

# Highlighting *Suzanne E. Harrill*



*Suzanne Harrill is a therapist, writer and artist. She has a talent for helping others know and love themselves, solve their problems and heal their consciousness. She easily reflects acceptance and love, which encourages people to take the risks necessary for self-discovery and inner healing. Suzanne is a natural teacher and believes*

*her job is to facilitate others in becoming their own authority so they can heal their own lives and create a life with meaning and purpose. The following article is Suzanne's reflection on her journey with creativity and art.*

**I** grew up with a talented, artistic mother who modeled developing her talents. Today, at 79 years of age, she still takes art classes and is ready to draw anyone who will sit for her.

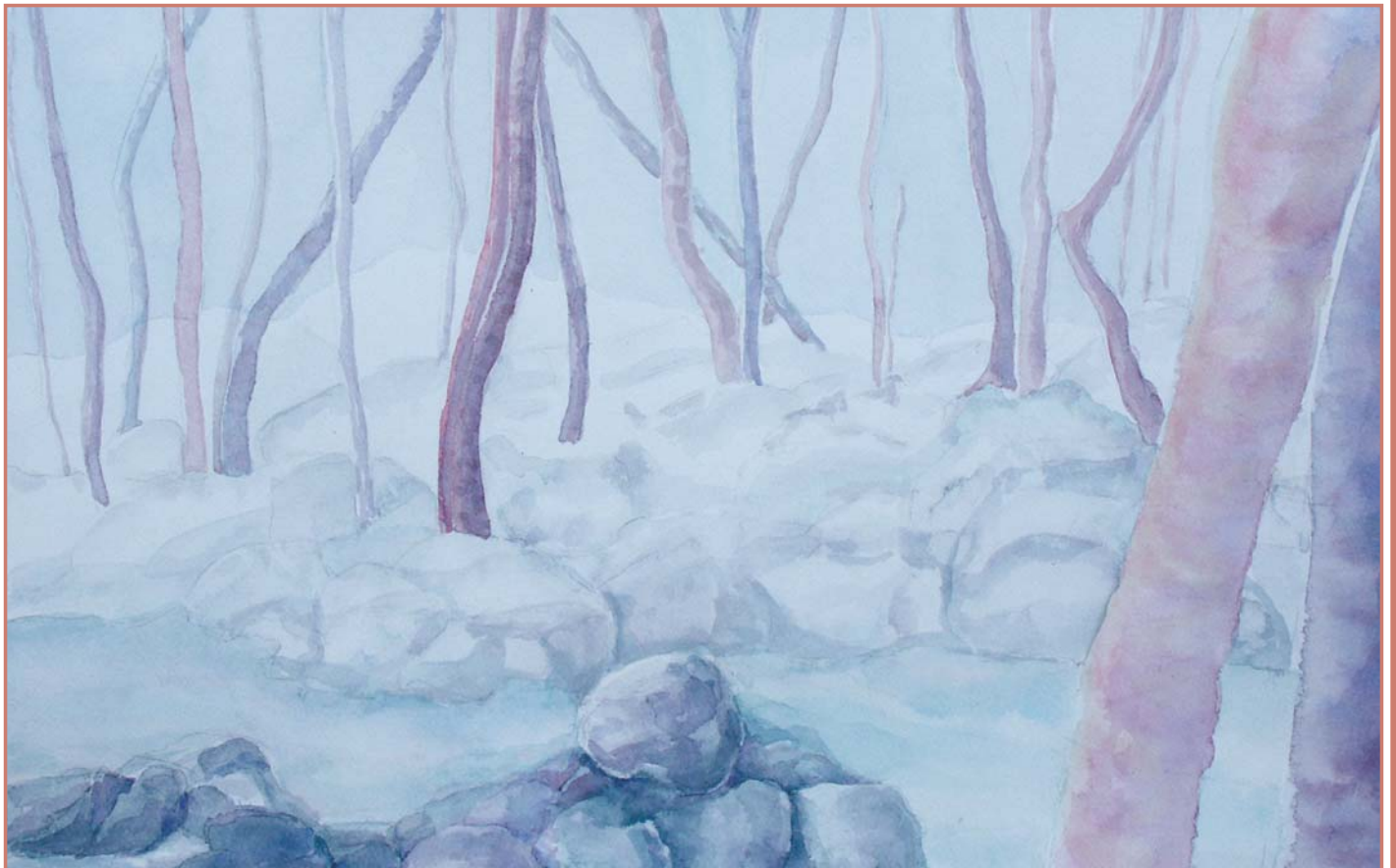
In high school, I was fortunate enough to have an art teacher who knew how to reach me and nurture my creativity. She figured out early that I was not a visual artist, but was kinesthetic or feeling-oriented, so encouraged me to draw

