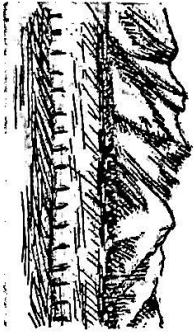




Charis Crandall
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Beginnings

In the beginning, God...
It all began with you, didn't it?
You declare,
I am the Alpha and Omega, the
Beginning and the End,
and yet you have neither
end nor beginning
and ever since you commenced
creating
you keep on creating, recreating,
beginning again —
initiating new mornings and new
moons
forming new and clean hearts
bestowing new names
establishing a new covenant

ushering in a new way into
new birth and new life
beginning again and again
and again.
What glorious hope —
a hope that invites me, not to a
monotony of *déjà vu*
here-we-go-again restarts,
but to a renewed strength that
enables me to run, to walk,
— even to soar —
without growing weary,
without fainting under
the strain of all
that has yet to be
redeemed, restored, made new.



When Nothing is Everything

Praise to you,
Shepherd of my soul.
In you I lack nothing,
have everything I need,
am not in want.
Except
I often do want
what you have not given,
feel lack when I look
at what others have,
notice bare patches in
green pastures,
see only a trickle instead of
deep untroubled waters.

Some days I am like a sheep
without a shepherd
not because you are elsewhere
tending to others
but because I have not listened
to your voice
and followed it to find you
still the Shepherd *who knows me*,
who leads, refreshes, guides,
provides, protects, comforts —
the Shepherd
who lays down his life
and takes it up again,
and fills my cup until it overflows
with goodness and mercy
and I lack nothing
of eternal value.

