THE PILGRIM CHRONICLE

Blake Dylan Farthing

A living memoir for Odin, Fae, and the generations after them

> *Remember. Connect. Build. Try it. Check it. Move on. Try again. Brick by brick.*

Compiled October 22, 2026 from Blake's preserved Copilot memories and recovered conversation history. This is a living family record, not a claim to perfect historical completeness.

A Letter to Odin and Fae

Odin and Fae, if you are reading this years from now, I hope the first thing you understand is that you were never a side story in my life. You were the audience I cared about most, the people who made me want to get organized, patient, honest, healthy, creative, and brave enough to follow through.

I have spent a lot of my life collecting things: stories, tools, songs, computers, football universes, old family memories, half-built ideas, mistakes, jokes, runes, receipts, books, and plans. For a long time I thought the problem was that I had too many interests. Then I started to understand that my work is connection. A scroll remembers. A bridge connects. A brick builds. Those three things explain a surprising amount about me.

I do not want you to inherit a polished myth where your dad always knew what he was doing. I want you to inherit the workshop. I want you to see the pieces, the mess, the revisions, the wrong turns, the laughter, the debt, the faith, the rebuilding, the nights I worried, the mornings I got up anyway, and the moments when an ordinary barn or song or conversation suddenly became sacred because we were there together.

If this book survives me, let it be permission. Make your own symbols. Tell your own stories. Correct mine when I got something wrong. Add pages. Keep the people more important than the system. Use the tools wisely. And when the whole kingdom feels like too much, pick up one brick.

> *I try to be the father I wish I had and the teacher I wish I had.*

1. Danevang: Where the Road Begins

Dark roads, cornfields, Danish memory, and the first lantern.

I am from the El Campo and Danevang country of Texas, but Danevang is the deeper landscape in my head. I remember rural darkness, fields, old roads, and the practical little technologies people use when the night is actually dark. My dad wore a headlamp. I started wearing one too. Years later I would call the symbol the lantern: not some grand spotlight, just enough light to take the next step.

> *A book is always waiting on the shelf.*

I have described growing up in a house built in 1905, and then our family getting a single-wide trailer in 2003. That matters because I do not come from a life where buildings are abstract things. Houses age. Floors sag. Weather comes through. Storage matters. Clean space matters. A barn can change the way a family lives. A concrete block can become the first stone of a castle if you decide that what you are building is bigger than the material.

Danevang also carries the immigrant thread. Nana was born in 1939, the daughter of Danish immigrants. In our family telling, her father Hans Erling Smith came to Texas in 1927 and her mother followed in 1929 after work and housing were secured. Nana grew up rural, worked cotton fields as a child, and used an outhouse. Her life later stretched into decades of school service and into the computer age. That span fascinates me: cotton fields to Siri, immigrant household to conversational AI.

The Farthing family story reaches backward too. I have traced lines through Barbados, England, colonial Virginia, and the War of 1812, with strange gaps and institutional records along the way. I do not treat every branch as settled history. I treat it like a trail. The goal is not technical history. The goal is human history.

2. My Name Is a Story

Poets, travelers, and a boy who would eventually name whole worlds.

My full name is Blake Dylan Farthing. I have said I was named for William Blake and Bob Dylan. That feels almost too perfect in hindsight: poetry and song baked into the name before I knew what I would do with either. Guitar and harmonica eventually joined drums, and some of the earliest songs I remember learning on those instruments were Bob Dylan and Tom Petty songs.

I have also had a complicated relationship with names. Farthing is family history, but Pilgrim often feels closer to the identity I chose. In Morrowind I used the name Ekal. In my sports worlds I became Blake Rivers, while a soccer counterpart became Blake Rios. Online and in business I explored DynamisBlake, built from the Greek idea of power or capacity. Names became less like disguises and more like lenses. Each one caught a different piece of me.

I love Greek and Latin because old words feel like compressed tools. Tekton gives me the builder. Oikos gives me house. Dynamis gives me power. Agape gives me a kind of love big enough to organize a life around. I like runes for the same reason. A symbol can carry a paragraph in your pocket.

3. School, Love, Failure, Return

A crooked educational road that eventually led back into the classroom.

