

Wandering Heart: "*Rescue me from danger*"

## Rescue Me

I'd rather not need rescue.  
I'd prefer a five-step plan  
and a quick-fix solution.  
I'd prefer stubborn insistence  
over honest vulnerability,  
because rescue requires  
asking for help.  
Rescue names  
the rising water.  
Rescue sees  
the tired, treading feet.  
Rescue feels  
the swell of the wind  
and the rain at a slant.  
But when the floor falls out  
and the world is on fire  
and my small hands  
cannot fix the hurt welling in me,  
the prayer that slips out  
is *rescue*  
*rescue*  
*rescue me.*

Written by: Rev. Sarah Speed | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)

# Wandering Heart: "Rescue me from danger"

by Nicolette Peñaranda

Inspired by Matthew 14:22-23

Acrylic, ink, paper collage, and mixed media on canvas

There are no street lights in the ocean. I think about that often. Rarely do we think about how dark and mysterious the night is, even for a veteran fisherman. Nor do we take into consideration the movement of the wind and its roar rumbling off of the waves.

Inside the wind tunnel in this piece, we see the West African symbol, *Adinkrahene*,<sup>1</sup> symbolizing leadership and charisma. Peter embodies all of that when he follows Jesus onto the water. But the bottom of his foot holds the *Mako*.<sup>2</sup> *Mako* reminds us that not all peppers grow the same. As charismatic and eager to impress Jesus as Peter is, he does not necessarily embody the same level of development as Jesus. The hand of Jesus reaches through the image of *Asase Ye Duru*,<sup>3</sup> reminding us that the earth has weight. Jesus, the divine, is greater than the limitations of the flesh, the fears we carry like the uncertainty of the water. What we also see around the hand of Christ is *Nyame Dua*,<sup>4</sup> the sacred stump symbolizing God's presence and protection. The ever-present God protected Peter from drowning. All of this storytelling is set inside the symbol of *Mmusuyidee*,<sup>5</sup> signifying prosperity and sanctity. We are invited to maintain a hopeful outlook and persevere.

I titled this piece *Lift Off* as a nod to the 2011 Jay Z and Kanye West (ft. Beyonce) song by the same title. There is something about the opening lines, "We gon' take it to the moon, take it to the stars, how many people you know can take it this far?" that lingers in my head. The emphasis on the night sky and the deep wonder of the stars definitely influences the correlation. However, I think it also pertains to how Peter must have felt walking on water toward Jesus. No one had ever done that before. Not only was he the first, but he must have felt like he was having a deeper experience with Jesus. Who else was flying this high right then? Who else had dropped everything to live vagrantly with Christ? Before stumbling in his ways, there was something otherworldly happening, which brings me back to the stars.

Living in a metropolitan area, I don't get the luxury of stars but I like to imagine a world where the skies told their own stories. In *Lift Off*, the elements are like main characters, inspiring whimsical fantasy. Cut-out layered clouds build into the horizon of the sea. The forceful wind tunnel blows over the sinking foot of a probably panicking Peter. This is a moving piece that is meant to tell a story in any direction it is turned. Like the theme of this series, the viewer should feel like they are on a journey with Peter. *Lift Off* is intentionally dark with beautiful highlights of color and sparkle. It is because of the darkness that the colors shine bright. These two things are complimentary, not contrasting. The fear that entered Peter with the wind was most likely heightened because it was dark out. Without knowing exactly what was around him, Peter became vulnerable, thus causing him to reach out. The wonder of darkness exposes us and invites us to seek connection. We see that in the reaching hand gently entering the dark sky. —Rev. Nicolette Peñaranda

1 Adinkra symbols originated from the Gyaman people of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. Learn more about their meanings and significance here: [adinkrasymbols.org](http://adinkrasymbols.org). View the *Adinkrahene* symbol here: [adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/adinkrahene/](http://adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/adinkrahene/)

2 This proverb warns the greater ones (the peppers that ripen quickly) to help the less fortunate. Learn more here: [adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/mako/](http://adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/mako/)

3 *Asase Ye Duru* is a reminder of the earth's significance; humans should respect the earth and not harm it. [adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/asase-ye-duru/](http://adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/asase-ye-duru/)

4 *NyameDua* means "tree or altar of God." [adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/nyame-dua/](http://adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/nyame-dua/)

5 *Mmusuyidee* means "that which removes bad luck or evil." [adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/krapa-musuyidee/](http://adinkrasymbols.org/symbols/krapa-musuyidee/)