

# **SPECIAL EDITION**



MONOLINE  
**MAGIC**

Elizabeth McKee's Monoline Magic  
students have earned a place  
in the spotlight!

Workshop report by Instructor, Elizabeth McKee.

ENJOY...

**THANK YOU**  
**Michal Sommers**  
**Stephanie Tuttle**  
**Susan Clifford**  
**Debbie Finrock**  
**Ginger Rice**  
**Geraldine Michelli**  
**Sharon Shannon**  
**Linda Zwick**  
**Lynda Liu**  
**Beverly Wilson**  
**Linney Wix**  
**and (of course) Elizabeth McKee**

On May 26th, 2018, I received a phone call from a woman named Linda Hughes who had found my name and phone number on the Escribiente website. She had been the recipient of a nib collection from her recently-deceased aunt and asked if I would like them. She lived in Placitas which was a bit of a hike for me, but I said that I would be at the Open Space Visitor Center that morning for the annual Poets' Picnic and perhaps we could meet there. We could. When she arrived, greetings were exchanged; she gave me two small packages of nibs and changed my life.

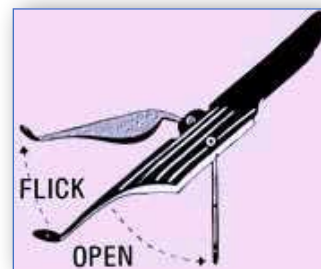
What she had given me were many nibs that looked like Speedball B series nibs, but the reservoir was a little different and they were stamped with FB. I gave full sets of the nibs to all the calligraphers at Open Space that morning but still went home with a fine little collection and the question of what to do with them. Give them out as raffle prizes?

The nibs languished in my nib drawer for a few months while I taught a Foundational class. Since the Escribiente theme for 2018-2019 was Roman Capitals, I thought it would be a good time to offer a class in monoline Romans and set Linda's aunt's nibs free.

The two disciplines of calligraphy and book artistry are so intertwined in my life that I cannot say where one starts and one ends. My second goal in designing this class was to create a class that would encourage book artists to do their own lettering in books rather than cutting and pasting text.

So I offered a four-session class – three hours long on the last Saturday of four months – called Monoline Magic. Five people signed up for my morning class and somewhat hesitantly, I accepted a class of three for the afternoon.

I had enough nibs to give three to each participant. Michal Sommers took one look at hers and said, "Oh, I think you can open this." And she proceeded to open the reservoir. It was only later that I found out that these nibs were called Speedball Flicker nibs. They were only produced in Speedball's B series of nibs. This explained the FB stamped onto the reservoirs. They are pretty cool but a little fragile which I think explains why this line was discontinued. It's possible you can still find them on eBay.



Stealing an idea from Yukimi Annand, I gave assignments that would fit on Strathmore 11" x 17" charcoal paper which could be folded in half at the end of the session and made into drum leaf bound books with a wrap-around cover. I spent a couple hours drawing lines on pages before concluding that if I asked my students to do that I would lose them in the middle of the first lesson. And why did I own Adobe Illustrator anyway? So for every exercise that I invented I also created line guides.

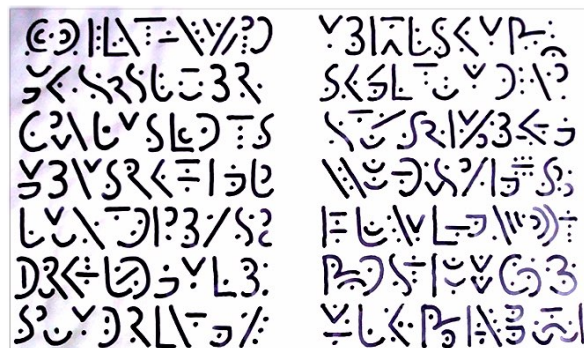
Every time I thought up a homework exercise, I did it myself to see how difficult it would be for my students. Thus my homework book turned into an illustrated example of the homework suggestions.

The first lesson was an introduction to the basic Roman Monoline shapes and spacing - first with a marker, then pencils and finally the B nib which takes a bit of getting used to. First I broke the alphabet down to its component parts, and the first homework exercise with the nib was to do what Mark Van Stone called Martian writing - stroke sequences that looked like they could be a language but were like nothing on earth.



