

---

# *Escribiente*

**2020-1**

## **NEWSLETTER**



**THANK YOU  
JILLIE**

**FOR INSPIRING US**

**ENCOURAGING US**

**MOTIVATING US**

**ENERGIZING US**

**ADVISING US**

**WARNING US TO  
NEVER RUN WITH  
X-ACTOS**

---

*Escribiente is Albuquerque's Calligraphic Society  
open to anyone interested in the fine art of beautiful lettering*

---





### OUR PRESIDENT SAYS:

Hi Escribiente Calligraphers!  
Kudos to Lynda Lawrence! She has quickly produced this Newsletter at a time when regular meetings, classes and exhibits are cancelled. Thank you, Lynda for keeping us in touch!

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives! I never dreamed I'd have time to do so much calligraphy, clean my studio, etc. Of course, it's easy to get diverted. The good news is that we should have plenty of entries in the State Fair! As of now, 'The Poets' Picnic and Weathergrams are still on in May. Bill Kemp will keep us informed. Hopefully Janice Gabel can reschedule Mike Gold for another class, and The St. Mark's Exhibit that Trish Meyer organized will reopen!

Most of all – everyone be well and be safe!!

Sincerely, Beth House



PO Box 30166, Albuquerque, NM 87190

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2019-2020

**PRESIDENT:** Beth House -  
beth.house107@gmail.com

**VICE PRESIDENT:** Elizabeth McKee -  
alphabeth55@gmail.com

**TREASURER:** Evelyn Costello -  
evelyncostello@msn.com

**SECRETARY:** Lynda Lawrence -  
lynda33@hotmail.com

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS 2019-2020

**E-NEWS:** Bill Kemp - brotherbill55@hotmail.com

**FUNDRAISING:** as needed (per event)

**HOSPITALITY:** Alma Sanderson -  
almasanderson.com

**LIBRARY:** Trish Meyer - trish@escribiente.org

**MEMBERSHIP:** Jan Florence & Ginger Larkin -  
jsfcallig@yahoo.com and ging1330@aol.com

**NEWSLETTER:** Lynda Lawrence -  
lynda33@hotmail.com

**PROGRAMS:** Elizabeth McKee -  
alphabeth55@gmail.com

**PUBLICITY:** OPEN

**EXHIBITIONS:** Trish Meyer -  
trish@escribiente.org

**STATE FAIR:** Beth House -  
beth.house107@gmail.com

**WORKSHOPS:** Janice Gabel -  
janice.gabel@gmail.com

**REFRESHMENTS:** Sharon Shannon -  
sshannon2@swcp.com



### COVER ART

Assembled in Photoshop by your newsletter editor from photographs of cut paper letters, cut paper flowers and paste paper. It's designed to be a tribute to Julie Gray who is well-known for her cut-paper art! We'll miss you Julie!

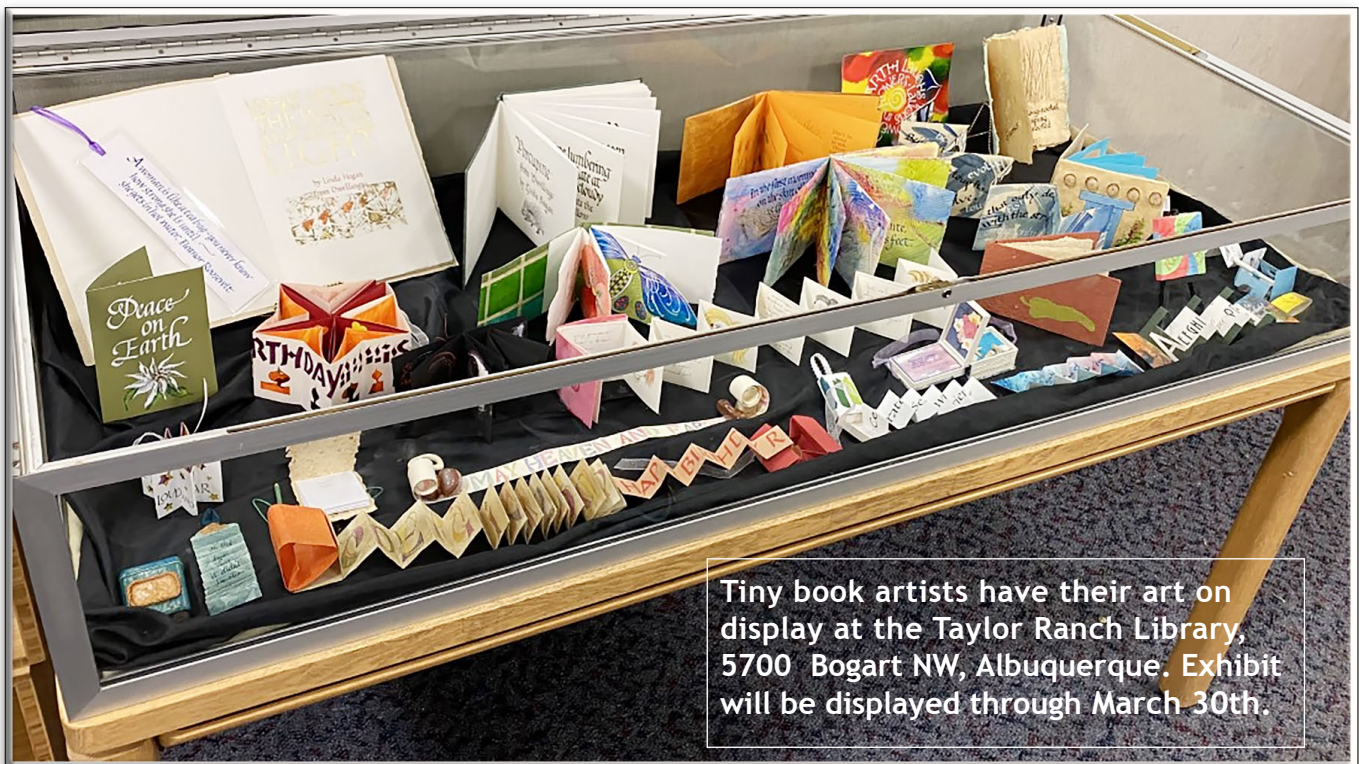






Each year Kathy Chilton recruits a team of volunteers with magic pens to letter and assemble Valentines to be placed on the trays for clients of *Meals on Wheels*. It's our chance to use our pink ink and red heart stamps.

Kathy Chilton's volunteer efforts were applauded in the February 10th edition of the Albuquerque Journal. [Read story at Albuquerque Journal online.](#)



Tiny book artists have their art on display at the Taylor Ranch Library, 5700 Bogart NW, Albuquerque. Exhibit will be displayed through March 30th.

NOT ALL THOSE WHO WANDER  
ARE LOST

J. J. R. TOLKIEN



**St Marks Sacred Arts Church Gallery** (431 Richmond Pl NE) is hosting a beautiful display of art by Escribiente members, showcasing many styles of lettering from traditional to contemporary and abstract. Most works are for sale.

Opening reception was March 1st. Show runs through May 28th. Gallery hours: *We recommend calling ahead due to Covid-19 restrictions (505-262-2484)*. Normal hours are Monday through Thursday, 09:00 to 2:00, and Sunday, 9:30 to noon.

Be sure to take time to admire the stained glass windows in the sanctuary! They were created many years ago by our own Caryl McHarney. See Escribiente newsletter Spring 2011 for her story.



Thank you, Trish, for arranging this opportunity to show the world what we do for fun.



