

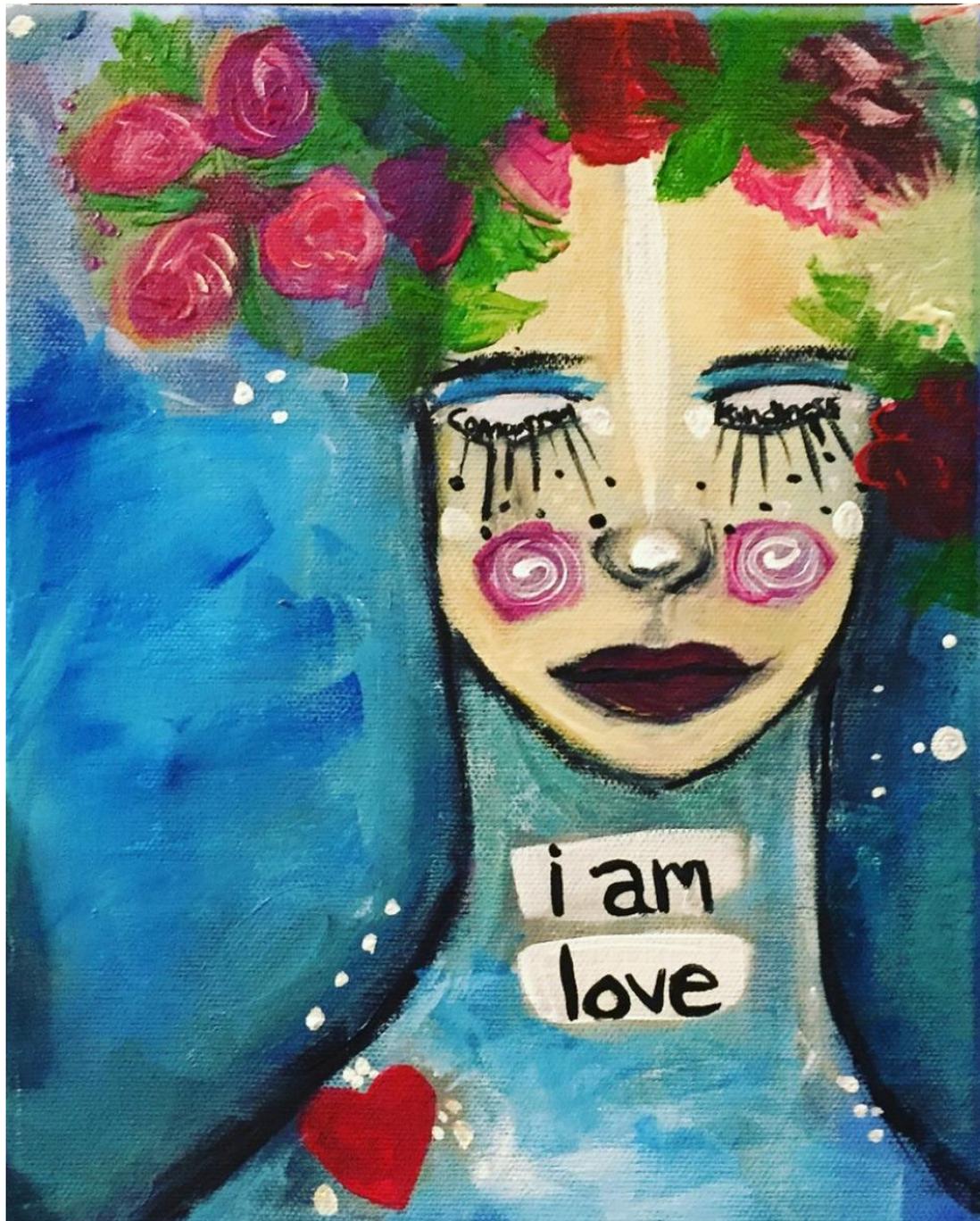
“Mothers and Children in HIV Village in Tanzania”

Judith Jennrich
Loyola University Chicago
Niehoff School of Nursing

Photography, 2011
18” x 8”

ARTIST STATEMENT: Judith Jennrich

- I took these photos doing home visits of women and children with HIV in Tanzania in 2011.



“Manifesting”

Nina Kadri

RN-Shirley Ryan Ability Lab

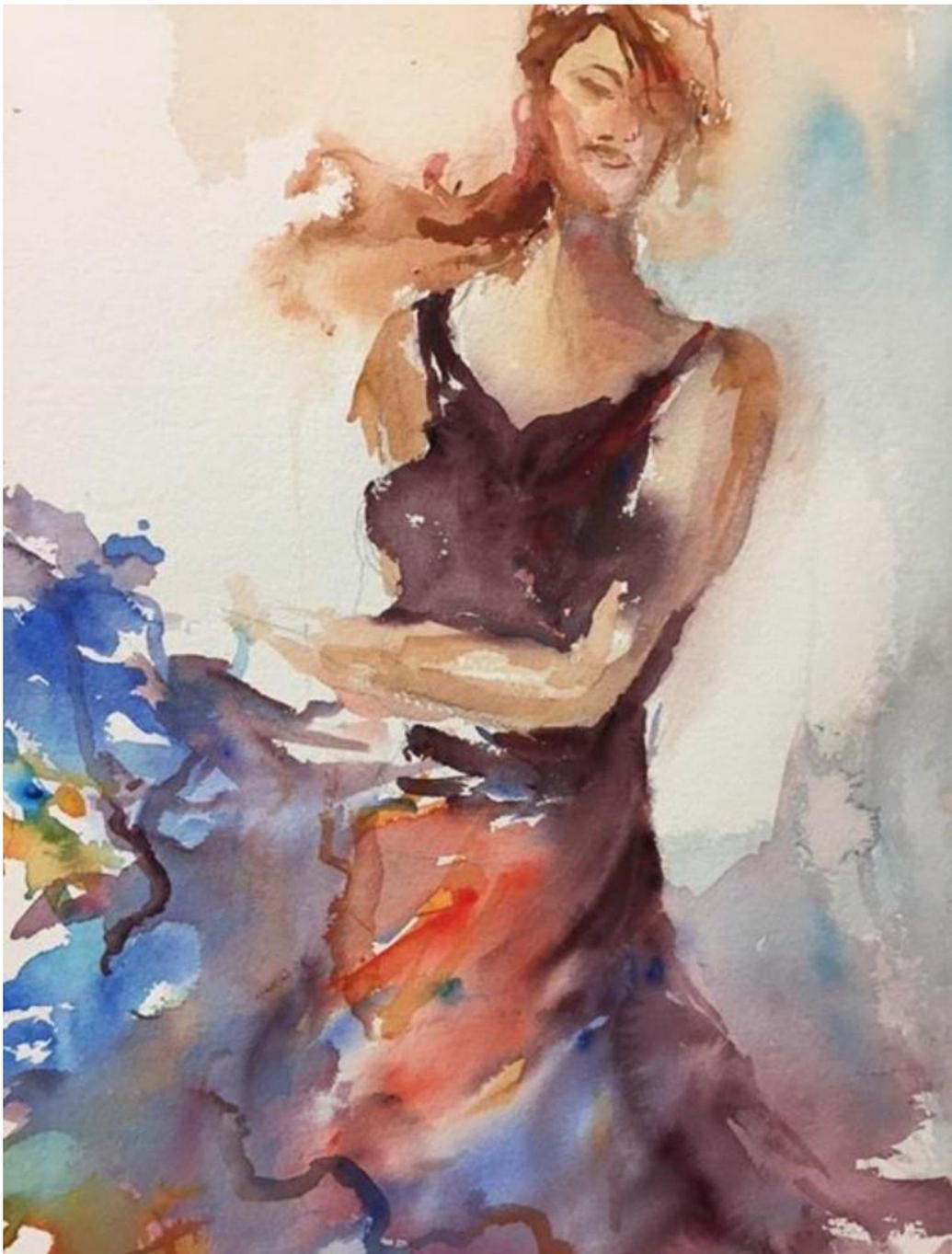
Painting, 2019

Acrylic on Canvas

10” x 8”

