRY STORIES.

I DO THINK THERE IS POTENTIAL IN TALES THAT INVOLVE SCIENCE...YOU KNOW, SPACE, TIME AND THE LIKE...



TOLLERS!

IF THEY WON'T WRITE THE KIND OF BOOKS WE WANT TO READ, WE SHALL HAVE TO WRITE THEM OURSELVES.!



WE NEED BOOKS LIKE YOUR *HOBBIT*, BUT ON A GRAND SCALE. SOMETHING MEANT FOR US.

HOW ABOUT WE FLIP FOR IT?



FLIP FOR WHAT?

HEADS, YOU WRITE A STORY ABOUT TIME TRAVEL; TAILS, YOU TRY SPACE TRAVEL, AND I'LL TAKE THE OTHER?

YOU'RE MAD!

THOUGH I AM REMINDED THAT THIS IS HOW *FRANKENSTEIN* WAS WRITTEN. MARY AND PERCY SHELLEY WERE CHALLENGED BY LORD BYRON TO WRITE A GHOST STORY...



This excerpt used with permission of the author. Hendrix, John. *The Mythmakers: The Remarkable Fellowship of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2024, p. 110–114.

Footnotes

1: Carpenter, Humphrey, and Christopher Tolkien, editors. *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000, p. 209.



With the flip of a coin, these two rather unknown Oxford academics dared each other to write a kind of book they longed to read, in a form they had never tried before. This writing challenge was no idle game. They both set to work, and immediately it illuminated a major difference between how these two created. Lewis wrote fast, and without much revision. Tolkien worked slowly and methodically, often starting completely over after multiple rereadings. Tolkien's story "The Lost Road" started well, but he couldn't complete it. "My effort, after a few promising chapters, ran dry: it was too long a way round to what I really wanted to make, a new version of the Atlantis legend."²

Lewis, in contrast, was off to the races. The first paragraphs in his story on space travel, which eventually became *Out of the Silent Planet*, became a bit of an inside joke for the Inklings. His protagonist, Elwin Ransom, is a professor who is an expert in languages. His first name means "elf-friend." Curiously, Ransom also seems to exhibit other affectionate characteristics of Professor Tolkien. It is not hard to imagine the Inklings' laughter at the first public reading of chapter one where Ransom was described as a man who "walked fairly fast, and doggedly, without looking much about him, like a man trying to shorten the way with some interesting train of thought," and he "dressed with that particular kind of shabbiness which marks a member of the intelligentsia on a holiday...In fact, he was a philologist..."³



2: Glycer, Diana Pavlac. *Bandersnatch*. Kent, OH: Black Squirrel Books, 2016, p. 39.

3: Lewis, C. S. *Out of the Silent Planet*. New York: Scribner Paperback Edition, Simon & Schuster, 1996, p. 7.

Magdalen College. Lewis's Rooms.
Thursday evenings.

The Inklings became the first audience to hear these new stories. There was no end to the “dialectical swordplay” during these meetings, as later described by Warnie Lewis. By Jack’s account, each gathering was comprised of “talking nonsense, poetry, theology, metaphysics over beer, tea and pipes.”⁴ One important part he left out was that each week, the members would read new writings aloud to the others. Despite their enjoyment of one another, the Inklings were not content to distribute fluffy praises to their fellow members. Each man offered real critique and commentary on the works presented. “To read to the Inklings was a formidable ordeal,” said Warnie of that harrowing experience. Barfield once recalled going up against Lewis in an argument during an Inklings reading that felt like “wielding a peashooter against a howitzer.”⁵

Each Thursday meeting would follow the same formula: The talk, laughter, and drinks would flow for some time until everyone arrived. Then Jack would blurt out in a voice that could be heard across the room:

WELL, HAS
NOBODY GOT ANYTHING
TO READ US?⁶

At the zenith of the Inklings’ weekly meetings, every man around the room sat together as equals. They were eager to be shaped by one another. Lewis said the Inklings were “hungry for rational opposition.”⁷ Charles Williams was an occasional visitor, as he lived in London. But Tolkien noticed the dynamic in the group changed when Williams joined. Feelings would be hurt occasionally, but tempers rarely flared up. For these friends, this time together was a sacred realm. Especially for Lewis. He summed it up:



4: Duriez, Colin. C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien: *The Gift of Fellowship*. Mahwah, NJ: Hidden Spring, 2003, p. 127.

