

The background of the entire page is an abstract watercolor wash in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue. The texture is soft and painterly, with visible brushstrokes and color blending.

APHASIA Art & Poetry

In honor of Aphasia Awareness Month, the members of **Virtual Connections** have submitted original artwork and poetry to express themselves and show what having aphasia means to them.

Aphasia is a language disorder that can impact speaking, understanding, reading, and writing. Aphasia does not affect intelligence.



Packing for a Dream

by Donna Blum

A pair of wings
Slippered feet
Gauzy nightgown
A map of night sky
constellations
Moon light path

Packing for a Dream

by

Donna Blum

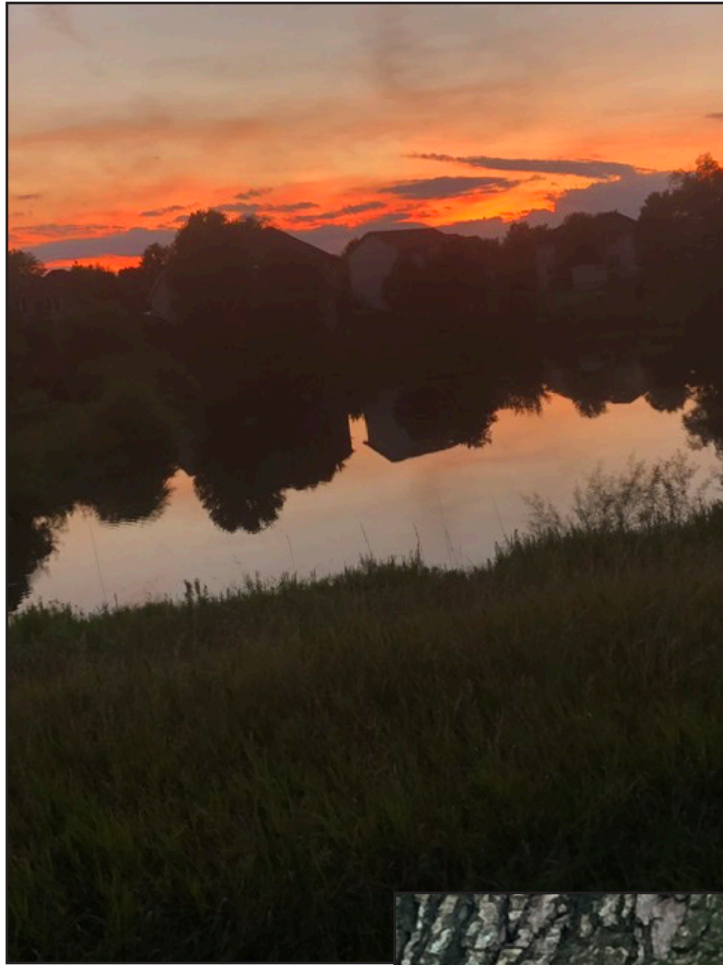
I created this poem as part of of a Poetry class.
It catches my sense of fantasy. I like to think I could fly
away in my dreams, to places only imagined.



Everyday

by Pammy Susan Bateman Lee

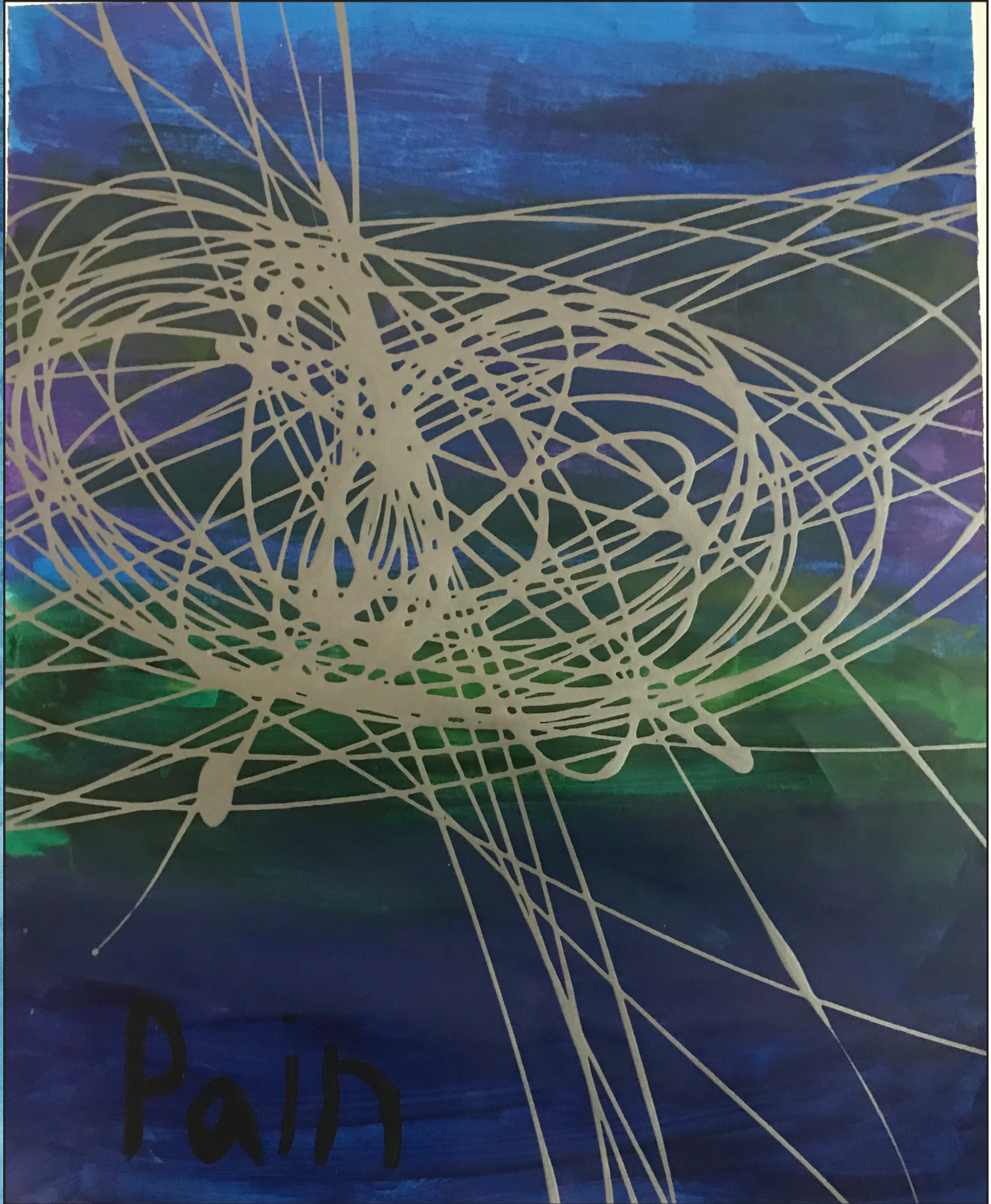
Because I had a stroke (8 years ago) with aphasia. Lockdown
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/aphasia/>



by Jerry L.



by Jerry L.