ARTIST STATEMENT: Nina Kadri

- I have always loved painting to relax and connect with the present moment. This piece was made when I was overwhelmed with so many emotions and couldn't find the words to express how I was feeling in that moment. I decided to paint the feelings I wanted to manifest in my heart and soul to feel hopeful and excited for what the future may bring.



“Bailarina de Flamenco”

Gerri Kaye

MS, APN, CNS, CCRN

Clinical Nurse Specialist, Critical
Care and Nursing Education

Weiss Hospital

Painting-Watercolor
21” x 25”



“Lincoln Park Spring”

Gerri Kaye

MS, APN, CNS, CCRN

Clinical Nurse Specialist, Critical
Care and Nursing Education

Weiss Hospital

Painting-Watercolor
17.5” x 21”



“The Strawberry Field”

Gerri Kaye

MS, APN, CNS, CCRN

Clinical Nurse Specialist, Critical
Care and Nursing Education

Weiss Hospital

Painting-Pastel
9” x 11”

ARTIST STATEMENT: Gerri Kaye

- I have been blessed with the ability to draw since kindergarten. Throughout my childhood and adult years I've participated in school art clubs, sketching, and craftwork. Watercolor is my primary medium but I have also ventured out to work with pastel and oil pastels. I continue to pursue my passion and enjoy others' reaction to the artwork I create. I am a native of and currently live in Chicago.



"Blanched"

Martha Kemp

RN-Neonatal ICU

Rush University Medical Center

Ceramics, 2019

ARTIST STATEMENT: Martha Kemp

- My intention when creating this piece was for it to be circular. The teardrop form came as I folded the clay to close the wall, and made no change. Sometimes things work out better when I give into the form the clay prefers to move with.



"Blood is Blue"

Martha Kemp

RN-Neonatal ICU

Rush University Medical Center

Ceramics, 2019

ARTIST STATEMENT: Martha Kemp

- Completing this piece, I gave up control to the color blue. In our field, “blue” blood is used in education and explanation in regards to the circulation of blood in our bodies, using the color blue to represent deoxygenated blood. While blue blood serves an important purpose in our lives, it represents lack of oxygen. If in the wrong area of the body or if there is too much, blue blood can prove very dangerous.



"No longer Occlusive"

Martha Kemp

RN-Neonatal ICU

Rush University Medical Center

Ceramics, 2020

ARTIST STATEMENT: Martha Kemp

- Creating this vase, I imagined endless layers peeling away from the area of closure. A frequent assessment in nursing is to make certain that dressings applied to the body remain intact and occlusive. In medicine, “occlusive” means an air and water tight seal from the outside world. Occlusive dressings prevent infection for central lines, and dangerous complications like air entering open chest/lung wounds. As hard as I work to maintain occlusive dressings as a nurse, I enjoyed the non occlusive nature of the the flaps as an artist.



"Above the Redwoods"

Norah Kilpatrick

Nursing Student

University of Illinois At Chicago

Textile Art, 2020

Embroidery

ARTIST STATEMENT: Norah Kilpatrick

- "As a nursing student, there are many moments I find myself overwhelmed, between school work, clinical experiences, and the uncertainty of where I will fit in as a nurse. Embroidery has allowed me to take a step back from school and create. I find meaning in words, images, and colors, and translate them into something that, when finished, makes me feel the wonderful emotion that can be achieved by finishing a project. For this exhibit, I chose to use a Mary Oliver quote to remind nurses and nursing students to find a perspective about their world and share it. Their words mean more than they know."



“Bell Pull”

Wendy Kookan

Illinois Wesleyan University

Crewel Embroidery, 2019

Wool and Linen

42” x 12” 1.5”



“Monticello”

Wendy Kookan

Illinois Wesleyan University

Crewel Embroidery, 2019

Wool and Linen

42” x 12” 1.5”

ARTIST STATEMENT: Wendy Kooken

- Crewel embroidery is an ancient form of art going back centuries. For me it is meditative and allows for reflection. It also is a creative outlet.



“Filibird”

Emilie A. Kovach
RN-Cardiac Intensive Care Unit
Rush University Medical Center

Illustration, 2019
Marker on paper
14” x 17”



"St. Anthony"

Emilie A. Kovach

RN-Cardiac Intensive Care Unit
Rush University Medical Center

Illustration, 2019
Marker on paper
6" x 7.9"

ARTIST STATEMENT: Emilie A. Kovach

- Drawing has always been an activity that takes me away from time. When I'm working on a drawing, I feel peaceful and engaged. I enjoy creating my pieces with things as simple as Crayola Markers and sketch paper. Using simple items on hand and pushing myself to practice my artistic skills despite a hectic schedule as a Critical Care RN for 20 years has kept my art alive, and only enhanced my life.



“In the land of the Free
(with Phosphorus bombs)”

William Krug

RN-Lutheran General Hospital

Painting, 2020

Oil on Panel

16” x 12”

ARTIST STATEMENT: William Krug

- Usually my paintings start with a single idea, this one started with the image of phosphorous bombs I had seen in an issue of World Press Photo. The image left a strong impression on me. I feel this painting is open to wide interpretations. While making this painting I thought about disproving Susan Sontag's statement that Camp is never political.



