

*The Barber Who Wanted to Pray*  
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Summary: One night after family devotions, Delaney asks her father to teach her to do better at prayer and he relates the story of Master Peter, a sixteenth-century barber who made the same request of Martin Luther.

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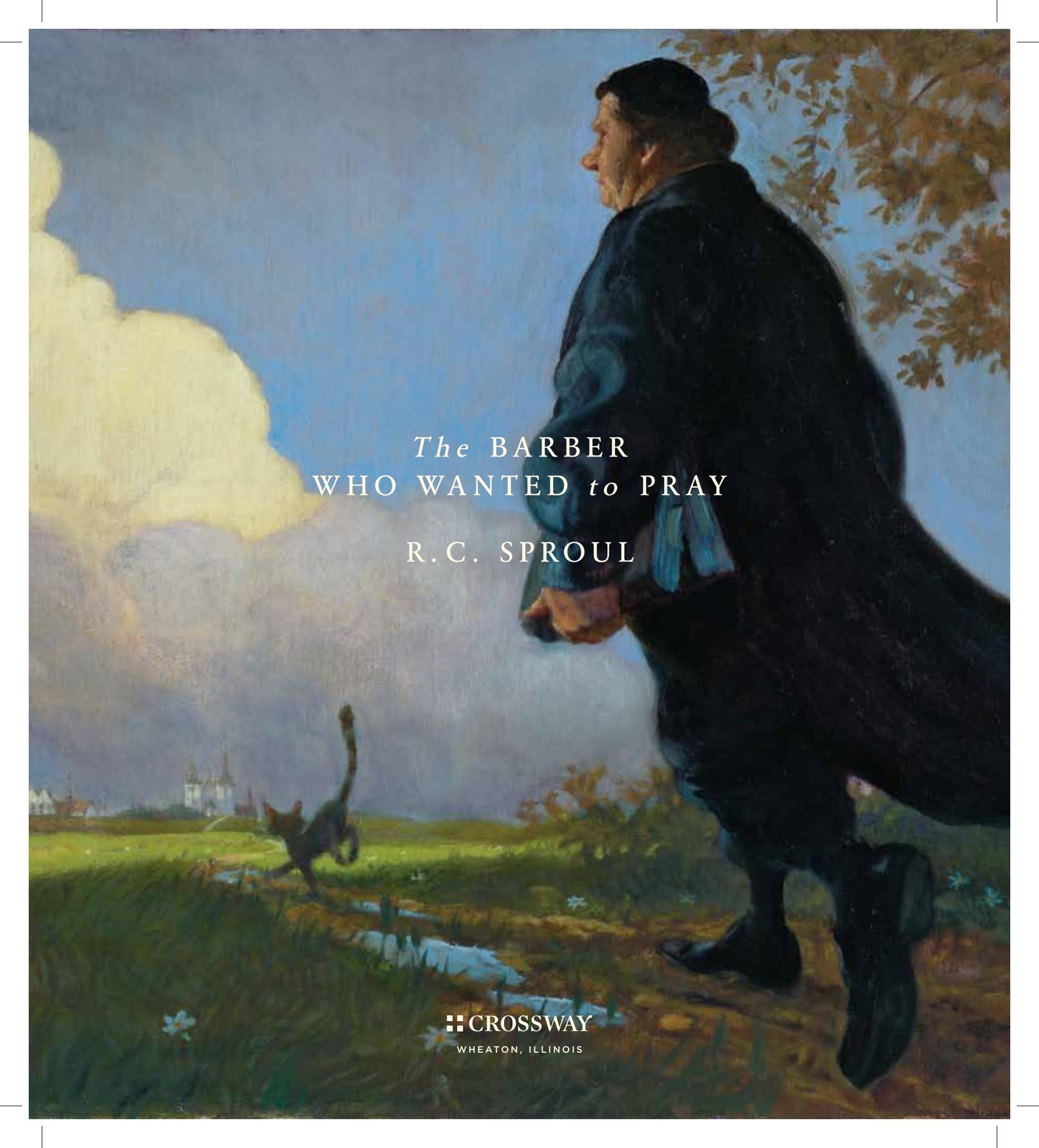
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A painting of a man in a dark suit walking through a field. The man is in the foreground, walking towards the right. In the background, there is a green field with a small stream, a cat jumping, and a church with a steeple in the distance under a blue sky with a large white cloud.