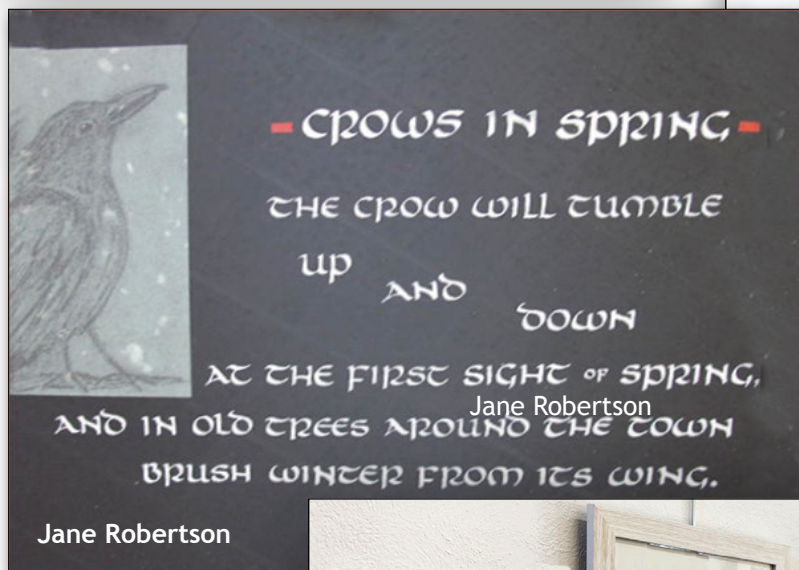
When it is only through age that one gathers wisdom & experience, why this endless struggle to seem young? remember that

BEAUTY WORKS FROM WITHIN;

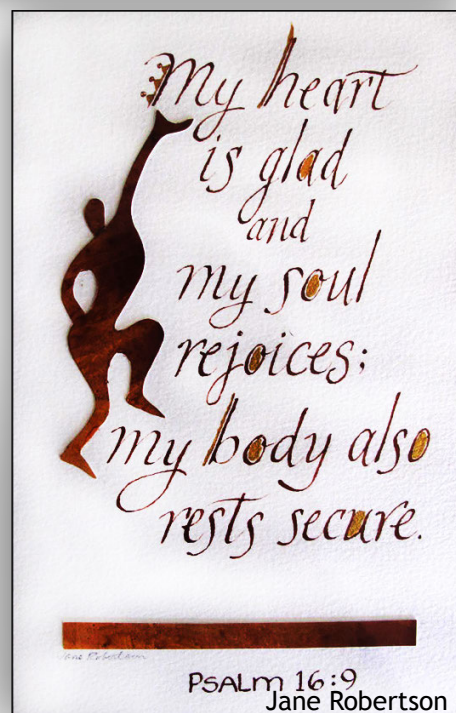
IT CANNOT BE PUT ON AND OFF LIKE A GARMENT, AND IT DEPENDS FAR MORE ON THE CULTURE OF THE INTELLECT, THE TASTES, SENTIMENT, AND AFFECTIONS OF THE SOUL THAN THE COLOR OF THE HAIR, EYES, OR COMPLEXION.

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON

Jane Robertson



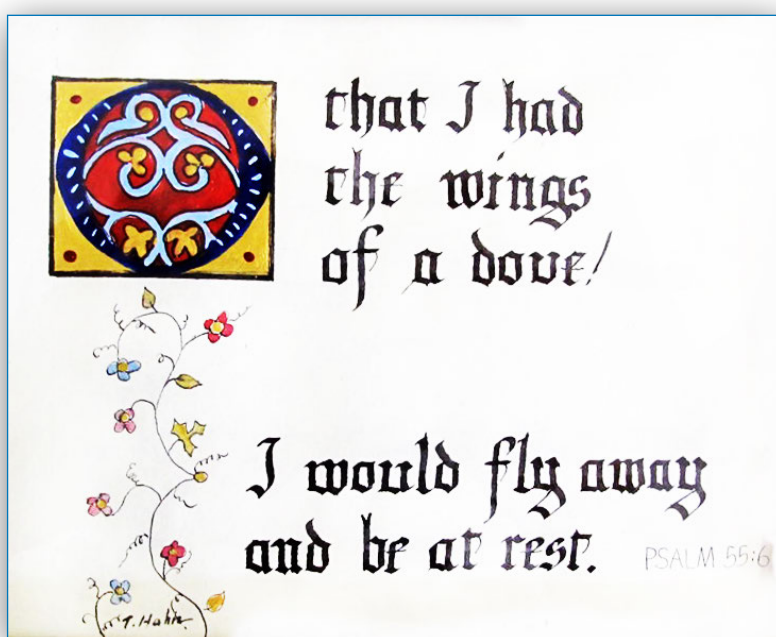
Jane Robertson



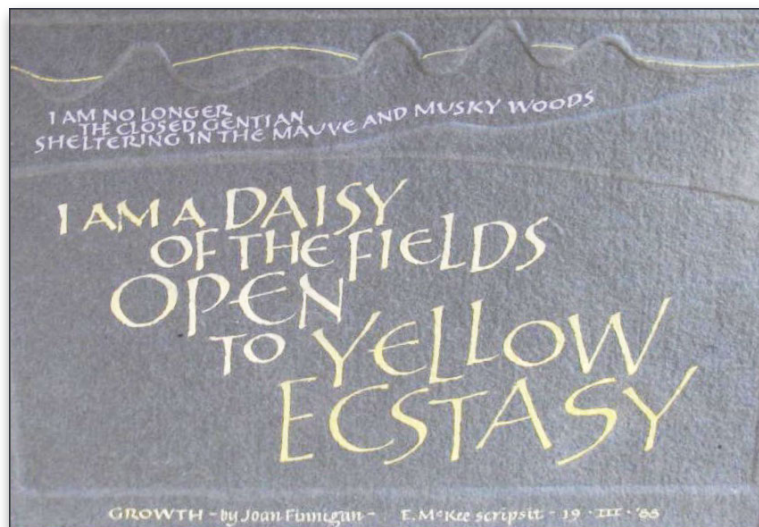




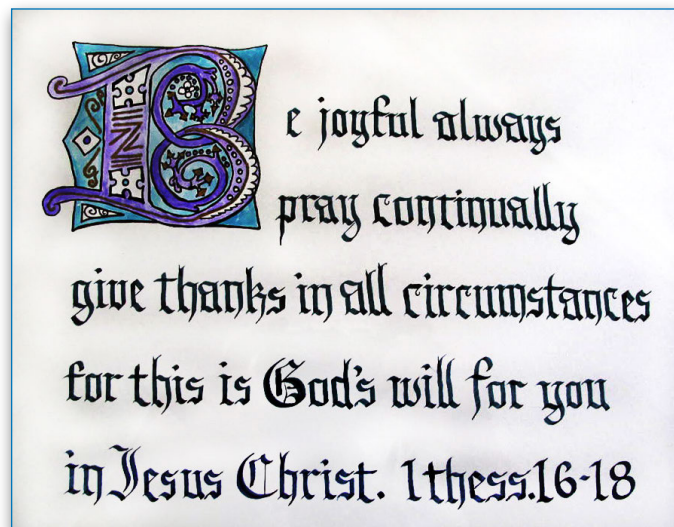
Jane Robertson



Thelma Hahn



Elizabeth McKee



Kristen Griego



Beth House

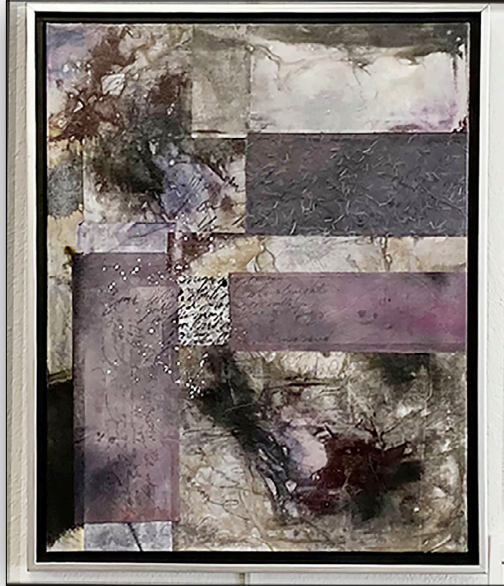


Jane Robertson

Jane Robertson

All images on this page and the next seven pages are from the exhibit at St. Marks Church Sacred Art Gallery; on display until May 28<sup>th</sup>.