“Trotsky and Frida with a Pinata”

William Krug

RN-Lutheran General Hospital

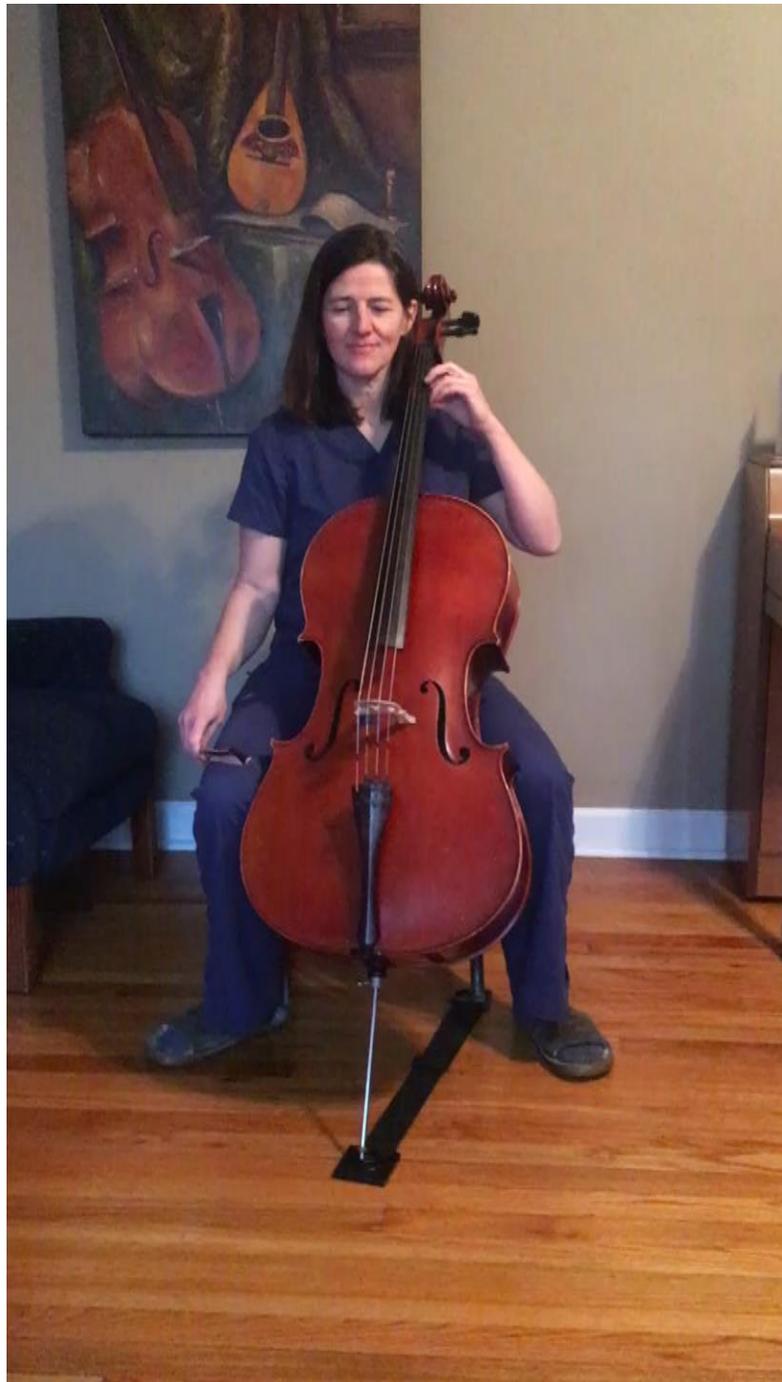
Painting, 2015

Oil on Panel

12” x 12”

ARTIST STATEMENT: William Krug

- Some time ago I read a short biography of Leon Trotsky and was impressed by his role in the Russian Revolution. Eventually the Bolsheviks came to be controlled by the larger psychopath, Stalin, and Trotsky was exiled. He eventually arrived in Mexico where he had a short affair with Frida Kahlo. Frida was very idealistic about Communism and even thought it could free people of physical pain. Her body was a great source of pain for her throughout her life. In this image Frida is freed of her body and only her heart remains.



Bach Cello Suite No. 1, prelude

Kirsten Landowne

Nursing Student

University of Illinois at Chicago

Musical Performance

ARTIST STATEMENT: Kirsten Landowne

- The Bach Cello Suite #1 Prelude has been a constant companion in my 40 year journey as a musician. Besides my performances in concert halls, I love bringing music to people in nursing homes, psych wards, nurseries, and adult day care centers.

Letter To My Sister's With Shades of Color!

As respected as you want to be, you are.
As fierce, as you want to be, you are.
As powerful as you want to be, you are.
As delicate as you want to be, you are.

Your skin tones shout royalty, like you were born from Nefertiti and Egypt was your backyard. Your tongue speaks Chronicles of Knowledge, as if the soul of GOD in you, just woke up. And to add admiration to your beauty your curves are being bought, sold, and injected, our ethnicity is not only a brand but yet a luxury.

So do you see how beautiful and magnificent you are? The world has discovered there stars? Hear me.....

Our culture was created so precise by GOD that he bathed us in the sun to distinguish our color, made our backs

strong to carry our babies, made our lips full to project and pronounce our intelligence, made us sassy to add to our confidence, you still leave lusting salivating tongues drenched in images of me, of you, a Queen, A Woman!
Embrace ~~of~~ All of you as a Woman!

No matter what shade of skin your in you are all beautiful. You're beautiful because you are a woman, a vessel that gives birth to nations from our bellies. A Woman! Sister's, I close my letter leaving you with this, after today no more silent cries, bruised eyes, sinking ships, neglectful relationships, drugs, or sexing just for the sake of having some one.

After today you shall rise up!
God provides us with our needs and blesses us with our desires, thus making it OK to go through our trials... Rise up!

MAKE A DIFFERENCE OVER ⇒

People say that motivation doesn't last long... Well neither does a bath that's why it's recommended daily.

Ruth

"Letter To My Sister's With Shades of Color"

Naomi Lesure

Nursing Student

UIC College of Nursing

Poetry, 2011

ARTIST STATEMENT: Naomi Lesure

- Up and over my head down to my hazel brown skin I am black. Sometimes I stowaway inside myself to revive the strength of the black goddess inside me. When I close my eyes my spirit carries me back to Africa and my senses become my ancestral tracker. I am Truth. A poet. A mirror of Black Excellence...



"The Intersection of Generations"

Jessica Litrenta

Nursing Student

UIC College of Nursing

Photography

ARTIST STATEMENT: Jessica Litrenta

- This picture captures the intersection of three generations of Operating Room (OR) nursing from seasoned veterans to a new nursing graduate. I have been an OR nurse since 2007 and want to present to the community the vibrancy, tradition, and art captured in the OR.



"Parapluies"

Barbara Lockart
Ann & Robert H. Lurie
Children's Hospital

Photography, 2019
10" x 8"

ARTIST STATEMENT: Barbara Lockart

- My nursing practice requires me to explore, communicate, and analyze the world. Photography requires me to see differently. With photography, all that matters is what I see through the view finder. Seeing the world from a different perspective is freedom. Both photography and nursing require me to consider patterns, foreground, background, and maintain focus.



“Big Brother is Here”

Mark Lockwood

PhD, RN, CCRC

Assistant Professor

UIC College of Nursing

Photography, 2003

Silver Gelatin Print

(Photomontage)

16" x 20" x 0.5"

ARTIST STATEMENT: Mark Lockwood

- I created this image during a time when I was exploring various experimental techniques in the darkroom. To create this image I used multiple photographic enlargers to create a composite image (inspired by the work of Jerry Uelsmann). The use of the solarization technique emphasizes the mood of despair. A tribute to George Orwell's novel 1984, and a commentary on the potential dangers of the Information Age. The image was created in 2003.



