



*Searching for truth and beauty, preaching through the transforming power of the arts*

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## **SPECIAL TWO VOLUME EDITION asking DIA members the question: “How has COVID-19 affected your life? Volume II**

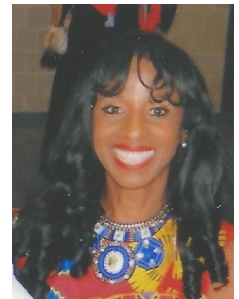


### **What The DIA Doctor Prescribes**

by **Phylliss Chappell, MD**

*“As we practice our daily arts, if only in the composing of a heart-felt letter, we are unearthing the eternal from within ordinary time, engaging in the special qualities, themes, and circumstances of the soul. (Thomas Moore)*

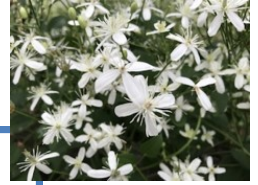
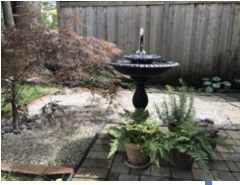
I am unable to fathom the over 19 million globally confirmed cases of **COVID-19**, unable to comprehend 700 thousand deaths. As a palliative care physician in a major medical center, what I have come to know firsthand is the overwhelming grief of families as they learn that someone they dearly love, perhaps the one they love most in the world, is dying and they will never again see them alive. Visitation is strictly prohibited; **COVID-19** patients are dying in the presence of strangers, while their families are facing their own sickness and death and that of others whom they desperately love.



Facing this mounting, unprecedented grief, I began to collect quotes, Scriptures, prayers, and poems in a small black journal entitled “Every Moment Counts.” It was a gift from my older daughter. The little book records reminders of : “God who is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble”(Psalm 46); “the one who welcomes the weary and the burdened” (Mathew 11); reminders that I am “precious in God’s eyes, called the Beloved from all eternity”(Henri J.M. Nouwen); reminders that in shadowy times like these, to be fierce and to show mercy are acts of immense bravery and greatest necessity” (Clarisa Pinkola Estes); reminders that “the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; will run and not grow weary; will walk and not grow faint”(Isaiah 40).

I had initially referred to my book, which I carry with me to the hospital in the morning and home with me at night as a “scrapbook.” Now, I call this collection created for my soul during a global pandemic, my “Holy Book.” In the language of Thomas Moore, “Our notebooks then truly become our own private gospels and sutras, our holy books.”

***In June 2020, the Board of Directors of Houston Methodist Academic Institute approved Dr. Phylliss’ appointment to the position of Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine. The HMAI “governs all research, education, and academic innovation in academic medicine, as measured by transformational research, robust education, and leading clinical care.”***



## SHEM CENTER ZEN MEDITATION GARDEN

ENZO is a minimalism  
born of Japanese aesthetics  
symbolizing complete enlightenment.  
**strength, elegance, the universe, the void.**



A place to seek balance,  
where the inner and outer are one,  
Where body, spirit and mind are summoned  
to find balance in a garden seeking to express balance.



The garden relates to what is within and outside its boundaries.

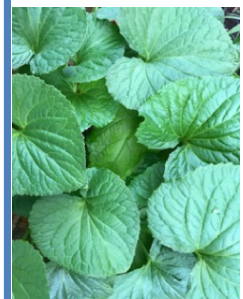


Search for the most appropriate place from which to view the garden.



Approach the garden with the intention to be guided into a place of balance.

Within the garden's boundaries one finds the elements of earth, rocks, water, plant life, sound, silence, stillness, movement, light and darkness, the vertical, the horizontal, hard and soft surfaces, the implied, the specific, what is hidden and what is disclosed, simplicity, austerity, emptiness, distance, the incomplete, the imperfect, absence, presence, serenity, tranquility. Enjoy!



Joe Killikevice invites us to  
calm our **COVID-19** anxieties in  
his garden.



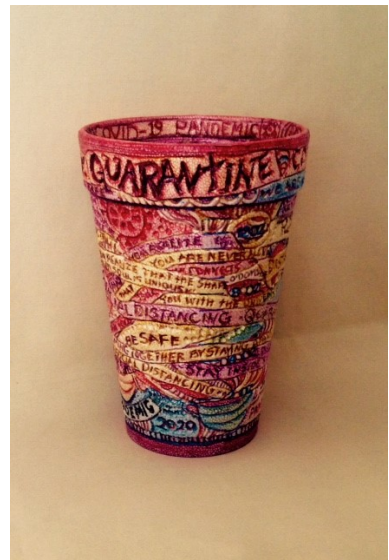
## Artists in Creative Quarantine

by Joeann Daley

**I have marked my calendar Quarantined: March 21, 2020,** the date the whole world closed down because of **COVID-19**. Our governor and our prioress commanded: “Stay In and Keep Safe.” As in the days immediately after the Twin Towers bombing, the universal language needed to express our common experience was ART. (I can still hear the cello playing in the rubble.) Sequestered in my apartment, I began connecting with family and friends electronically. In addition, I developed the habit of checking into local TV to see how ordinary people were coping with their prolonged confinement. It was delightful to find many families creating art together and reaching out from their kitchens, rooftops, front porches, and driveways to share their creativity with others.