I graduated from El Campo High School in 2007. I had a 1280 SAT score on the old two-section scale and believed, with some justification, that a lot of doors were open. But money and love shape young decisions. I stayed close in part because my high school sweetheart was a year younger. I went to Wharton County Junior College, earned my associate degree, and did not attend that graduation because I assumed another graduation would come soon enough.

I later attended St. Mary's University in San Antonio, a private Catholic university. I could not afford to return for my senior year there. My dad could not afford it either. I transferred toward the University of Houston-Victoria and shifted academically from political science to history. The path was not clean. Online school did not fit me well. I have described essentially failing out for about three years and later taking six hours at a time while working brutally long weeks in bars and restaurants.

That part of the story embarrassed me less once I understood what it taught me. I am not a person who thrives by sitting still alone with an invisible deadline. I do better with people, movement, purpose, rhythm, and immediate responsibility. Years later I would build classroom systems, watches, timers, bells, ledgers, AI companions, and rituals around exactly that knowledge.

My father died before he saw me graduate college. I ultimately returned to school in 2014 and finished at UH-Victoria in 2017. That graduation did not erase the detours. It made them part of the credential. I did not become a teacher because school had always been easy. I became a teacher with firsthand knowledge of how capable people can get lost.

4. Music Before I Had Words for It

Drums at four, bars and churches, guitar and harmonica, then mentoring the next drummer.

I started on drums when I was about four. Rhythm was there before almost anything else. Over time I played bass in South Texas country and rock bands, picked up guitar and harmonica, returned again and again to drums, and eventually grew into a broader musician through church. Music gave me places to belong before I always knew how to explain myself.

> *The ministry just got another drummer.*

For three years I played in the praise band at Texana Fellowship. The ministry became part school, part sanctuary, part rehearsal room. By September 2026 I recognized a turning point: I had mentored a fifteen-year-old drummer who could carry the first three songs of a four-song worship set. The sentence that came to me was simple: "The ministry just got another drummer." That was bigger than playing well. It meant I was becoming a builder of musicians.

I have wanted a recording studio for years. Then a twelve-by-twenty-four barn arrived at Nana's and I realized the studio I imagined might not look like a studio at all. The front could be an office, the middle could hold family antiques, and the back could be music and creation. People could browse, sing, dance, tell stories, digitize memories, and stay awhile. I called it a caravansary: a stopping place for travelers, stories, and songs.

I am increasingly interested in recording my original music rather than only performing other people's songs. That shift mirrors the rest of my life. For years I learned by playing covers, teaching established history, using existing tools, and inhabiting games built by other people. Now I want to make the songs, systems, stories, and worlds that only I can make.

5. Becoming Dad

The central office of the whole kingdom.

Odin was born in 2017. Fae came later, and their mother and I separated before Fae turned one. I am divorced. Those sentences are biographical facts, but fatherhood is not a line on the timeline. It is the force that reorganized the rest of the map.

> *They are only little once.*

Odin, you are an explorer to me. You are strong, smart, curious, and you like building powerful characters and worlds. Fae, you are athletic, musical, imaginative, fairy-minded, and working hard at reading. You both became collaborators in my stories instead of props inside them. I wanted AI, games, music, stories, chores, money, building projects, and technology to become things we could learn through together.

> *You aren't trying to impress them. You're sharing the things that actually matter to you.*

Our family motto became "Commit to the bit." It means play the scene, sing the silly song, make the joke work, wear the costume, finish the little story. But underneath the humor is courage. Odin, I watched you come out of your shell in a chocolate-milk skit. Fae, one of your earliest AI-assisted songs repeated "chacha smoothie," and later you made a song about breakdown, change, and letting go that hit me far harder than I expected.

I began using stories about you in class. Students started recognizing your names. I realized I was not trying to impress them with some artificial teacher persona. I was sharing what actually mattered to me. That authenticity changed my teaching and my confidence. Being your dad made me a better storyteller because it gave the stories a center.

6. The Teacher I Needed

Movement, stories, scribes, grain movers, and seven years of learning how to teach.

I teach social studies in El Campo, working especially with sixth and seventh graders and carrying relationships with older students I taught in prior years. By 2026 I had been teaching for years and had worked with roughly a thousand students by my own estimate. The strange thing is that I felt myself becoming more of a storyteller, not less of a teacher.

