

Spring 2016 #1

Thrive True

wishful thinking? absolutely!



*may we
thrive in
harmony
in both
darkness & light*

#celebratinglife&nature #reverence&delight #serenitynow #soulfood

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thrive true

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Letter from Founder & Co-Creator:
Julia Osterc

Ahhh.... Welcome dear delightful being... to the very first offering of the *thrive true* e-zine! I am so grateful for the vision to put this together and opportunity to share this with you. Something keeps whispering these wild big ideas and dreams in my head, heart, and soul for this amazing, mysterious life and world and I'm glad to have kindred spirits around on this journey!

I'm re-visioning, re-opening, and re-connecting with intentions that felt too big and overwhelming in the past. Recently, it felt like something inside shifted to finally say, "Holy Yes!" (even though I couldn't imagine how) to the call to encourage people (especially myself and my kiddos) to live with intention, imagine and choose a world where we can all thrive in harmony. I'm passionately dreaming and working on a brand new website (thrivetrue.com), along with a new monthly Thrivalist online course offering (a wishful version of the 'revivals' so popular here where I live in the South) full of soul food to nourish and nurture a flourishing community... kind of a modern 'medicine/wisdom school' of sorts... for the co-creative spirits inside each of us. ♡

It feels huge to attempt this amidst a blessedly full life. Yet, that is what enables us to experience all that we have to share with each other... the stories, the exploring and experimenting, finding ways to squeeze the sweetest juice out of this bittersweet life, and breathe in the deep blessings and beauty right here and now.... Celebrating life and nature with reverence and delight... Inviting loving guidance into our presence... Thriving in tune with our true selves and nature.

Thank you for choosing to accept the gift of this e-zine offering (I genuinely hope that's what it is) and spend a bit of your sacred time in this way. May the following pages bring sweet, gentle smiles and feed the soul with good medicine.

Thrive True, Julia (aka Jules/Jewels)

PS—The phone rang as I typed the closing words above and I learned that my Grammie, who is in her 90s and was on her way here to visit, was in the hospital near my uncle's home. I'm reminded that I'm not trying to put the most polished, 'professional' e-zine or offerings out there, but ones that are full of life... all the ups and downs, detours, kids in the room, and to-do's that are life.

♡ ♡ ♡ *Wishful Thinker? Holy Yes!* ♡ ♡ ♡

Inspired by nature... scattering blessings, wishes, hopes, and dreams like wildflower seeds. May we thrive true together in harmony. ♡

You can subscribe to the free Thrivalist Newsletter and this seasonal *Thrive True* e-zine, from the website at thrivetrue.com and thrive with me. ♡



Contents... *Yes, there's Treasure Within!*

Yay! The very first seasonal offering of the *thrive true* e-zine is here! I imagine it will grow and evolve quite a bit over time from this introductory issue and I hope you'll enjoy the unfolding! I recently read these words from Clarissa Pinkola Estes in her book, *Women who run with the Wolves*: "Remember, we say that a flower is blooming whether it is in half, three-quarters, or full bloom." I swear it felt that those words were meant just for me in that magic moment! It was like the divine cheering on these wild wishes, hopes, and dreams to be shared in whatever stage of blooming is natural here and now. So, here's what I'm able to offer right now, choosing to publish this in a very short time to celebrate Earth Day, Mother Nature, and Thriving in Harmony. Future offerings may have more or less pages, contributors, embellishments, etc., depending on the season and flow of inspiration, connections, abilities, and energy. If you'd like to collaborate and contribute in the future, you can learn more about what is needed at: thrivetrue.com/cocreate. Let's thrive! *Julia*

Now, on to the juicy sweetness and beautiful blooms in this first offering... Woo-hoo!



Art pictured above by Corinna Maggy

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Marvelous Mandalas, Energy, and Intentions with intuitive artist and energy worker, Corinna Maggy

7 *Watercolour and Wild Flowers*

These dreamy flower girls feel like they have big, wild ideas in their heads, are at home with nature, bright, beautiful, and strong enough to thrive even if life pricks them with a few thorns among the roses. By artist, Iris Fritschi-Cussens.

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Take a spring peek into Gibbs Botanical Gardens

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Mr. Constanza (a character from the *Seinfeld* television series) may have been on to something with his "serenity now" practice (or was it Kramer?)... if only they had added poetry and painting to the mix. Presenting a lovely 3 way collaboration with artists, Robin Hawkins and Julia Osterc and poet Cherry Harris.

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Art pictured above by Iris Fritschi-Cussens



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*And Many Beautiful Blessings
And Wonderful Wild Wishes Within!*



Mandala Art above by Corinna Maggy

Inviting Harmony...

“My painting process is very intuitive at the same time as being very intentional with the energy it will bring into its home.