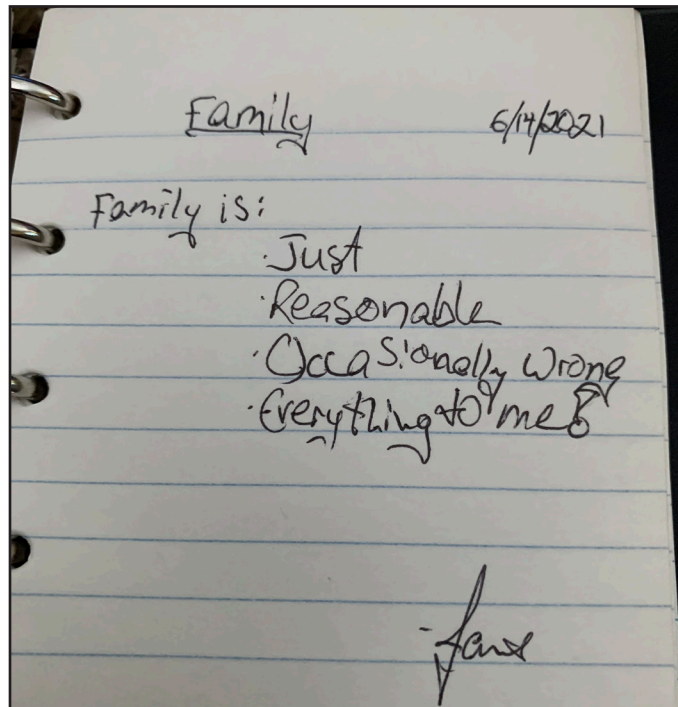
by Leslie Griggs



A painting of Sunflowers

by Cheryl Adamson

This was my first time trying to paint in a Class 20



by James Bardunias

It was an assignment for my speech therapy. What it means to me, my family is my life and is my only source of comfort.



Flower

by James Bardunias

It was part of a class. What it means to me, I am free a draw!



Butterfly

by James Bardunias

It was a class. What it means to me, I have been drawing for a while now and I will draw as long as I can!



Sunflower

by Laurice Renee Brewer

I had a stroke August 10, 2020. Painting sunflower October 23, 2020 and happy :)

I live in Torrance, California

I like music, friends, paint, and kitty 🐱



Color Paint

by Madison Bowe



I have Aphasia

I live in Las Vegas Nevada. I love art and my friends, when I do art for my friends. I like games and my friends play, I make are of love. I hurt my head and I love playing games with friends. A little ago and four of my friends. It means coloring friends.



I did dat!

by Amy Walters

I have Aphasia

I am Happy, Joyous, and Free.

I painted this in the Covid Sequestration Summer of 2020 during a Voices of Hope for Aphasia "Art With Mason" Zoom session. I thought my sister, Noelle, got all the artistic talent in our family until I painted this...I like it!



The Will of the Wisp.

by Arthur Showntell Williams

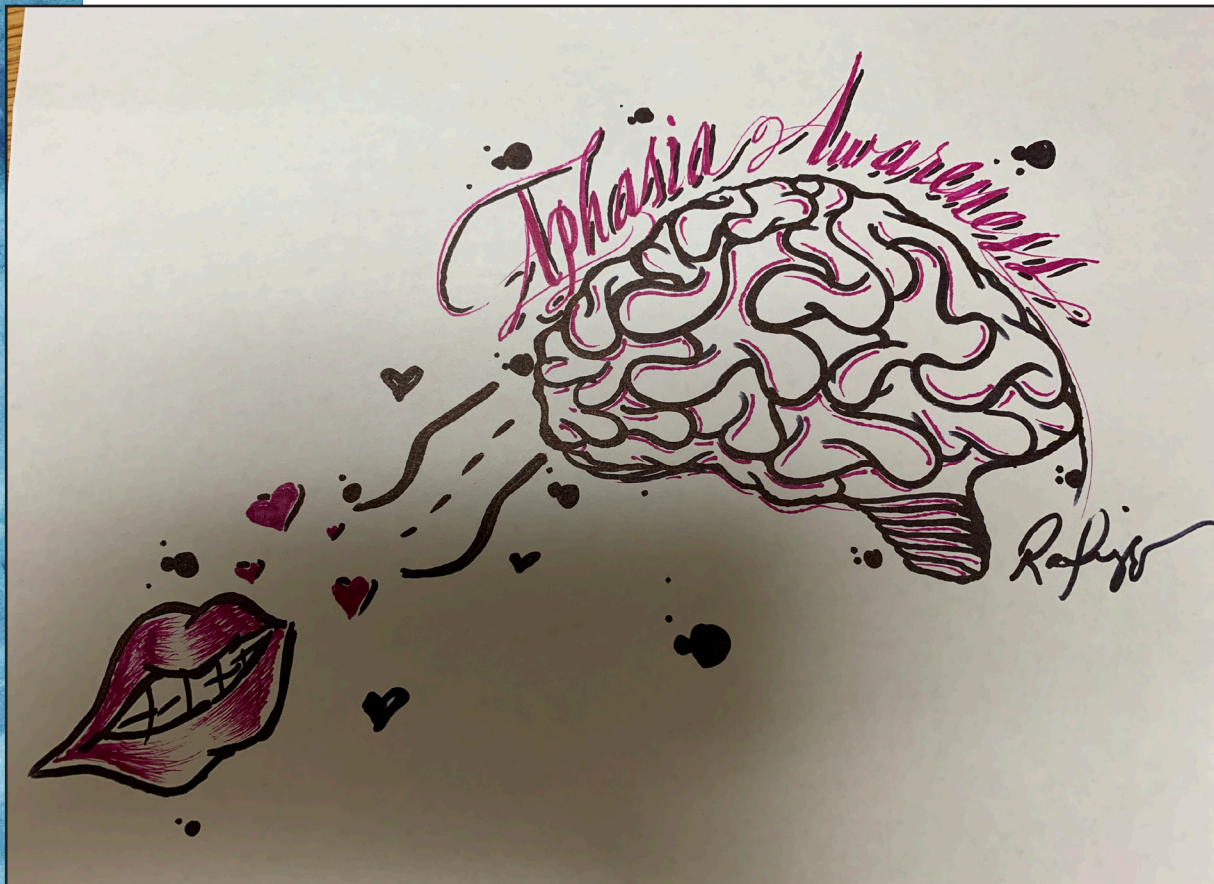
Anytime Anywhere this thing can happen to you.



Fastnet lighthouse

by Eddie Hennessy

I became a professional photographer since I got a major stroke and I learn to live with my aphasia and that helps me to think more creative, the image I submitted is by product of my stroke/aphasia



Aphasia Street

by Rafiq Abdellah

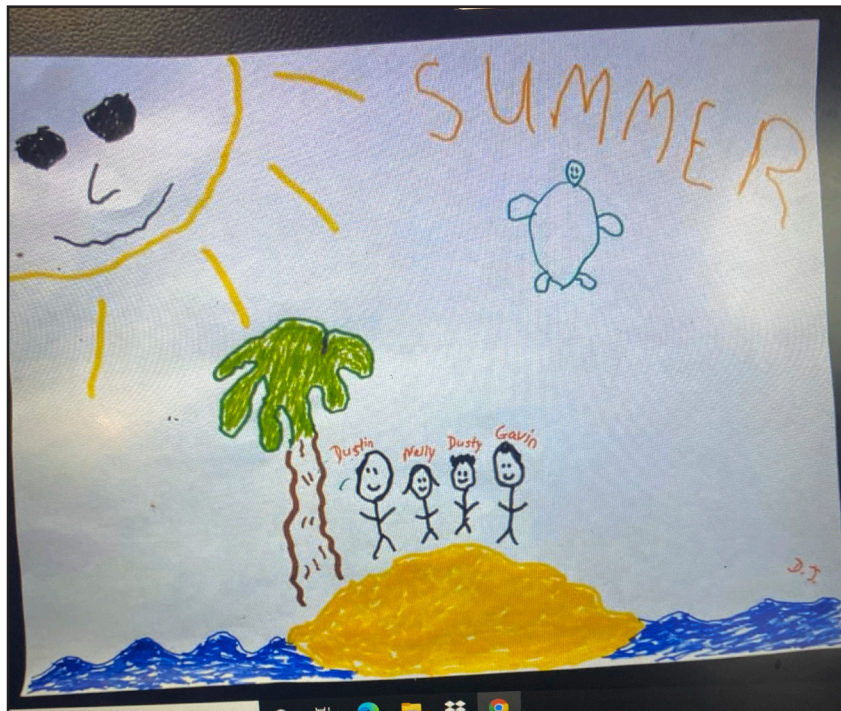
I drew it in speech therapy to spread aphasia awareness. It shows the road between the brain & the mouth and the love that travels with it.