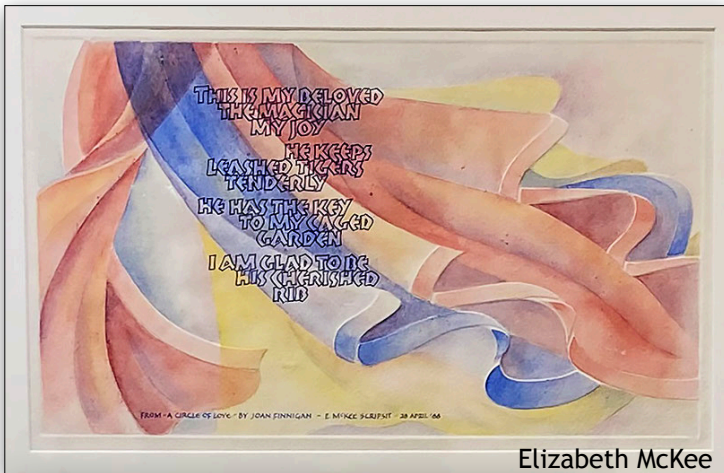




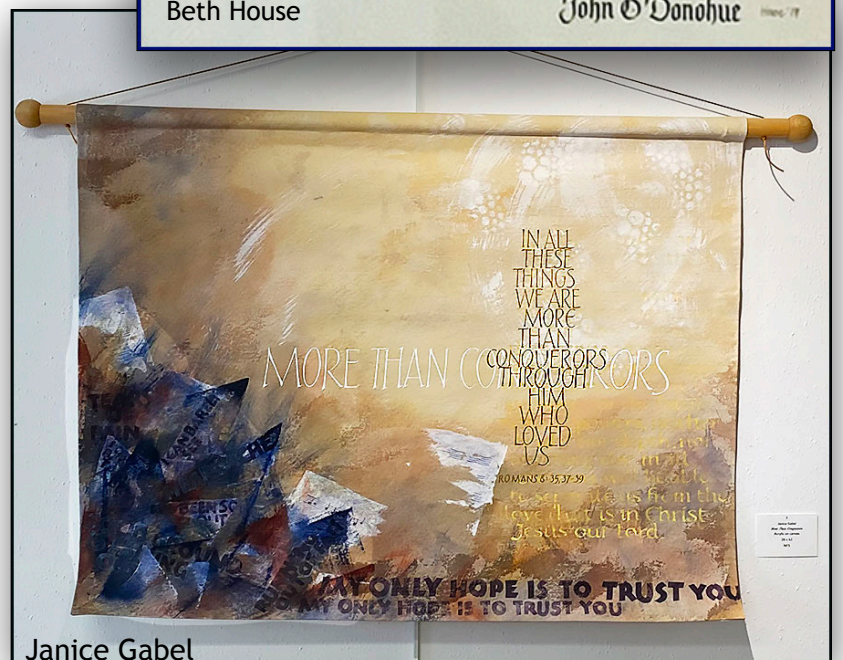
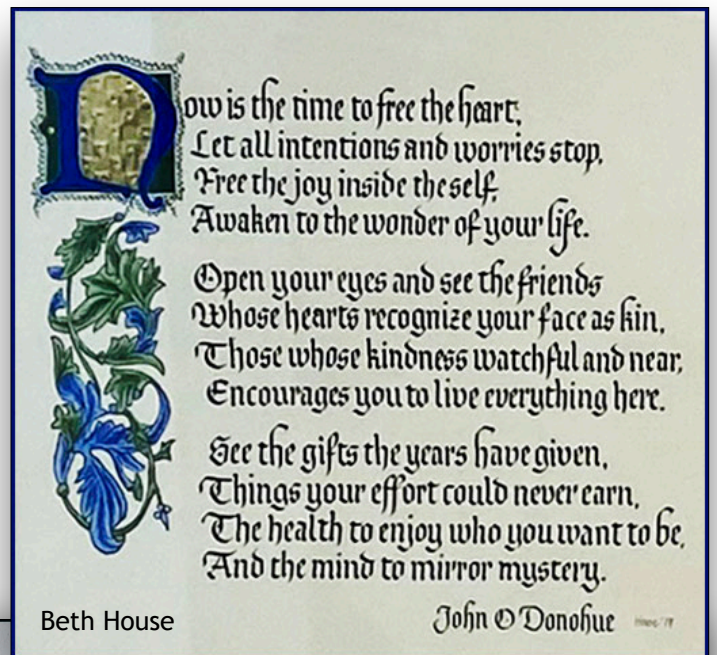
Trish Meyer



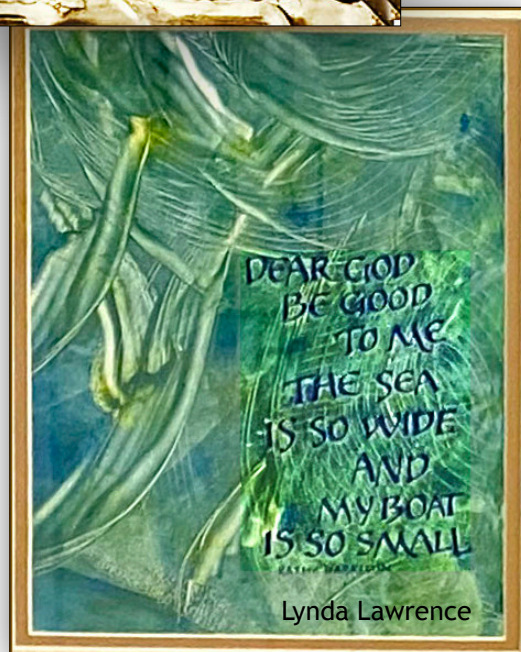
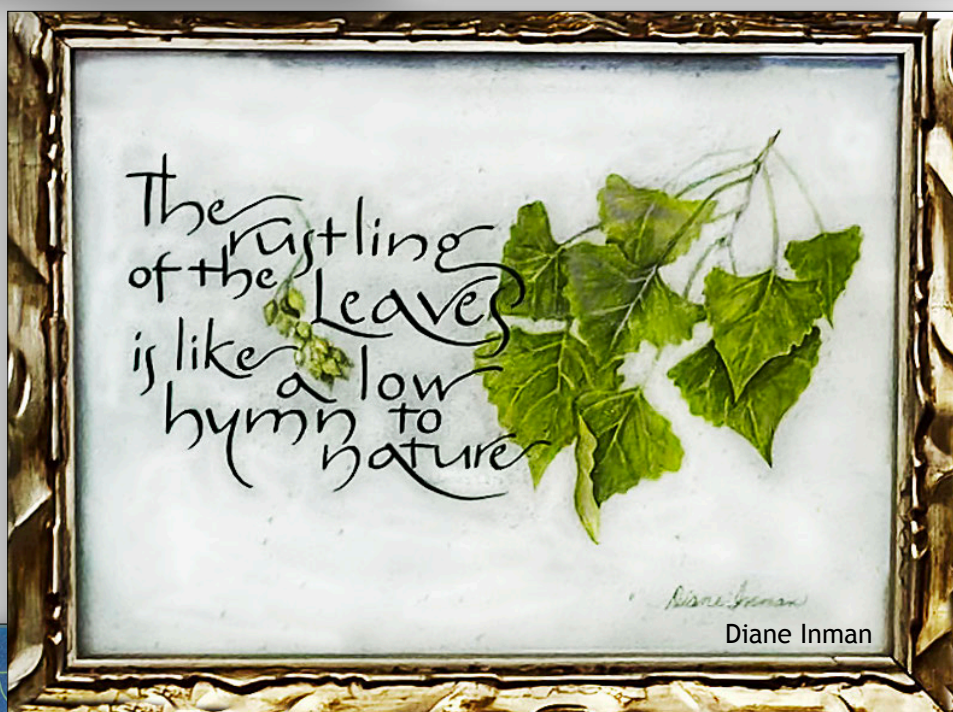
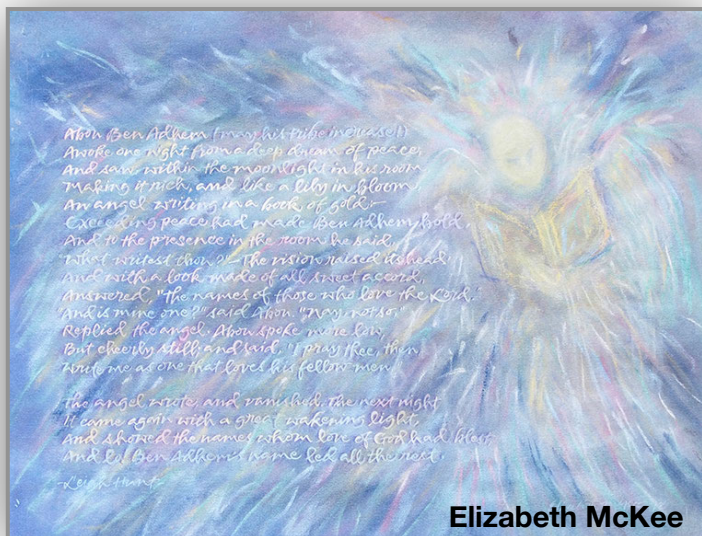
Patty Hammarstadt



