

“Do you remember two years ago when you said you were done writing?” And I said, “No.” “And how about a year ago?” “No.” I always think I’m done writing and then something else comes out, but no I don’t have any rituals with my writing. I have conditions that are better for the writing. I have this studio, and Chris is retired now, but when she was at work, I had this very open head space. I’m just very porous. I’m very aware when I’m not the only one in the house. Last week I was in my office on campus on a Friday and there was no one around. It was perfect. Solitude is good.

### SPIRO

Are there any biblical stories you draw inspiration from again and again?

### BROWN

Just literally and simply the story of bringing people back to life. People are dead and they come back. I think of it a little like the downside of bipolar depression, the feeling of, “That’s it, I’m done, no more”—the idea that there’s life after death, and then asking, was I really that dark? What was I worried about? This chemical lifting of light after dark. And the story of Jacob wrestling with the angels—it’s like, who are you? I can’t leave until I know this thing. Who are you, who am I, what’s the name?

Another story that’s incredibly troubling for me is the story of Abraham and Isaac. If you love me, you’ll kill your son for me, and it’s like, no way! If that’s the kind of god you are. It’s really hard for me to wrap my head around that, but I know it’s a story of faith. But don’t ever ask somebody to do that. There’s this book, *New Animals*, by Nick Francis Potter from Subito Press. They do really great work in Colorado, and there’s this story in there called “Oops, Isaac.” The angel in the story shows up and tells Abraham, don’t do it. In this story, the angel gets lost on his way to Isaac, “Oh, sorry, Isaac.” It’s great—don’t give the wrong angel the job, cause he’s like, “Sorry! Sorry!”

Also the story of Paul: he goes from being really sure and really right and pure and turns around like, “Oh what have I done? I’ve got to stop persecuting people.” And he doesn’t become perfect, he is