

Christ Pantokrator

by [Jana-Lee Germaine](#) in the [November 3, 2009](#) issue

—*Chilandari (Athos), 13th-century Byzantine icon*

Our Lord of Flaked Paint freckling
sallow skin and emerald robes,

Our Lord of Mudpuddle Eyes
that look away in weary irritation,

no one can touch your loneliness,
God cut off from God.

You who flamed a world into being
with only words, stood

in the midst of bickering men,
fig trees dying, and sparrows

falling to the ground.
Were there days when heat and dust,

the smell of stale crowds
pushing you from place to place,

asking for one more resurrection,
food for thousands

or withered hands healed,
made you want to slash the canvas,

fly back to heaven and start fresh
on some new world far away?

Days where your head ached
from sun on sand and water,

where your throat scraped raw
from shouting *Blessed* are . . . to men

who would go home, forget, and return
to nail you to a piece of wood?

No one understood your stories,
could grasp that you would trade

legions of angels
for nine ungrateful lepers,

the friend who turned you in,
and never enough sleep.

Our Lord of Omnipotent Frustration
with your halo like a setting sun,

your hand is raised as if to bless me,
though I can't imagine why.