5: Glyer, *Bandersnatch*, p. 53.

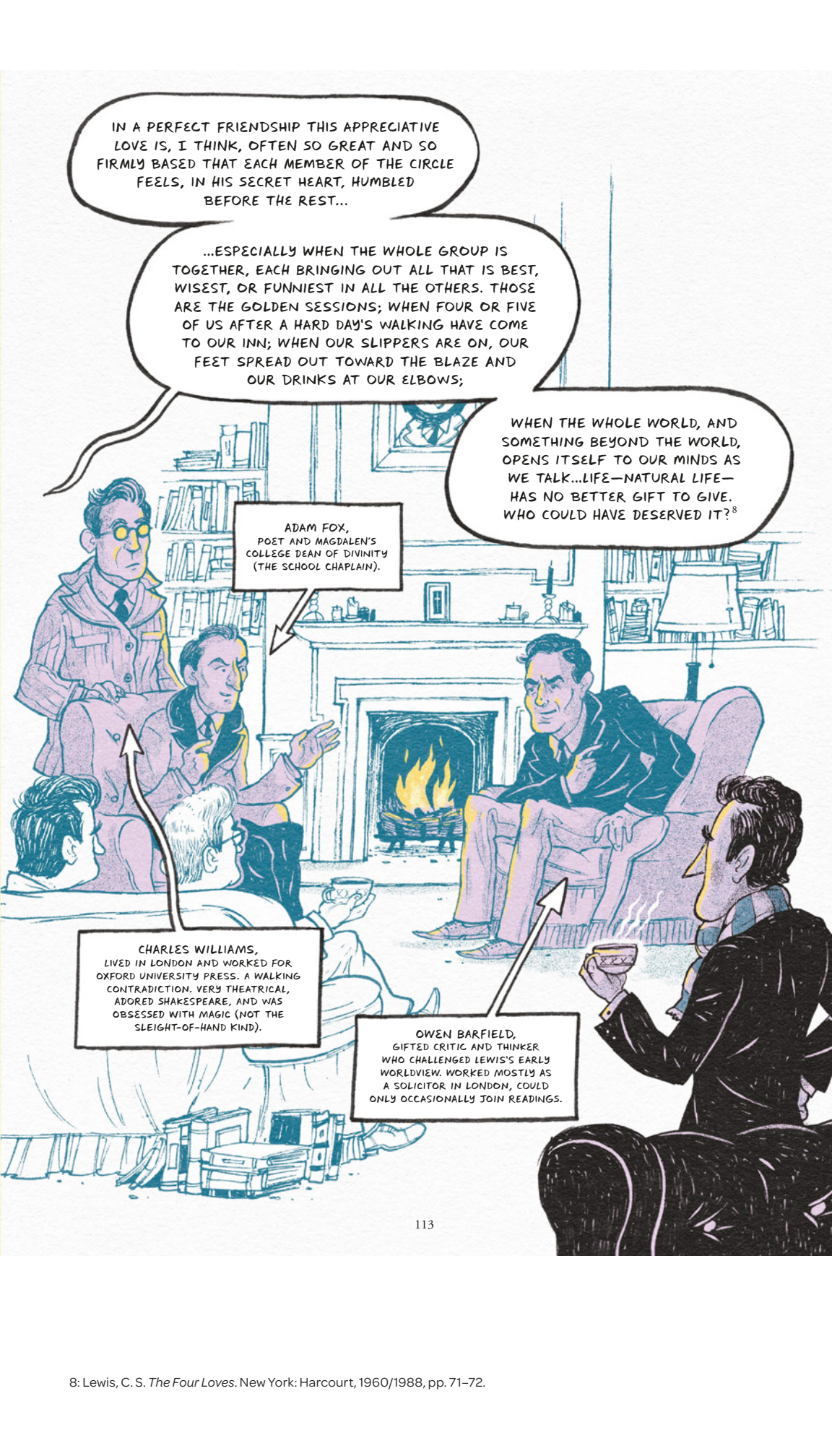
6: Zaleski, Carol and Phillip. *The Fellowship. The Literary Lives of the Inklings: J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Owen Barfield, Charles Williams*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015, p. 201.