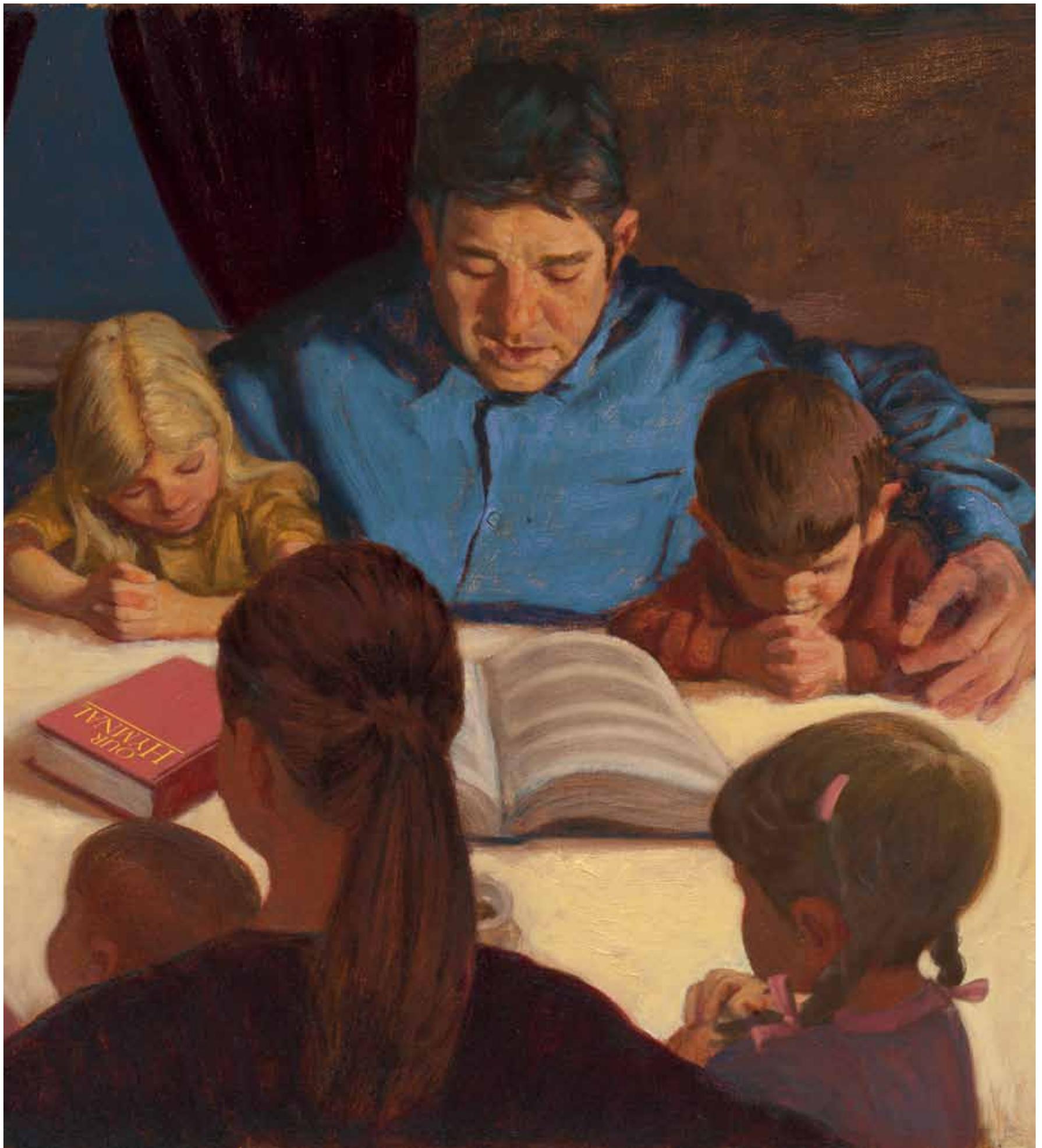
*The* BARBER  
WHO WANTED *to* PRAY  
R. C. SPROUL