This Mandala Painting was made with the intention of bringing in Harmony, Peace & Love into your space.” - Corinna

har·mo·ny (här'mə-nē) n. pl. har·mo·nies
1. a. An orderly or pleasing combination of elements in a whole: color harmony; the order and harmony of the universe.
b. A relationship in which various components exist together without destroying one another: different kinds of fish living in harmony.
c. A relationship characterized by a lack of conflict or by agreement, as of opinion or interest: family harmony.

Flowers always make people better, happier, and more helpful; they are sunshine, food and medicine for the soul.

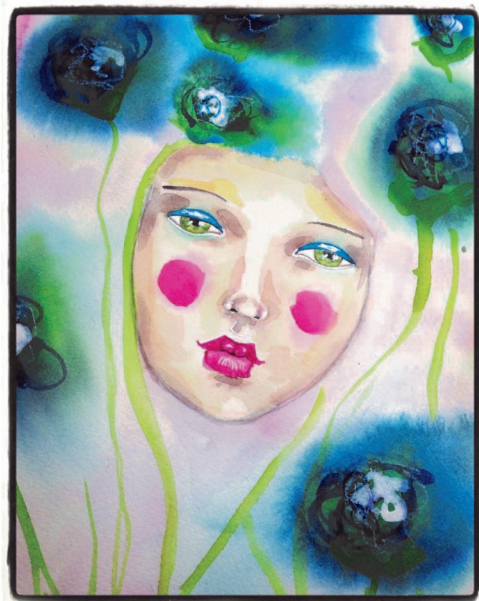
- Luther Burbank



All art on this page by Iris Fritschi-Cussens

“For a while now watercolours have totally captured my imagination and I have been playing with them non-stop! I really want to share the joy and the techniques that I am discovering, so I made an [e-course](#) for others to experience them, too.

Watercolours are a wonderfully dreamy medium, but they can be intimidating to use. In the process I work with the wonderful properties of watercolours (rather than against them). It is a process of discovery, of letting go, of playing and seeing what emerges.” ~ Iris



What sunshine is to flowers, smiles are to humanity. These are but trifles, to be sure; but scattered along life's pathway, the good they do is inconceivable.

