

The Loom

A Creative Arts Journal by Patients, Families, Caregivers and Staff
The Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute



Fall 2014



Mount
Sinai

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4 *Central Park, Joan Long*

Introduction

I am delighted to introduce this inaugural issue of “The Loom.” As you leaf through these pages, you will find wonderful poetry and beautiful art work created by patients and families in the Creative Arts Therapy Program of the Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute.

Palliative Care provides the best possible quality of life for patients and their families who are confronted by a serious illness. Our interdisciplinary team offers an added layer of physical, psychosocial, spiritual, and emotional support for patients and their families at any age, at any stage of illness, and simultaneously with other medical treatments.

Our focus in palliative care is on healing the whole person – mind, body, and spirit. Whereas we know that the beauty, peace, quiet, privacy and specially trained clinical staff of the Wiener Family Palliative Care Unit at Mount Sinai Hospital promote healing, we also realize that the healing of the soul and spirit often cannot happen without the words and images that our Arts Therapy Program helps patients and families create. By sharing these images and words, we hope to form a community of caring with all of you. I hope you find meaning and solace in the pages ahead and join with me in thanking and honoring the artists and writers who agreed to share their work with us.

R. Sean Morrison, MD, Director
Lilian and Benjamin Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute



Letter form the Editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to “The Loom”, a creative arts magazine whose mission is to preserve, connect, honor and remember the creativity, lives and stories of the Palliative Care community at Mount Sinai Hospital.

The artwork and poetry in “The Loom” were created by the Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute’s patients, families, caregivers and staff who participated in creative arts therapy during the patient’s hospitalization.

Like a Loom that weaves a unique tapestry, this magazine interlaces threads of strength, struggle and love into one single fabric. Our many contributors include a five year old child who painted with watercolors for the first time, a young adult who found peace in drawing nature, and an elderly women who wrote poetry to express gratitude for the care she received. My hope is that you enjoy the depth of these works individually and as a collection, that they inspire you in some way, that they help you remember.

In “Ways of Seeing”, John Berger writes: “Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak... Soon after we can see, we are aware that we can also be seen.” My thanks to all of those who contributed their work to “The Loom”, whose courage to be seen has made this magazine a reality.

With gratitude,
Sarah Yazdian, ATR-BC, LCAT, Editor-in-Chief
Child Life and Creative Arts Therapy Department





The Blue Period, Shannon Finucane 9

UNTITLED

I'm in the infinity of darkness
where I'm just standing on
the middle of nothing
but there is something—

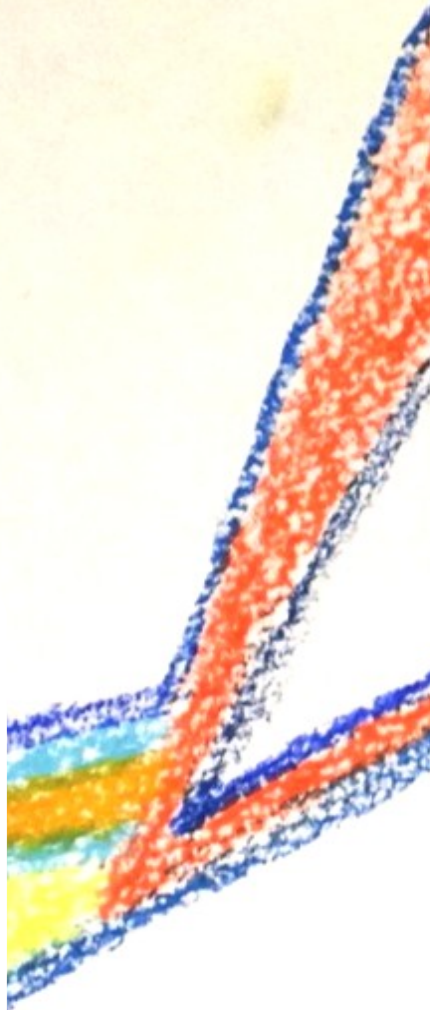
glowing lights and appearing is
his name: God. Yet when
you see God, you can't
picture a face, once he appears
the light is so bright