Left:  
Michal  
Sommers

Right:  
Stephanie  
Tuttle

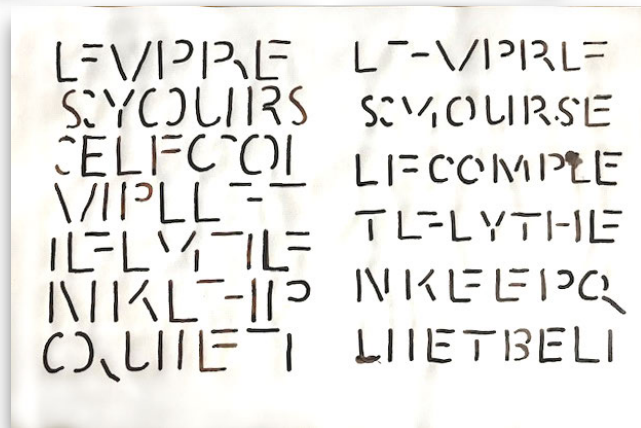
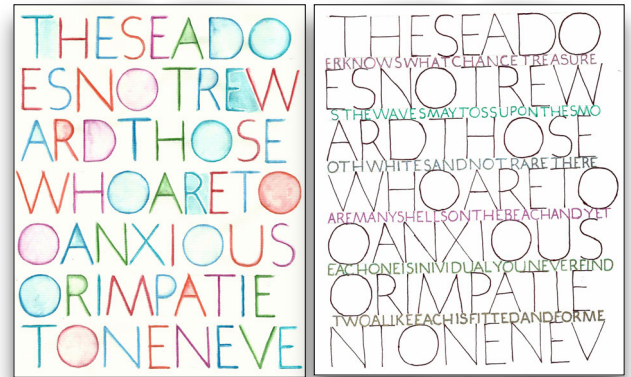




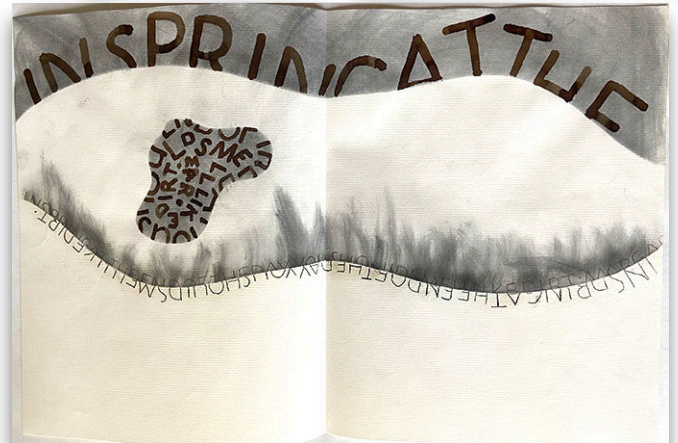
Each lesson started with a warm-up exercise. We played with changing nib sizes and ink colors.

Left: Susan Clifford

Right: Lynda Lawrence



Above: Exploding letters by Debbie Finrock



Above: Lesson Two Intro Exercise by Michal Sommers



Above: Lesson Four Intro Exercise by Debbie Finrock



Above: Lesson Four Intro exercise by Ginger Rice



Left: Lesson Four Intro Exercise Part Two by Geraldine Michelli

In the second lesson students worked on longer texts using nib and color variations.

Right: This image by Michal Sommers.



CHRISTOPHER ROBIN NOSE AND SOME MO  
HAD WHEEZLES AND RE FOR A COLD IN THE  
SNEEZLES. THEY BUNDLED NOSE AND SOME MOR  
HIM INTO HIS BED. THEY FOR A COLD IN THE HE  
GAVE HIM WAHT GOES AD. THEY WONDERED  
WITH A COLD IN THE IF WHEEZLES COULD

Left: Changing ink colors  
by Sharon Shannon.

Right: Changing nib sizes  
by Linda Zwick

LOREM IPSUM DOLORS  
IT AMET CONSECETUL  
R ADIPISCING ELIT VIVA  
MUS UT URNA AC OR  
CI VEHICULA ULTRI  
CES NULLAM LEO JI  
JUSTO SODALES NI  
ON CURSUS VITAE VI  
VERRA IN JUSTO QUI  
SQUE MALESUADA AN  
TE DAPIBUS ELEIFEND Q  
UAM QUAS DIGNISSIM JU  
STO NULLAM CONDIMENT

UM QUAM NON C  
RNARE FRINGILLA SA  
PIEN NISL BLANDIT O  
RCI SIT AMET DICTUM  
JUSTO LECTUS AURNA  
CRAS EGESTAS GRAVIDA  
ORCI SIT AMET SAGITTIS  
AURIS MAXIMUS EGET INI  
EGER MINIBH ULTRICES  
EGET ALIQUAM SED M  
ATTIS IN NULLA PRAE  
SENT AT MI IN EROS  
SAGITTIS ALIQUET

Left: Changing nib sizes  
by Michal Sommers

Right: Long text  
by Lynda Iiu

Below: two balancing  
exercises by Linda Zwick.

Lower Right: Balance  
exercise by Michal  
Sommers.

The homework then moved to balancing long blocks of text with no inter-linear spacing - an exercise inspired by Friederich Neugebauer in The Mystic Art of Written Letter Forms. I introduced small nibs including one of my favorites, the Brause .5 B Style Redis nib.