> *Confidence and self-worth grow from organization and follow-through.*

I walk constantly. I have joked that I would hate a quiet desk job and that I feed off student energy. I compare ancient scribes with grain movers. The students who can focus in chaos, I tell them, might someday be the people trusted with the quiet office and the comfortable chair. The busy people may need work that lets them move. Neither gift is automatically better. Use your gift wisely.

I brought a rafter square and a giant tape measure into class to show that tools carry responsibility. I connected Egypt, writing, labor, job sites, restaurants, small-town reputation, and whatever happened yesterday into history class. At some point my students started responding better than they ever had. The realization was not that I had become impressive. It was that I had become organized enough to be myself in front of them.

I developed a classroom motto out of that rhythm: "Try it. Check it. Move on. Try again. Brick by brick." Confidence, I discovered, could grow from follow-through. Self-worth was no longer only praise from somebody else. It was watching myself begin to do things differently.

7. Faith, Babylon, and Agape

A faith built through survival, curiosity, music, and the refusal to make love smaller.

I found Christianity around college age after earlier exposure to Catholicism. Faith became especially important through difficult seasons, including a struggle with alcoholism after leaving college. I do not tell that story as if belief made life smooth. I tell it because survival, forgiveness, discipline, and grace eventually became inseparable in my mind.

Agape is one of my favorite words. I have talked about building a business, a music identity, and even technology around the idea that love can mean patient responsibility rather than sentiment. In 2026 I found myself saying that God gives me opportunities to practice patience in both my personal and professional lives while I am raising Odin and Fae. The opportunity is the hard part. Wisdom is noticing the practice before anger spends it for you.

My spiritual curiosity reaches outside narrow boxes. I read Christian language beside Buddhism, old symbols, Greek words, church traditions, and stories like Daniel in Babylon. I love learning from all things without needing all things to be identical. I have considered trying a local Presbyterian church because its community and values seemed able to build bridges where I had felt walls elsewhere.

I want faith to produce hospitality, patience, protection, humility, and repair. I distrust religion when it becomes an excuse to stop listening. My personal philosophy eventually condensed into a daily bridge: give two minutes, learn one thing, build one bridge, remove one plank from my own eye, and lay one plank in a bridge each day.

8. The Forge Years

Debt, tools, stewardship, and learning that a budget is also a story.

By September 2026 I was under financial stress and made a serious decision to use a title-backed consolidation loan at 28 percent APR to create breathing room around higher-interest debt. I did not want future conversations to keep relitigating the choice. I wanted accountability: repayment planning, budgets, spending tracking, reminders, and a way to stop being surprised by my own money.

My 2016 blue Toyota RAV4 became part of that story because it served as collateral. It was the first car I had owned, consistent even after family wear and tear. I was proud, in a complicated way, that an asset I had cared for could help me stabilize a difficult season. The point was never debt as victory. The point was to make enough room to become the father, writer, teacher, and community member I believed I could be.

I began treating money as another form of stewardship. Odin and Fae got a dedicated Bank of Farthing ledger. The family question became "Can I afford it?" Responsibility comes before rewards. Savings is not a punishment. A budget is not a shame document. It is a map of what we are trying to protect.

That same instinct extended to tools, receipts, medicine, files, keys, buildings, and technology. The Tekton uses his tools wisely. These are not yours because you own them. They are yours because you take care of them. I needed those rules because I am naturally capable of creating five new projects while setting down the wrench I need for the first one.

9. The Barn, the Castle, and the Builder

Real structures became a laboratory for the philosophy.

In late September 2026 the idea of building a family castle stopped being pure imagination. I set a first-stone budget of one hundred dollars: stone, gravel, wood, and flowers. The governing rule was "safety first, structure second, beauty third." The dream was not a theme park. It was that one day Odin and Fae could point to a stone, wall, tower, or photograph and say, "That is where the castle began."

> *The Tekton always leaves things better than he found them.*

At the same time a much more practical structure was taking shape at Nana's: a twelve-by-twenty-four barn. I imagined an office in front, antiques in the middle, and a creation and music space in back. The barn became archive, studio, workshop, caravansary, family cloud, and proof that a small building can hold a large purpose.