This was also a time to respond to social inequities and injustices laid bare by the murder of George Floyd. Broadcast on the media, the crime resulted in a world-wide response through Black Lives Matter. I used the medium most familiar to me—Styroart—to be the container for my response to these profound moments of history- in- the making. I created three cups: a red one for the virus, a purple one for George Floyd, and a third to record words from our Virtual Community Days. Each design included an appropriate text: “Social Distancing” “Be Safe,” “I can’t breathe,” “Justice for George,” “Thank God Our Time Is Now!” I found that my regular schedule of interaction with meaningful colors, texts and textures fueled spirituality.

**COVID-19** did, however, impose many inconveniences: postponed doctors’ appointments, cancelled art events, rescheduled interviews. Early in 2020, the director of **The Arts Page** for **Milwaukee Public TV** had contacted me about filming my Styroart and prints for a future segment to be aired in a ten-state market area—including Florida. Now we have had to reschedule cancelled interviews twice and pushed them into 2021.

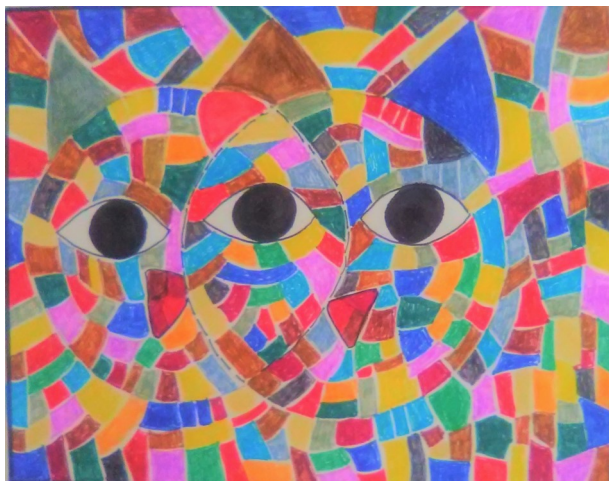


## Art in the Time of Corona

by Sharon Foley Bock

Day One of our “sheltering in place” began on March 11. I recalled my teaching days in Michigan, where occasionally titanic winter storms wrapped our school in epic drifts of snow, provoking the invigorating announcement of a “snow day.” Both teachers and their pupils welcomed this unexpected “holiday” – an opportunity to pursue our individual interests without interruption. With this model in mind last spring, I awoke each morning and mentally announced to myself: “What an opportunity!” Now was the perfect time to start chipping away at my lengthy “to-do list.” Some items were “do once and done;” others were enjoyable continuing projects; still others were a stab at domestic engineering demands. By mid August, I had crossed thirty-one items off the list; started and worked on eighteen different interests; maintained regularly-scheduled activities and household responsibilities; and managed to avoid starting any one of twenty-two others.

As our quarantine continued, I experienced the situation as “cloistering.” I recalled my days as a novice with the Adrian Dominican Sisters, in an environment wrapped in silence and reflection and one which prohibited ventures away from our “home base.” Now once again, I engaged in more meditation, prayer, and spiritual reading. Although it took me a long time to carve out more time for “art for art’s sake,” I found myself reviving a ministry to the retired Sisters in the Dominican Life Center: creating original handmade birthday cards



for each of them. Somewhat unexpectedly, I reactivated my involvement with the Palm Springs Arts Council for whom I wrote two grants, one of which was immediately awarded. All this convinced me that my weekly schedule must block time for my own artistic endeavors.

Currently I am working on a series honoring my favorite animals, felines. The two, “Klee’s Kittens” and “Gaudi’s Gatos,” are rendered in colored pencil and watercolor pencil on paper. Next Project: “Mondrian’s Mouser.” I do look forward to real hugs, non-virtual travel, theater, movies, museums, and exhibitions.



### Grrrrrrrrrr

by Elizabeth Slenker

This is how my dog, Boo thinks of **COVID-19**. She is very bored because we can’t go for any Therapy visits. On Mondays we would go to Pediatrics in the morning, and to the Public Library in the afternoon. Wednesdays would find us at a second Public Library where she worked with pre-school children. On Thursday evenings we would go to a post surgical hospital for children with special needs. She doesn’t get any of those visit and pets now and really misses them.