THIS WORLD IS OFF ITS ROCKER  
JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO I WAS IN ZAMBIA VISITING  
A DISTRICT WELL OUTSIDE OF LUSAKA. WE WERE  
TAKEN RUN BY A GROUP OF WOMEN AN INCOME GENERATING PROJECT  
WERE GATHERED UNDER A LARGE BANNER PROCLAIMING THEIR  
IDENTITY. SOME FIFTY OR MORE WOMEN ALL LEVYING WITH THE  
STANDING PROUDLY BESIDE THE INCOME GENERATING PROJECT,  
AFTER THE HAD ALL BEEN VISITING AND  
OF THEIR OWN AND OUR OTHER NEEDS AND THE NEEDS  
SUPPLEMENTED ABOVE THE CABBAGES. I ASKED IF  
NODDING OF HEADS SURROUNDED US AT LEAST THEY CHOKED UP AND  
AND THIS TIME THERE WAS WITH THE PROBLEMS  
RESPONDING TO OUR SAYING THAT  
SURELY YOU KNEW THE ANSWER  
WE NEVER HAVE ENOUGH COFFINS.

THERE IS THE OCCASIONAL OBLIGATORY PARAGRAPH  
THAT SIGNIFIES THE FORMAL CONCLUSION. IT RECOGNIZES THAT  
GIVEN THAT THE WOMEN ARE ABSOLUTELY  
CENTRAL TO THE VERY INTEGRALITY OF SURVIVAL  
THEY ARE DEALT WITH AS THEY ARE ALWAYS  
DEALT WITH IN THESE APOCALYPTIC STUDIES:  
AT THE BEGINNING,  
NO FORM.

## MINDFULNESS VERSES

I ENTRUST MYSELF  
TO EARTH.  
EARTH ENTRUSTS  
HERSELF TO ME.  
I ENTRUST MYSELF  
TO BUDDHA.  
BUDDHA ENTRUSTS  
HERSELF TO ME.  
PLANTING

BREATHING IN.  
I FEEL MY ANGER.  
BREATHING OUT.  
I SMILE.  
I STAY WITH MY  
BREATHING  
SO I WON'T LOSE  
MYSELF.

SMILING  
AT YOUR  
ANGER

SUNSHINE IS DELICIOUS RAIN IS  
REFRESHING WIND BRACES  
US UP NOW WISELY LARATING  
THERE IS REALLY NO SUCH THING  
SUSUP NOW  
ING A BAD WEATHER ONLY  
DIFFERENT KINDS OF GOOD W  
EATHER JOHN RUSKIN

FADE FAR AWAY DISSOLVE AND QUITE  
FORGET WHAT THOU AMONG THE LEA  
VES HAST NEVER KNOWN THE WEARI  
NESS THE FEVER AND THE FRET HERE  
WHERE MEN SIT AND HEAR EACH OT  
HER GROAN WHERE Palsy SHAKES A F  
EW SAD LAST GRAY HAIRS WHERE YO  
UTH GROWS PALE AND SPECTRE THI  
N AND DIES WHERE BUT TO THINK IS  
TO BE FULL OF SORROW AND LEADEN  
EYED DESPAIRS WHERE BEAUTY CA  
NNOT KEEP HER LUSTROUS EYES OR  
NEW LOVE PINE AT THEM BEYOND T  
O-MORROW AWAY! AWAY! FOR I WI  
LL FLY TO THEE NOT CHARIOTED BY  
BACCHUS AND HIS PARDS BUT ON TH  
E VIEWLESS WINGS OF POESY THOUGH  
H THE DULL BRAIN PERPLEXES AND RE  
TARDS ALREADY WITH THEE! TENDER IS  
THE NIGHT AND HAPLY THE QUEEN-M  
OON IS ON HER THRONE CLUSTER'D  
AROUND BY ALL HER STARRY FAYS; B  
UT HERE THERE IS NO LIGHT SAVE W  
HAT FROM HEAVEN IS WITH THE BREE  
ZES BLOWN THROUGH VERDUROUS GL  
OOMS AND WINDING MOSSY WAYS.  
ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE JOHN KEATS