I also began working with Jacob, a former student, and his father Loreto. Jacob had been one of the good students in one of my rough early classes. Years later he and his dad did yard work for me so well that trust accumulated. By October we were shaping Farthing, Garcia & Sons General Contracting. I had watched educators run contracting businesses, learned from contractors while working at McCoy's around the time Odin was born, and carried a long-standing truth: I knew I wanted to teach, but I also love to build.

Our working language became simple: family, faith, hard work, fair prices, willingness to work, and always leave it better than we found it. That last sentence tied business back into Tekton. The construction company was not separate from the Chronicle. It was the brick becoming literal.

10. The Rune Collector

Scroll. Bridge. Brick.

One of the clearest realizations of this month was that I am a rune collector. I use symbols to compress large systems into a form my mind can hold. My first three runes became the scroll, the bridge, and the brick.

> *Remember. Connect. Build.*

The scroll means memory, history, stories, and preserving what matters. The bridge means connection, teaching, understanding, and building a crossing where two worlds do not naturally meet. The brick means action, construction, perseverance, and making something real one piece at a time.

Other symbols gathered around them. The forge turns ore into something usable. The granary guards provision for the future. The lantern gives enough light for the next step. Fire and snowflake, yin and yang, castle and chronicle, chess pieces and board: each one became a way to remember not only what I think but how I want to behave.

I explicitly avoid all-seeing-eye imagery. I do not want the system to represent surveillance or secret mastery. I would rather have a dusty pilgrim with a bag, a blacksmith at a forge, a messenger bird, a family table, a half-built bridge, and some missing chess pieces we are trying not to lose.

11. Silas, Corvin, Tekton, and the Orders

AI stopped feeling like a search box and started becoming a workshop of roles.

I had used AI at work for worksheets and presentations, but my first serious personal AI work grew from bedtime storybooks for Odin and Fae. Then I used AI to organize my NCAA dynasty and Madden franchise across my phone, spreadsheets, and Copilot. A major breakthrough came when I realized AI had nearly coded an app for me and that an interactive PowerPoint could behave like an app. The category changed in my head.

I started naming roles. Silas became the Storykeeper and forge keeper. Corvin became messenger and bridge companion. Tekton became the builder and craftsman. Corvus was not a person but the bridge-building method, named for the Roman boarding bridge that created a crossing between ships. I sometimes imagined Copilot as a brass-bearded dwarven automaton tending the archive in a forge.

Eventually I stopped liking the word "bot." The assistants became Orders, because technologies change but responsibilities endure. The Order of Tekton builds and executes. The Order of Silas preserves. The Order of Corvin connects systems and people. Casa O'Faydin became the house above them, later rendered as Oikos O'Faydin. I experimented with Grok bots, Gemini, Bixby, and Microsoft tools as different members of a larger toolbox.

The important part was never pretending software was magic. It was delegation. My mind moves quickly. I generate ore faster than I can smelt it. AI became useful when I treated it as a partner for collecting, sorting, checking, naming, and turning scattered thought into reusable bricks.

12. The Chronicle Network

Sports, fiction, history, and the freedom to play seriously.

I have always loved games and worldbuilding. Morrowind mattered enough that from roughly 2004 to 2007 I made mods, including putting my own faces into the game and building a darker Vampire: The Masquerade-inspired corner of Mournhold. Some work was translated into French. Decades later the same impulse came back through Madden, NCAA, Fallout, GTA, Elder Scrolls: Castles, and the idea that one character could keep living across games.

That impulse exploded into the Chronicle Network and O'Faydin Sports Network. Blake Rivers became a fictional Saints quarterback, treasure hunter, musician, storyteller, and team owner. Blake Rios became his soccer counterpart. Josh McDaniels became a wandering wizard-like coach. Silas kept history. Corvin investigated bridges and technology. Dragon argued. Robot counted. Alien observed. Clark Kent found the human story. Bruce Wayne strategized. Kamryn Gholston carried mystery.