- Joseph Addison

*Harmony in a Garden,
Harmony in a Heart...*

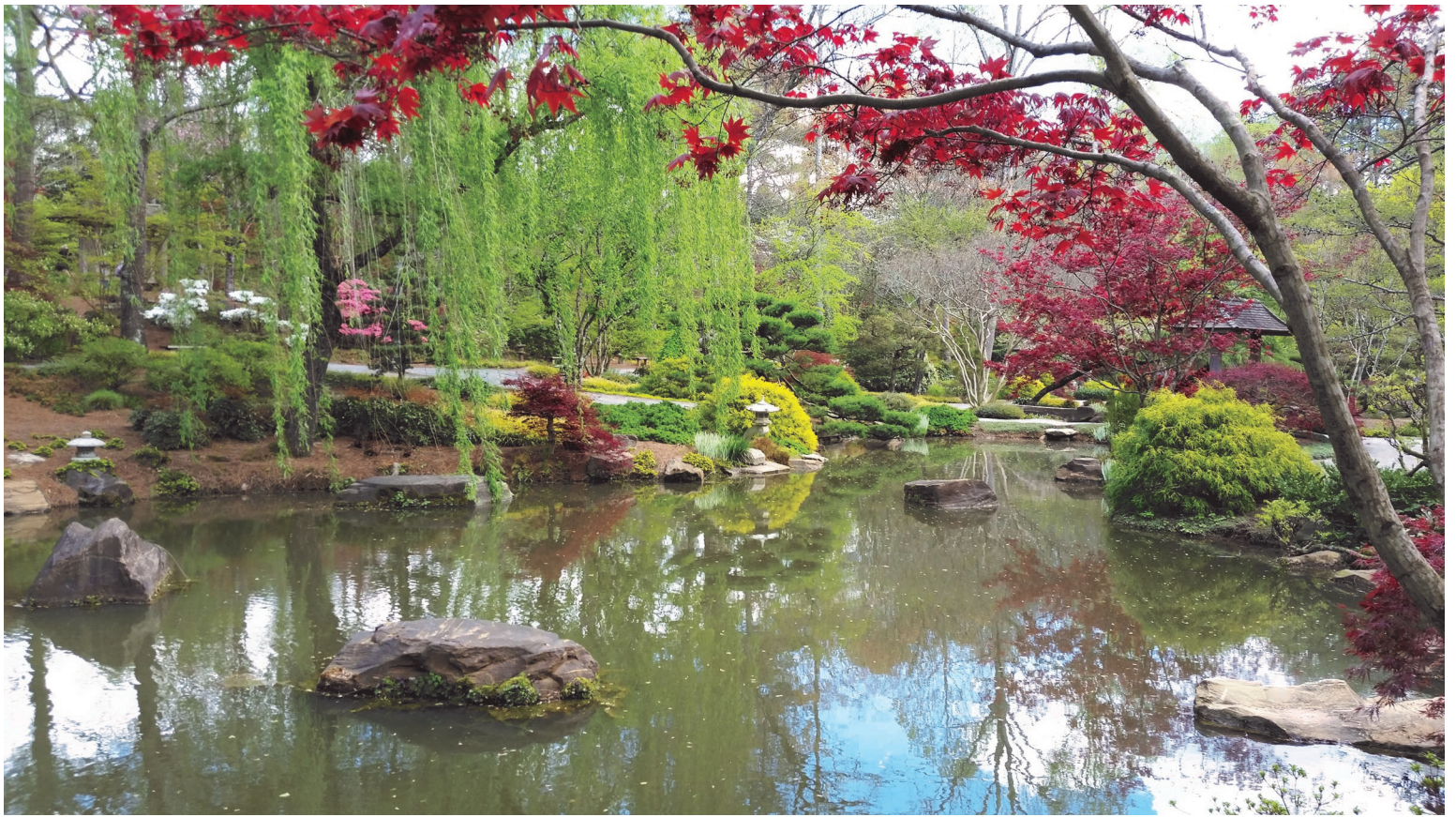


The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.

The next best time is today!

- Chinese Proverb





Let's take a deep breath together.... Breathe in... breathe out. Maybe now you can step into the garden with me, at least in your imagination! What a lovely way to spend a beautiful spring day: at a botanical garden near you. Consider that an invitation! The one pictured here happens to be Gibbs Gardens in Ball Ground, GA. What a treat to discover this within driving distance of our home! The Japanese Garden had a zig-zag bridge. A guide informed us that you walk across it and leave your troubles behind. My 11 year old twin sons were in a hurry to get across. Perhaps we can all take a moment to visualize going across such a bridge if there's anything you'd like to leave behind. May we all be blessed to find harmony in a garden, Mother Earth's Great Garden, and harmony in our hearts.

*"A single sunbeam is enough to
drive away many shadows."*

— Francis of Assisi



All photographs pictured here by Julia Osterc



"Serenity" Art above by Robin Hawkins

Man fishing and wild flower swirls

I only had a moment...
How precious that moment was.

I watched a man letting the fishing
rod do the work...
While he lay back on his deckchair.
Legs outstretched,
arms folded somewhere behind his
head.
Just a ripple on the water,
An ocean of thoughts.
The call of a crow,
And the warm breeze ruffling his
downy hair.

I only had a moment
How precious that moment was.

I went for an early morning walk in
the park,
My playground as a child.
They'd moved the swings, the slide,
the seesaw...
Section by section.
To another corner,
Another space,
time.
They planted young green saplings
and dug a swirl in the dark earth
sprinkling
It with wild unkept flowers.
I wanted to stamp my feet and write
letters of complaint.
Bring back my childhood, thieves,
rogues and vagabonds.
After a little well shuffled time.. my
childhood became a small woodland
area, a field of wild unruly flowers.
No cause for complaint .

Poem by Cherry Harris

"People usually consider walking on water or in thin air a miracle. But I think the real miracle is not to walk either on water or in thin air, but to walk on earth. Every day we are engaged in a miracle which we don't even recognize: a blue sky, white clouds, green leaves, the black, curious eyes of a child -- our own two eyes. All is a miracle." - Nicholai Hanh

Ruby Tulips

He stood leaning up against the garden gate,
Suited and booted and ready for war.
The leaves were falling on our heads like brown frogs.
A red forelock dipped across a pale sheet of blue eyes.
Thought I detected a teardrop,
Just visible.
Time was with the Gods,
So he stole what was left of the minutes,
And within my clutched hand he thrust,
A brown paper bag.
Kissed me
Till we run out of breath,
And ran.
I stood and watched his slight frame,
disappearing across the fields.
He ran for all he was worth,
like a hunted fox.
I stood frozen,
Clutching my brown paper bag
A milk float ambled up the road,
bottles clinking.
I stood motionless,
unblinking
A postman lent me a jovial wink.
Still my feet stayed glued to the spot like stone.
The children went to school in a tumble,
and came home in a jumble of joy.
Day turned into night.
The bright moon wept stars the size of pear drops.
My hands were frozen.
The brown paper bag wet with tears.
I could hear the ticking of my wristwatch,
In time with the beat of my heart.
My swollen eyes searched the brown paper bag,
For clues,

For answers.
Neatly placed were four plump bulbs.
There they lay in wait.
A brown paper note said,
PLANT ME
In bright red ink
A big X the size of a man's hand beside it.
I shuffled to the garden shed,
turned the rusty key,
An fished out the garden fork.
I kneeled and planted my soldier's bulbs,
deep in the brown earth.
Then wiped my muddy hands,
And went into the house.
I found a window seat,
With just the right view.
curled myself into a ball,
and waited.
I watched the pumpkin lanterns glow
And the witches scurry on their broomsticks.
I watched the fireworks light the sky.
The snowflakes came and go with the glitter,
and there my valiant soldier's bulbs grew fine green shoots.
Till soon the ruby tulips emerged strong and bold,
Like my soldier.
The rain and the wind tore the petals.
Hope for my soldier grew.
April showers brought morning mist,
and the May sunshine warmed till the last of the petals fell.
I watched in the distance.
A strong handsome figure walked.
Suited booted and forlorn.
A red forelock fell across grey misty eyes,
Like a shield,
I wave,
and smile a ruby smile,
My soldier is home.