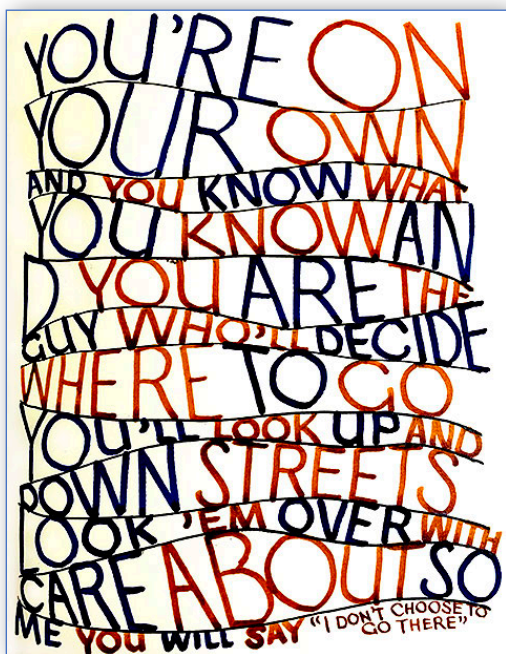
WATER AND AIR  
SO VERY COMMON PLACE ARE  
THEY THAT IT TAKES THEM  
HARDLY AT FIRST TO ATTENTION AND  
YET THEY COULD BE SO VERY  
EXISTENCE THE BEGINNING OF LIFE OUR VERY  
IN MY LIFE THERE WERE BE WATER  
AND AIR  
PHENOMENA SPONTANEOUSLY  
GENERATED FROM WATER AND  
AIR IN THE PRESENCE OF LIGHT THOUGH  
THAT COULD JUST AS EASILY SUGGEST RANDOM  
COINCIDENCE AS A DEITY LET'S JUST SAY  
IT AT THERE HAPPENED  
TO BE A PART WITH WATER  
AND AIR  
IN OUR SOLAR SYSTEM AND MORE OVER AT PRECISELY  
THE RIGHT DISTANCE FROM THE SUN FOR THE  
TEMPERATURES REQUIRED TO COOK  
FORTH LIFE WHILE HARSH  
INCONCEIVABLE THAT AT LEAST ONE  
SUCH PLANET SHOULD  
EXIST IN THE  
VAST REACHES OF THE UNIVERSE  
WE SEARCH SIMILAR EXAMPLES OF  
OF MYSTERIES WATER AND  
WATER AND AIR  
BEFORE US IN THE SEA EVERY  
TIME I MEET THE SEA I  
FEEL A CALMING SENSE OF  
SECURITY AS IF VISITING  
MY ANCESTRAL HOME I EMBARK ON A  
VOYAGE OF SEEING  
HIROSHI SUGIMOTO'S WATER FLOWS  
WATER DOES FLOW  
RENT YOUR HAND INTO YOUR  
WHEN YOU FEEL IT  
TILL YOU FEEL IT  
CARESS WATER IS NOT A SOLID WALL IT WILL

THE PEACE PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS  
 LORD, MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT OF YOUR PEACE  
 WHERE THERE IS HATRED, LET ME SOW LOVE;  
 WHERE THERE IS ERROR, TRUTH;  
 WHERE THERE IS INJURY, PARDON;  
 WHERE THERE IS DOUBT, FAITH;  
 WHERE THERE IS DESPAIR, HOPE;  
 WHERE THERE IS DARKNESS, LIGHT;  
 AND WHERE THERE IS SADNESS, JOY.  
 O DIVINE MASTER, GRANT THAT I MAY NOT SO MUCH SEEK  
 TO BE CONSOLATED AS TO CONSOLATE;  
 TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS TO UNDERSTAND;  
 TO BE LOVED AS TO LOVE;  
 FOR IT IS IN GIVING THAT WE RECEIVE;  
 IT IS IN PARDONING THAT WE ARE PARDONED;  
 IT IS IN SELF-FORGETTING THAT WE FIND  
 THAT WE ARE BORN TO ETERNAL LIFE. AMEN

Left: Balancing exercise  
 by Sharon Shannon

Students were encouraged to break away  
 from straight lines.

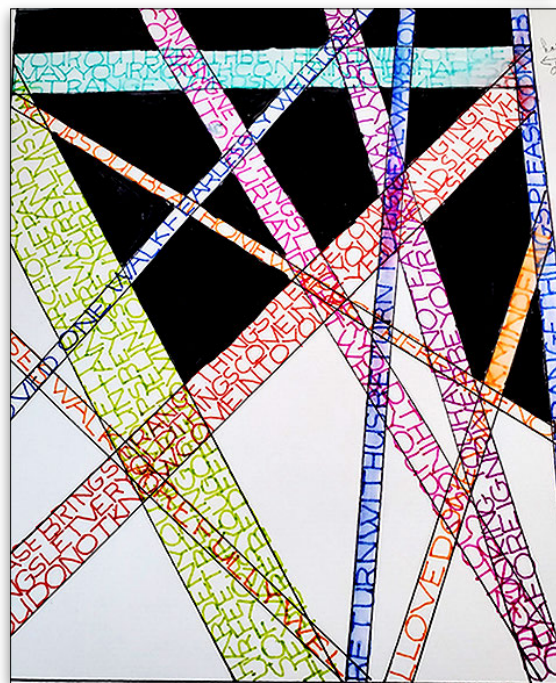
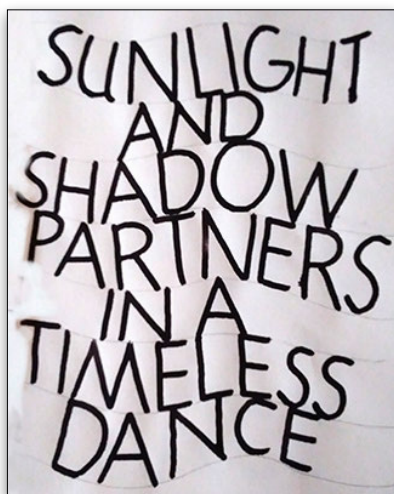
Right: This one by  
 Debbie Finrock.