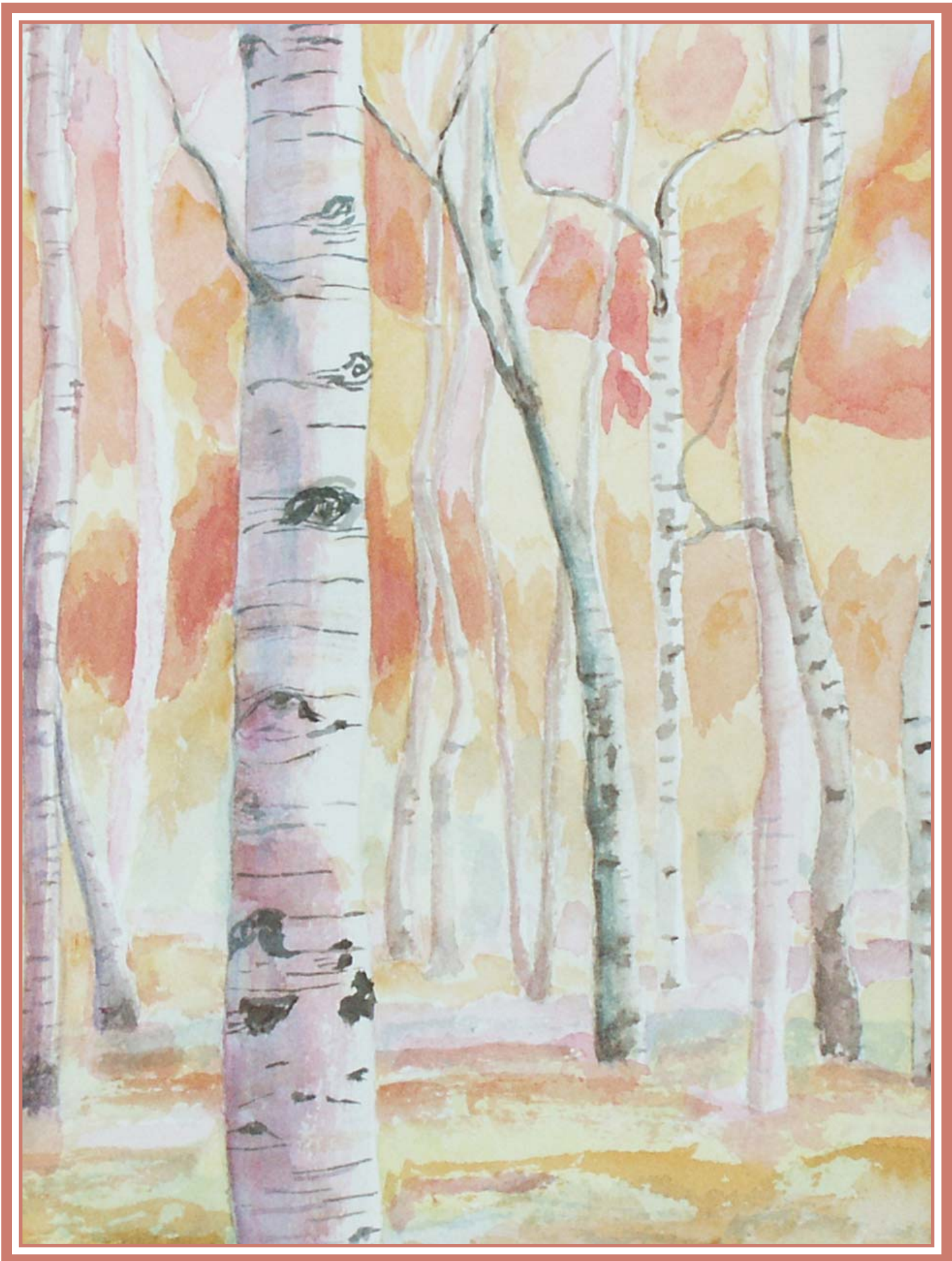
with yarn. I created many stitcheries; color and design became my strong suit. In college, I majored in art education. Fine arts courses were required, so I picked up the missed stitches that I had avoided in high school and learned the visual half of the equation. The most valuable parts of the program were the art education classes. I learned so much to help my own creativity and how to encourage others. It impacted how I raised my children. For example, I learned that the process of creating something is more important for children, (or the child within all of us), than the end product. It is a helpful to remind myself today, when I am frustrated with results or blocked in my creativity, to focus in on the process— to get into the joyful feeling of self-expression.