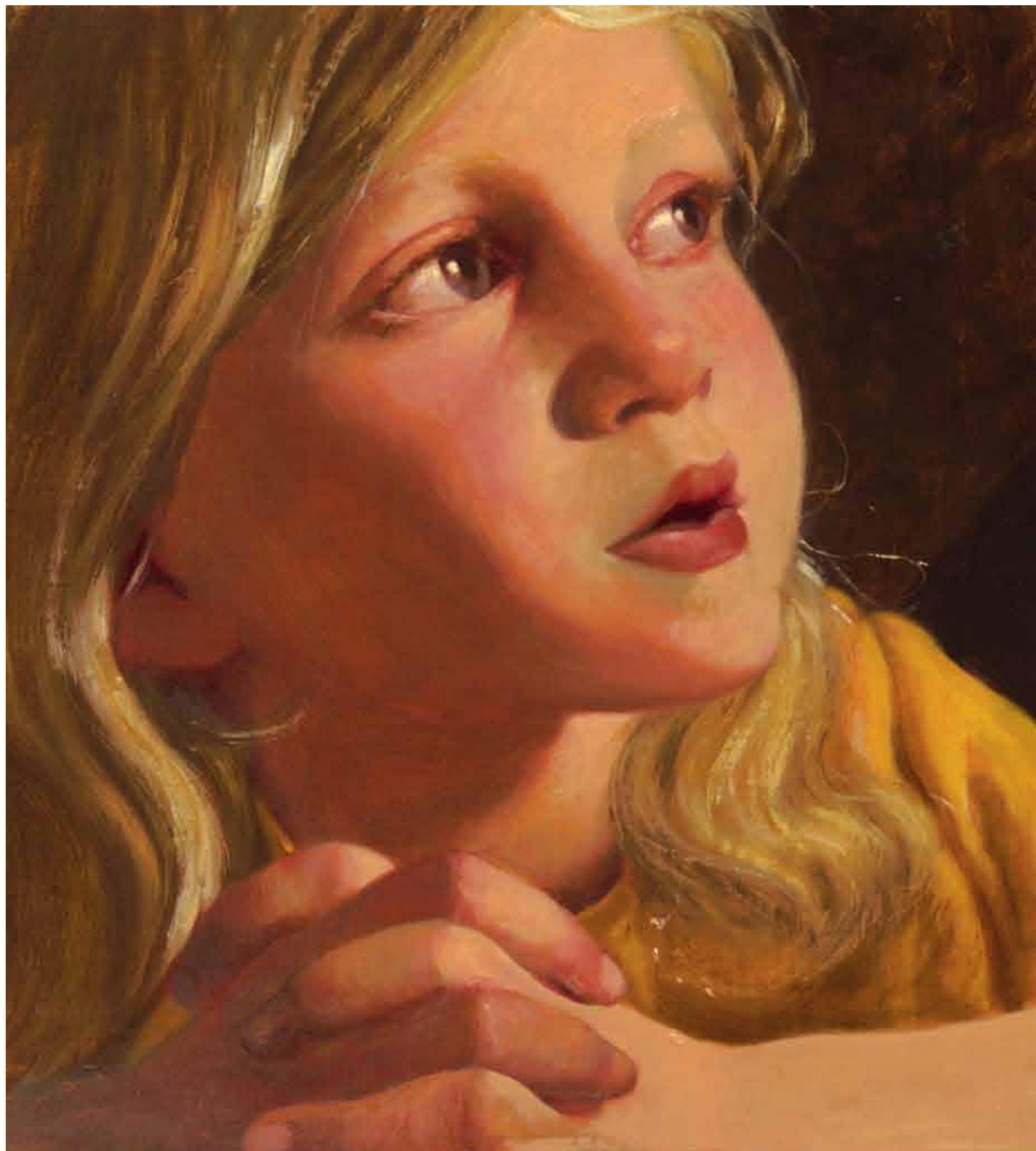
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Every night at dinner, Mr. McFarland gathered his family together for devotions. Mr. and Mrs. McFarland had six children, two boys and four girls. The children's names were Donovan, Reilly, Maili, Erin Claire, Delaney, and Shannon.

It was Mr. McFarland's practice to read a portion of Scripture every night and give a short explanation of it. Then he would ask each of the children to recite memory verses from the Bible and to answer catechism questions. Finally, Mr. McFarland would lead the family in prayer. Each of the children would participate in the prayers in his or her own way.