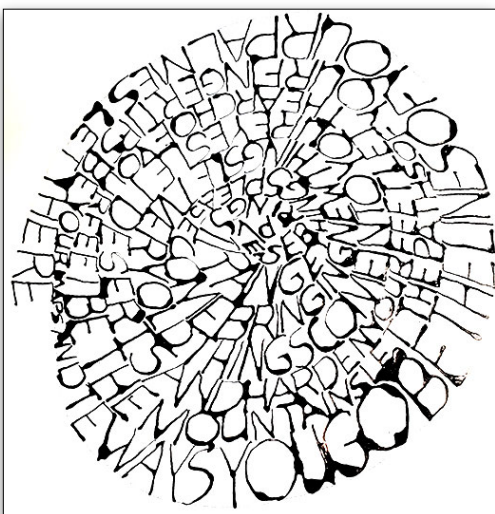
Above: Breaking away from straight  
 lines by Ginger Rice.

Below: Breaking away  
 from straight lines by  
 Stephanie Tuttle.

Text by Stephanie Tuttle.

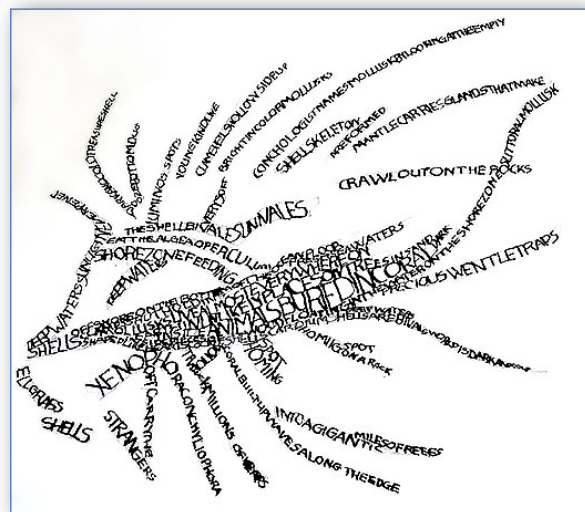
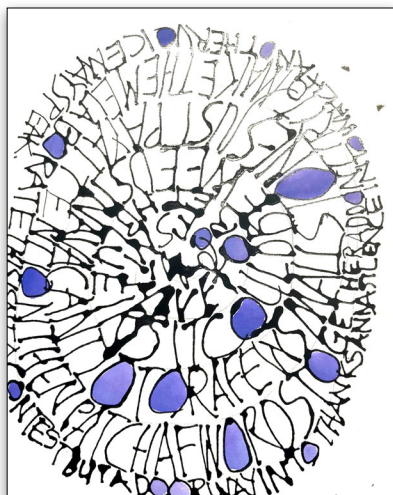


Above: Just breaking away by Beverly Wilson.

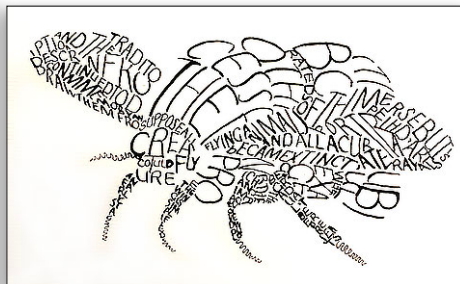
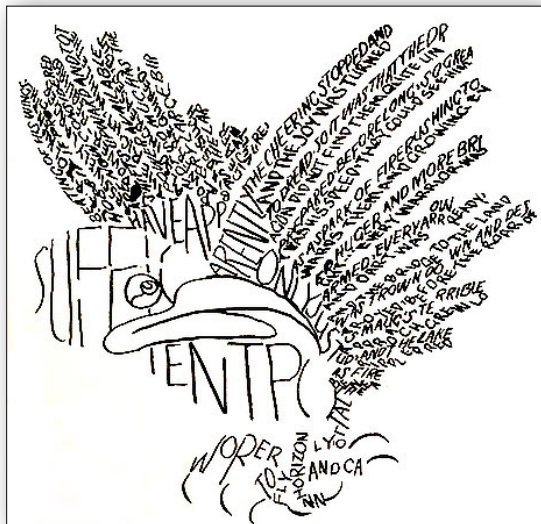


Above: Writing with a needle-tipped  
 bottle by Beverly Wilson.