Gaudi’s Gatos

## Pandemic Inspires Group to Create and Contemplate

While creative people all around the planet struggled to organize daily life in the face of **COVID-19's** global upheaval, **Barbara Cervenka** convened a group of artists, "to not let these times go by without some way of thinking about them artistically." Barbara was joined by fellow Adrian sisters and associates, other artists and friends. Each member of the group worked in the medium best suited to convey the theme of her choice.

Barbara began by interrogating the headlines of each week and creating an artwork symbolizing each event and reflecting her personal experience of it. Occasionally, she added poetry. Her project "evolved as the virus itself evolved" in its impact on daily life." Her first work dealt with what was going on with the virus itself, Barbara explained. Suddenly we had the death of George Floyd followed by reactions to racism and police brutality in the larger world. Every week I had to find symbols to represent all that." This discipline, often involving mandalas "gave me a focus for my days."

**Aneeshah McNamee** also created mandalas to explore the depths of her pandemic experience.

**Mary James Hickey** (Fran) used a series of water color paintings featuring clocks to deal with the confusion of time many people experienced during the pandemic's long reign. Fran's initial painting included a real clock. Then, throughout the series, the hands began to go backwards, then become months; finally, they fell off into the air. "These small paintings are representative of most of us," Fran explained. "Without a set schedule, sometimes I have to ask: 'What day is it?'" Photographer **Sue Schreiber** taught herself to transform video clips and still photos into movies; **Nancyann Turner** expressed her pandemic reflections in a series of collages combining poetry and photography.



<https://youtu.be/Cq9DD27TkEo>

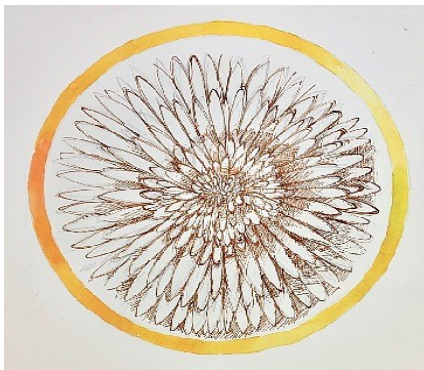
Copy this link into your browser to see Sue's video.

Several associates also chose to combine verbal with visual art. **Judi Engel** produced a series of paintings with poetic texts. **Mame Jackson**— co-founder and director with Barbara of *Con/Vida*, a non-profit which promotes the popular arts in the Americas—made bookmarks combining imagery with haiku. Her friend **Debra Henning**, an art educator, developed a series of drawings of cocoons, symbolizing the isolation of this time—as well as its potential.

During a time when people were being asked to stay at home for their safety, when so many activities were being cancelled, and when the United States and the planet seemed immersed in turmoil, group participants appreciated the challenge to focus on art. "I think that, for each of us, doing art was a whole process of trying to give meaning to this extraordinary time," said Judi.

"When you have a pandemic in the middle of a growing concern

for ecology plus increased evidence of a stubborn racism, all coming together like a perfect storm, it can be overwhelming. As an artist, you try to find some image or metaphor that can communicate meaning to people." Group members also found meaning in their shared time together—in the community they formed during their ZOOM calls. When Aneeshah hesitated to share one of her mandalas expressing her personal frustration at not being able to enter the closed Motherhouse or even her own studio, "Everyone was so supportive it was wonderful!"



Two of Barbara's many illustrations to accompany poetry.

## **" 'Stay at home' Experience" by Catherine Anderson, OP**

The week of March 15 we got the order to " stay at home" because of COVID-19. On March 24, my knee surgery was cancelled.

At first, I felt angry because of all the preparations.

I tried to paint a watercolor picture. I was so upset, I scribbled yellow and red all over the paper, put it aside to throw away later. When it was dry, I looked at it and saw three red dragons at the top and a round red spot at the bottom.

Wow! I named the picture, "Dragons Of The Coronavirus". What a revelation!

A few days later, I painted some purple crocuses and named that picture, " Hope For The Future". I was feeling more hopeful.

During the following weeks, we Sisters become involved writing notes of encouragement to first responders, workers at hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and parishes. We also made phone calls, many to people who live alone. We have also been in prayer for demonstrators, victims of violence and the pandemic. Hopefully the outcome will be one of healing, greater love and justice for all peoples of the world including healing of Mother Earth. With the help of God's generous graces, we will get through this together.



"Dragons Of The Coronavirus" by  
Sr. Catherine Anderson



"Hope for the Future" by  
Sr. Catherine Anderson

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**LAURENA ALFLEN** WINS THE  
PRIZE FOR THE MOST CREATIVE  
SUBMISSION — HER RENDITION  
OF THE HOUSEHOLD ITEM  
WITH WHICH WE ARE ALL  
BECOMING MOST FAMILIAR —  
FOR HANDWASHING!