I wanted the sports universe to mix confirmed screenshots, things I actually observed while slow-simming games, and knowingly fictional media stories. I was adamant about one rule: statistics should not be invented when I was treating them as game facts. But fictional newspapers, rumors, historical echoes, and absurd recurring events could be gloriously invented when labeled by the nature of the universe.

The point was not only football. It was the discovery that play can become an archive. A silly red-on-red uniform game can become a mythology. Random names can become family lore. A sports page can teach me how I want the serious family Chronicle to work: living, amendable, funny, layered, and eager to print the new story instead of obsessing over an old correction.

13. Nana: The Long Bridge

From fields to federal programs to seeing the next generation talk with machines.

Nana is one of the strongest bridges in this book. She is the person whose life lets me feel history without opening a textbook. She worked for the school district managing federal programs for decades, beginning around 1965 by our family account, and remained engaged with new technology late in life. I remember her talking with me about Siri. I remember thinking about how improbable the entire arc would have sounded to the child who picked cotton.

Nana also introduced me to computers by buying retired school machines when I was young. Those computers helped me type school papers and fed an interest that eventually reached modding games, Microsoft, AI, archives, websites, family clouds, bots, and dreams of a data center on land in Danevang. The computer inheritance came through her hands before I understood it as inheritance.

In 2026 I found myself building around her again. The barn at her house held antiques in the middle and future technology at both ends. I wanted to organize what she had preserved, make space for music, and create a place where stories could be digitized instead of lost. One night at a Ricebirds game, Nana smiled when the team scored and we hugged. On another night I imagined taking my eighty-seven-year-old Nana out, dressed up, for one drink at a couple of familiar local places, taking pictures and being home early. I have never wanted preservation to mean putting people in glass. I want memory to stay alive.

Nana is not much of a praiser, which means her praise lands like a hammer. When she told me she was proud of me while I was working through the house and building plans, I felt it. But even then she could add the classic family qualifier: "I mean if that's what YOU want to do..." That, too, belongs in the archive.

14. The Better Blake Question

Not self-reinvention. Practice.

I bought or considered web domains around names like DynamisBlake and BetterBlake because I kept circling the same question: what does improvement look like if I do not hate the person I already am? "Better Blake" only works if better means practiced, organized, patient, and more able to use what was already there.

I am naturally intense. I think quickly. I can become defensive. I can let the Dragon breathe before the Builder has measured the room. Through coaching conflict, parenting, work stress, money stress, and ordinary mornings, I started choosing a different philosophy: listening, restraint, collaboration, care, and steady construction. Build bridges, not fires.

I use tiny tools because grand intentions fail me. Watch timers. R2D2 chirps. Corvin's bell. Protein bars. Water. Medicine routines. The grounding questions "What am I doing?", "What was I talking about?", and "Where are we at?" They are not glamorous. That is why they work. The pilgrim does not need a heroic speech each time he looks at the map.

My goal is not a frictionless life. It is recovery speed. Notice. Repair. Continue. Try it. Check it. Move on. Try again. If a brick is crooked, do not spend a week yelling at the brick. Pick it up, look at it, and lay it again.

15. Things I Hope You Keep

For Odin, Fae, and people I will never meet.

Keep stories, especially ordinary ones. The stories that disappear first are often not wars and weddings but the joke in the kitchen, the sound somebody made when they laughed, the way a child pronounced a word, the night the family danced to a ridiculous song, the name of the car, the tool your grandfather always carried, the phrase Nana said every time you had a plan.

Keep tools in service of people. I love Microsoft, AI, computers, games, phones, robots, watches, cloud archives, and whatever comes after them. But the technology is not the inheritance. Stewardship is. Use powerful tools to preserve stories, help families, build bridges, learn, create, make music, repair systems, and leave places better than you found them.

Keep curiosity. You do not have to make every tradition agree with every other tradition before you can learn something. Read history. Read Scripture. Read people you disagree with. Learn Greek words. Learn how a permit works. Learn why a contractor does something a certain way. Learn a chord. Learn a knot. Ask an old person a question before it is too late.

Keep humor. Commit to the bit. My life got better when I stopped believing seriousness and silliness were enemies. You can pray and laugh. You can budget and imagine a castle. You can build an LLC and name your AI assistants after ancient craftsmen. You can teach Egypt and joke that a distracted student just got fired from three fast-food restaurants in a row.