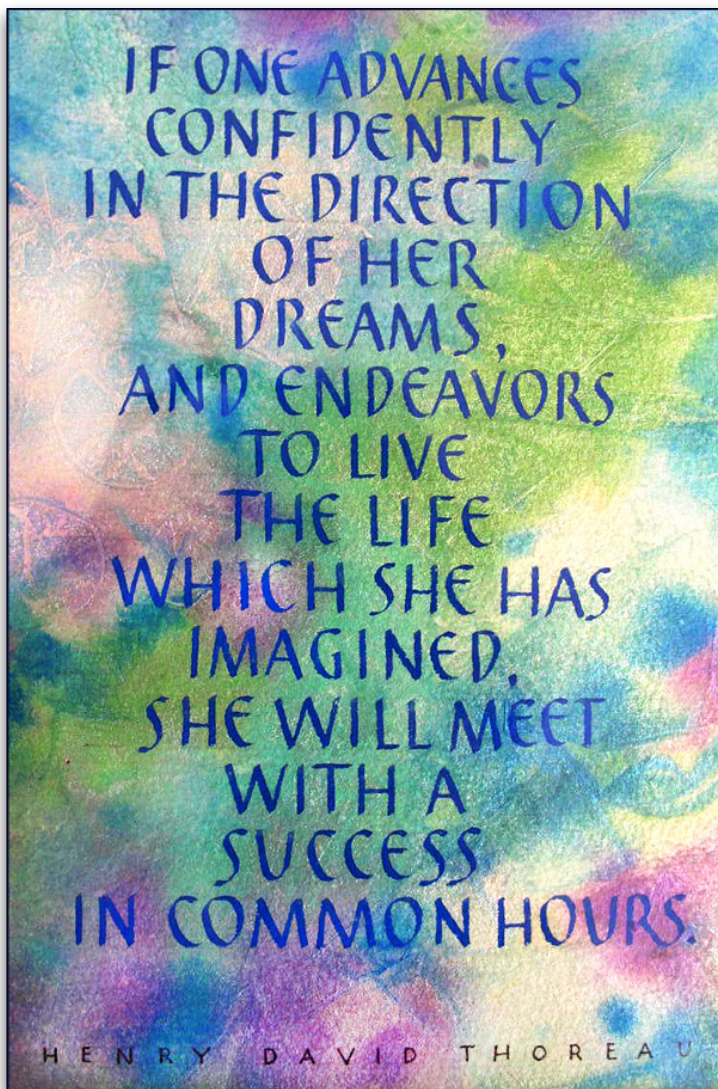
Elizabeth McKee



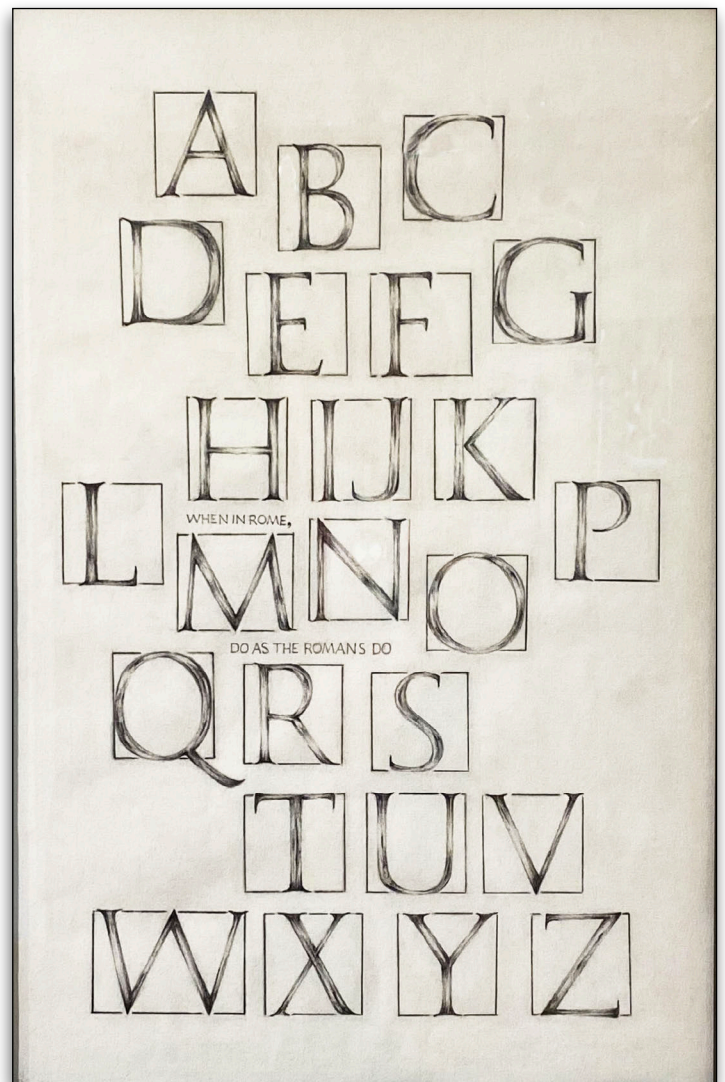




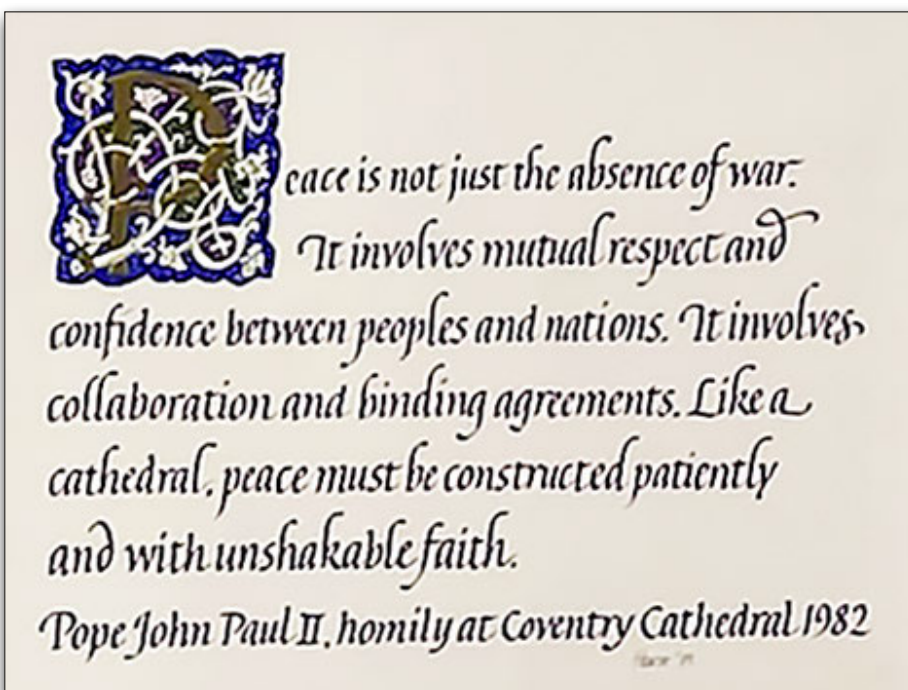




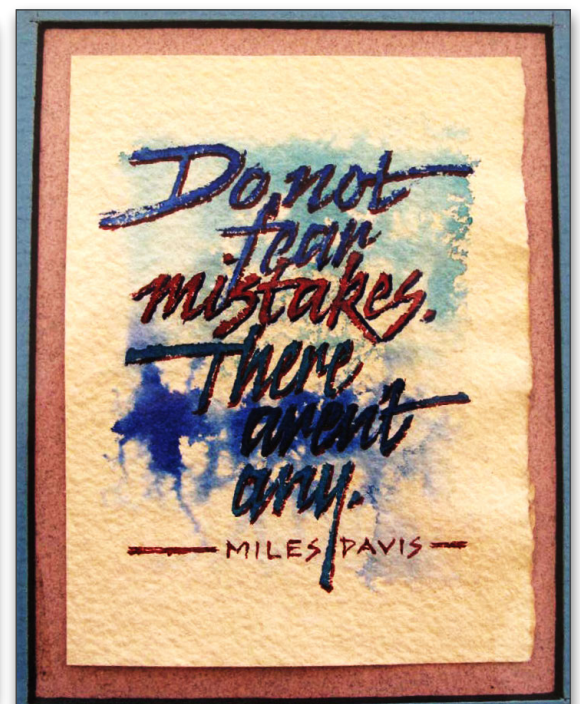
Jane Robertson



Lynda Lawrence