“Drown”

Mark Lockwood
PhD, RN, CCRC
Assistant Professor
UIC College of Nursing

Photography, 2003
Silver Gelatin Print
(Photomontage)
16” x 20”x 0.5”

ARTIST STATEMENT: Mark Lockwood

- Have you ever spoke with the living dead? Have you ever looked into the eyes of a drowning soul? Suffocated by the complexities of pleasure and pain life has to offer. Submerged in the life-giving waters, blind to what is real and what is fantasy. To offer a safety rope will do no good as the suggestion only proves to add more weight to the sinking mass. A gasp of air and an outstretched hand followed by the cold, lifeless stare. He has drowned. I miss him. Will he ever be back again?



“Leo & Aline”

Mark Lockwood
PhD, RN, CCRC
Assistant Professor
UIC College of Nursing

Photography, 2003
Silver Gelatin Print
(Mordancage Technique)
22" x 28" x 0.5"

ARTIST STATEMENT: Mark Lockwood

- I created this image during a time when I was exploring various experimental techniques in the darkroom. To create this image I used a technique called mordantage. The mordantage solution works in two ways: it chemically bleaches the print so that it can be redeveloped, and it lifts the black areas of the emulsion away from the paper giving the appearance of veils. Once the emulsion is lifted, it can then be removed or manipulated depending on the desired outcome. Areas where the emulsion was removed appear to be in relief. These prints can become oxidized during their creation, further altering the tonality of the image. The image was created in 2002.



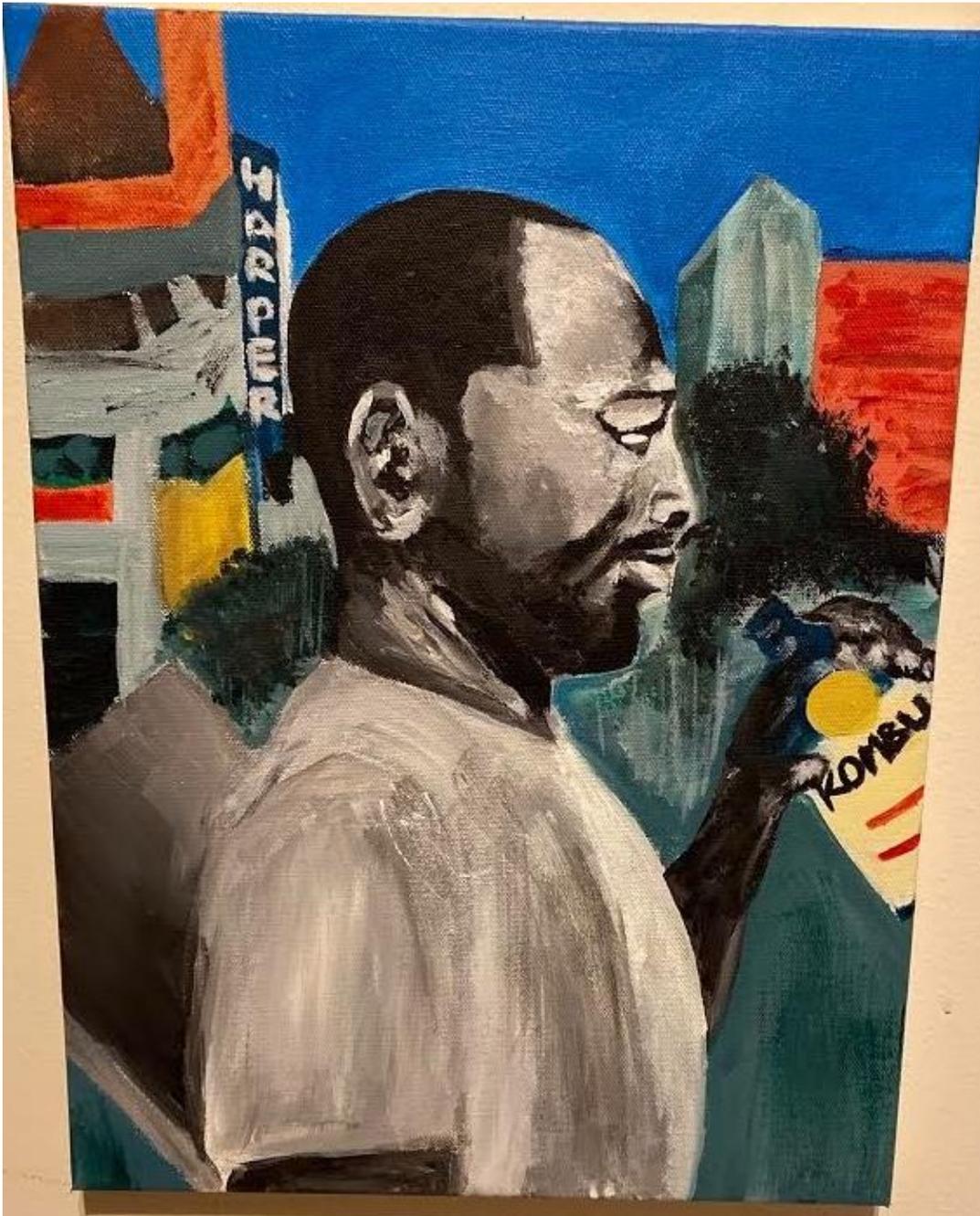
"Wolf"

Wendy Looman
Professor, University of Minnesota
School of Nursing

Fiber Arts, 2018
Felted Wool
11" x 6" x 12"

ARTIST STATEMENT: Wendy Looman

- I learned the craft of needle felting as a way to relax and focus my energies outside of my work as a family nurse researcher and teacher. I was surprised to discover how enjoyable it was, and even more surprised to watch this wolf emerge from strands of wool in my hands.



"Self-Care with Derrick"

Anna Luong

Research Assistant and PhD student
University of Illinois at Chicago

Acrylic on Canvas

16 " x 12"

ARTIST STATEMENT: Anna Luong

- I am a former trauma nurse and a current PhD student, focusing on how the criminal legal system affects health care. Health is affected by factors such as systematic oppression and the zip codes people reside in, yet, many legislators fail to realize that. I paint as my form of self-care. I hope one day, lawmakers and clinicians realize that self-care can only go so far. Without nationwide health insurance and accepting that we have created systems which inhibit the health of underserved populations, we can never truly say we are advocates for health.



"Blue Garden"

Pamela Martinez

Retired Public Health Nurse

Acrylic marbling on Japanese paper
20" x 16"

ARTIST STATEMENT: Pamela Martinez

- I have been studying and teaching paper marbling for over 15 years. Acrylic paint is floated on thicken water called size and a design is created on the surface of the size. Dry absorbent paper is placed on the floating image and a one of a kind print is lifted.



"Winter Dream"

Pamela Martinez

Retired Public Health Nurse

Acrylic Marbling with paste
paper design
18"18"

ARTIST STATEMENT: Pamela Martinez

- My fascination with paper art began long ago beginning with Suminagashi Japanese paper marbling, acrylic marbling and paste paper techniques, having studied with respected and accomplished teachers. I now provide instruction on marbling techniques and lecture on the origins of paper marbling.



"Wisteria"

Pamela Martinez

Retired Public Health Nurse

Sumi Ink Painting

15" x 11"

ARTIST STATEMENT: Pamela Martinez

- Sumi-e is the art of Japanese ink painting. Having studied the art form and being a member of the Midwest Sumi-e Society has helped me appreciate the many spiritual aspects of mono chromatic ink painting.