7: Glyer, *Bandersnatch*, p. 53.

IN A PERFECT FRIENDSHIP THIS APPRECIATIVE LOVE IS, I THINK, OFTEN SO GREAT AND SO FIRMLY BASED THAT EACH MEMBER OF THE CIRCLE FEELS, IN HIS SECRET HEART, HUMBLED BEFORE THE REST...

...ESPECIALLY WHEN THE WHOLE GROUP IS TOGETHER, EACH BRINGING OUT ALL THAT IS BEST, WISEST, OR FUNNIEST IN ALL THE OTHERS. THOSE ARE THE GOLDEN SESSIONS; WHEN FOUR OR FIVE OF US AFTER A HARD DAY'S WALKING HAVE COME TO OUR INN; WHEN OUR SLIPPERS ARE ON, OUR FEET SPREAD OUT TOWARD THE BLAZE AND OUR DRINKS AT OUR ELBOWS;

WHEN THE WHOLE WORLD, AND SOMETHING BEYOND THE WORLD, OPENS ITSELF TO OUR MINDS AS WE TALK...LIFE—NATURAL LIFE—HAS NO BETTER GIFT TO GIVE. WHO COULD HAVE DESERVED IT?⁸



ADAM FOX,
POET AND MAGDALEN'S
COLLEGE DEAN OF DIVINITY
(THE SCHOOL CHAPLAIN).

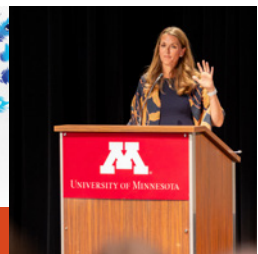
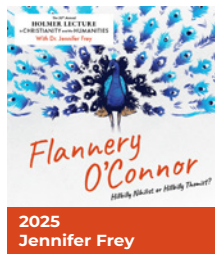
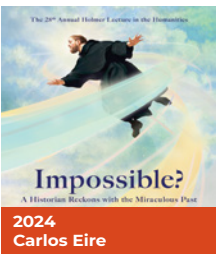
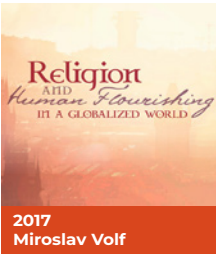
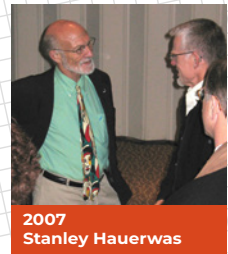
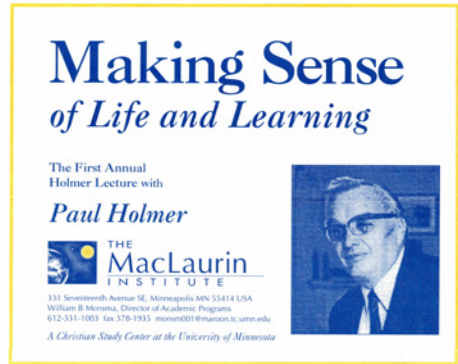
CHARLES WILLIAMS,
LIVED IN LONDON AND WORKED FOR
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. A WALKING
CONTRADICTION. VERY THEATRICAL,
ADORED SHAKESPEARE, AND WAS
OBSESSED WITH MAGIC (NOT THE
SLEIGHT-OF-HAND KIND).

OWEN BARFIELD,
GIFTED CRITIC AND THINKER
WHO CHALLENGED LEWIS'S EARLY
WORLDVIEW. WORKED MOSTLY AS
A SOLICITOR IN LONDON, COULD
ONLY OCCASIONALLY JOIN READINGS.