Beth House

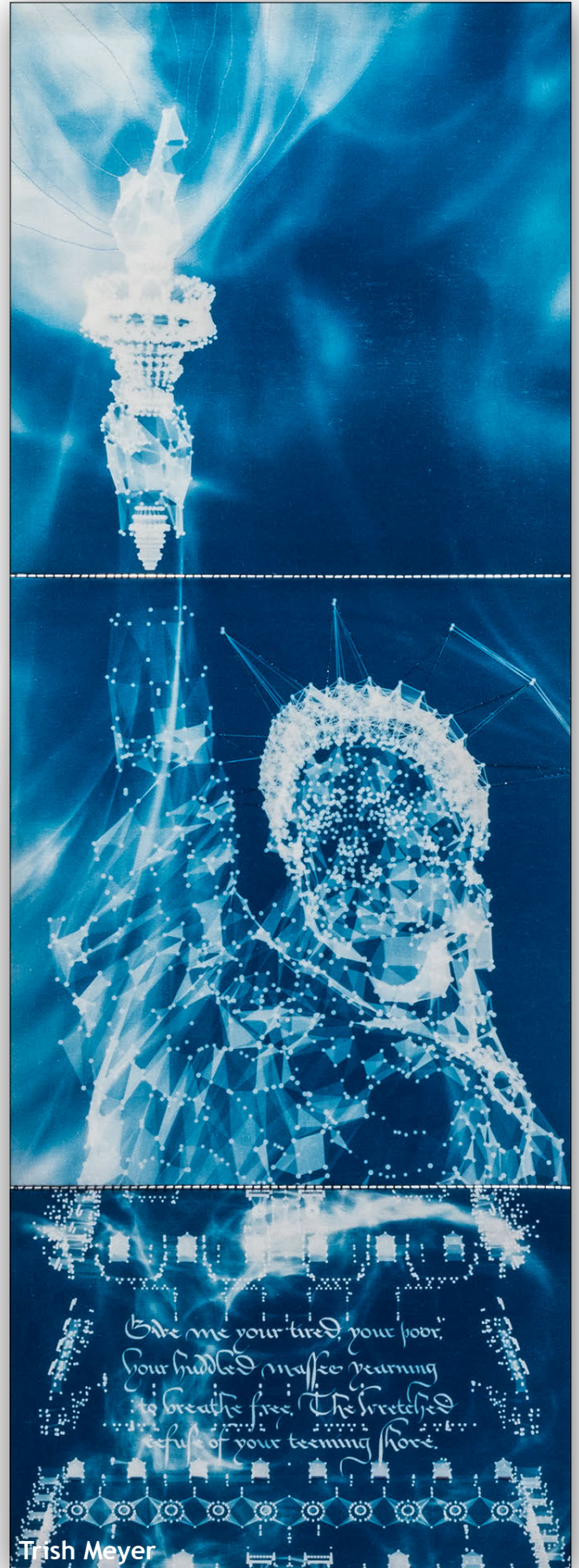


Esther Feske

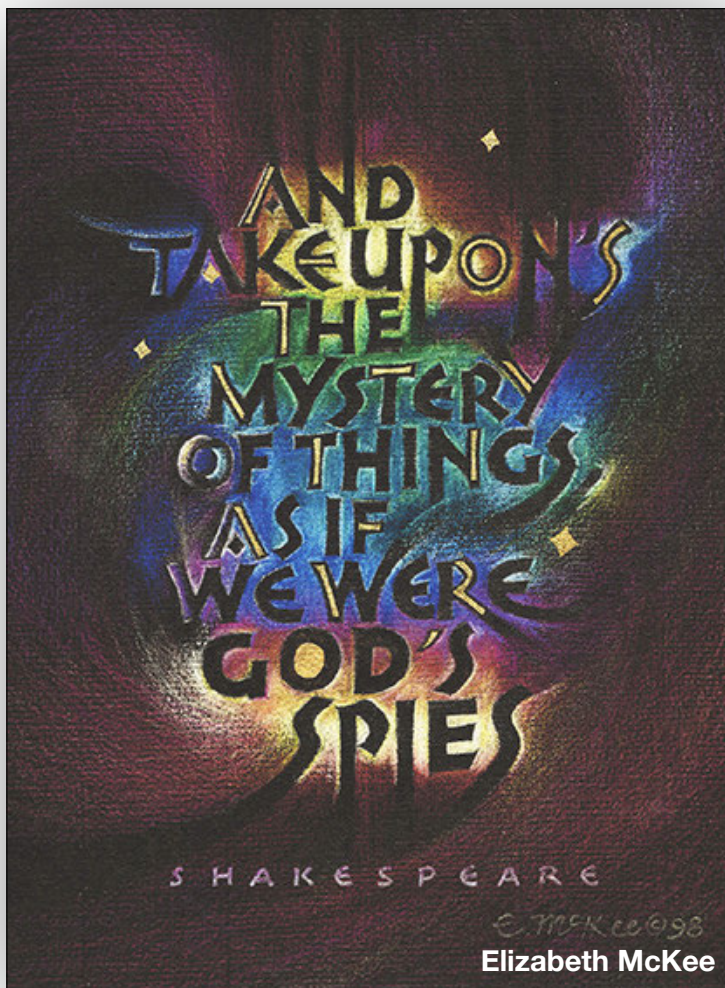




Patty Hammarstadt



Trish Meyer



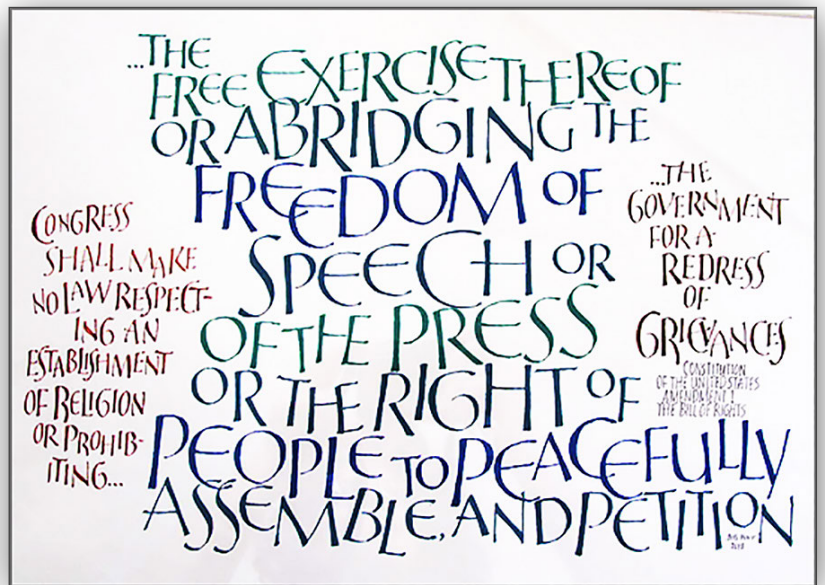




Jane Robertson



Lynda Lawrence