“Seize the Day”

Susan Massatt

RN, MA, CCRN-K, NEA-BC

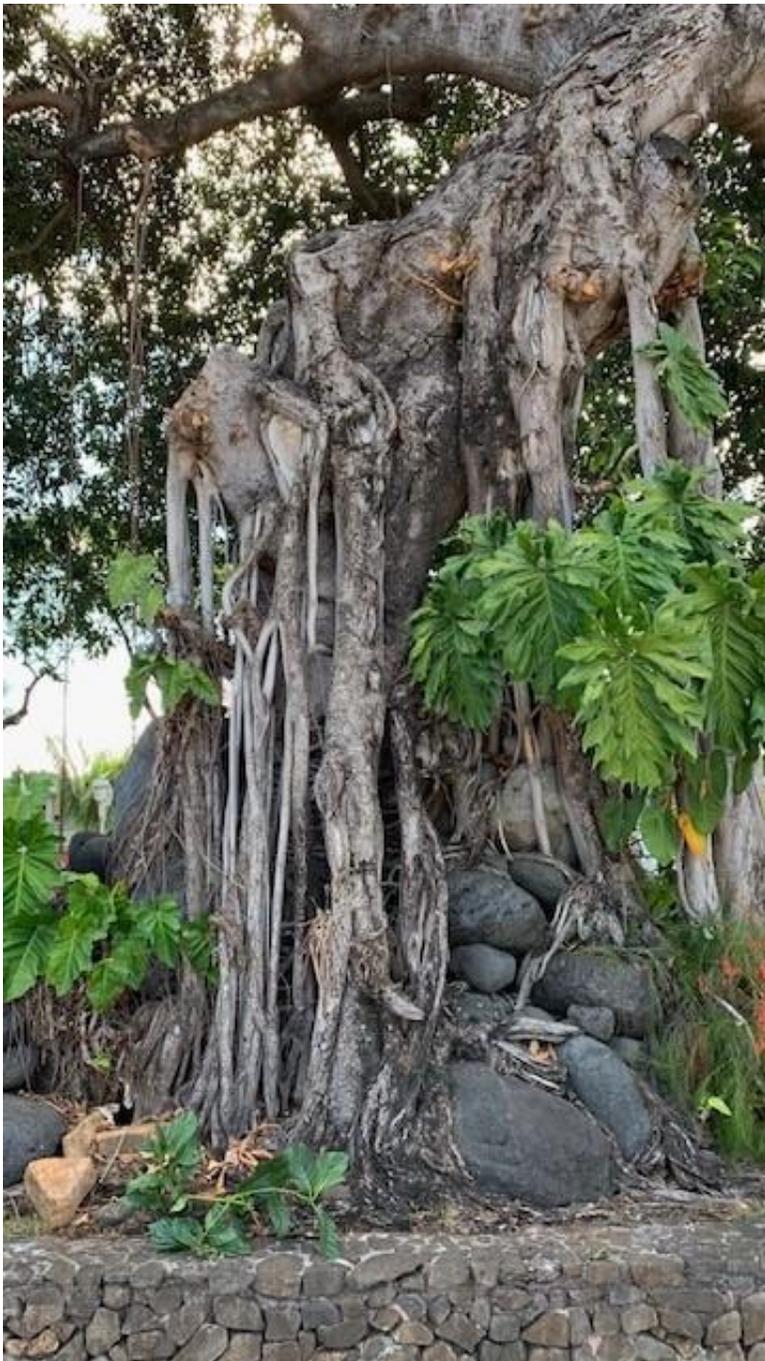
Advocate Christ Medical Center

Photography, 2019

7” x 5”

ARTIST STATEMENT: Susan Massatt

- Thirty nine years in the Intensive Care Units taught me that every day brings new challenges. While on a photo safari in Africa, I caught this elephant silently walking from the sunrise ready for whatever adventure the day will bring. Photography and travel have taught me resiliency and helped me remember why I enjoy being a healer.



“Timeless”

Susan Massatt

RN, MA, CCRN-K, NEA-BC

Advocate Christ Medical Center

Photography, 2018

16” x 9”

ARTIST STATEMENT: Susan Massatt

- As an Intensive Care RN for 39 years, I use travel and photography to unwind and re-center myself. On a recent trip to the South Pacific, I noticed this ancient tree surrounded by new growth. It reminded me that life is truly timeless.



“3000 miles”

Leah McClellan
MSN, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC
Instructor
Loyola University Chicago

Photography, 2012
10” x 8”



“Breathing Room”

Leah McClellan
MSN, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC
Instructor
Loyola University Chicago

Photography, 2012
10” x 8”



“Sandbar Chat”