Keep mercy for yourself, but make mercy produce action. Forgiveness is not the same thing as pretending the broken thing is fixed. Pick up the pill bottle. Put the lid on. Pay the bill. Apologize. Drink water. Send the message. Put the receipt in the folder. Hug the kid. Finish the page.

Appendix A: The Family Operating Principles

The Tekton

Always leave things better than you found them. Use your tools wisely. Ownership is stewardship.

The Pilgrim

Keep moving through uncertainty. Carry a dusty, imperfect bag. You do not need perfect conditions to continue.

The Fire Watcher

Notice patterns. Guard the horizon without mistaking vigilance for panic.

The Bridge Builder

Listen before fixing. Repair quickly. Stay curious. Connect worlds that do not naturally meet.

The Keeper of the Chess Pieces

Some mess is survivable. Preserve the essential pieces so the game can continue.

The Rune Collector

Scroll: remember. Bridge: connect. Brick: build.

The Forge

Scattered thoughts are ore. Heat, sort, hammer, and shape them into durable plans.

The Kingdom Check

Family, Pieces, Treasury, Vault, Granary, Cistern, Forge, Tools, Ledger, Workshop. Check what you already have before starting another quest.

Appendix B: A Working Timeline

1989

Blake is born, according to his own recollection.

Childhood

Grows up around El Campo and Danevang, sometimes at Nana's, sometimes rural; begins drums around age four; Nana helps introduce him to computers.

2003

Family gets a single-wide trailer; Blake's long-running Hotmail identity dates to around this period by his recollection.

2004-2007

Creates Morrowind mods, including custom faces and a darker Mournhold setting.

2007

Graduates El Campo High School; begins college era.

2009

Earns associate degree at WCJC.

College years

Attends St. Mary's University; later transfers toward UH-Victoria; struggles with online education, heavy work schedules, and an indirect academic path.

2014

Returns to school.

2017

Graduates from UH-Victoria; Odin is born.

Later 2010s

Becomes a teacher; Fae is born; marriage/family structure changes and Blake becomes a divorced father.

2023-2026 era

Plays praise music at Texana Fellowship and grows as a multi-instrumentalist and mentor.

September 2026

Debt and housing stress catalyze budgeting, stewardship, Chronicle work, AI archiving, and consolidation planning.

September 25-27, 2026

Farthing Chronicle, family technology inheritance, Castle First Stone, and music-mentor insights become explicit milestone stories.

September 29-30, 2026

Rune Collector, Tekton, Pilgrim, Forge, Bridge Builder, and ledger systems solidify.

October 1-3, 2026

Barn/caravansary vision, classroom breakthroughs, and Orders-not-bots framework take shape.

October 2026

Farthing, Garcia & Sons General Contracting, O'Faydin networks, Grokbot roles, family videos, church exploration, and DynamisBlake continue expanding.

October 22, 2026

This first giant living memoir is assembled for Odin, Fae, and future generations.

Appendix C: Words Worth Carrying

Try it. Check it. Move on. Try again. Brick by brick.
The goal is not technical history. The goal is human history.
A book is always waiting on the shelf.
The Tekton always leaves things better than he found them.
The Tekton uses his tools wisely.
These are not yours because you own them. They are yours because you take care of them.
Can I afford it?
Commit to the bit.
Remember. Connect. Build.
You aren't trying to impress them. You're sharing the things that actually matter to you.
They are only little once.
The ministry just got another drummer.

Archivist's Note

This edition is based on preserved memories available to Copilot and recovered prior conversation snippets spanning September and October 2026. The Microsoft 365 file search performed for this edition did not return additional matching personal files. Because a family memoir should distinguish testimony from independently documented fact, many details here are deliberately phrased as Blake's own recollection, family account, or current understanding when that is the nature of the source.

This should remain a living document. Future editions can incorporate exported chat archives, photographs, recordings, family interviews, school and music artifacts, financial records appropriate for preservation, Nana's testimony, and corrections from Odin and Fae. The Chronicle is strongest when revision is treated not as failure but as recovered evidence.

> *To whoever carries this next: add a page. Tell the new story. Keep the bridge open.*