Below: Needle-tipped  
 bottle by Linney Wix.



Above: Lettered picture by Beverly Wilson.



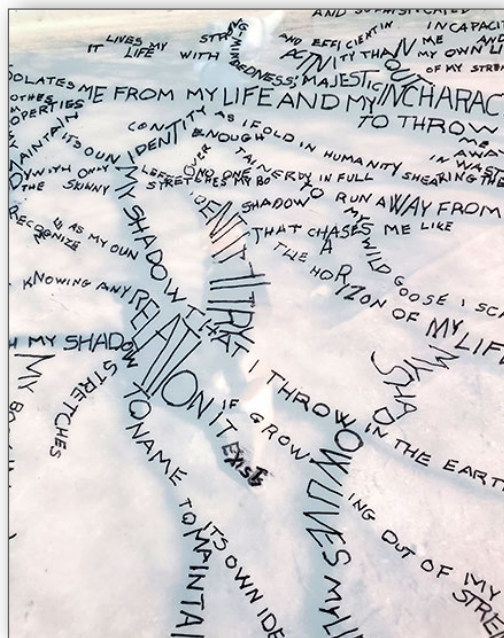
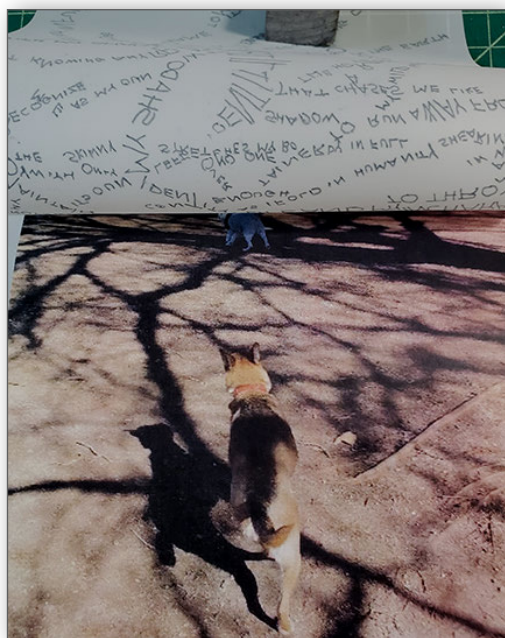
Left and Above: These two lettered pictures by Ginger Rice.

Below: (left and right): Writing on the shadows by Beverly Wilson.



Above: by Geraldine Michelli.

In Lesson Three, we cut letters, and for homework the students started to create capital variations.

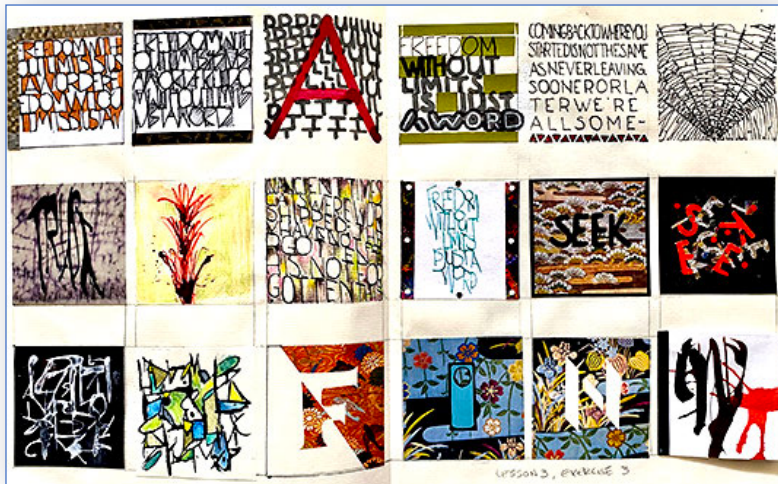


Far left and center: Monoline Variation Exercises by Beverly Wilson.

Above: cut letters by Linney Wix.



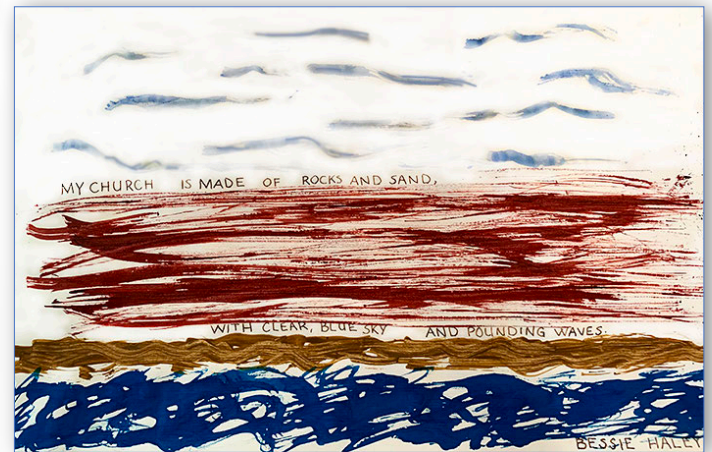
Above: Two Monoline Variations by Linney Wix