Leah McClellan

MSN, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC

Instructor

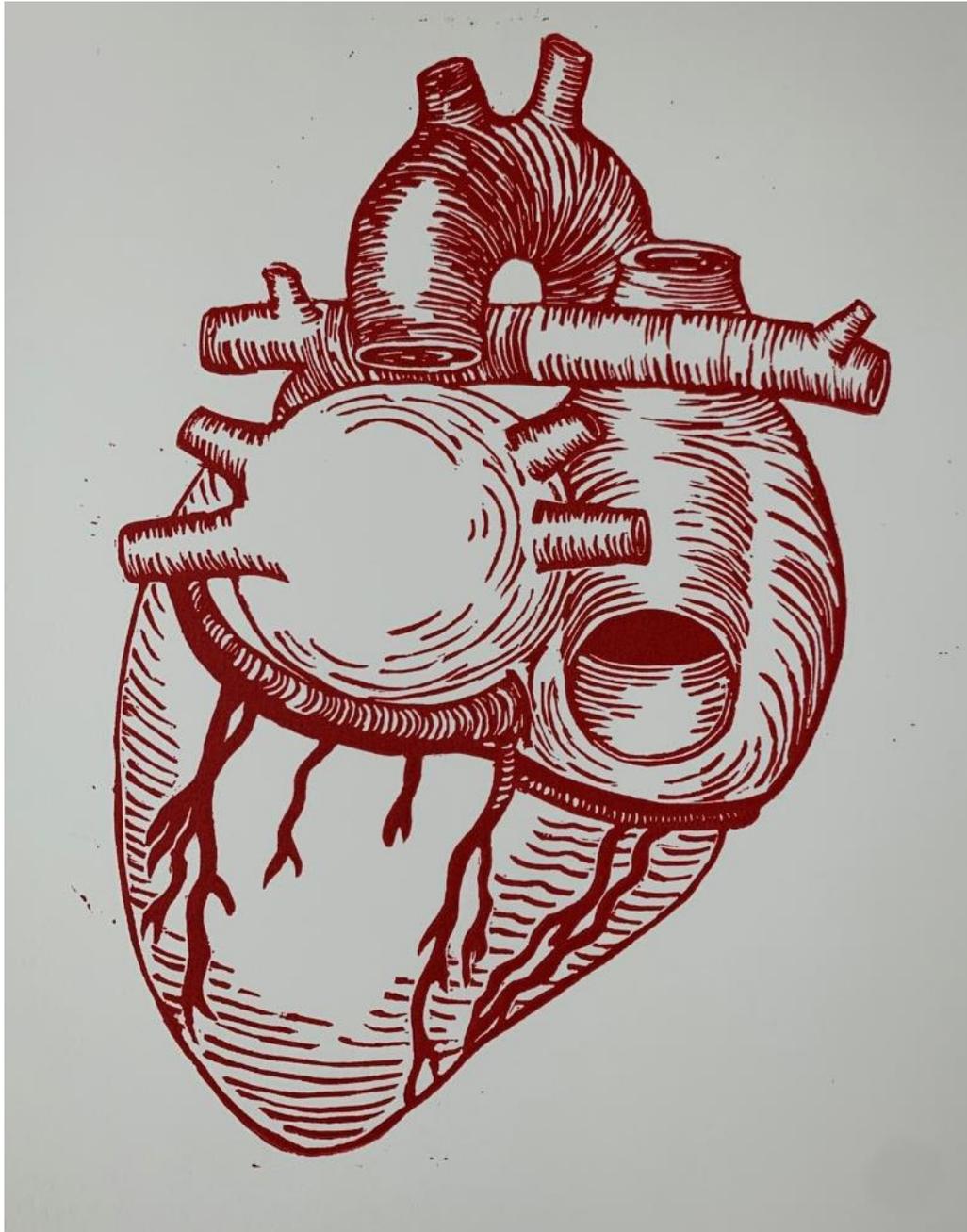
Loyola University Chicago

Photography, 2019

10” x 8”

ARTIST STATEMENT: Leah McClellan

- I found nursing through traveling. I continue to find inspiration in nursing and traveling. While many times those moments are not captured, there are times I am able to capture those moments of inspiration through photography.



“He(art)”

Jasmine Mirabelli
Nursing Student
Loyola University Chicago

Printmaking Linocut, 2019
Relief ink on BFK Rives
Printmaking Paper
14” x 11.2”

ARTIST STATEMENT: Jasmine Mirabelli

- I chose to make a linocut print of an anatomical heart for various reasons. After caring for many “sick” hearts this summer during my internship in the Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit, I learned the importance of taking care of one’s heart, both physically and spiritually. It is imperative for nurses to promote and educate their patients on living healthy lifestyles in order to prevent cardiovascular disease. Furthermore, I have learned the importance of feeding our own hearts spiritually by engaging in activities that encourage relaxation, replenish our energy, and help us to live out our passions.



“Labor”

Jasmine Mirabelli
Nursing Student
Loyola University
Chicago

Drawing, 2019
Graphite on Paper
18" x 24"

ARTIST STATEMENT: Jasmine Mirabelli

- My creative work includes drawing and printmaking. Within the past year, my passion for art collided with my love for nursing. Thus, nursing has a profound influence on my artwork.
- People do not tend to consider the hard work and long hours spent in order to complete the artwork.
- My work explores the unique relationship between nursing and art, and how one cannot exist without the other.



“Blue Bull”

Megan Nelson
RN-Advocate Christ
Medical Center

Painting, 2013
Acrylic on Canvas
9” x 12”

ARTIST STATEMENT: Megan Nelson

- I am both a registered nurse and a certified veterinary technician. I used to work in an Amish community which is where I discovered my love for painting portraits of cattle.



“Renewal”

Tammy Neiman

PhD, RN-BC, PHN

Assistant Professor

Minnesota State University Mankato

Painting, 2020

Acrylic on Canvas

16” x 20”

ARTIST STATEMENT: Tammy Neiman

- I am nursing faculty and a staff RN. This painting was painted with the idea of renewal in mind. I see the blue water lilies as a calm in a profession that sometimes stresses us or pushes our limits. The little sparkles coming from the flowers represents the energy gained by taking time for self-care and doing things we enjoy. For me, this is painting.

Taking the Scenic Route



“Taking the Scenic Route”

Tahanie Omar

RN-Rush University Medical Center

Collage, 2020

10” x 8”

ARTIST STATEMENT: Tahanie Omar

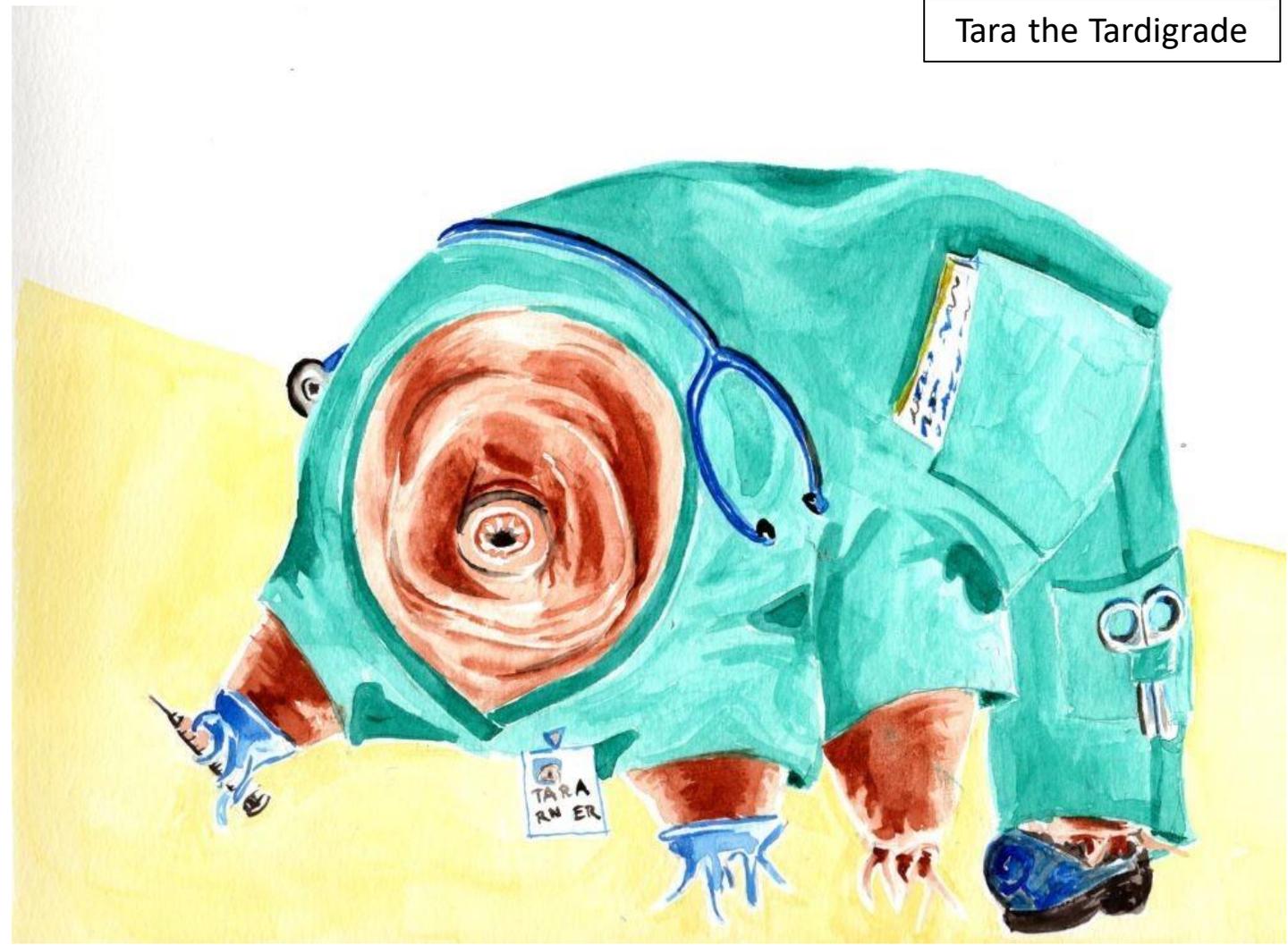
- My artwork is a small depiction of how running, particularly in nature, reenergizes my soul. I run because I am able and grateful, and I run for those who cannot. I am constantly reminded of this, for these exact pictures are the moments embedded in my heart. In these moments...I am whole.