Beth House



Janice Gabel

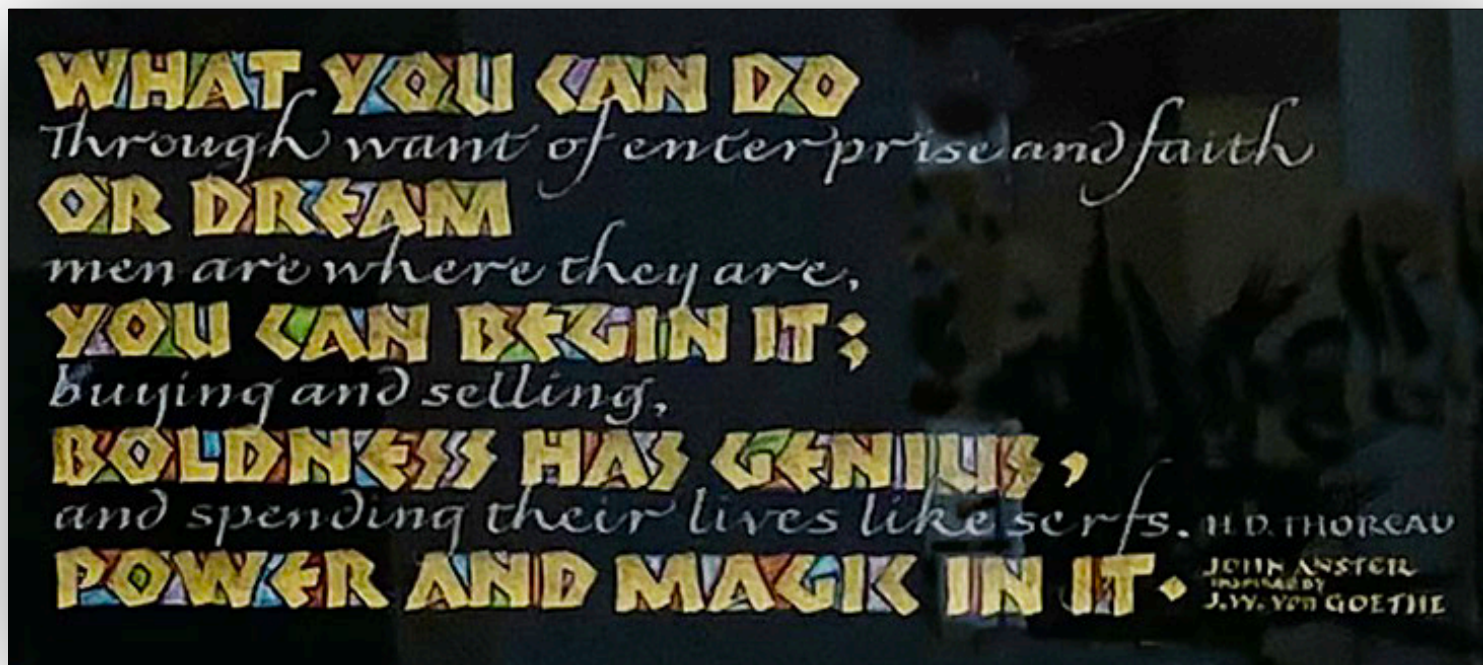




Patty Hammarstadt

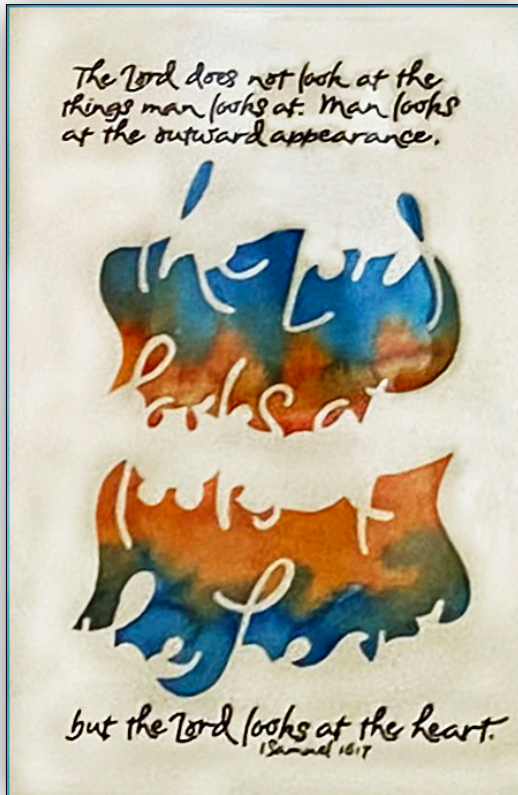


Caryl McHarney

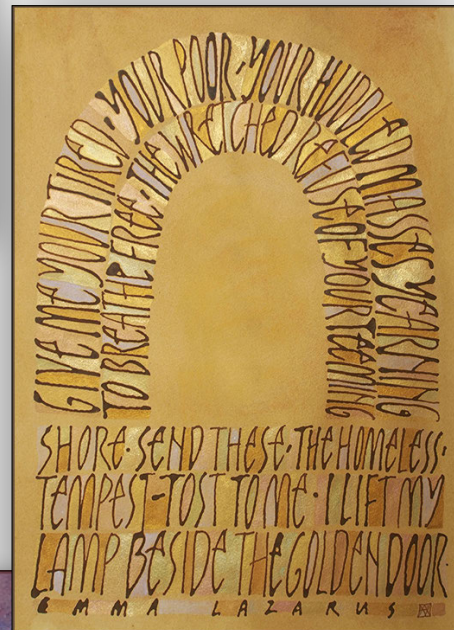
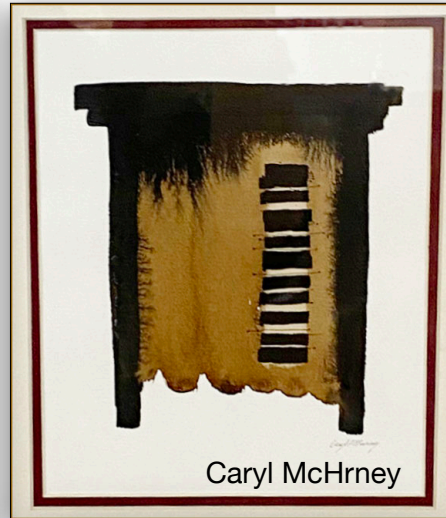