Above: Monoline Variations by Susan Clifford

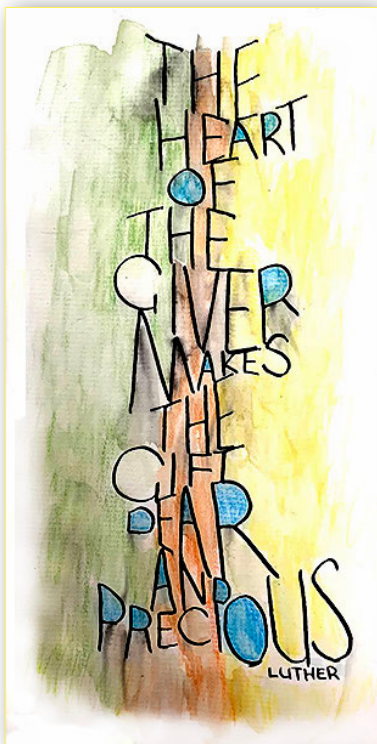
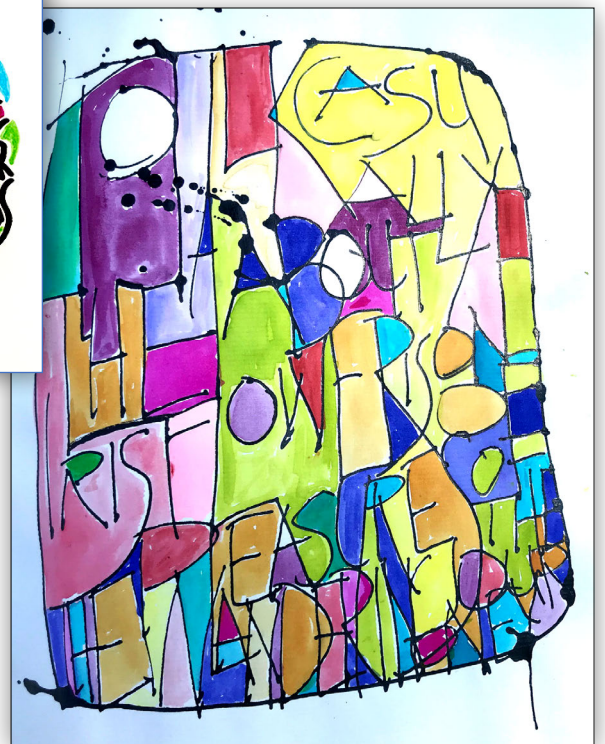
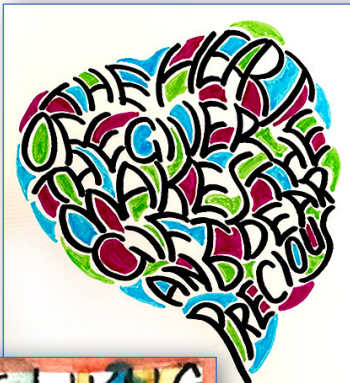


Above: Monoline Variations by Debbie Finrock



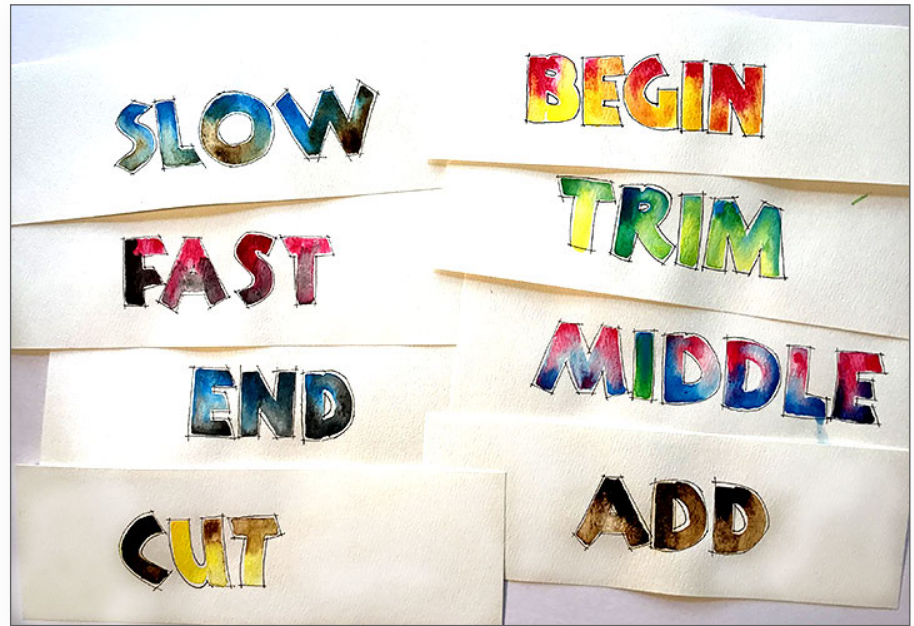
Above: Monoline Variations by Linda Zwick