I'm here for your biological wound debridement.



Val, wound care nurse

Tara the Tardigrade



Octavia the Octopus



“Val, Tara, and Octavia: A Triptych of Nurses”

Mat Peltier

RN-Shirley Ryan Ability Lab

Painting, 2020

Watercolor on Paper

ARTIST STATEMENT: Mat Peltier

- I am a rehabilitation nurse and amateur comic artist. These pieces joined my recent obsession of teaching myself watercolors by painting unlikely animals with a need to express the frustrations of nursing with humor.



"Storytelling"

Evelyn Perkins
MS, RN, PMH-BC, NE-BC, APNA
Northwestern Memorial Hospital

Children's Book: Nanorobots and
the Hunt for H1N01
& Teacher's Manual

Print/Book, 2016

ARTIST STATEMENT: Evelyn Perkins

- Storytelling is in my DNA. It is a gift from my father, who mesmerized children with stories so vivid we felt spellbound. Neuroscience has proven that when storytellers create powerful characters their readers or listeners brains are synchronized with the storyteller's brain in the same way music that is synced with visual images creates relaxing experiences. When nurses use the art of storytelling to have patients visualize health, images of recovery are planted inside the patient's brain in sync with the nurse's brain. This is a powerful resilience tool for nurses.



"Reflections Quilt"

Dorothy Plovanich
Swedish Covenant
Northshore Hospital
Fiber arts

ARTIST STATEMENT: Dorothy Plovanich

- The title of my work is "Reflections".
- My love of quilting has been inspired by my maternal grandmother who created many quilts out of her aprons and the shirts of her nine children.
- I feel that I'm continuing in her legacy.
- Thank you,
- Dorothy
-



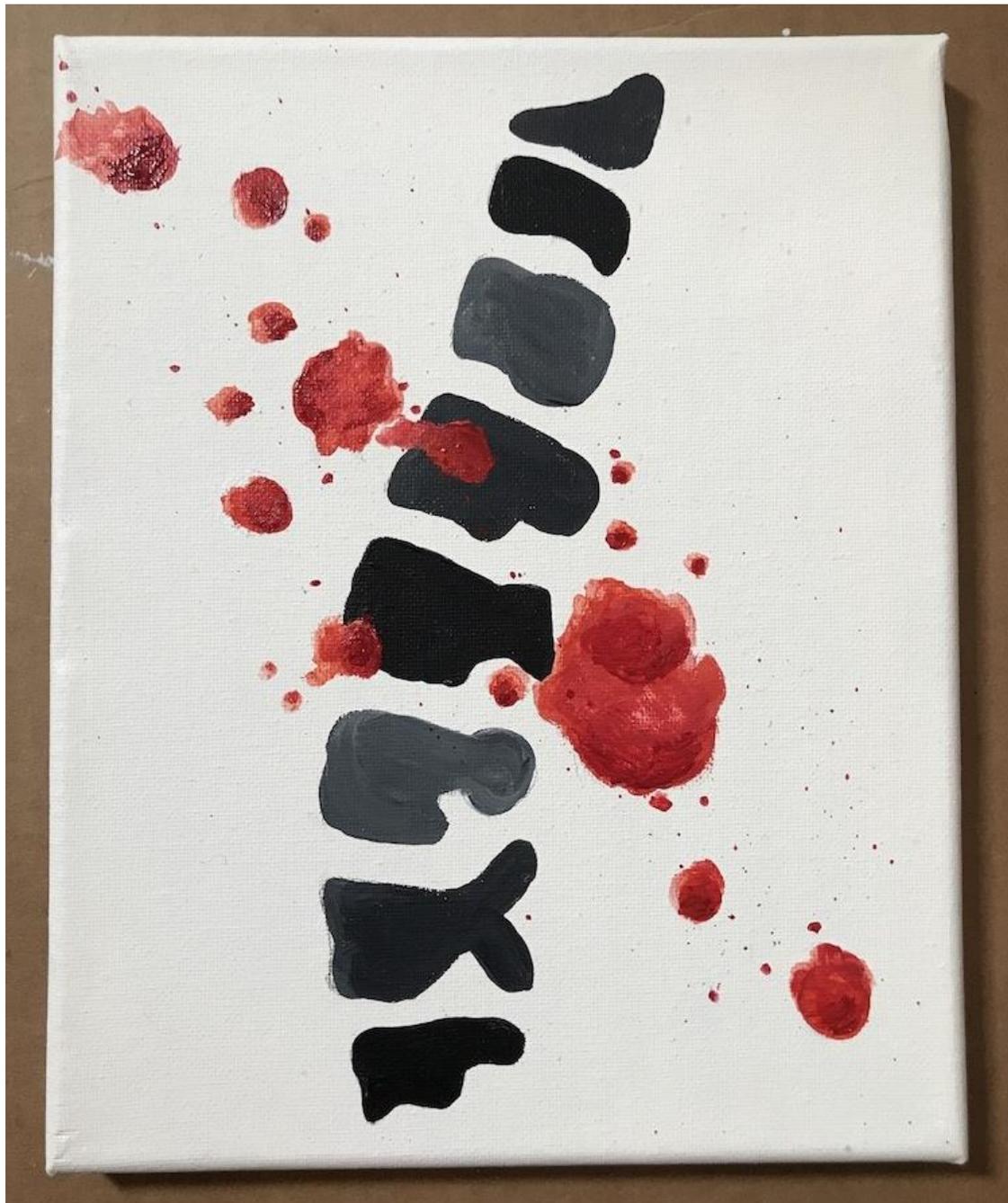
"Seasons Change"

Wiphawadee Potisopha
Graduate Student
University of Illinois
at Chicago

Acrylic on Canvas, 2020
5" x 7"

ARTIST STATEMENT: Wiphawadee Potisopha

- I have been in Chicago for almost 3 years for study. When I walked through the park back home, I saw the differences of scenic in each season. Seasons changing reminds me of how long I have been far from home as well as how long I step closer to my dream.