C'mon, Cowboy Up!

by Trish Hambridge

I go to the coffeehouse.
I practiced at my home, "I want chai tea latte."
Every time I practice, it's like clockwork.
Keep telling myself, "You've got this, today."
One day I was tired, it's crowded, and noisy.
Now I feel anxious and I can't speak.
Yikes! I had the yips for aphasia.
I feel like I'm having a losing streak.
When it's hard to talk it's frustrating.
The harder you try, the more difficult it becomes
and you just spiral into being even more frustrated.
I'm not going to be glum.
Just deal with it and move on.
It's part of life, yup!
You need to turn your frustration "off" and turn your
hope "on."
C'mon, cowboy up!
Relax, visualize, be positive.
I have a plan,
I said, "I have a speech problem called aphasia."
I can do it, Batman.
You can't control your surroundings
and frustration is a part of the cards.
Have a plan and know your limits.
It's important to know what works.



SUMMER

by Dustin Jones

Help is on
the way



"My Dad"

by Dustin Jones



Zagsortiz
by Manual Ortiz



Democracy (Acrylic on Paper)

by Cindy Lam

I live in Atlanta Georgia

I developed Aphasia following brain aneurysm.

I like to paint & make origami.

I didn't paint before my stroke, which was March 2019. I enjoy painting now, and I like to give paintings to friends. It's freedom.





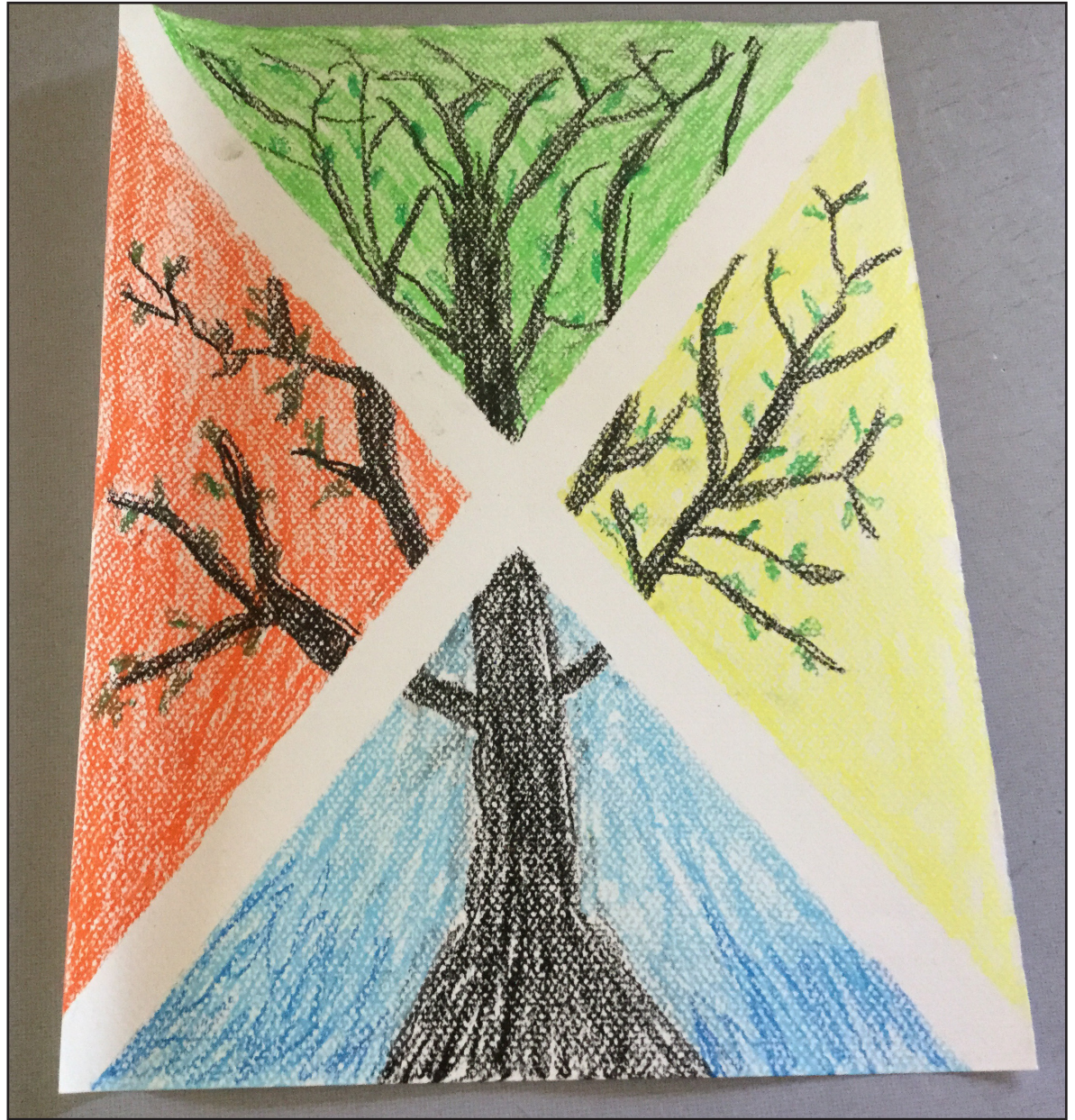
I UNDERSTAND

by Shelagh Brennand

Please don't talk to me in baby talk. It really isn't good.
Even though my words don't come out right, I can hear; I understood
Don't finish all my sentences. When you talk to me this way,
as it's clear you wish I'd hurry up so we can get on with the day.
Even though my words are jumbled, and I slur to get them out,
Inside I know what I want to say so give me time and please don't shout.
It's important for me to process what I think I want to tell.
Even though when the words are spoken, they may not come out too well.
Buckets of patience I know you'll need to help me through this time.
But please, oh please be mindful, they are not your words but mine.
I know my brain will heal but you must give me space.
Having a conversation does not need to be a race.
Sometimes I may not want to join in as my what anyone has to say.
But that's okay, I do not mind, as my brain needs a rest today.

Author: A Stroke of Poetry

I wrote this shortly after my stroke in 2013 after reading "A Stroke of Insight" by Jill Bolte-Taylor, a Canadian physicist who suffered a stroke of her own. I was inspired by how she had to learn to read again from scratch and that nobody acknowledged her because she couldn't speak.