One night, just after devotions had ended with the singing of a favorite hymn, the McFarlands' daughter Delaney spoke up. "Daddy," she said, "your prayers are beautiful. Sometimes I want to cry for joy when I listen to your prayers. But *my* prayers seem so simple and weak. I'm almost embarrassed and ashamed to pray out loud. Daddy, can you teach me how to pray in a way that will make Jesus happy and will make me feel more comfortable?"



**M**r. McFarland smiled. “I understand how you feel, Delaney,” he said. “When I was younger, I felt exactly the same way. I wasn’t sure how to pray. About all I knew when I was your age was the table grace:

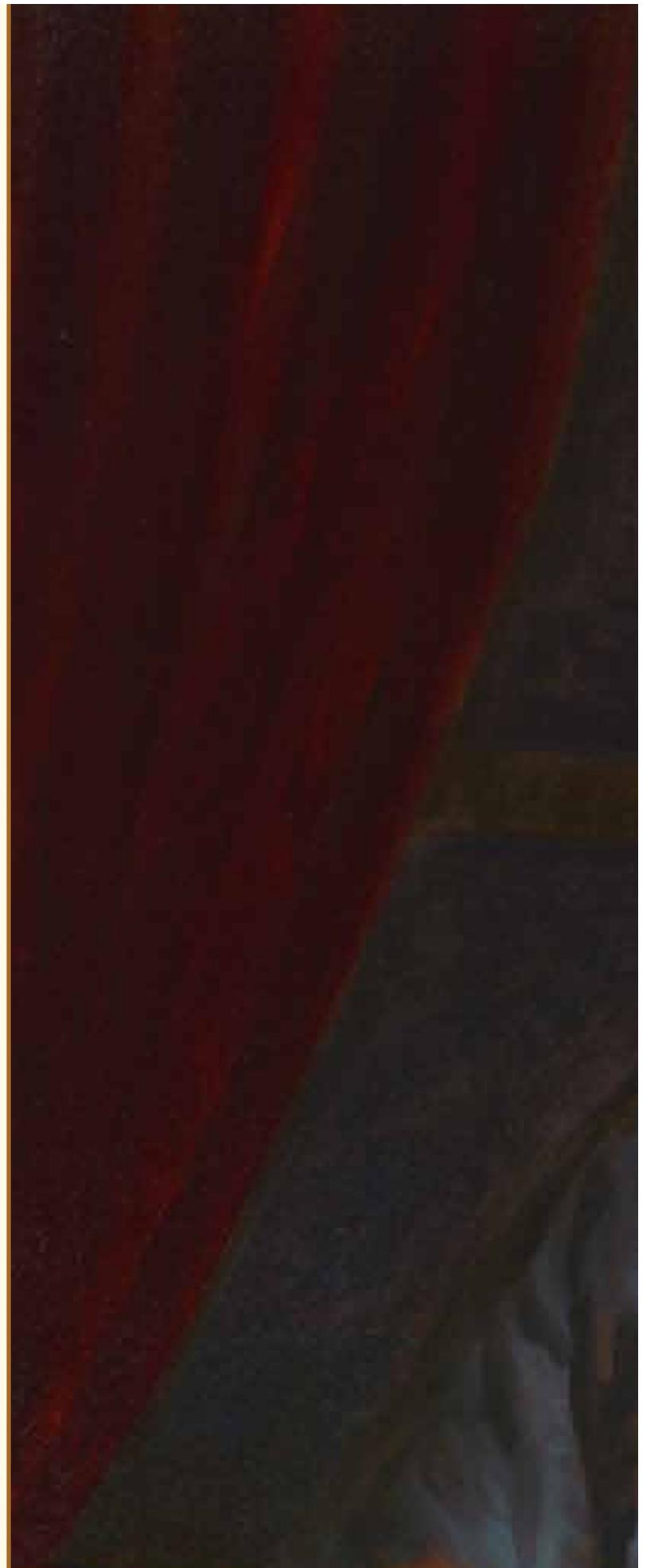
God is great, God is good,  
and we thank Him for this food.