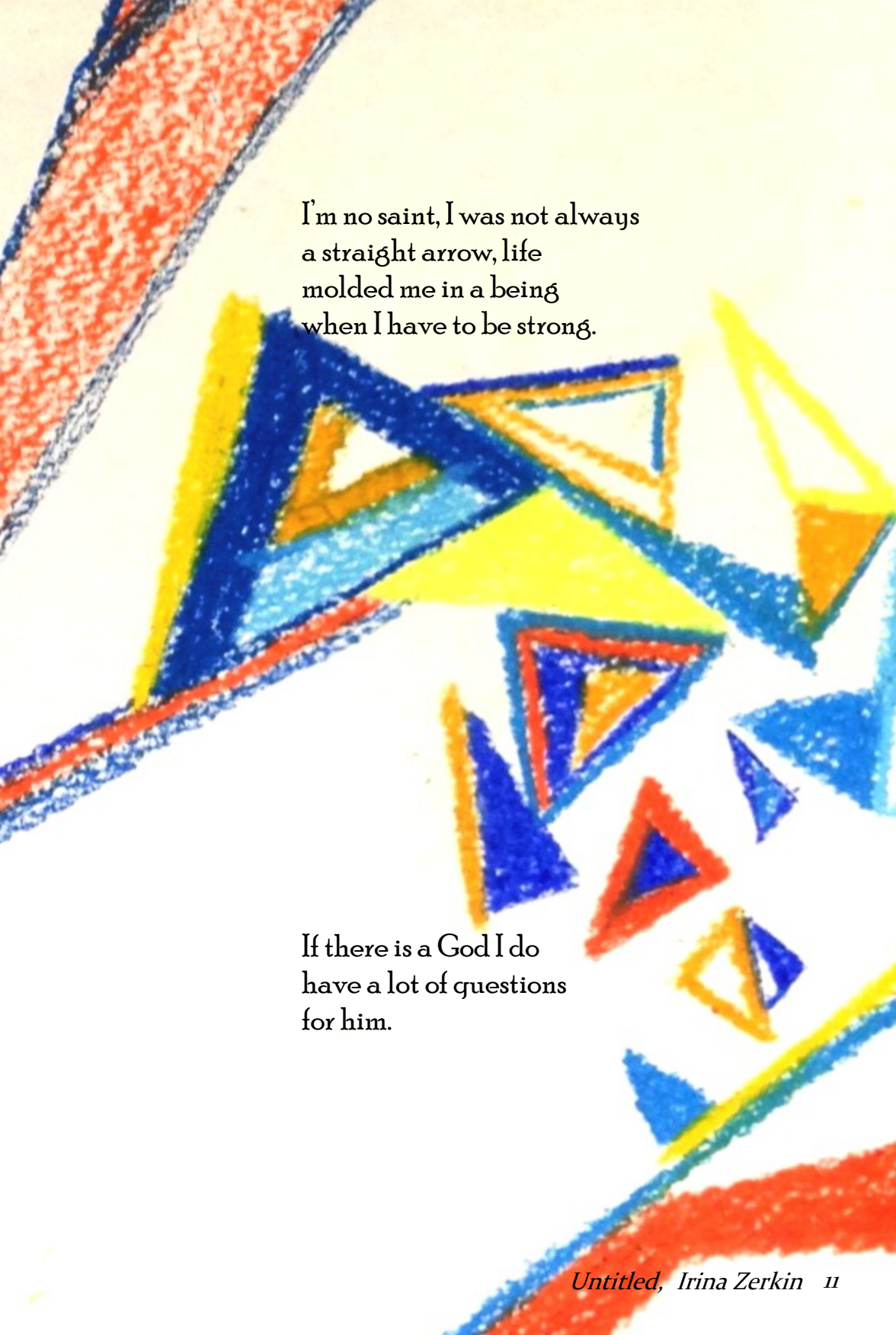
you see nothing. You hear
nothing but a deep voice—

And he talks in riddle
whatever you ask him
he leaves you open-ended
because God like to play
the mysterious card.

