

Short
Life in a
Strange
World

*Birth to
Death in
42 Panels*

Toby Ferris

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Chapter 1: Flight



Landscape with the Fall of Icarus, c. 1558 (oil on canvas), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) /
Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, Belgium / Bridgeman Images



Clodhopping ploughman: *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*, detail.



Dionysiac vehicle: *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*, detail.

Chapter 2: Census



Winter Landscape with Skaters and a Bird Trap, 1565 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) /
Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, Belgium / Bridgeman Images



Always watching, always waiting: *Winter Landscape with a Bird Trap*, detail.



The Census at Bethlehem, 1566 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, Belgium / Bridgeman Images



Criss-cross tracks, paths, desire lines: *The Census at Bethlehem*, detail – Younger (left) and Elder (right).



Hitched to no wagon: *The Census at Bethlehem*, detail.



We have resources: *The Census at Bethlehem*, detail – Elder (left) and Younger (right).



A vanishing point: *The Census at Bethlehem*, detail – Elder (top) and Younger (bottom)

Chapter 3: Fire



The Tower of Babel, c. 1560 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter The Elder (c. 1525–69) / Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands / Bridgeman Images



Pollen of the mason's art: *The Tower of Babel* (Rotterdam), detail.



The Fall of the Rebel Angels, 1562 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, Belgium / Bridgeman Images

Chapter 4: Massacre



The Massacre of the Innocents, 1565–67 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2019 / Bridgeman Images



On it goes: *The Massacre of the Innocents*, detail – copy (left) and bowdlerized original (right).

Chapter 5: Grey



The Adoration of the Kings, 1564 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / National Gallery, London, UK / Bridgeman Images



Pagan witches: *The Adoration of the Kings*, detail.



She dissolves on a grey panel:
The Dormition of the Virgin,
 detail.



The Dormition of the Virgin, c. 1564 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Upton House,
 Warwickshire, UK / The Bearstead Collection / National Trust



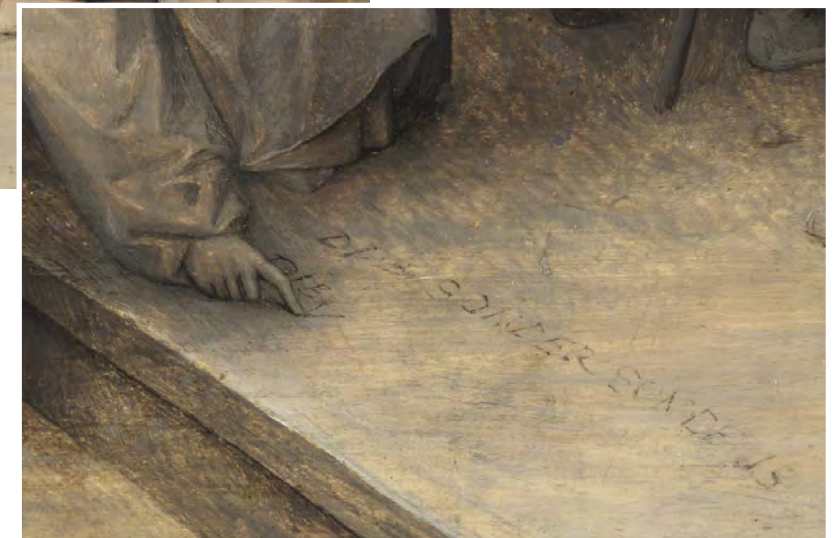
Landscape with the Flight into Egypt, 1563 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London, UK / Bridgeman Images



Spread your wings: *Landscape with the Flight into Egypt*, detail.



Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery, 1565 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c.1525–69) / Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London, UK / Bridgeman Images



Scratching his unanswerable caveat in the dust: *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, detail.

Chapter 6: Beggar



The Beggars, 1568 (oil on panel),
Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69)
/Louvre, Paris, France / Bridgeman
Images



The lopping of the nose: *Christ Carrying the Cross*, detail.

Christ Carrying the Cross, 1564 (oil on wood), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria / Bridgeman Images

Chapter 7: Cold



The Adoration of the Magi (oil on canvas), Pieter Bruegel the Younger (c.1564–1638) / Museo Correr, Venice, Italy / Bridgeman Images

Heading stoutly for a hole in the ice: *The Adoration of the Magi in the Snow*, (Pieter Bruegel the Younger, after Bruegel) detail.



Hunters in the Snow (Winter), 1565 (oil on wood), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) /
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria / Bridgeman Images



Same size as a bird trap: *Hunters in the Snow*, detail.



The Fight Between Carnival and Lent, 1559 (oil on oak panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) /
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria / Bridgeman Images



Embodiment of cusp-existence: *The Fight Between Carnival and Lent*, detail.



The Suicide of Saul, 1562 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria / Bridgeman Images



Awkwardly but effectively: *The Suicide of Saul*, detail.



The Land of Cockaigne, 1567 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Alte Pinakothek, Munich, Germany / Bridgeman Images



Witless toing and froing: *The Land of Cockaigne*, detail.