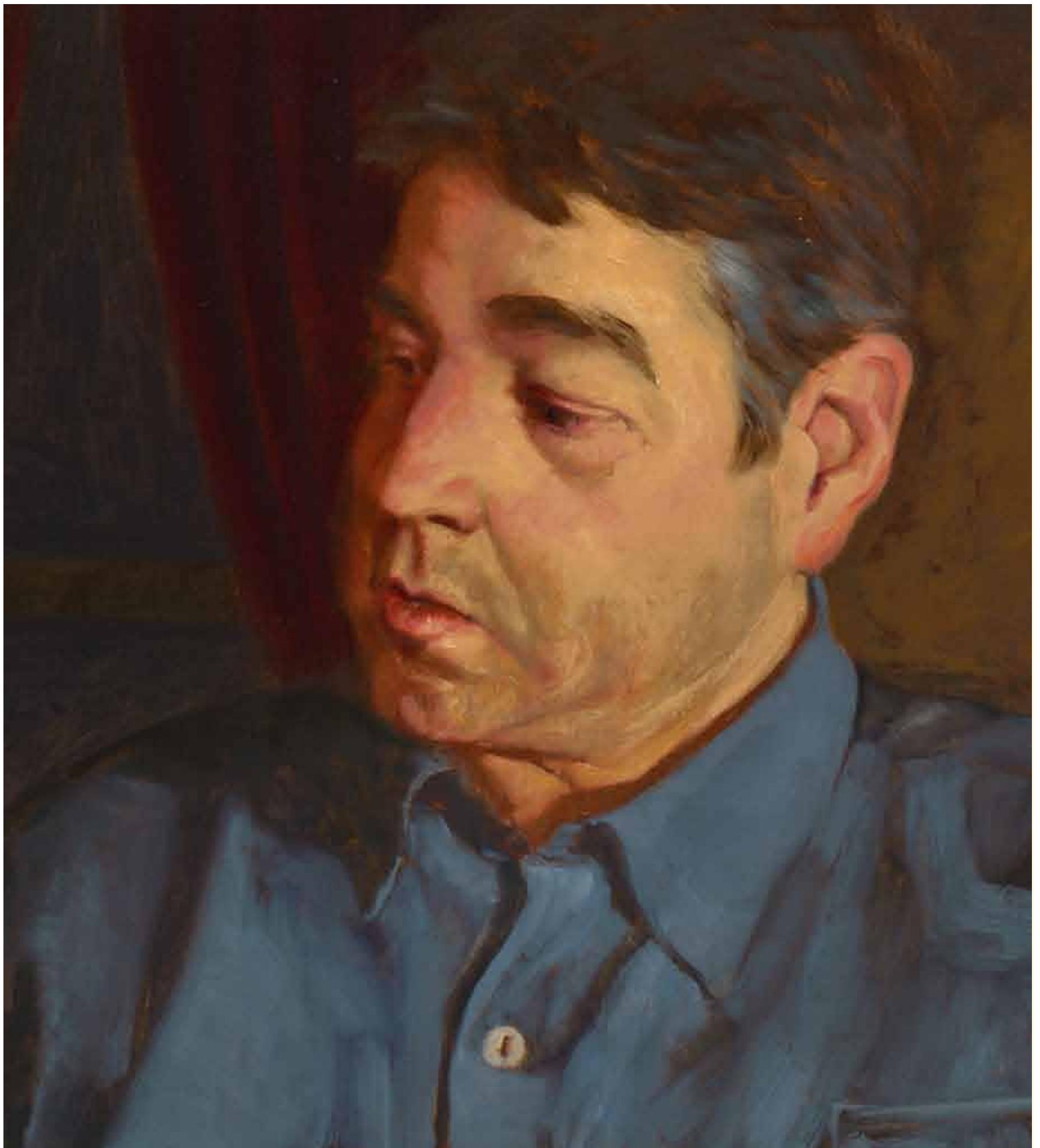
“Oh, yes, I also knew my nighttime prayer:

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,  
If I should die before I wake  
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

“But other than those two simple prayers, about the only thing I could say in prayer was, ‘Dear God, please bless Mommy and Daddy and my brother and sister and Uncle Joe and Aunt Sue.’ Then my grandfather told me a story that changed everything for me. Do you think you might like to hear the story?”

Delaney said, “Yes, I surely would.” The other children, who had been listening to the conversation between Delaney and their father, nodded eagerly, too. So Mr. McFarland told his children this story.





Once upon a time, in a village far across the sea, there lived a barber. Everyone in the town knew him. He not only cut men's hair and shaved their beards, but he could do all sorts of things that people needed to have done. The villagers called him simply "Master Peter."