He wants you to figure out
for yourself, maybe even if you die.

I ask God,
“Why was I chosen to walk this path?”



An abstract geometric drawing composed of various triangles and lines. The colors used are red, blue, yellow, and orange. The lines are thick and textured, suggesting they were drawn with markers or crayons. The composition is dynamic, with shapes overlapping and creating a sense of movement. A large red shape is visible in the top left corner, and a yellow shape is in the top right. The background is white.

I'm no saint, I was not always
a straight arrow, life
molded me in a being
when I have to be strong.

If there is a God I do
have a lot of questions
for him.





GOING HOME

What is home like?
Being home is very nice
Spacious, I have two floors
It's bright
It's sunny

I love to be in my kitchen
To cook
It's one of my favorite things to do
When I'm home
I can play music that I like
On the radio

When I'm home, I feel good
Very good
Secure
Comfortable
I live by myself

My home is for me









FEBRUARY 25, 2014

I still like to water my roses,
I appreciate high levels of delicacy,
it takes a lot of hard work,
strenuous details, the center balance
of delicacy. A lot of love
a lot of close supervision
to keep that balance
just like waxing a car
after the detail, it shines up like no other
a lot of laboring, the scratch removal,
the touch-up painting, intensified cleansing,
you're making him feel like he's peeling out
of a dead skin, all these maneuvers
requires delicacy and subtlety in movements,
eye movements, hand movement, emotions,
the motions, commotion, with extra lotion,
that's the magic potion
to stop from being corrosion,
finally the explosion
of exposure of the fine work
in the end, I still like to water my roses.