Chapter 8: Bear



Christ Carrying the Cross, 1564 (oil on wood), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) /
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria / Bridgeman Images



The pedlar's life-burden: *Christ Carrying the Cross*, detail.



The Wedding Dance, c. 1566 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Detroit Institute of Arts, USA / City of Detroit Purchase / Bridgeman Images



Inspecting reality in the manner most habitual and comfortable to him:
The Wedding Dance, detail.



The Harvesters, 1565 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA / Bridgeman Images

A bit of know-how: *The Harvesters*, detail.





The Parable of the Sower, 1557 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / The Putnam Foundation, Timken Museum of Art, San Diego, USA / Bridgeman Images



Little Johnny Appleseed: *Landscape with the Parable of the Sower*, detail.

Chapter 9: Technique



The Misanthrope, 1568 (tempera on canvas), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Museo di Capodimonte, Naples, Campania, Italy / Bridgeman Images



Relieving him of the burden of his purse: *The Misanthrope*, detail.



The Blind leading the Blind, 1568 (tempera on canvas), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Museo di Capodimonte, Naples, Campania, Italy / Bridgeman Images

Like a flipbook of a man walking and falling: *The Blind Leading the Blind*.



The Dark Day, 1565 (oil on wood), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria / Mondadori Portfolio/Electa/Remo Bardazzi / Bridgeman Images



A world of no reflected light: *The Dark Day*, detail.



The Triumph of Death, c.1562 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c.1525–69) / Prado, Madrid, Spain / Bridgeman Images

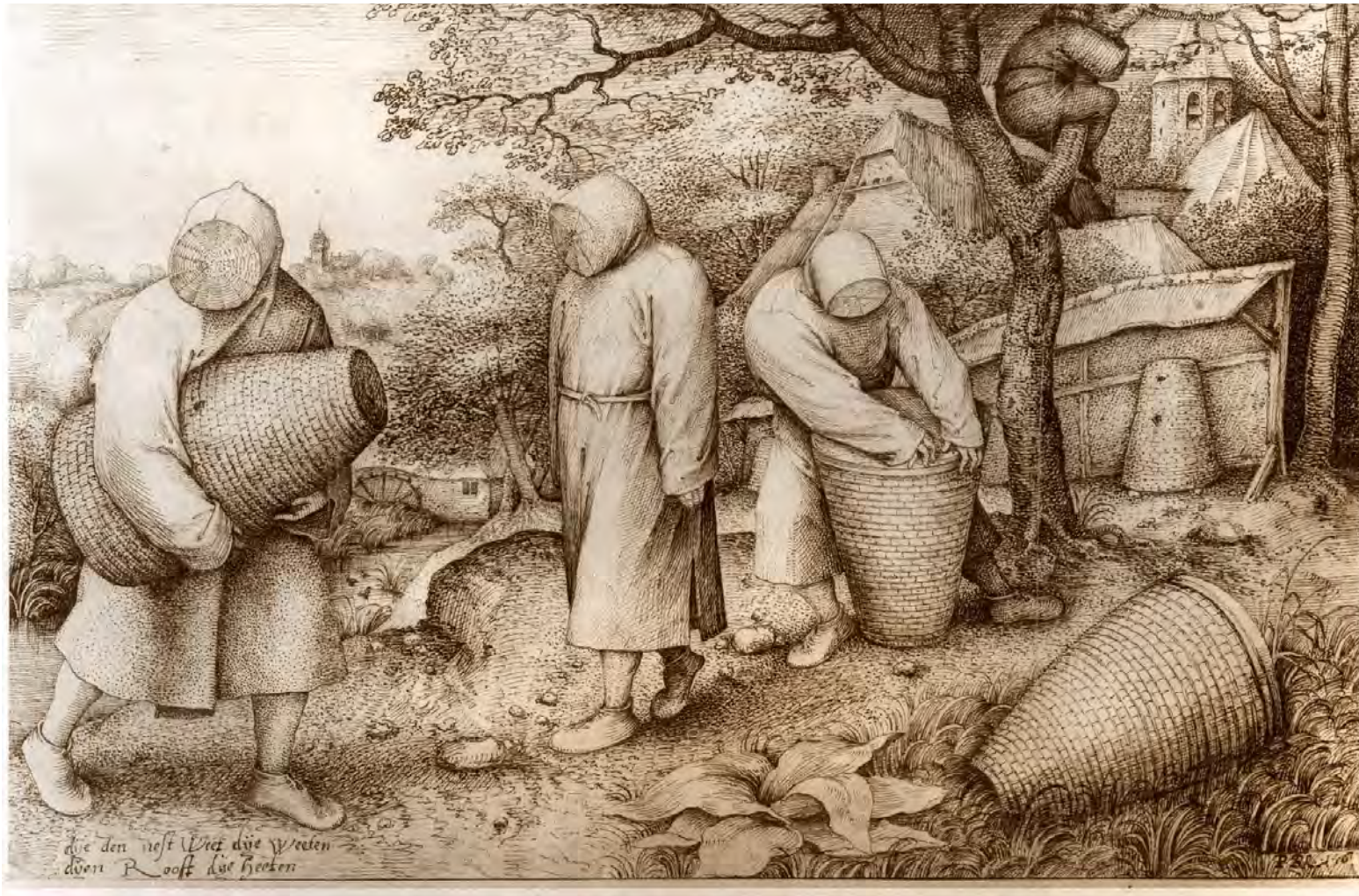


As though the trundling cart of the cosmos had itself been dismantled: *The Triumph of Death*, detail.