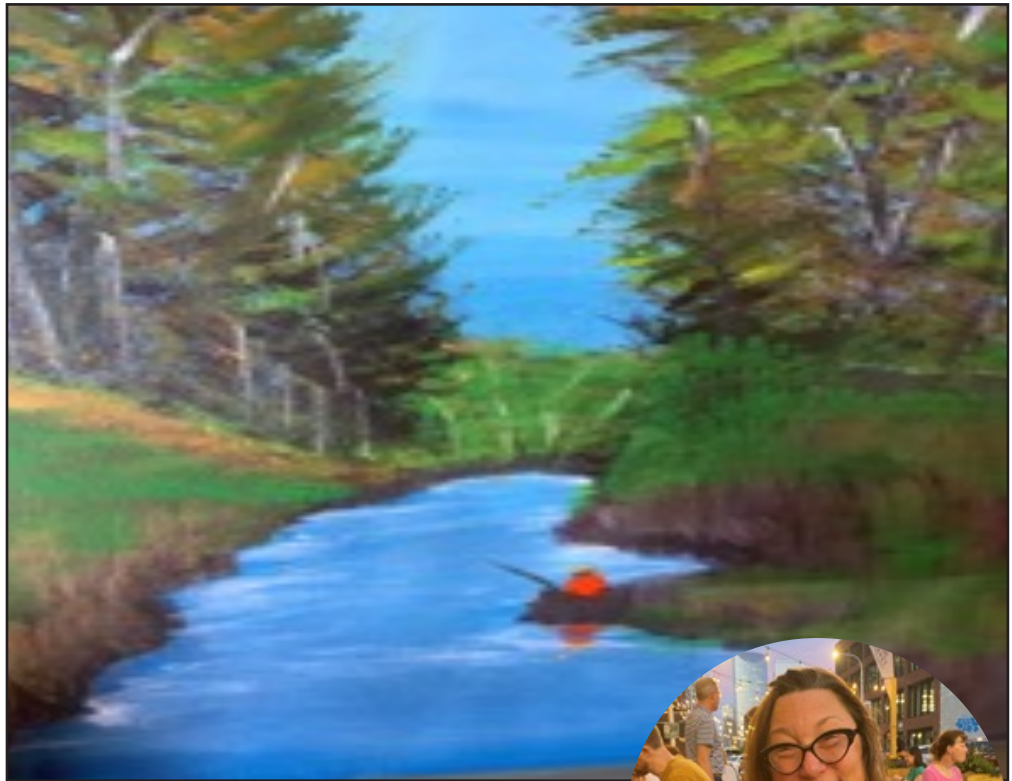
4 Seasons

by JoAnne Cloutier

I created it 1 month ago and using my left hand (I am right handed). It means that I can do art even after 3 years since my stroke.



by Carolyn Poltorak



Gone Fishin

by Rebecca Steinen

I live Jacksonville FL

I get my energy by surrounding myself with motivating and happy people.





Painting

by Elizabeth Hininger

I was diagnosed with a Stroke, Aphasia and Epilepsy I live in East Haven Connecticut. It depends on the day either I absolutely love it and I am glad to have a aphasia! All of the friends I have met along my journey inspire me to get better and better! Or I want to throw it out.

To be honest I am still to find my self after stroke ~ not only who my friends are and does not worth my while ~ and sometimes it's just scary! But I think that laughter is probably the best medicine for me right now~ laughter!!



Crayons-Canoe

A light, narrow boat ~

created colored:

of raw sienna,

of burnt orange,

of cadet blue,

pointed and no keel,

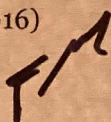
propelled with paddles

and

bitter-sweet.

Farzana Marie

(18 Sept - 6 Oct 2016)



Crayons-Canoe

by Farzana Marie

I created it in 2016. I used crayon colors named in the poem to create the image, connecting the two. The poem describes my experience in the depths of aphasia after a major stroke: trapped, unable to get out. Even today, it is a struggle to direct my words in the way I envision in my mind. The image and the poem are about being adrift far from land without the means to move closer. (My sister Katrina helped to gather these words.)




Letter to Nicodemus

By Amaryah

First breath, clear perception, a new reality, a new beginning, my spirit revived
I've never seen such rich vivid colors, an existence so exuberantly defined
Every burden and trouble, dissolved, endowed with the power for battle
I owe Jesus everything, He loved us first... I am no longer a slave to sin.

Letter to Nicodemus *by* Amaryah Tarkington

My poetry peace is an
answer to His questions



By Amaryah

Green is...

Photosynthesis, The Canopy, Creates Oxygen, Life;

Yet Also; Sewage, Slime, Mucus, Phlegm,

Infection, Infectious, Sickness, Bug, Gross

Planning for a Dream *by* Amaryah Tarkington

What green is to me.



Planning For A Dream

by Amaryah Tarkington

I cannot predict a dream... Who knows what I'll need?
I can have what I need at the speed of thought.
No need to overpack, no need to be weighed down
This dream may require agility, strength, or speed
I maybe hang gliding
Or need soft jazz, with precision, a scalpel, performing surgery
I may need the ability to breathe underwater, taking another
trip to the water kingdom
I may need the words to comfort a friend
I may need the correct diction to articulate my point
My dream may require knowledge, or the skills to prevail
My dream may necessitate keen understanding, to reason
well, or crack the riddle
Or maybe a map is needed, to find that long lost treasure
I may need intuition and swift instincts, to react and speak in
an instant...
I'll take my imagination
Yes, that's all I need
My needs fulfilled at the speed of thought
To conquer and thrive on this journey
To this most uncharted realm.

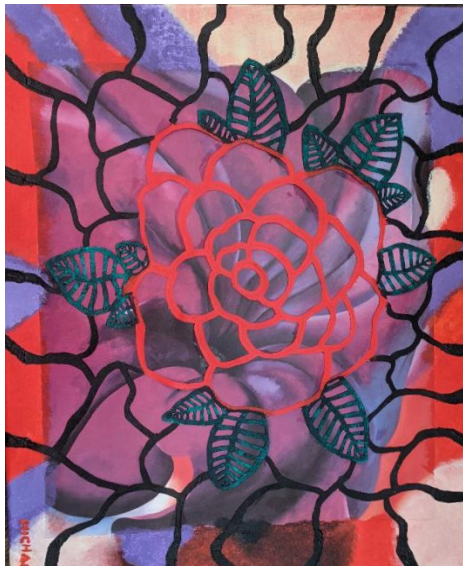


Love Conquers All

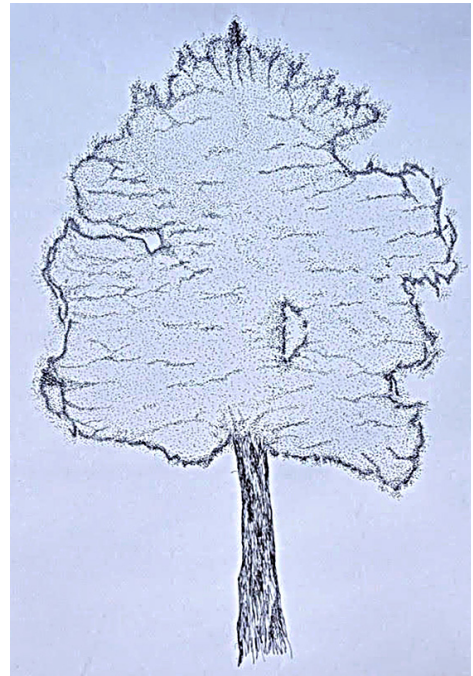
by Eric M. Chan

Love is patient
Love is kind
Love is precious
Love is selfless
Love is not showing anger
Love is not jealousy
Love is not dishonest
Love is not guaranteed
Love is protective
Love is caring
Love is unconditional
Love is believing in true friends
Love always protects
Love always trusts
Love always hopes
Love always perseveres
Love does not discriminate
Love does not spread hatred
Love does not suppress positive emotions
Last but not least, love conquers all

I have been diagnosed Corticobasal Degeneration
I live in Markham Ontario
I enjoy Exercise and diet



Papercut Flower
by Royce Morales



by Royce Morales



Portrait of my Wife in the style of Freida Kallo

by Royce Morales

The artwork I am submitting was all created in the last year, some done in the Rancho Los Amigos Adult Fine Art Program. Each piece is very personal and expresses when words won't come. My art means everything to me and flows out of me in subconscious ways.