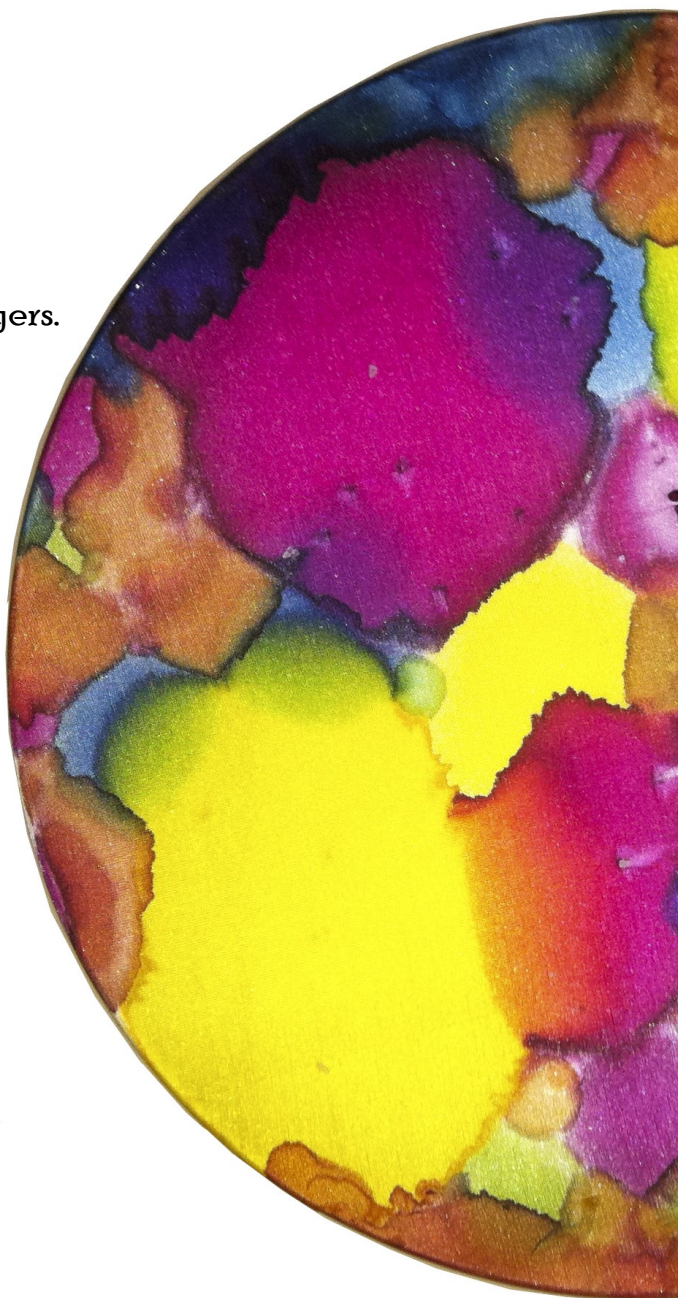
CANCER PAIN

Cancer pain
It's beatin' up on me

Like a hammer,
Like a hammer.

I can only fight with prayers.

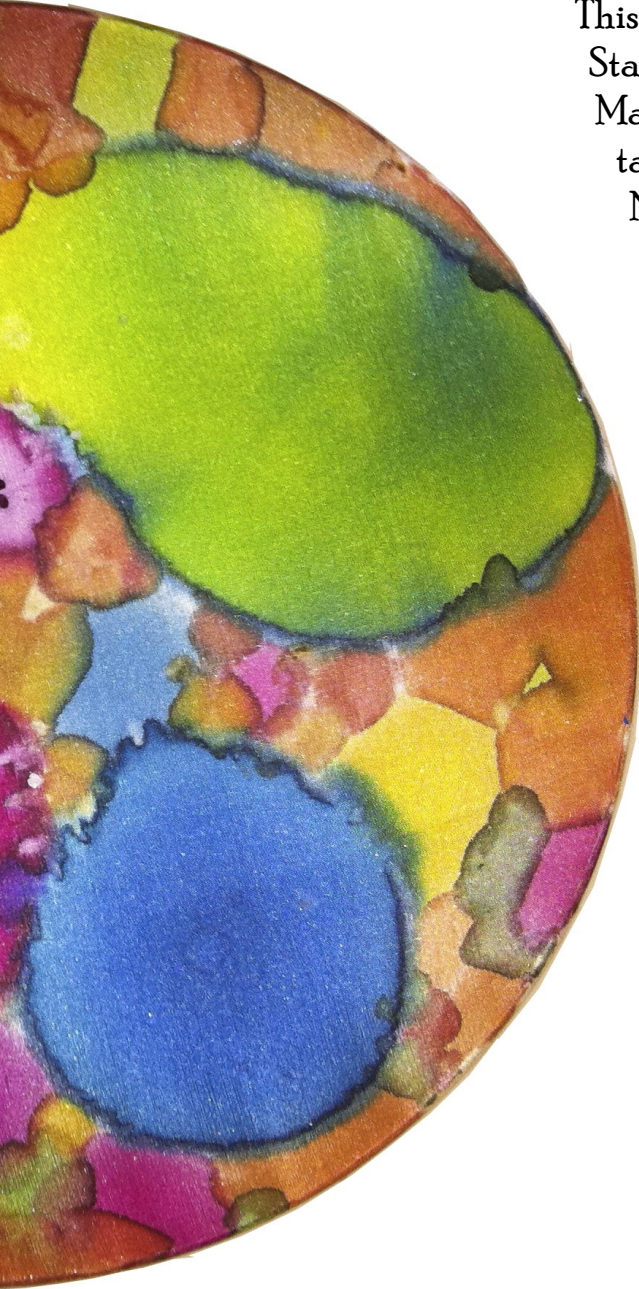
God is the only one
In my world of pain
That can help me.



FOR MY MOTHER

This is her
Standing tall
Majestic, strong, standing
tall, beautiful
No matter rain, snow, wind
She still stands tall

This is her.













A photograph of pink cherry blossoms on dark branches against a light blue sky. The blossoms are in various stages of bloom, with some fully open and others as buds. The branches are dark and silhouetted against the sky.

Dear Sade,

I want to thank you
For your extra support
Love
And kindness
That you take time to
Show me
And my family

I appreciate all of it

I am very, very grateful

May God continue to reach out
And bless you
And your family.