Beating on the kettledrum of our heart:
The Triumph of Death, detail.



Chapter 10: Gallows



The Beekeepers, c. 1567–68 (pen and brown ink on paper) (b/w photo), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) (workshop of) / Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, Germany / Bridgeman Images



Whoever robs it has it: *The Beekeepers*, detail.



Magpie on the Gallows, 1568 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt, Germany / Bridgeman Images



Like the furcula of a bird in flight: *The Magpie on the Gallows*, detail.



Netherlandish Proverbs, 1559 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) /
 Gemaldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Germany / Bridgeman Images



To shit on the gallows: *Netherlandish Proverbs*, detail.



The Return of the Herd, 1565 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria / Bridgeman Images



Functional in the landscape: *The Return of the Herd*, detail.



Head of an Old Woman, circa 1564, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, The Picture Art Collection / Alamy Stock Photo



Col tempo: Head of an Old Woman, detail.



The Land of Cockaigne, 1567 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Alte Pinakothek, Munich, Germany / Bridgeman Images

Lifeless in the midst of life: *The Land of Cockaigne*, detail.

Chapter 12: Crowd



The Preaching of John the Baptist, c.1598 (oil on wood), Pieter Brueghel the Younger (c.1564–1638) / Kunstmuseum, Basel, Switzerland / Bridgeman Images



Fragmentary information from far away: *The Preaching of St John the Baptist*, (Pieter Brueghel the Younger, after Bruegel) detail.



Conversion of St. Paul, 1567 (oil on wood), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria / Bridgeman Images



... parody of a soldier ... *The Conversion of St Paul*, detail.



Christ Carrying the Cross, 1564 (oil on wood), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria / Bridgeman Images



A day out: *Christ Carrying the Cross*, detail.



The Village Kermis, 1568. Oil on wood. Dim: 114 x 164 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum / Photo © Luisa Ricciarini / Bridgeman Images



Deafening honk: *The Village Kermis*, detail.



Encouraging her to move: *The Village Kermis*, detail.



Children's Games, 1560 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria / Bridgeman Images



Trying to make contact with us: *Children's Games*, detail.

Chapter 13: Home



Summer, 1568 (pen and ink on paper), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany / Bridgeman Images



One great Hodge swilling beer: *Summer*, detail.



Caught in the act of scrutinizing the ordinary: *The Hay Harvest*, detail.

The Hay Harvest, 1565 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Lobkowitz Palace, Prague Castle, Czech Republic / Bridgeman Images



Transformational possibilities of the habitual: *The Hay Harvest*, detail.

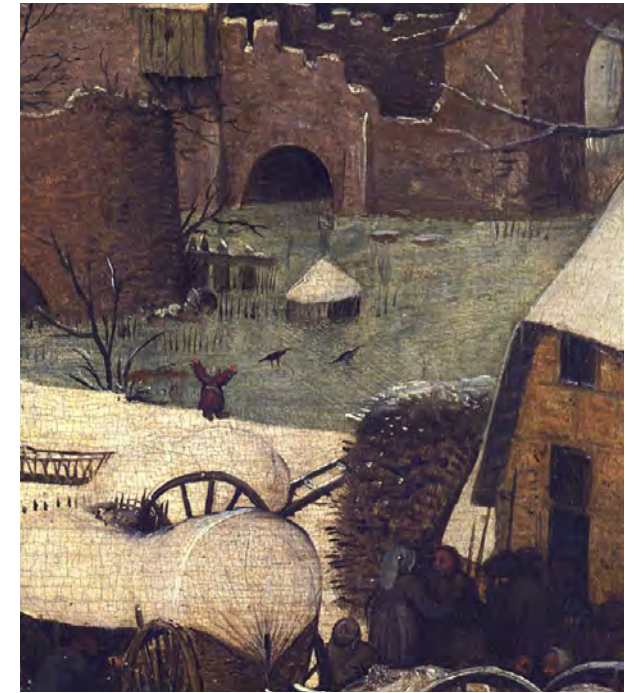


Strange, flickering world: *The Peasant and the Birdnester*, detail.

The Peasant and the Birdnester, 1568 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria / Bridgeman Images



The Census at Bethlehem, 1566 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, Belgium / Bridgeman Images



Taking flight: *The Census at Bethlehem*, detail.



One deft flick: *The Census at Bethlehem*, detail.

Epilogue



View of the Port of Naples, c. 1558 (oil on panel), Bruegel, Pieter the Elder (c. 1525–69) / Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome, Italy / Bridgeman Images