Bio: I am a California native who now lives in the gorgeous, peaceful mountains near Lake Arrowhead. Before my ischemic stroke in 2014 that left me aphasic and with no right side movement, I was a massage therapist and also co-owned a handcrafted gallery that only sold earth friendly artwork. Although I was artistic my entire life, my talents emerged in a bigger way when I started taking art classes at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center. It was as if something re-awakened inside! I could focus for hours and creations poured out of me. I was using my non-dominant hand offering bigger challenges. My other obsession is doing incredibly difficult jigsaw puzzles, nothing less than 1000 pieces!

Poetry and Aphasia

by Rochelle M. Anderson

Wrote poetry in junior high; seasons of winter, spring, summer, fall
Metaphors and similes. Hearing, seeing, touching, smelling
Nouns and adjectives; feelings, emotions, descriptions, insights
No new poems for forty years, busy working, family

Suddenly, all by myself and alone, nobody is listening
Crying out in a deserted cave, guitar with no strings
Hospital two months, now home, what now?
Aphasia. An ostrich with a broken leg, a muzzled dog

Poetry makes my heart beat and mind soar
Old hammer, nice shoes, Lake Superior, disability problems, black poodle
Life survives and flourishes. Fresh and alive. Eating orange popsicles
Sun, stars, moon and earth. Poetry lives on

I had a stroke and subsequent
Aphasia, 2007
I live in Minnetonka Minnesota
During the pandemic I found about
five places I could write poetry. I think
it affects me differently in my brain
and it's helping me improve. I enjoy it.





Wildlife of the Boundary Waters

by Rochelle M. Anderson

Summertime. Canoeing and paddling. Boundary Waters. Beautiful, glorious
Still, quiet, silent. See the earth

Eagles soaring the sky, swooping down, talons grab fish
Wolves baying at the moon
Moose chomping plants in marshes, streams, swamps, lakes
Turtles sleeping on sunny logs, shore, eating insects

Of all the wildlife, the loon is my favorite
Loons swimming in water, suddenly dive to the bottom
Looking for food for their family, five minutes later they reappear across the lake
Black and white, with piercing red eyes, blue collar on neck
Yodeling for territory, laughing tremolo when alarmed, hoot for their family
At night, hear choruses of wailing loons
Haunting calls when family separated, chick and parent, or mates
Like folk songs, strumming guitars, and rhythmic drums

Dreaming of pristine lakes, nature thriving, spectacular world
Fall comes, birds fly south, animals prepare for winter.
All returns in the spring



Thanksgiving

by Rochelle M. Anderson

Over the river. Cold and wet
Sometimes Fall. Squash, pumpkins, gourds
Sometimes Winter. Snow, blizzards, flurries
Yearly festival of food and feasting

And through the wood. Contemplating all the animals
Worrying about orange-cloaked hunters and Bambi in Wisconsin
Cows being milked every morning in Minnesota
Laughing, joking, giggling, listening, talking

To Grandparents house we go. Waiting for guests to arrive
Women working all day. Men watching football or sleeping
Now vegan. No turkey. No wishbones. No giblets
Lasagna, Tofurky, asparagus, fruit, chickpeas, rice

Thinking about all our bountiful blessings



Solstice

by Rochelle M. Anderson

Solstice, winter

Something happening every day, starkness
Sleeping ever longer under warm down comforters
Stillness and quiet everywhere, no sound but dripping icicles
Slumbering bears, bats, hedgehogs, groundhogs
Sled careening down steep tree-studded hill
Spinning cars on wind-blown highway

Spring is showing itself around the bend

Smelling fresh, fragrant earth, bursting buds
Snakes slithering out from their long hibernation
Sunflower's yellow head peeking, red robins chirping
Slimy, squiggly earthworms, hive-making honeybees
Swimming box turtles, jumping bullfrogs
Soaking rains bring nourishment for all

Solstice, summer

Sun all day, youthful feeling in moonlight
Soccer in the evening, softball under the lights



Three Characters

by Doug G. Campbell

I am a retired Professor of Art living with aphasia. I painted this 2 years ago. I enjoy being engaged with my art even if I must now paint with my left hand. It is very difficult, but I feel joy when I paint, so I keep painting and creating art. It helps me be free in my mind.

I live in Portland, Oregon. I am Professor Emeritus of Art at George Fox University where I taught painting, printmaking, drawing and art history courses. I am also the author of *Parables Ironic and Grotesque* (2020), *Tree Story* (2018), *Turning Radius* (2017), *Seeing: When Art and Faith Intersect* (2002) and *Parktails* (2012). My poetry and artworks have been published in a number of periodicals including *Harbinger Asylum* and *Off The Coast*. My artwork is represented in collections such as The Portland Art Museum, Oregon State University, Ashforth Pacific, Inc. and George Fox University. My goal has been to make art that is engaging—art that speaks to our everyday lives in many instances. So my artwork, poems and other writings can be serious, humorous, goofy, thoughtful or some combination of the above.



Entangled. 2016.

Acrylic on canvas. Douglas G. Campbell

by Doug G. Campbell

Weakness with words

by Doug G. Campbell

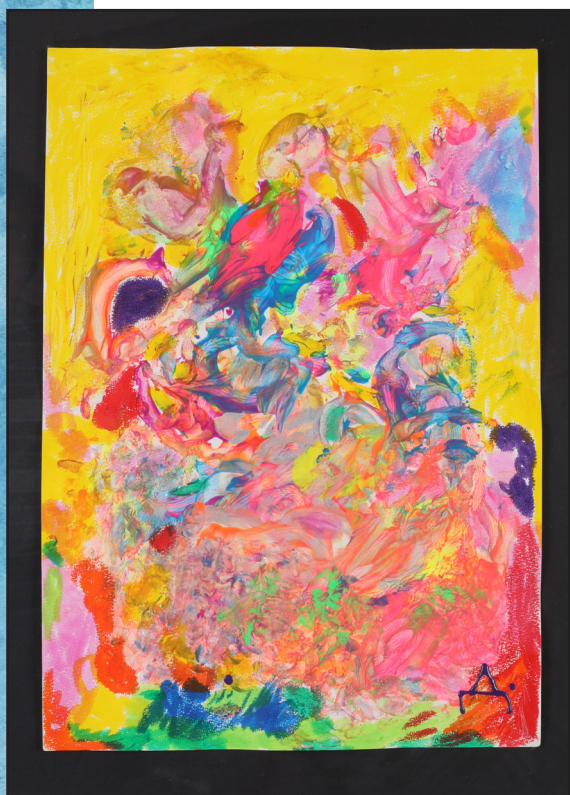
Sometimes I say things wrong
it haunts me
my communication is not
what I mean to say
I grumble
this is terrible
so appalling
my words come out
I wrote them
but they don't make any sense
the aggravation is too much
my fingers don't work
like they're supposed to
snakes crawl in and out of my mind
all this stuff leads to melancholy





by **Stroke
Association Bulgaria**





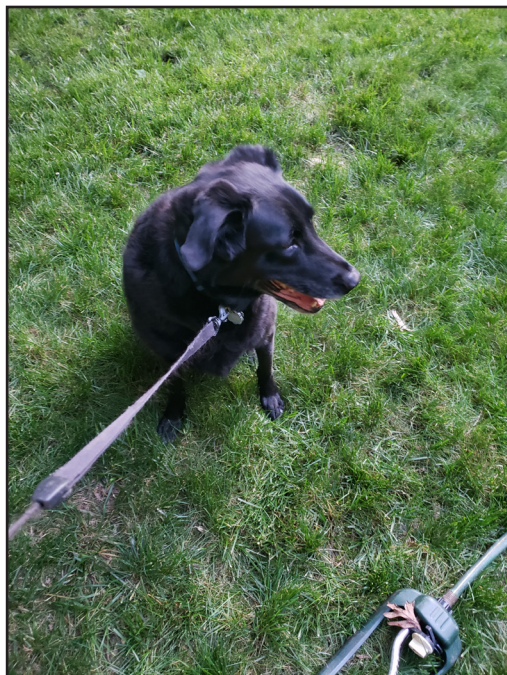
by **Stroke Association Bulgaria**



“Lake”