Butterfly

There was a butterfly that landed on an upside down tent,
Left in the garden after the thunderstorm.
I think it was a Peacock,
or an Emperor
or something.
Something beautiful,
Large and colourful,
Shouting... look at me.
It rested a while,
Enjoying the early morning breeze.
He fluttered his beautiful wings,
Russet, burgundy, black and blue.
I watched in awe of this miraculous creature.
His short life spent a minute with me
I was agitated,
troubled,
before he came,
worried about nothing in particular really.
He rested with me.
His thoughts.
His short life.
He fluttered again
and on the gentle summer breeze .
He flew away.

Poems on this page by Cherry Harris
"Unfolding" Art below by Julia Osterc





not all
are
the
same

open

“Open” Painting
By Artist & Alchemist,
Lara Cornell



Reverence and Delight...

By Julia Osterc

Have you ever smelled the sweet scent and felt the silky petals of a spring apple blossom tickle your nose, just before sunset, on a tree you planted, nurtured, waited and watched grow? Have you felt this kind of moment when the thoughts pause and a deep sense of peace and presence, reverence and delight fills each breath; drinking in the nectar of life like the bees and the butterflies sipping from the blooms?

Note: The above self portrait painting was inspired by moments like these, using the image to the right as a guide along with a Life Book (2015) lesson with Tamara LaPorte. The interesting stylized hair, choice of contrasting colors, circle and layout were a direct exploration of the techniques Tam covered (though the lesson was not for a self portrait specifically). I love Tam's approach to art as a way to heal, explore, and express our lives. I have an [affiliate link](#) for Life Book if you'd like to learn more.



Listening inside and out...



Above: "Listen to Your Truth"

Left: "Wild Courage"

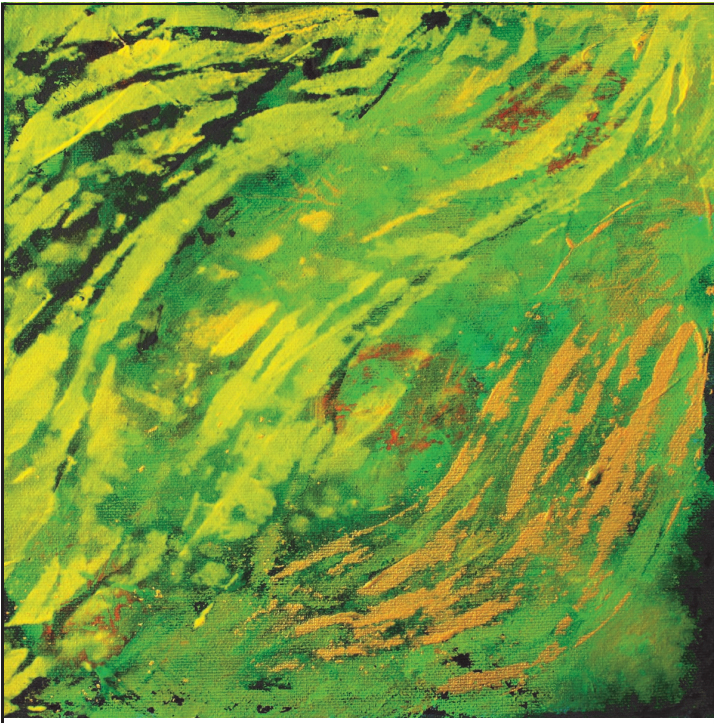
Artwork directly above and directly left
by riaE, Maria Elizabeth Woodbury-Rosales

*Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak;
courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.*

- Winston Churchill

*"Put your ear down close to
your soul and listen hard."*

- Anne Sexton



"Golden Waves of Joy"

Art directly above by Heather Cox, who says it was:
Inspired by my hiking trips & being out in nature.

*"I only went out for a walk and finally concluded
to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found,
was really going in." - John Muir*



Where is the Child I Was?

She has put on her magenta sundress with prints of peonies and freesia. Her dance is inviting ruby-throated tiny birds and the nectar-song of bees.

She has thrown her shoes into the teeth of the blackberry bush. She has refused to brush the moonlight from her hair.

Her heart fell into the tidepool and grew wavy, phosphorescent limbs. She is feeling her mouth make the word phosphorescence

because she is part ballerina/scientist/singer and acrobat and her tongue tumbles over the words like jolly ranchers or gobstoppers.