Love always,
Gail

ZEEV

I saw a man today
lifted on a cloud of music—
A gossamer tarp of sounds
and vibrations

He shook
all crazy
and happy

Beatific upon
an armless chair
limbs in constant motion

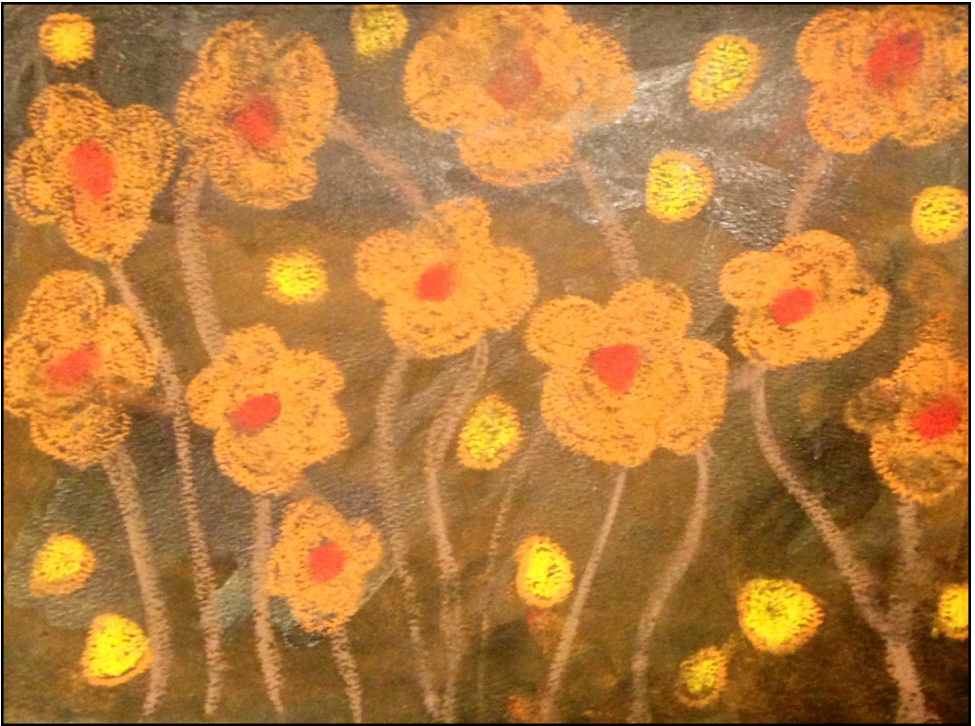
The man sat dying
hands and feet
puffy and thick--
sclerodermic

Yet joy reverberated
laughing, dancing shakes
induced by beating drums

Shake-charmer
disembodied by music
electrified nerves

Both his and ours
sitting witness on the floor
tangled death and liberation

Seismic shaking
his brand of dance
laughing, dancing shakes
revealed a cosmic song



THE HAPPIEST DAY OF MY LIFE

When I feel like I'm gonna die
I go back to when I was five

My parents were together then
We were in a house

My dad was drinkin' egg-nog
My mom, drinkin' water coffee
I was eatin' cold cereal, watching cartoons

My grandparents were there
Recording us as we opened up the presents

And I can't believe my Daddy died that year, too

I don't know why I go back to when I was five,
Somewhere happy
Safe
Maybe it was a sacred time
And that's why I go there~ the happiest day of my life

You know those days ain't gonna come again.