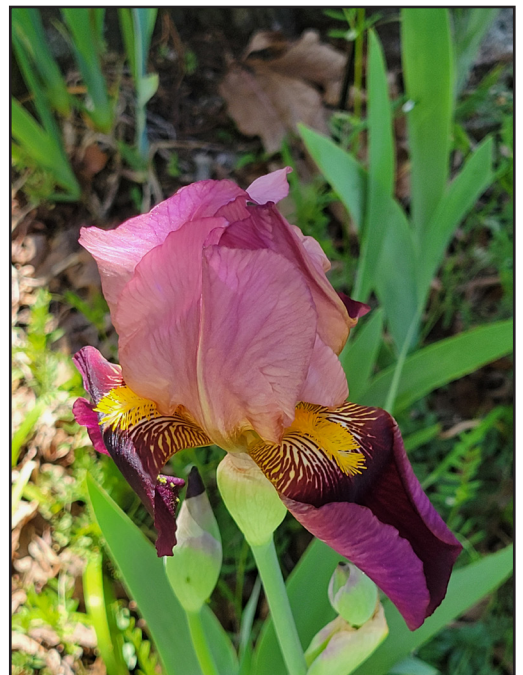
by Rick Mason

Lake, the day after days, the time of day



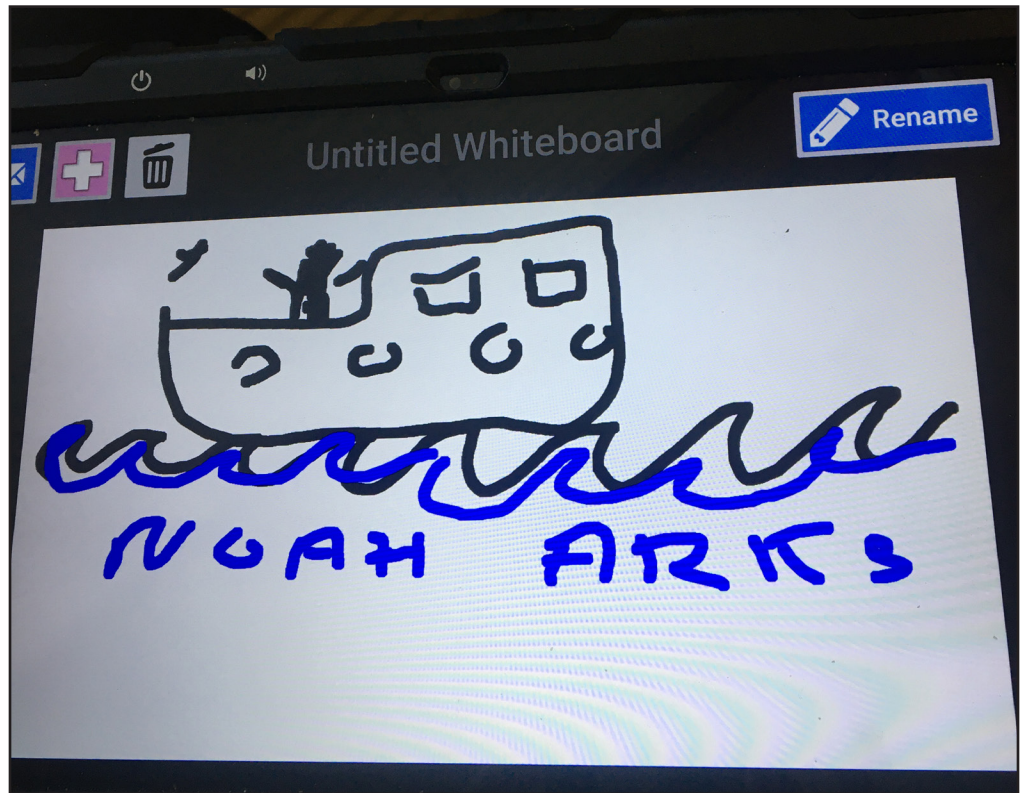
My Deigo (Dog)

by Rick Mason



“Flower”

by Rick Mason

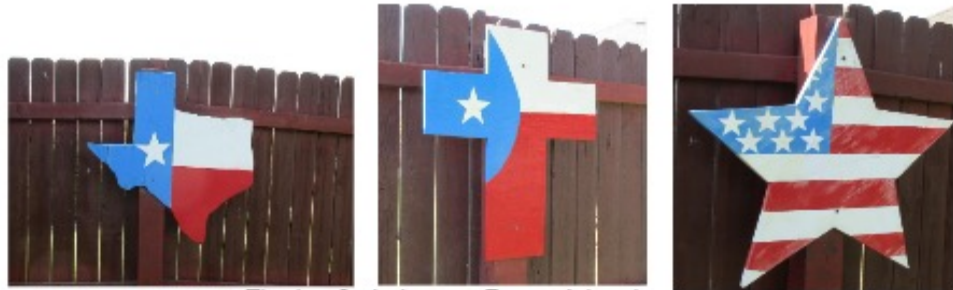


Noah's Ark

by Sylvia Darrow

2 of every kind of animal.

I love the Lord. I was a Sunday school teacher. I had a stroke in 2021 and love my device so I can communicate. It has been so encouraging to me.



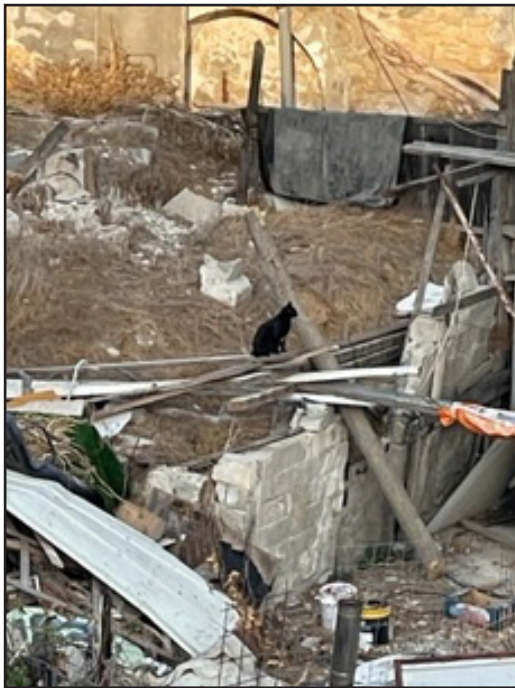
The top 3 photos are Fence Art, cut out of wood, painted and mounted on the fence in the back yard. It helps make the back yard a cheerful place.

The fourth photo is a Beverage Bar – happily used in the morning for coffee and in the evening for wine.