She is starring in the gobstopper's dream tonight...unearthing each layer: First she is yellow like a dandelion's mane. Then red as a fire hydrant's tongue.

Then pink as the cloud-dragon who lay down at the edge of the sunset yesterday from 7:30 'til way past bedtime. That dragon, she says, is my soul.



"Celeste Dreams a Bigger Dream"

Poem & All Art on this page By Julia Alter, Author of *Walking the Hot Coal of the Heart* www.hummingbirdpresspoetry.com



"Ready for My Surprise"

"For me, poetry is about expansion. It's about expanding your connection to yourself...to the world...to others. It's about expanding your emotional range, your emotional depth. It's about expansiveness in your own consciousness and seeing things in a way that you would not necessarily have looked at them before reading or hearing a poem. Expanding the imagination so it becomes a territory you regularly inhabit " - Julia Alter

Julia Alter has been hosting a National Poetry Month Celebration this April on her blog, which according to Julia means: "I'm jumping into my tradition of video-recording (do people still say that??) a poem each day for the month of April! I'm still continuing my 365 faces challenge over on Instagram, where I draw or paint a face every day of 2016, but I LOVE LOVE LOVE doing these poems because it not only inspires me to wash my hair (ha!) and look (not like a total troll) presentable but it taps into my soul and brings my too often hibernating poet back to the light!" You can join her and listen to her share many of her favorite poems from various poets on her blog at seizethedazzle.com.

In Loving Memory

by Julia Osterc

As both Mother's Day and Memorial Day approach here in the United States, I wanted to share this and send love and a prayer to all those feeling grief for any reason, to all that have experienced their mom's passings, or brother's, child's, friend's, etc.. My heart and hopes are with those experiencing loss... hopes that you are able to celebrate the life and person you've witnessed cross into the heavenly mystic, hopes that you're able to feel the love shining beyond all space and time, hopes that you're able to let go of the physical grief through healthy tears, shared stories, and hugs, hopes that you're able to hold onto the love and memories. Their loving light continues to shine on, in, and through you. May we feel the love always.

My mom's earthly body died almost 6 years ago now. Thrive True is the evolution of energy and efforts started in 2010 in loving memory of my Mom's graceful zest for life, a way to carry on her legacy of love for self, others, and nature. She wanted to have a memorial celebration of her life versus a funeral and I suppose the creative efforts started in her loving memory are a kind of continuation of that.

I read the dragonfly story (opposite page), which I stumbled onto online just when I needed it most, at her memorial.



"Heavenly Dew" Artwork above by Julia Osterc

The 'found' prose reads:

"We are children of the Divine heavenly dew. Blessed light-hearted flowers our souls."



The Stars Still Shine... One night while sitting on the back porch talking to my mom (after her death), I said, "I really miss the sparkle in your eyes" and I saw one of the brightest shooting stars I've ever seen right at that moment. So this little saying has a very special meaning to me. Being able to reach out to others and send loving energy across borders, time zones, generations, and cultures has been a blessing. Such as this connection and these words from Sue, "My beloved Mum closed her precious blue eyes. I spoke at her funeral. My tribute was called "My Mother's Eyes", and just like you, it will be the sparkle and twinkle in her beautiful blue eyes that I will miss SO much... I just wanted to tell you that now, I, too, will be looking out for shooting stars. For now though, I will take comfort from my favourite drink, sipped from your beautiful mug, just the right size to wrap my hands around, to caress and savour the warmth. As my broken heart searches for light in this "forever darkness," I thank you for walking this path before me, and providing such comfort through your art."

Dragonfly Story, A Tale Of Life After Death...

Once, in a little pond, in the muddy water under the lily pads, there lived a little water beetle in a community of water beetles. They lived a simple and comfortable life in the pond with few disturbances and interruptions.

Once in a while, sadness would come to the community when one of their fellow beetles would climb the stem of a lily pad and would never be seen again. They knew when this happened; their friend was dead, gone forever.

Then, one day, one little water beetle felt an irresistible urge to climb up that stem. However, she was determined that she would not leave forever. She would come back and tell her friends what she had found at the top.

When she reached the top and climbed out of the water onto the surface of the lily pad, she was so tired, and the sun felt so warm, that she decided she must take a nap. As she slept, her body changed and when she woke up, she had turned into a beautiful blue-tailed dragonfly with broad wings and a slender body designed for flying.

So, fly she did! And, as she soared she saw the beauty of a whole new world and a far superior way of life to what she had never known existed.

Then she remembered her beetle friends and how they were thinking by now she was dead. She wanted to go back to tell them, and explain to them that she was now more alive than she had ever been before. Her life had been fulfilled rather than ended.

But, her new body would not go down into the water. She could not get back to tell her friends the good news. Then she understood that their time would come, when they, too, would know what she now knew. So, she raised her wings and flew off into her joyous new life!