30 Years of the Holmer Lecture

Since 1996, Anselm House has hosted the annual Holmer Lecture in Christianity and the Humanities, bringing world-class Christian scholars to the University of Minnesota. Named after Dr. Paul Holmer (1916–2004), a theologian and Kierkegaard scholar who taught at the University of Minnesota from 1946–1960 before taking an appointment at Yale. Over the decades, the Holmer Lecture has featured the voices of such scholars as Fr. Richard John Neuhaus, Dallas Willard, James K.A. Smith, Miroslav Volf, Hans Boersma, Meghan Sullivan, and Gary Saul Morson, among many others.

You can find an archive of our Holmer Lectures, along with our other named lecture series, online at anselmhouse.org/lectures.



Sarah Hay Gives Back

When Sarah Hay first came to Anselm House after hearing about us from her sister, a Fellows alum, she knew it would become her home on campus. “I was immediately struck by the hospitality,” she recalls, “and just that people were coming up and remembering me and having conversations.” Sarah dived in and joined the Fellows program, which she participated in for four years. It was through the meaningful conversations with her Fellows cohort that she grew in faith and built lifelong friendships—including with her husband, Caleb.



Today, Sarah remains connected to Anselm House through the friendships she formed and by volunteering at Fellows meals, serving the next generation of students. “I mainly volunteer to pay back all the things that I received in the little ways that I can,” Sarah explains, “because I feel like Anselm House made such a large impact on my college life and my current life, so I want to give back.” For Sarah, volunteering is more than a task—it’s a tangible expression of gratitude for a community that shaped her journey.

Would you like to learn more about volunteer opportunities at Anselm House? Send an email to Bekah Jones, Hospitality Manager (rj@anselmhouse.org).

Book Feature: *Working for Better*



We were thrilled to host Dr. Elaine Howard Ecklund (Rice University) on October 30 for a lecture exploring themes from her new book with Dr. Denise Daniels (Wheaton College), *Working for Better: A New Approach to Faith at Work*. Their book offers a compelling vision for how Christian faith can transform the modern workplace—not by retreating from difference, but by engaging it with empathy, humility, and courage. Ecklund and Daniels invite readers to see our work as a participation in God’s ongoing story of creation and redemption, calling Christians to “radically embrace those who are different from ourselves.” They remind us that “the belief that someone else is created by God can determine the way

we interact with them, shaping us as well as them.” The authors challenge common notions of success and rest, encouraging leaders to “work from rest, not for rest,” and urging the Church to ensure that the fruits of integrating faith and work are shared equally by all. We invite you to read the book and join the conversation about how our Christian faith can shape more just, restful, and life-giving workplaces. **(187 words)**

—Lauren Mulonda, Director of Development

EVENTS

Public Events

John Hendrix Exhibition

Opens Tuesday, Nov. 11

Closes Wednesday, Nov. 26

Melrose Station

Fellows Preview Nights

Monday, Nov. 17

Monday, April 13

5:30–8:30 p.m. | Melrose Station

Save the Dates

Faith & Business Networking Social with David Horsager

Thursday, Feb. 26, 2026

13th Annual Anderson Lecture in Science & Religion with Dr. Julia Wattacheril (Columbia University)

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

Healthcare Initiative Lecture

“Moral Imagination in the Healthcare Sciences: What? Why? And How?” with Dr. Jon Tilburt (Mayo Arizona)

Monday, Nov. 17 | Noon–1:15 p.m.

UMN, PWB 3-154/156



Find our full event
calendar and
registration at

anselmhouse.org/events

Weekly Rhythms

Public Reading of Scripture

Wednesdays | 9:00–10:00 a.m.

Tea Time

MWF | 3:00–3:30 p.m.

Wisdom Waffles

Thursdays | 12:15–1:00 p.m.

Anselm House at
Melrose Station is open
Monday–Friday
8:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

ANSELM HOUSE

PO Box 141007
Minneapolis, MN 55414

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