The last photo is a Food Transporter for hot dishes taken to church or a friend's house. You move the dowels to applicable hole to secure the dish from moving around.



by Mary Sutter



by Gail Auslander



by Dorothy Bove



“Stop and Think”

by Dorothy Bove

* take time, easily
escape, then
evaporate. take every
movement in life *



by Dorothy Bove

Bio: Ruptured
Brain Aneurysm
9.11.2000. - then
clipped, 2 weeks
later vasospasm
stroke. Learn,
Grow, Recharge



by Alan Corn



The Secret Box (for my Dad)

By: Stephanie Chatsey

November 26th, 2016


I have a secret box,
and it's hidden deep inside.
It keeps all the memories
that I like to hide.
Of you brushing my hair into a pony tail,
or us feeding the sea gulls on the balcony.
Memories that I know will never fail.

Now these memories can no longer be made.
I cry, because I miss you dearly.
I know though, that you're happier now than you were.
And so, I'm happy with all of the memories.

by Stephanie Chatsey

I wrote this piece when my Dad passed on. I created it out of sadness, and happiness. My Dad struggled in life, so that's why I was happy that he passed.

Bio: I'm from Lansing, IL. My hobbies include: singing, walking, AA meetings, and Virtual Connections, of course! My stroke was in December or 2009. I suffer from normal aphasia, and expressive aphasia.



Albany winter cloud
joy both south west,
vast ocean land barred,
our silhouette sun,
light noon dark,
smile tempest us follow
Paul Haynes
2016

by Paul Douglas-Haynes

“Remembering the historical importance and my contribution to covering news and life in the area.”

Bio: Paul is 69 years old, living in Ballarat, who began his career as an investigative journalist, later becoming an award-winning journalist on the Albany Advertiser and sub-editor working for the Herald Sun newspaper. He has been married to Joan for 45 years, we have six children and thirteen grandchildren which makes a full and happy life. Just over six and a half years ago Paul suffered a stroke which affected his receptive and expressive language skills. Writing had been Paul's life! Being a journalist, self-producing a book on Amazon; he also produced a book for the University of Ballarat on the history of the School of Mines. Paul was able to produce a short poem on Albany where we lived in WA, within the first year after stroke. He reflects it took him a lot longer than it would have previously and was much more difficult, but he was able to complete it. He enjoys the peer support, friendship and the rehabilitation he finds in being in the Chatterbox Choir of Ballarat; reading, walking and watching his beloved Melbourne football club win!!!! When asked about his feelings now six and a half years later, he shakes his head and says, that it has always been the inability to verbalise the most frustrating of all. He is more confident in communicating with others now and as a family we constantly admire the way he keeps on going! Sure it is a challenge for us all, we laugh we cry and we get frustrated but hey doesn't everyone! Paul's goal is to keep doing what he's doing until he can do it even better than now!



**Purple Crown -
Chakra**
by Kania Kennedy

Kania No Hearts
by Kania Kennedy

I do stuff because
I love them but no
heart no





by Kania Kennedy

Bio: Detroit, MI, Engineering, Duke University, BSE Minister Wellness, Unity Urban Ministerial School Diva Dance, CEO Diva Makeover , CEO TechnoDiva, CEO Smart Sista, CEO, Yoga, Belly Dance, Meditation, Photos, Roller Skate, Drums, Plants/ Garden, Books (audio), Movies, Cosplay, Kickboxing, Jewelry, Piano, Snowboard, Travel

The Only Light

I tiptoe and creek through the blackest night in my restless mind
The only nightlight was found in the haunted and ominous shadow
Alone, I hid behind the corner hugging my knees and my fears
trembling and crying
Who is taunting and surrounding the darkness of my thoughts?
You are watching me but I will never know
The shadow monster is laughing and mocking me
It's an illusion, I'll just close my sightless eyes

The birds begin chirping and it give me gracious hope
Until the sun rises I will form a bright light, my peaceful thoughts
revive inside of me
The monster will be taken away,
For the light that gives me endowment will dry my tears

But inescapably ... he will shake my hand for another dark night



by Jenn Derry

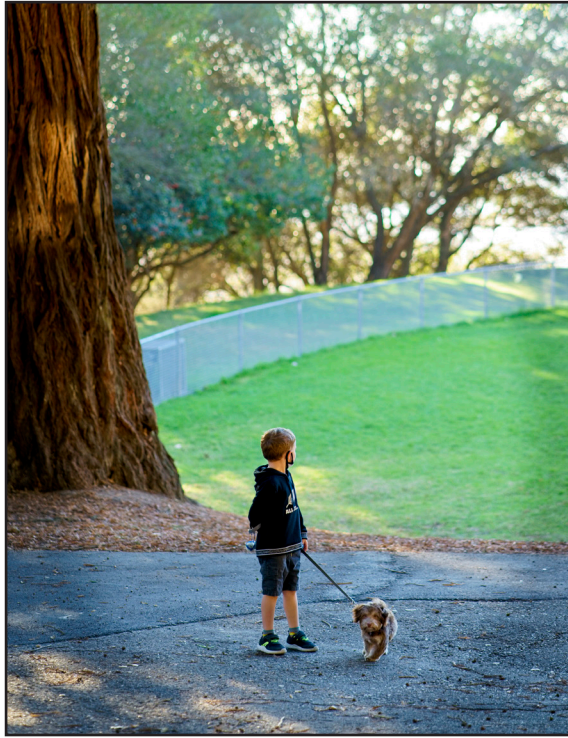
* Before my stroke I never painted and wanted to find a way to express myself. It became my therapy, I felt bottled up in my head, I couldn't write a journal, I couldn't read, speak and couldn't understand, so painting became my journal. * A few years after painting I wrote my poem "The Only Light" written about my first painting "Isolated" sitting on the floor in the dark painting.

Bio: The day May 9, 2016 I suffered a stroke I had an ischemic and hemorrhage stroke on the left side of my brain I had a craniotomy to remove the entire left side of my skull, my left of my physical weakness, low vision, get seizures and have global aphasia. I was young, my son was only 14 months old, I couldn't sing my baby a lullaby, read him a bedtime story and I could not say "I love you". I couldn't spell my name and couldn't understand my alphabet A-Z or even count 1 to 10. But I don't know why I had a stroke and I don't know why I have Aphasia. I think that it might be because I was misdiagnosed with colitis for 30 years and when I was hospitalized I was diagnosed with Crohn's. So they think my Crohn's may have caused the clot that caused my stroke. My hobbies now are painting, poem, read books and enjoy with book clubs, garden, speech therapies continue improve my language and most important I take time with my family.





by Veronika Cervenka



by Jason Harrison



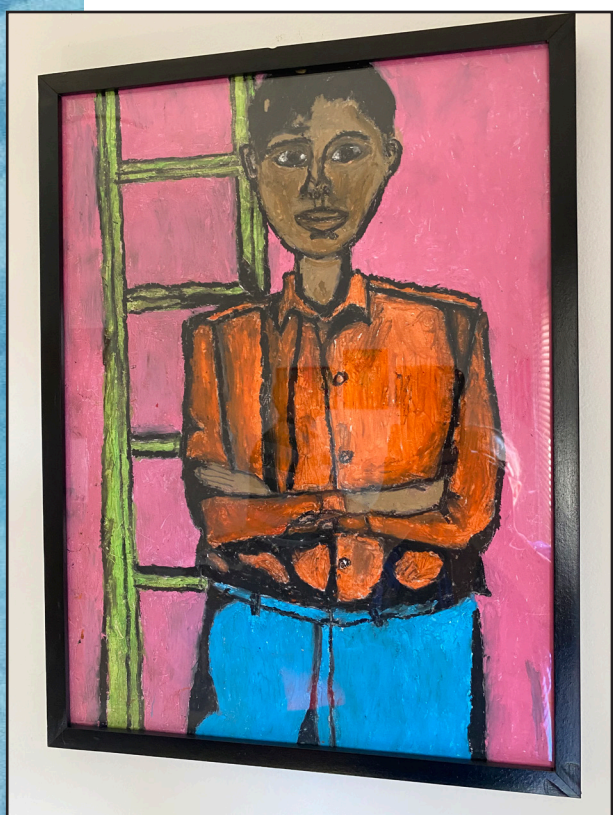
by RoJo



by Paul Gallagher



by Chaim Kohl





by Chaim Kohl





What Is In My Heart?

by Cynthia Pearson

There is a fresh flame in my inner spirit.
The deep, bold, confident faith is within.