- Author Unknown



Top: Mom & Me | Bottom: My mom with my twin boys 11 yrs ago

Art Heals... Art has been a healthy part of my journey with grief and can be quite therapeutic. From my early first attempts to create cards to the mixed media paintings I make more often now, there have been tears and smiles, reflections and rememberings, letting go and holding on... tending to my broken heart and sweet soul.

I had a surreal experience recently when I could deeply feel my mom's presence dancing in the garden with me. She was an amazing gardener and nurturer, playful, generous, and kind... a beautiful blessing to all that were fortunate to know her well. It was amazing to feel her dancing with me while painting the memorial garden (pictured at left) and thinking of her. She's the one that taught me to 'dance in the rain' as she lived each day, even 1½ years with ovarian cancer, choosing to see the beauty and hug her loved ones, to play and laugh and cry and despite the disease, her love continued to thrive!



In Tune with Nature...

Celebrating Earth Day 2016, which falls on a Spring Full Moon, and Dancing with the Rhythm of Nature.



"Peacock" Art Above by Lara Cornell



I am going to notice the lights of the earth, the sun and the moon and the stars, the lights of our candles as we march, the lights with which spring teases us, the light that is already present. - Anne Lamott

All Art on this page by Lara Cornell



"Don't worry if you're making waves simply by being yourself. The moon does it all the time.

- Scott Stabile



Riding the Wild Donkeys...

I sure hope you've enjoyed this very first introductory offering of the *thrive true* e-zine! It has been a bit of a wild ride to get it all put together in less than 2 weeks, while working on a new website & e-course, having company in our home, spring gardening, a construction project in the basement, homeschooling kiddos, and all the rest of the bits and pieces that make up our lives. So, what's with the donkey?! I learned a phrase about 'riding the wild donkeys' from some of my online Dutch friends a while ago. It refers to all the wild ideas that we get and whether we choose to do something with them. I don't know the actual story behind the phrase, but here is my story:

For several weeks, I was stuck in 'analysis paralysis' regarding where to go from here. I've invested lots of love, time, energy, and hard work into efforts I started in memory of my mom... starting with just a vague idea that I wanted to see others smile more and encourage us all to lift one another up, to rejoice in the roses in spite of the thorns (and I've had my share of pricks and scars!), to dance in the rain, to accept the wild mystery of life with open arms choosing to see the beauty and celebrate the sweet in a bittersweet life. It all started with a facebook page and some homemade cards with ideas to offer inspirational stationary and photography. I was inspired by Kelly Rae Roberts, whose book and art I somehow stumbled across shortly after my mom died, and felt I wanted to offer that kind of energy and inspiration to the world in memory of the sparkle in my mom's eyes, her sweet smile, her grace and generosity. It has been a windy and uphill path at times and I've often felt I'm trying to walk the path at night in the darkness when I can barely see the next step. Yet, the spark in my heart and soul insists on burning. I've written many blog posts, sharing straight from my heart whenever it felt right. Brene Brown's speeches about embracing vulnerability came at just the right time to encourage me to share more than I ever

would have imagined... realizing now that our stories have the power to heal and bring us together. I've created online courses about things that have been good medicine in my own life... such as finding the courage to listen to my own heart and discover an inner compass amidst all the external 'shoulds' and cultivating an attitude of gratitude to celebrate life and notice the blessings. Yet, I realize I haven't reached many people and keep feeling like I have more to offer... if only I could figure out what my 'gifts' were... what unique 'song' I have to share... how to let 'my little light' shine, without dimming anyone else's! I had to get over the, "Who am I to think I have something worth sharing and, big gulp, even worth people investing their time, money, and energy in?!" or at least decide to ignore those voices and keep giving it my best. I also needed to change the domain name, "Loving Rd" (which was named for the actual road sign we pass on the way to our home), for both technical reasons and others. I have too many pages of possible domain names in my journals from the past several months! I didn't want to use my actual name because I always wanted it to be about more than me... I wanted it to be about us... a place for community and connection... not solely about my creations and not claiming to have answers or a 'cure' for anything, yet a place to create together, to wonder and explore together, to share what we've found worthwhile, and yes, a bit of cheerleading, too! I felt like focusing so much on art wasn't enough (or maybe 'good' enough) to fully touch lives the way I originally hoped (though I still love to play with art supplies and will still include art as a part of what I have to offer). Creating art is medicinal for me and feeds my soul. Yet, I want to pass on the 'enlightenment' I've found (as in feeling lighter in life, not beyond it or as some guru!) that I'm grateful to be experiencing. I've been praying for guidance and clarity in the foggy visions I've had the past several years. I even asked for a big neon sign of some kind. I sure wasn't expecting this!