A SONG FROM SOMEBODY FIGHTING FOR THEIR LIFE

I'm strugglin' to stay alive
for my children
and my grandchildren

That's who I'm tryin' to stay alive for

My hope and trust is in the Lord
Only he know the outcome of my life
So He is all in control
My life depends on Him

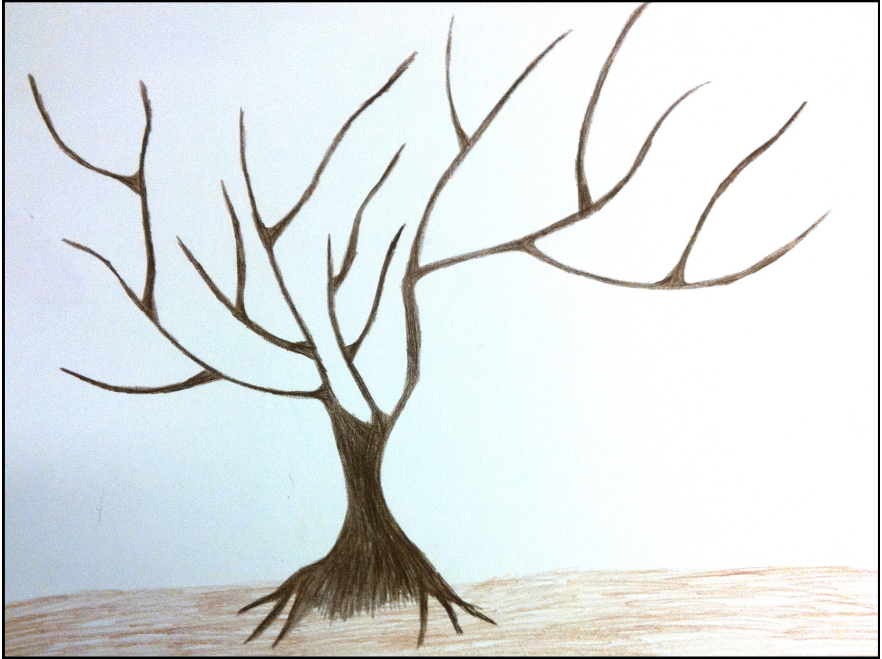
Without God, I can't make it
I am dependin' on him to reach out and
heal my body
and to stop cancer from beatin' up on me

He has the power
He has the authority
To work a miracle
In my life









GREG

Let me tell you about Greg
First off, he loved crack more than he
loved me

When I was eight and a half months
pregnant
I heard some sad news

My baby had died inside me
And I would have to birth a dead baby

That's the moment that Greg left me
I was in labor for thirteen hours, alone

I kept thinking
And breathing
And thinking

I would never hear my baby cry
I would never see my baby smile
I would never put clothes on my baby

My mama helped me bury my child





40 *Untitled, Natalia Barsky*





42 *A Screen Print of My Father's Tattoo, Julie Butkovic*

THE TRUTH

My throat is like sandpaper
Water don't taste like nothing no more
Nothing
The pain on my cord is tolerable
But when it reaches my shoulder blade
that's it
cold sweats
shaking
heartburn
nerves hitting pressure points
that's it
bruises everywhere
marks from IVs
Here we go again feeling drowsy again
Not sleeping
Not awake
I am no poet
This is the truth







POEM FOR MY FRIENDS IN THE HOSPITAL

Today
July the 26th
Is a happy day for me.