Elizabeth McKee





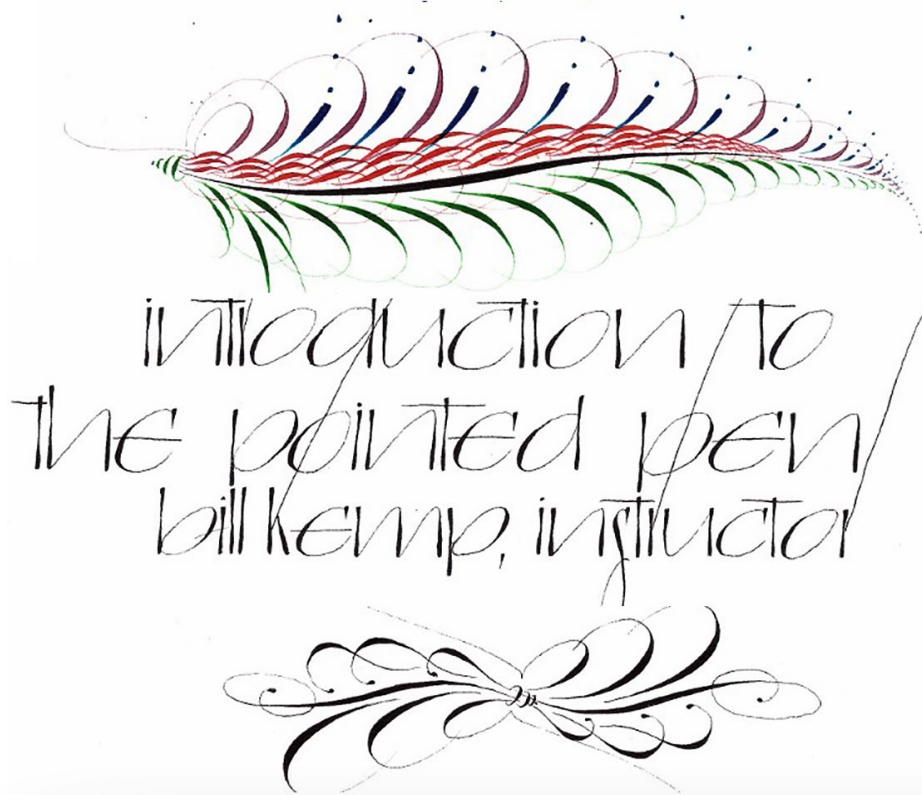
Janice Gabel



Elizabeth McKee







Students were all set with oblique nib holders and Nikko G nibs in hand, expecting to attend a Pointed Pen class with Bill Kemp in March. Then along came the Corona Virus scare and its many social gathering restrictions.

*Social distancing* is now the order of the day! Circumstances forced cancellation of the class for now.

But never fear – we can look forward to rescheduling this class when our world normalizes.

**Leave it to Bill to refund our class registrations in style!**





## Sins & Salvations in Calligraphy

*Everything I've learned in 50 years of the study of calligraphy*

by Esther Feske

### SINS

(erroneous beliefs which contribute to less-than-your-best performance)

#### 1. "Writing lots of letters makes you better."

This essay began with a discussion over lunch between Escribiente then-President Jan Florence and I. Jan remembered when she was a beginner and we were sitting next to each other in a workshop. When she had finished a whole page of the style we were learning, she looked over and I had written one line. She asked me why I went so slow, and I replied "Well, when I've got it, I've got it." The discussion continued: I had learned from taking piano lessons that you do not practice the wrong notes, as they become a pattern that is hard to break. Instead, you practice the right notes, even if Very Slowly, until your fingers know where to go. After Very Slow and Even practice, you can gradually increase speed until you can play the music. Lettering is the same, to me. I may go slow, striving to see and learn the letter shapes first. Then writing simple combinations of similar letters allows me to get consistency between letters made of the same strokes. This practice continues, adding more letters. I never strive for speed or quantity, only quality.

Eventually, when I am familiar enough with the letters that I do not have to look at the exemplars very often, I can begin the second practice: finding an even rhythm with which to make the letters: Start, stroke, end. Start, stroke, end. Having a consistent rhythm in the making of strokes adds consistency and harmony to the letters (more about that in Salvation #1).

These little details add up to the overall effect of the page: consistency in pen angle, slant, stroke shapes, spacing give a certain texture to the block of calligraphy. The consistency of texture tells the quality of the work. In teaching, I can glance at a page and know if it is an A, B, or C. This is not a whimsical judgment; when I analyze the elements of the calligraphy, the details support my impression.

#### 2. "When you're good, you can just sit down and do a finished piece in one shot."

Maybe once in a thousand tries. When you see a beautiful piece hanging on a gallery wall or at the State Fair, you do not see the piles of paper in the collage/recycle box in the artist's studio. I practice letters and colors and layout on layout bond paper. Then I practice

on "good" paper. As the page gets better, new places stick out as weak design, unbalanced emphasis, etc. and need to be adjusted. Then I do "final" art, but there might be six of them before I'm satisfied. I'm lucky if there are only two or three. Not to worry – this lengthy process justifies the piles of good paper you have accumulated.

#### 3. "Some people just have it, and some don't."

You know that's a lot of BS. Anyone can improve with practice. What you believe about yourself becomes the self-fulfilling prophesy. So say something different about yourself and your abilities.

I learned calligraphy in a historical progression from Roman Capitals to the Incunabula. The early forms were so astonishingly easy for me, I was sure I'd been a monk in a previous lifetime. I could look at any example, and using the principles of x-height, pen angle, shape, and ductus, make a good representation in a half hour. Then I got to Italic, one of the last developments in broad-pen calligraphy (before the invention of type froze the letterforms). My Italic was ugly, ugly, ugly every time. It took me four years of teaching and writing Italic before it became beautiful.

Yes, calligraphy asks for a degree of eye-hand coordination that not everyone has developed yet, and it asks for a degree of kinesthetic sensitivity – your ability to feel the whole width of the pen upon the paper, the resistance of metal on paper, the miniscule movements of your hand and arm. If you've played a musical instrument, or knitted or cross-stitched or embroidered, or gotten good with a Yo-Yo or basket weaving, you've developed these skills. So what if it takes four years to get really good? In four years, you'll be really good!

Another factor is personal preference. You will find you have an affinity to some styles and not others. Get good at the ones you like. No calligraphers are experts at all styles. In fact, most professionals have a few they have developed. With variations, it looks like a lot; it's not.

## Salvations

#### 1. Calligraphy is a performing art, like music or dance.

Unlike music and dance, which disappear into thin air in an instant, calligraphy leaves a direct record of ink on paper. But Performance it is. What you're thinking at the moment you make a stroke shows up in the stroke. Who



you believe yourself to be, who you are *being*, shows up in the stroke. If you'd studied Asian calligraphy, you were taught this, but it is missing in Western teaching, we are so results-oriented. If you are uncertain about where that stroke is going, it will waver. If you (figuratively, not literally) grit your teeth and Go For It, the stroke will have a certain power. Put your Whole Self into it. This attitude of confidence and bravery, done consistently, letter by letter, will have telling results on the page. There is no technique or trick or experience that can substitute for *attitude*. I suggest you study the best ballerinas and pianists and singers; look for who they are being in the moment. If they can be that, so can you.