On my way home from Easter dinner at my in-laws' house a few weeks ago with my kids, this guy (pictured at left) stopped me in my tracks – literally!!! And, I was driving in the dark on Loving Rd! Mr. Donkey was blocking my path. I barely managed to stop within a few inches of hitting him! He was standing broadside to my car, in my lane, from head to tail across the front of my car, head held high, looking me straight in the eye! At first I thought it might be a deer (common here in the mountains where we live), but I never expected to come face to face with a donkey blocking the road. Of course, at the time, I was too shocked to see any possible symbolism, coincidence or “sign”. After sitting there for a while, looking a donkey in the eyes, with no other cars around in the dark (there are no street lights way out here in the country and my bright headlights were illuminating a donkey of all things!), I slowly reversed my car and pulled down a close side road to the nearest house thinking maybe I could find the owners.... Except that I was hesitant to knock on anyone's door around here unexpectedly at night since the security systems around here usually take bullets not batteries! There were no lights on at the house and I was afraid to knock! The next thing I thought was that I better tell my husband (who was not too far behind me in his truck full of firewood from his dad) because I didn't want him to hit the donkey! Trusty cell phone in hand, I called him and the first thing I said was, “hey, there's a donkey in the road!” Uh.... What?!?! “I said, there's a donkey in the road... slow down! I see you and you're almost to him... slow down!” Well, maybe I shouldn't have been distracting him with the phone and he might have seen it himself. He did slow down and he said it was a good thing I told him because he didn't think he would have seen it. The donkey had turned and started walking straight down the center of the lane so there wasn't as much of him to see across the road. My husband was able to slowly maneuver around him and I decided to head home, too. I saw an on-coming car when I was back on the road and flashed my lights at the car over and over. It stopped and she said, “I know... he's mine. I'm here to get him.” I headed on home.

Only last night did it occur to me after working late in to the night that after that encounter, I started 'riding the wild donkeys' again as my friends say.... I finally got tired of wavering about possible domain names (and all the ones I liked that were already taken) and bought a new one. Things kept happening very fast after that, mentors crossing my path calling

So that's way more than I intended to say about that! As usual! I swear I keep trying to “say it sweet, simple, and with a smile” as the phrase on a Yogi tea bag suggested, yet it seems I'm destined to wander in the details and weave more into the words. If you had ever met my dad, you'd know where I get it!

May we thrive (you know, grow and flourish with vitality and fulfillment and all that kind of thing?) true (whatever that may mean to you to be in tune with your true nature), open (to wild possibility, love, laugh, live, give and receive), and free (as the amazing creatures we were born to be beyond labels, definitions, boundaries, expectations, and such) in harmony (with ourselves, others, and all of nature). That is kind of my version of a prayer for world peace re-visioned to imagine us all thriving with joy, grace, and peace.

Wild Wonderful Wishes to You, *Julia*

me to “birth my big vision” and “do that next big thing; yes, that one.” I found examples of others doing similar things, creating online communities and courses that tend to the spirit, and realized that maybe there is a place for that expanded, broader vision for creative gatherings and good medicine (the soul food kind) and that I've actually already been doing that in some ways! Maybe, I'll even be able to collaborate with those others. Once I took the next step with the new domain name and realized I had to build an entirely new website (when the old one didn't migrate so nicely to a new home), it started another wild dance of figuring out what to do in each moment. Ideas have been pouring into my journals for books and courses and videos and all kinds of seemingly crazy things. And I think it all started after that donkey literally looked me in the eye! And, yes, I went back to take a picture of the donkey (I see him in his pasture every time I go to town) so you could meet him, too! Admittedly, he wasn't actually a wild donkey, but he had managed to get out of the fence!

Anyway, I just couldn't resist sharing this unexpected tale/tail with you. I'm reminded that whatever I put into the world, I don't want it to be too serious... I want to remember to see the world through eyes of wild wonder. I remember when my boys asked me what I thought the purpose of life was a few years ago (out of the blue!) and among the things I suggested (admitting that I didn't know, but thought maybe it could be, love, learning, experience, etc), 'play' was one of the things that came to mind. And though as a child I learned about 'survival of the fittest' and competition, something in my gut has always been hesitant to fully accept that. I see a mysterious world and when I can see past the individual trees to the greater forest and life web that they are part of, I can see a Great Song playing in harmony... with more gentle aspects (like flutes/flowers?) and big booming aspects (like drums/earthquakes?) and when I see the bird eat a worm in the backyard, I wonder if the worm just grew wings (as opposed to seeing it destroyed). Yep, I'm a dreamy, wild wonderer! If any of this resonates with you, maybe we can walk together for a while. If this all just sounds like lunacy to you, maybe we can part ways with curious smiles wondering at how we can see the world so differently and both live here... unless of course, you think I'm living in a dream world... in which case, it's all good, I like it here. I want to use my imagination to smile more. I've already tried pity, paranoia, anxiety, fear, guilt, and worries and I didn't like the taste so well. I have a sweet tooth.