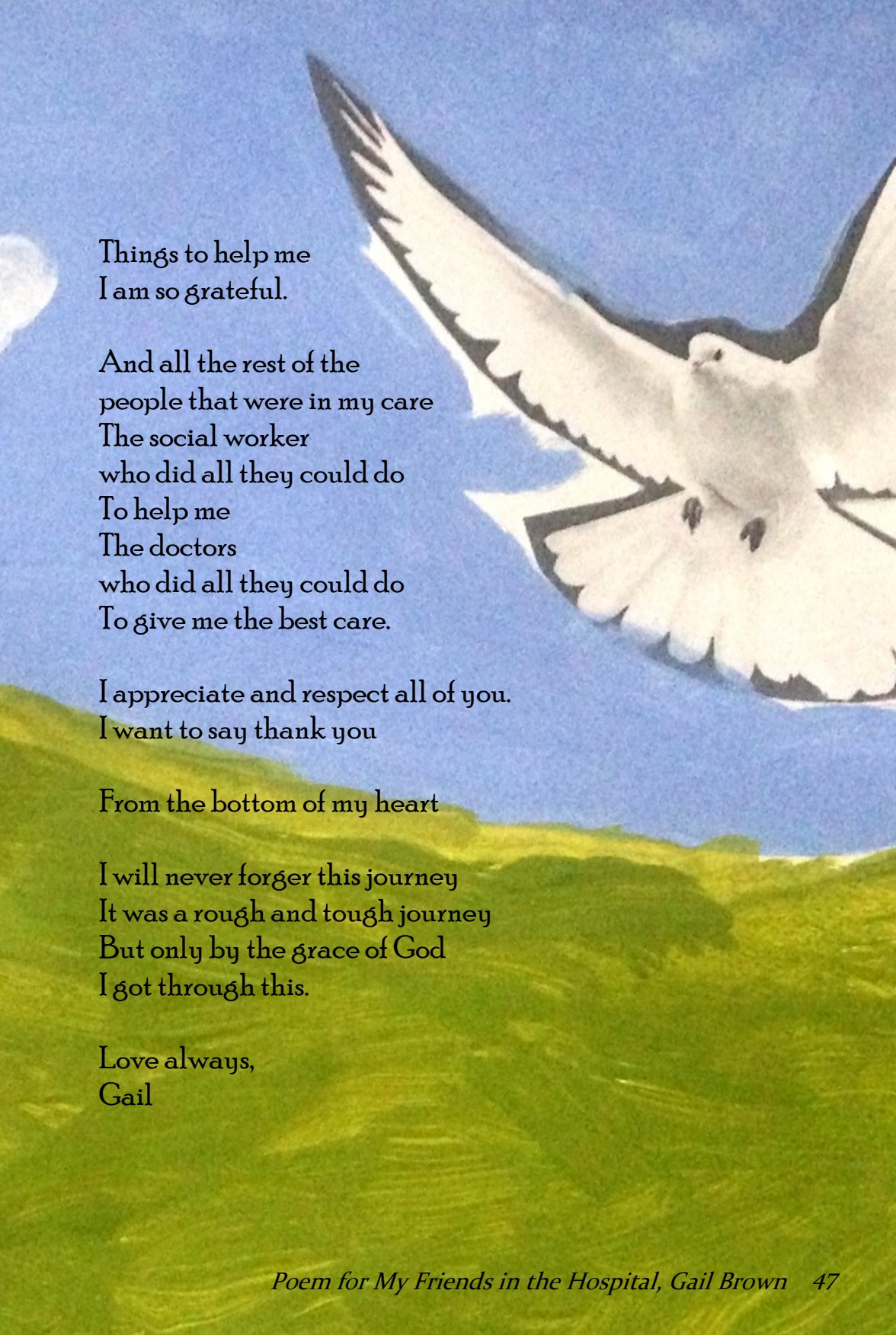
I give God all the praise for this day.

I was getting discharged from the hospital
That I spent two months of my life in.

During that time I got to make
new friends
With the nurses
The art therapist, which is
Sarah Yazdian
Who I grew to respect
And love.

And all the other teams
Palliative Care
Barbara, the volunteer
JD.

Julia, who fought for me to get
out of here
Doin' all she could do for me

A white dove is shown in flight, its wings spread wide, against a clear blue sky. The dove is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the page. Below the sky, there is a green, rolling landscape. In the upper left corner, a white, crescent-shaped moon is visible. The overall scene is peaceful and symbolic.

Things to help me
I am so grateful.

And all the rest of the
people that were in my care
The social worker
who did all they could do
To help me
The doctors
who did all they could do
To give me the best care.

I appreciate and respect all of you.
I want to say thank you

From the bottom of my heart

I will never forget this journey
It was a rough and tough journey
But only by the grace of God
I got through this.