*What is the source of Performance? How do you get to that place?* My biggest revelation in being an artist came from a Landmark Worldwide Education courses I have done. They suggest that how we think about our actions, goals and desires is backward. We *usually* think that we must **Have** a certain training or education before we can **Do** or Act or Perform at the level we want before we can Be artists. We're always trying to get some- where else than where we are. Landmark suggests that it is easier to **Be** an artist: take a stand for yourself that you are henceforth an artist. Standing in this new place gives you a new viewpoint as to what to **Do** next. By doing those things, you **Have** Results that were previously unavailable. Also, by declaring yourself an artist *now*, it is not something you hope to get to Some Day. Haven't you had enough of a Some Day Life? Be an artist now; own it and tell other people. Now, applying this idea, I bring Art and Craftsmanship to everything I'm an artist everywhere.

## 2. The white space is the key to beauty.

My calligraphy greatly improved when I could see the white spaces – the “negative” shapes, counter-shapes and interspaces – *as shapes*. Imagine that the guidelines defining the x-height are actual lines, and your pen is making a series of white ovals and hour-glasses and parallelograms-with-rounded-corners. Watch those shapes as you make your letter strokes.

As you practice this visualization, you will discover that when the negative shapes are beautiful, your letters are beautiful. Eureka! You are instantly a better calligrapher.

## 3. White space is the secret to visual spacing, not mechanical measuring.

Now visualize those white spaces as containers for water. See the water assuming different shapes (as above). Equalizing the amount of water which those spaces hold will equalize your spacing. Double Eureka!

## 4. Serifs can absolve spacing sins.

Those little hairs at beginning and ending of strokes can take up visual space without changing readability. If your inter-letter spacing is uneven to the eye, lengthening some incoming and/or outgoing strokes may help even out the visual effect. Do not make the hairs fatter, as that's too obvious. Practice this on your imperfect practice pages until you are comfortable with this little fix.

## 5. Even the best calligraphers shave sometimes.

You've got a beautiful piece of calligraphy, and discover you've misspelled a word. Take a double-edged razor blade; break it in half. Take one half, holding the ends between thumb and middle finger, with index finger in the middle of the blade, with sharp edges of the blade just beyond the fingernail. Press down with index finger, curving the blade and creating a “scoop.” With the scoop held at a shallow angle to the paper, you can shave off a wrong letter or part of a letter, a little at a time. Shave as shallowly as possible. On some papers, this erasure can be nearly invisible, and is certainly less visible than abrading the paper with erasing.

After shaving, the paper *might* require a bit of burnishing (do not make it shiny if the paper is not shiny) or a little rubbing with Pounce (to restore a workable surface, as shaving might make the paper bleed more in that spot). There are obvious limits to shaving: a hand-colored background would have to be restored; thin paper is easily cut through. And in shaving, less is better: it might look OK to leave a speck or two of the wrong letter than to over-shave and have too much paper surface to restore. Shaving does take practice, but what have you got to lose? At worst, you'll do the whole page again anyway.

## 6. Photoshop – the new perfection.

Like airbrushed starlets on magazine covers, your calligraphy-for-reproduction can be made “flawless” in Photoshop (or Photoshop Elements, both computer programs from Adobe). Well, I take that back – there's a limit; Susan Boyle, much as I like her, will never resemble Angie Harmon. But you can erase errant dots and lines and double-strokes, darken pale spots, increase contrast or eliminate background texture. Two problems arise in Photoshopping your calligraphy: (1) It is VERY time-consuming, and it might be easier to keep making “final art” with your pen; (2) It is easy to lose the proper shape of a curve or the consistent pen-width of a stroke if you get mesmerized by the power of the pixel.

I hope these insights will help you master The Inner Game of Calligraphy, relieve you of some Sins, and offer a bit of Salvation.



Celebrating 40 years of  
**LITERALLY LETTERS**  
in 2020 at  
Ghost Ranch / Abiquiu, NM

June 7–13 / 2020

*The Painted Word* / Annie Cicale

*Paste Papers That Sing* / Elizabeth McKee

*Monoline Alphabets & Creating Small Treasures* / Carol Pallesen

*Alphabets Inspired by Nature* / Julie Wildman

Visit [ghostranch.org](http://ghostranch.org) for more information

Join us for an  
exciting week of  
art and lettering  
in the beautiful  
surroundings of  
Ghost Ranch!



[Website: Ghostranch.org](http://Ghostranch.org) – Literally Letters

Enter the world where words and art collide! Celebrating its 40th year at Ghost Ranch in June, *Literally Letters* is a week that is a learning experience like no other! Beth House and Amy Jones work all year to make this an unforgettable creative lettering experience.



**BULLETIN BOARD**  
For more information, see [escribiente.org](http://escribiente.org)

<p>April 1<sup>st</sup> Membership Meeting cancelled</p> <p>Introduction to Pointed Pen still on for March 21<sup>st</sup></p> <p>Pointed Brush workshop with Mike and Ann on for April 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup></p> <p>Next membership meeting May 6<sup>th</sup></p> <p><b>CANCELLED</b></p>	<p><b>EXHIBITS</b></p> <p>St Marks Episcopal Church Sacred ArtsGallery until May 28<sup>th</sup></p> <p>Art of Haiku May 7<sup>th</sup> to June 28<sup>th</sup> Open Space Visitor Center</p> <p>Taylor Ranch Library Tiny Books display until March 30<sup>th</sup></p>	<p><b>SAVE THE DATE</b></p> <p><b>by May 1<sup>st</sup></b> Send chapbook image to Esther Feske</p> <p><b>May 7<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup></b> Art of Haiku</p> <p><b>by May 15<sup>th</sup></b> Weathergram turn-in</p> <p><b>May 21<sup>st</sup></b> Hang Weathergrams 11:00 to noon Open Space Visitor Center</p> <p><b>May 23<sup>rd</sup></b> Poets Picnic</p> <p><b>June 7<sup>th</sup> to June 13<sup>th</sup></b> Ghost Ranch</p>
<p>International Calligraphy Conference June 26 - July 1, 2020 Slovenia</p>	<p>Annual IAMPETH Conference July 6 to July 11, 2020 Atlanta, GA</p>	<p>Artwork with Focus on the Sacred with Randall Hasson May 18 to May 23, 2020 Pecos Benedictine Monastery</p>

Escribiente's Newsletter is published three or four times per year. Articles and images from this Newsletter are covered by copyright and may not be reprinted without permission from the editor.

Do you want your work featured in the Newsletter? Or do you have an article of interest you would like to publish, and/or an event you would like to publicize? Our newsletter is one of the many things that keeps this well-inked machine flourishing. Send information and/or suggestions to: [lynda33@hotmail.com](mailto:lynda33@hotmail.com)

This newsletter is for and about YOU, so it's only as good as you make it and contribute to it. Any information and/or artwork you have is welcome! Classes you've attended, artwork you have done, tidbits of news, awards you've won, book reviews, a favorite material you can't wait to tell everyone about, upcoming shows, classes you attend as a teacher or student, etc. This is YOUR connection with the calligraphic world in New Mexico and beyond. We always welcome your input!

Escribiente is a non-profit organization of persons dedicated to the advancement and promotion of calligraphy. Meetings are held at 6:30 pm on the first Wednesday of each month, except January and July. December's holiday meeting will be announced. We meet at Manzano Mesa Multi-Generational Center (southwest corner of Elizabeth and Southern Streets).

Yearly dues are \$30, are not pro-rated, and are payable in June. Members receive discounts to attend workshops along with access to our extensive library collection. Newsletter back issues can be viewed on our website at [escribiente.org](http://escribiente.org). Members also receive at discount at Artisan in Albuquerque. Dues should be mailed to: Escribiente, PO Box 30166, Albuquerque, NM 87190

Current members receive up-to-the-minute information and news relating to Escribiente's activities and workshops through our regular email bulletins.