## Corona Nursery Rhyme

There were some old folks who lived in a “Shoo!”  
“Shoo”, get away! Six feet may do.  
They turned up their hearing aids  
So you don’t have to shout  
All of them wondering  
When they will get out.  
In the meantime, they play or talk on their phones  
Walk in the hallways to exercise stiff bones.  
Sometimes, at a distance they even throw kisses  
While wondering sometimes just who this is  
Most are glad to be here  
Love finding notes on their doors  
Especially, the menus, their promise of more.  
When quarantine is lifted, they’ll not be the same  
Nor eager to do it all over again.

### Martha Bartholomew

#### IN MEMORIAM

*Mary Ellen Paulson, OP*

died in Racine on August 17, 2020.

**We shall miss our beloved poet.**

*“I am the resurrection and the life;  
to believe in me means life in spite of death.”*



### and another

The house is quiet and the room calm  
the frig breaks into a song that reminds  
its contents huddled in statuesque form:  
remain crispy and stable, cool and content,  
pretty and ready to party.

The sound of the coffeemaker brings warmth  
and comfort as of a contented baby in a crib,  
or a monk breathing deeply in and exhaling  
quietly into a sacred slow OM prayer form,

suddenly  
that sound which once released fragrance  
and brought morning delight now  
the breath of a respirator masked onto  
the faces of the young and old as the  
spiked coronavirus stabs into their lungs,

a quick, sharp U-turn of the coffee maker’s  
function and comfort turned overnight,  
its automatic inhales exhale into a long  
tired sign as if breathing for centuries.

It’s enough to paralyze any person  
into a stone statue weeping.

Even its silence is enough to turn heads  
and plead: please, another breath, and another

### Elizabeth Rodkewich





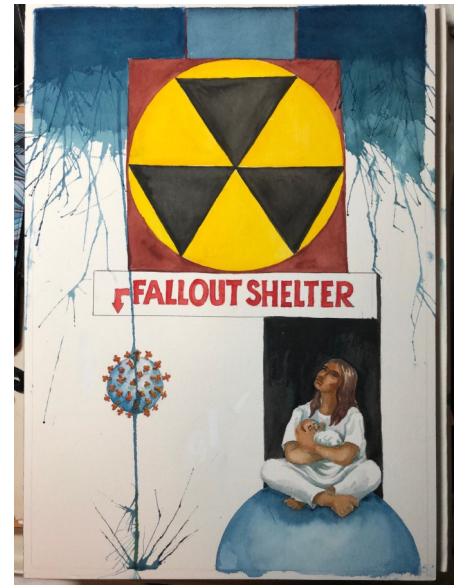
## Derby Day in Pandemic

**Elaine DesRosiers** writes: We Dominicans of Peace in Kentucky know how to experience the Kentucky Derby annually by spending the day in the dining room of the motherhouse before a large TV screen watching the 13 races while betting (\$.25), snacking, chatting, etc. It is my custom to set up my easel in the midst of it all, and paint. This year was different because of the coronavirus. The Derby was in September instead of May; no one was in the stands at Churchill Downs; and we observed social space. Pictured is me with corona-length hair, at work during the races.

Adrian, con't. from p. 5

Photographer Sue Schreiber has always drawn inspiration from natural environments. As a benefit from the pandemic project, she came away with an ongoing experience of drawing inspiration also from events of the times. This approach confirmed her desire “to be out there interacting with the world, both its beauty and its suffering—contemplation on the spot, so to speak.” In her film Sue tried to find the beauty of spring, yet capture feelings of sadness and care, while at the same time bringing comfort to people through image, word, and music. Nancyann Turner’s thoughts also turned to other people: “I wish, I hope, and I pray that everyone could have some kind of center or inner life—meditation, art, prayer—to give them calm and focus during all this suffering and worrying. . . . Art can stretch people’s hearts and imaginations so that they see things differently.”

Nancyann’s most recent reflection led to her creating her **Quilt of Hope**.



Judi’s **Fallout Shelter**

## AZALEAS ON WIRE — A COVID-19 Poem

by **Brigid Bray**

This plant of Azalea Wired may be seen as a plant of the symbol of our earth.

The earth is being ravished by our treatment of it.

It has been wired down by man's inventions that have been chosen first for many years.

Perhaps, if we follow under God's Hands, we wouldn't be seen mourning these wonderful people, having to give up our wonderful things.

Maybe starting with the way we produce energy—Save energy.

Wind blown water reserves big power light fixtures.

People would see God's Hand guiding our efforts.

The wire would maybe then snap. The earth would then return to looking up and out.



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