“Spine”

Wiphawadee Potisopha
Graduate Student

University of Illinois at Chicago

Acrylic on Canvas, 2020
9” x 7” x 0.5”

ARTIST STATEMENT: Wiphawadee Potisopha

- My friends who are bedside nurses work so hard for their patients. Some of them are suffering from back pain and how they hurt and would like to express this art for them. I hope their health problems will recover soon.



"Tea"

Wiphawadee Potisopha
Graduate Student
University of Illinois at Chicago

Acrylic on Canvas, 2020
9" x 7" x 0.5"

ARTIST STATEMENT: Wiphawadee Potisopha

- A cup of tea can make nurses relaxed after working an entire shift. Besides, I love drinking tea because flavors of tea can represent different regions and cultures globally



You are committed to excellence.
You change lives and advance healthcare.
You are the future of nursing.
Thank you for being a Sigma nurse.

“Sigma: Improving Our World”
Nancy Raschke-Deichstetter for Alpha Beta Chapter-Sigma Theta Tau

Photo Collage

ARTIST STATEMENT: Nancy Raschke-Deichstetter

- The mission of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International is advancing world health. Our chapter members are from the Niehoff School of Nursing and Loyola University Medical Center Chicago...we wholeheartedly support that mission!



“Sunrise, Sunset at the Lake”

Nancy Raschke-Deichstetter

MS, RN, CEN

Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing

Loyola University Chicago

Photography, 2019

20” x 12”



ARTIST STATEMENT: Nancy Raschke-Deichstetter

- My nursing career started in 1980 as a "registered nurse-license pending" on an orthopaedic unit. My talents and passions led me to spend most of my career in emergency nursing and nursing education. My husband and I had an opportunity early in our marriage to purchase a very small cabin on Lake Madeline in northern Wisconsin. As our family grew, our cabin grew, and so did our love for nature. We have been truly blessed and enjoy each day from sunrise to sunset.



"Street Photography-Chicago"

Terry Ratner

RN, MFA

Angels on Aldine (Pandemic Initiative)

Photo on Metal

16 " x 20"

The Changing of the Seasons

There are two main seasons in Phoenix: summer and winter. Our fall and spring are bypassed for long stretches of sameness. Maybe there's a hint of spring in March, when a frail rain falls, casting a silver net over the neighborhood. Then the sky clears and the flowers smell like baby lotion until the aroma is suffocated in blazing heat. These are our seasons.

Nursing also has its own seasons. They follow no direct weather pattern and occur as suddenly as a hurricane or an earthquake, without much warning. There are brief periods of calm with little activity, just the daily comings and goings of patients—the ones who recover without much pain, without any scars.

Then the changes occur: trees with still branches begin their dance; the full moon wears an orange veil as winds throw blankets of dust like confetti up toward the sky. In daylight the air fades to sepia, like an old photograph. That's when code bells chime and intensive care units fill to capacity with dying patients and grieving families. The scent of loss is everywhere, and one can't escape the inevitable season of death.

It begins in the arteries, rushing words without words. Some agree: "It's too soon for death." Others welcome the freedom from pain. The season of loss passes by like a series of cold breaths, one after another.

The way I practice nursing might have been different if I hadn't lost my mother in the spring of 1993. The time of year when the nights stay cool and days begin to warm. That's when I began to bond with little old ladies wearing turquoise rings, silver earrings, and glittering beads. I'd hold their hands and laugh with them like old friends. I'd study their faces, searching for a

connection: hair the color of freshly fallen snow, skin paper-thin, eyes shining like topaz, and a dimple on the left when they smiled.

My nursing care changed again in the spring of 1999, when my son, Sky, died in a motorcycle crash. All the young patients became a part of me—each one taking up a small space in my heart, trying to fill the emptiness. They brought about poems of music, stanzas without metaphor, making something out of nothing.

It all happened during the season that's sometimes missed. During the season that hides; the one that smells like jasmine and sprouts tulips from the darkness of the earth. It's a season that cools the evening sky with its sweet resinous wind while orange tree petals drift to the ground like snow. The season filled with colors; fairy dusters with pink puffs radiating from their centers and clusters of purple wisteria trailing their vines around budding trees. That was the season when my world caved in.

Those deaths affected my career in ways I never understood until now. They left a sickness in my heart that can't be healed from medicine. No drug can take it away. No narcotic is strong enough to dull the pain.

My patients are the medicine I need: Elderly women with blue hair who want to hold my hand and call me "honey" because no one else is there with them. The old men with salt and pepper sprinkled on the few hairs they have left who tell me a joke because their children are too busy to listen. The young people who are having surgery because they were reckless, the ones I caution and catch myself preaching to—these are the patients who fill my void.

I prepared a young man for surgery last week. Behind the paisley curtains, he cursed as he shook his head from side to side and moaned, sounding more like a pop star singing a song of love and loss.

“Help me, someone! I can’t take this pain any longer!” he yelled.

I pulled a chair close to his bed, placed a cool wash cloth across his forehead, and injected morphine into his intravenous port. I asked him how the accident happened.

“I was riding my dirt bike out in the desert and got carried away performing some fancy stunts. I fractured my left leg.”

I looked at the external fixator attached to his leg, the swelling in his ankle and knee, and the metal pins that disappeared into his bone. I watched his temple pulsating and thought about life, about luck, about my son, and wondered why he had to die.

I took the young man’s calloused hand in mine and listened as he talked about the accident.

“I don’t know what happened. The bike just got away from me,” he said.

The connection between him and Sky went deeper than motorcycles: their bushy eyebrows, big brown eyes and olive complexion, a build referred to as “buff,” and flawless skin. I wanted to save this young man and his parents from a worse fate. I wanted his parents to be immune to the disease that afflicted me.

“You’re playing Russian roulette with your life,” I told him. I felt his hand squeeze mine. His forehead dripped with tiny beads of perspiration.

“My belief is we all die when our time is up. I’m not afraid of death,” he said. “We all have to die sometime.”

I wanted to put my arms around him and talk about a son who followed that belief. A son who thought he had nine lives and joked about his luck—a son who had two motorcycle crashes before the fatal one. A son who kissed me on the cheek two days before he died, for no particular reason. But I didn’t. Instead I just told him to be careful. I don’t want to burden others with my grief.

Nineteen years have passed since Sky’s death, but the sense of loss lingers, like a potpourri scent that never quite goes away. I want to be reminded of him, the joys and the heartbreaks. I want to be around others with his interests, language, gestures that link them as one. And just like a child who grows up and leaves, so do the patients I connect with. They come and they go like the change of seasons—something to count on, like the first rainfall of the year, or the scent of an early bloom leaving us with a bouquet to remember. What remains at the heart of this is its humanity, its search for connections within the seasons of our lives.

Terry Ratner
RN, MFA
Angels on Aldine
(Pandemic Initiative)

Prose

ARTIST STATEMENT: Terry Ratner

- I'm a nurse, freelance writer, and photographer. I use a process called Ekphrasis, which explores who we are through words and images. A photo is a declaration that our lives have meant something, and like a detective, I seek out those fragmentary details and bring about a living resurrection with my writing. Photography offers a distinct perspective of the world outside of my nursing profession, while writing gives me an introspective view of myself in relationship with the world.