Lower two images: Monoline Variations by Linney Wix

Left and right:  
Monoline  
Variations by  
Ginger Rice



Above: Neuland Variations by Beverly Wilson



Above: Neuland Variations by Michal Sommers

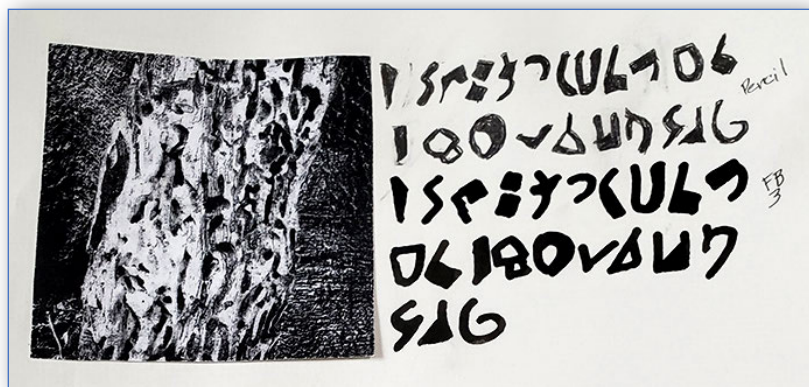


Above: Neuland Variations by Debbie Finrock

While I was planning this last class, I mentioned the homework exercises to my daughter who said, "What? Homework? You should be giving them a party!" That was probably true. But there was more that I wanted to teach and the students had only signed up for four sessions.

Some of my first students did put their books together and Susan Clifford entered hers into the Book Binding division at the State Fair and won a blue ribbon. Yay, Susan!

In the fall I offered the class again but this time with six sessions. The students had to buy their own nibs because I had given all of Linda's aunt's away. I then added a fifth class inspired by Annie Cicalé's Monoline workshop in which we created our own alphabets based on something around us.



Above: Letterforms inspired by a tree trunk by Beverly Wilson



Above: Letterforms inspired by Coal Avenue wall by Elizabeth McKee



ABOVE: Letterforms inspired by nature by Ginger Rice



Above: Embossing by Ginger Rice



Above: Book cover by Ginger Rice

In the sixth class which was scheduled for March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020, I hoped to do a quick demonstration on embossing, put covers on our books and do a show and share. When we all went into lockdown, I said, we can meet on April 18<sup>th</sup>. Covid-19 laughed! Then I learned enough about zoom to offer a last class on June 27<sup>th</sup>. Since I could not do the embossing demonstration, I mailed directions to everyone. I asked them to send me their favorite images that I could share on my computer. It turned out that this is an excellent way to share. Both of morning and afternoon classes could come together to see what everyone else had done.

It gave me great joy to see what my students had produced, and now to share some of their work with you. I love that it is so varied. I hope that it will also inspire you. I think Linda's aunt would be pleased. I look forward to teaching this class (maybe with seven sessions) again after we have all been vaccinated for Covid-19. And to all of those who have taken this class I leave you with my message with monoline lettering inspired by a rock wall on Coal A

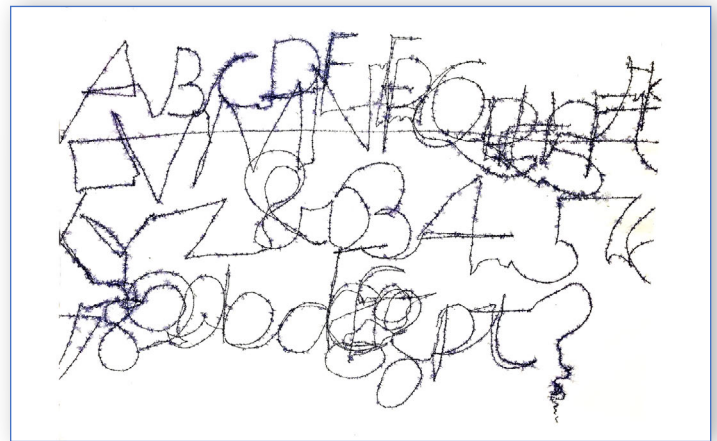


Above: End pages of exercise book by Ginger Rice

Below: Close-up of cover flap of book by Ginger Rice



Right: Lynda Lawrence off on a tangent with Alphabet Blind Contour Drawing (the topic of our September 2020 program.)



AMAZE YOURSELF

Elizabeth McKee is a book artist and calligrapher. Some of her work can be seen on her new website <https://elizabethmckeebooks.com>