

Christus

Laura Craner

As a child first, the ramp was
forever. Walking, counting stars, planetgazing,
still walking; music playing, missionaries talking.
Your feet, eye-level, substantial and white, perfect
toenails and rounded scars;
My big heart and small
hands reached out to touch You.



Adolescent next, early spring and crowded square
And me alone meant surfing waves of tourists until I found
an interesting one; that day a Jewish one.
Their questions, sprinkling like April showers, made
dappled testifiers of not just missionaries but me too.
We sang, "As I Have Loved You." The Jews sang in Hebrew;
Their tour stopped outside.
Heart burning, tears running, I climbed the ramp in leaps
And saw Your hands stretched out still,
Like an embrace I wanted to fill.



Jaded then, that accidental night, I figured,
looking down from the ramp,
You knew I was there. Your words in music
called like forever, but I just stopped in to
get warm. It didn't matter. I'd seen it
before: scarred feet firm, arms stretched wide, and, the

longer I waited, at this point, reproach in those eyes, maybe
regret in those hands and that side. I didn't look up to find out.



Mother now, I find myself back, children in tow.
Buttoned bench, light-streaming window, and You,
waiting, at the top of the ramp, just like
You do, scarred feet firm, arms stretched.
Their eyes open wide, searching, seeing,
Big hearts and small hands reaching. With them with you
this is how I remember what it is that I know,
what it was that I knew.