What's in My Heart?

Unlock the bolts of fear, doubts and insecure thoughts.
I am a human,
I hide the masks.
It's true, I am not perfect.

What's in My Heart?

I hear the gentle whisper voice,
You are not Alone!
Refocus and Believe it.

What's in My Heart?

The promises are there: Love is there, Provision,
Protection, Sustaining, and Fulfillment.
So, I Rise up and now
I Go!
That's in My Heart!

Where Did She Go? Aphasia

by Mark Harder

Where did Ann go? But they didn't look high or low.
Where's Patrick now? They didn't see him wave or bow.
Where did Hope go? She is lost like a Miss Doe.
Where's Alan now? Oh No! What happened and how?
Where did Sue go? Any details? Do you know?
Where's Ian now? No one even raised a brow.
Where did Ash go? But I think I saw her though.
Where's my friends now? It's like a ghost town, oh wow!

Ann, Patrick, Hope, Alan, Sue, Ian, and Ash.
They've something in common but not the same set.
It could've been a stroke or maybe was a crash.
A tumor, disease, or PPA can threat.
Some needed stitches and some not even a rash.
Some can't write or read and words they just can't get.
Some can't use their arms and some need more RAM cache.
Everyday people lost their voices and yet,

Gabby Giffords, Kirk Douglas, Glen Campbell,
Sharon Stone, Terry Jones, Emilia Clarke,
Michael Hayden, Randy Travis - bombshell!
Only 3 of 10 know, let's kindle a spark.
So be an Aphasia Awareness Rebel.
Life's a new adventure, ready to embark.
Ann, Pat, Hope, Al, Sue, Ian, Ash - raise hell!
Practice self-advocacy with words to mark.

11/12/20



Christmas Wrapping Paper

by Mark Harder

A toy, a sport, and a game.
The word I can't name.

It's long, it's thin, like a "J".
And yep, that's a nay.

Hold it and hit with something.
And I've got nothing.

It's hard, fiber or wooden.
Find a word I couldn't.

Stop it, shoot it or sweep it.
Forgot, can't keep it.

It's cold, inside or outside.
And you know I tried.

Finally got a right click.
It's a hockey stick.

Yes, I get frustrated.
Something I hated.

But my focus needs to shift.
Every word's a gift.

12/7/20



APHASIA

by Regina E. Messina

As I sit here silently, I feel the isolation,
It takes its toll on me and there is no conversation.
What seems like a day to me, can be a thousands years or more.
I am aware of things around me but can't say my name any more.
It seems like just a little thing but nothing is the same.
The look on people's faces when they hear what I'm dealing with day by day.
Their eyes show the shock and sadness but they don't know what to say.
I will face each day with courage knowing there is still hope in my heart.
And take each new sunrise as it comes and do the best I am able to do.
Accepting the strength and grace, that is showered on me from above.
Knowing that someone else could use some encouragement with love.
So I share a kind word by writing to them to hopefully brighten their day,
And pray this journey will help someone else along the way.
We are created by Father God with a special purpose in mind.
And our life is worth the living until God calls us home in His time.

4-20-2022



by Laura Webb





by Bryon Motley



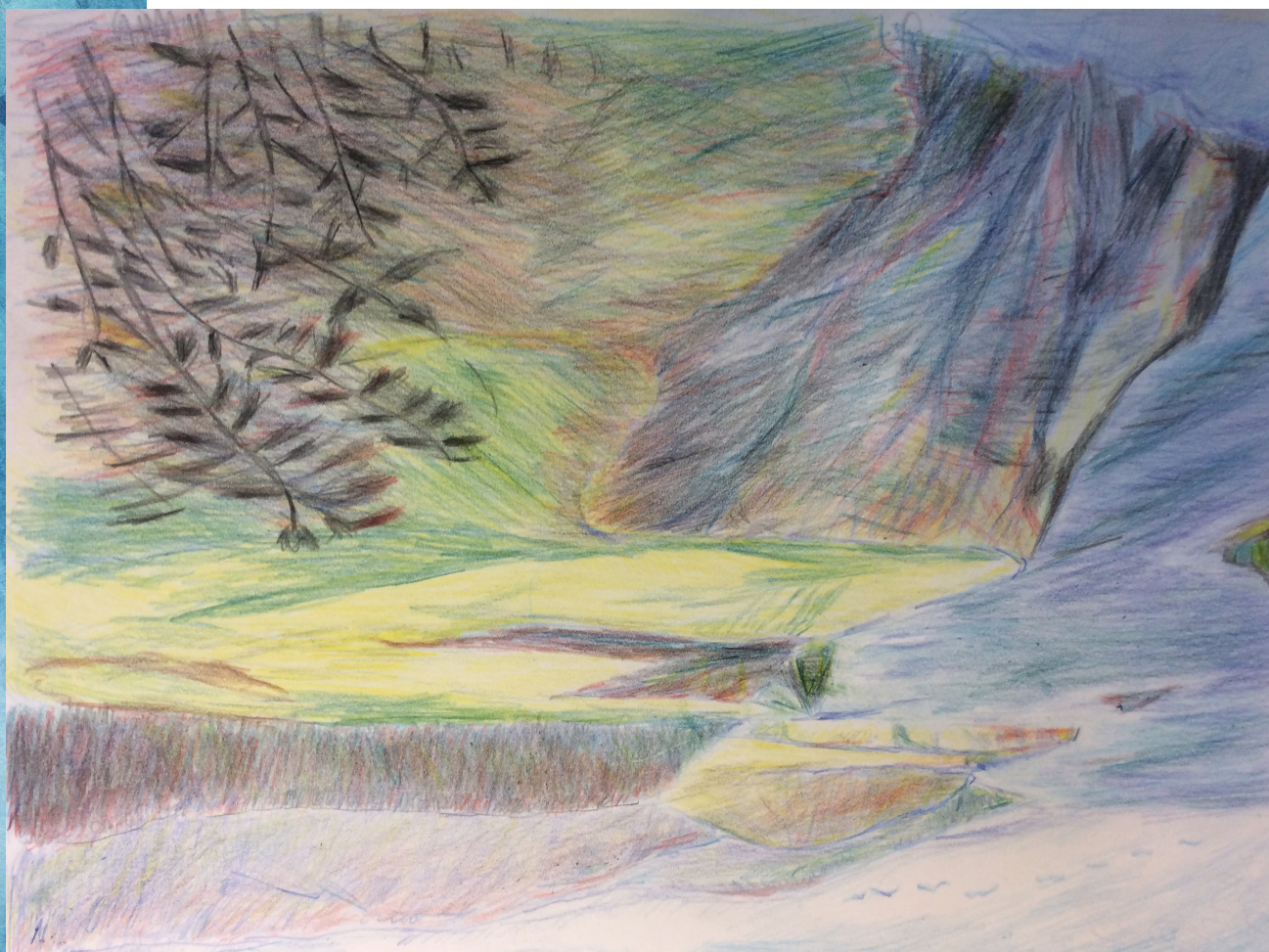
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