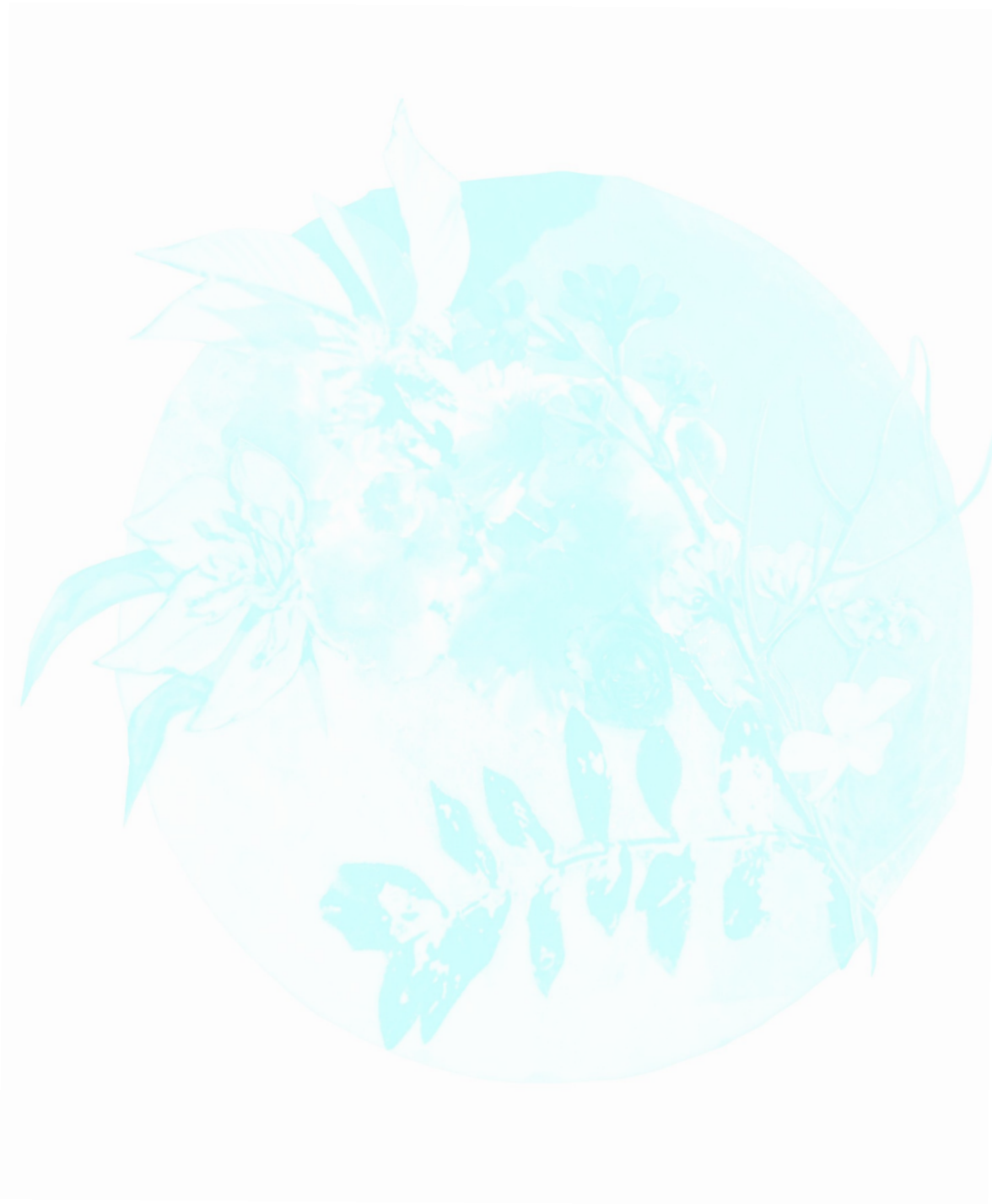
Love always,
Gail



Creative Arts Therapy is the therapeutic use of art making by people who experience illness, trauma, or other challenges. Through the creative arts process, patients, families, and caregivers may express, reflect upon and cope with uncertainty, stress, pain and loss.



The Creative Arts Therapy Program at the Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute is generously supported by donor funding. For more information about the Creative Arts Therapy program at the Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute and to inquire about submissions to “The Loom”, please contact : Sarah.Yazdian@mountsinai.org



Back Cover: Untitled, Dionne McLaughlin