Contributors

The idea for this e-zine just came to me with less than 2 weeks to Earth Day (and full moon) when I wanted to have it ready to give and share! Thankfully, the sweet souls I asked to collaborate and contribute still said yes in spite of short notice! This wouldn't have come to fruition without these magical beings! And, they've unleashed their generosity to give without any financial compensation for their participation! As poet, Laura Probert, once said to me, I like to think that collaboration multiplies the love and energy by like a zillion times! With a grateful heart, *Julia*



riaE, Maria Woodbury-Rosales

Hi friends! I'm riaE (Maria Elizabeth) and I create soulArt. I grew up on a small farm in Linden, Michigan where I spent my summer days running with the wind in my hair, playing in mud puddles and digging for worms. I have had a creative spirit my whole life, from the time I was young. I say I am a self taught artist, but truthfully, creativity is in my heritage. It's in our blood lines. Visit riaE at: riaEsoulart.net



Julia Alter

I'm Julia Alter~ half rose garden, half thorn. Half rust, half faceted ruby. I've been in love with words since I was a young girl writing potions against boys-lol. And I would wither without music; I lived life as a poet & jazz singer before I had my two children. I love the lilt and flow and expression of those old sappy songs as much as I love the smear of acrylic, the tear of vintage dictionary, the list of feelings and happy accidents that pour forth when playing with poetry. Visit: www.seizethedazzle.com



Lara Cornell

Lara was raised in Northfield, Minnesota. After living, traveling, teaching and studying internationally she graduated from the Univ. of Minn. In 2014, she turned to painting for a creative outlet and the flood gates opened. Lara's style is Soulful Expressionism; painting, mixing medias, using photography, lettering words of love and encouragement, and often focusing around her love of beauty, nature and kindness. Visit Lara at: laracornell.com



Cherry Harris

Hello, I live on the West Coast of Wales here in the U.K. Home to our very own prestigious Dylan Thomas. I first became hooked on poetry at the age of 14 when a friend introduced me to it. I haven't stopped writing since. I have had two poems published and hope one day to have a novel see the light of day. I do lots of walking and it's usually out in nature when I am inspired. My favourite poets include Sylvia Plath, Emily Dickinson and Emily Bronte. Visit Cherry on Instagram: [@cherry_harris](https://www.instagram.com/cherry_harris)



Heather Cox

Heather paints inner landscapes, always circling back to that holy primal wilderness of the psyche that can't be quantified but only experienced - those primitive, irrational, pre-verbal places where our original selves are still wild, still mystical, still blissfully whole.

You can find her at www.wanderingwombstudio.com

In nature we never see anything isolated, but everything in connection with something else which is before it, beside it, under it and over it.

- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



Robin Hawkins

Mixed media artist living in Indiana with her husband of 35 years and two sons. She enjoys finding and using various mediums to portray the elements in her paintings. Color is what drives her soul and makes it happy. Nature and animals are often the subjects of her art. She loves mixed media because it is a forgiving form & the sky is the limit with imagination.

You can Visit Robin here:
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Visit CorinnaMaggyDesigns.com to learn more about Corinna and her creative process, her artwork, and her offerings.

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Iris Fritschi-Cussens

Iris is a London-based **mixed media artist** and creative enabler. She lives in the heart of London with her beautiful family (husband, 2 boys & 1 cat). She is passionate about mixed media art, art journaling and inspiring you to **be free** to create the way you are meant to create and **shine the way you are meant to shine!**

You can Visit Iris at:
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Julia Osterc

Artist, Brave Heart, Cheerleader, Co-Creator, Dreamer, Explorer, Farm Girl, Facilitator, Grateful Guide, Hostess, Medicine Weaver, Mystic, Mountain Momma, Rockband Singer, Sweet Sunshine, Thrivalist, Wild Woman

Getting in tune with my true nature, finding joy in the journey, and celebrating the sweet in a bittersweet life. Founder of Thrive True in memory of my mom's love for others, nature & life. ♡ Visit me at www.thrivetrue.com

"Connected" Art below by Julia Osterc



Seeds of Kindness...

There are so many ways we may find to celebrate nature, life, and generosity and to scatter seeds of kindness. Perhaps, you'd like to spread some seeds this year as well to celebrate Earth Day... whether planting fruit, vegetables, or flowers at your home or in a community garden or scattering seeds of kindness. Inspired by the [Art Abandonment Project](#), I've started leaving [inspirational postcards](#) in public places, such as restrooms, dressing rooms, doctor's waiting rooms, airplanes, and where ever else you may roam, leaving a trail spreading seeds of kindness and scattering sunny smiles. A short and simple sticky note might brighten someone's day. It's easy to make your own or you might buy some from an artist you like, planting seeds of support in addition to sprinkling seeds of kindness around.



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Know someone else that might enjoy this offering?

I'd be delighted if you choose to [share the link on social media](#) and add your breath to the wildflower wishes that we may thrive true together in harmony, scattering sweet smiles & soul food, grace & generosity, reverence & delight. ♡

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