Watercolor painting followed me after college. It met my need to play with color and I enjoyed the unpredictability and fluidity of the medium. Over time, I learned that I was good at painting from my unconscious.

The stained glass is a newer art medium for me. I took a class a few years ago while living in Australia. It can be a special meditation for me. As I listen to soft music and focus on one small step at a time, I get lost in the moment, forgetting

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about time. All thoughts leave me and I feel a deep peace and oneness.

The theme in all my art is nature—I am drawn to flowers, trees, fields, rocks and water.

From my current perspective, it looks like I have always lived a creative life, yet I did not have the confidence, understanding of my abilities and potentials, clarity or ability to access my creativity as I do today.

I have developed the creative art of writing the most. I learned about 20 years ago in a powerful dream that it was my one of my purposes to teach others what I know, through writing. “Writing?” I questioned the teacher in my dream. “I don’t want that to be my purpose. I don’t even know how to write well and what would I write about?” The teacher just smiled and said no more. It took me a long time to develop the confidence to write and I would get writer’s block often in those days.

Currently, and this could change with the yin and yang of the cycles in life, my writing flows just about anytime I discipline myself to sit at my computer to write an article or to clarify my thoughts and feelings. Notice the word discipline is important here, as this is where I can miss opportunities to tap into my creativity.

I felt blocked many times writing the book, *Enlightening Cinderella*. It took many years to finish. I started it in the late 80s and it was published in 2001. The ideas just did not flow so I could finish it, so it lay fallow for many years. I would pick it up every three or so years, write for a while and then work on a different writing project that was flowing. I doubted and criticized myself, which did not help. I think in this particular case, I had to go further on my own journey and in my own relationship in order to finish the book. Sometimes a block is simply not tuning into the proper timing and rhythm and flow of my life, while at other times the block is about my self-esteem issues.

I am like others in that I have times of ease and the creativity flows easily and then I have times of frustration. Usually being blocked is about getting in my own way with my critical mind talk. I have to remind myself about the process of creating, how much I enjoy the art, and it is not important how “good” it is compared to any outside standard.

Creativity for me is boosted when there is a lot of down time. The yin, non-directive cycle allows ideas to find me or I feel the urge to express from within. Time can be an inhibiting factor and I get scattered with so many choices of how to use my time. Slowing down, being by myself more is helpful.



Creativity is more than art or writing: it is how you do your day-to-day living, how to live your truth, how you problem-solve, how you deal with your issues, how you talk to others. Everyone is creative. We have made decisions early on in life about our own creative abilities and many of our

beliefs about our creativity is limiting and not true. To nurture our creativity it is helpful to change our beliefs about our self and the creative process in general. We have to release the negativity we picked up in our conditioning and relearn what is a natural state of being. The negative mind talk needs to hear the truth—that it is fun, natural, and easy to be creative, especially when we let go of impressing anyone else and use it for our own healing. If everyone were to spend some time each day being creative, we would have a new world—one of respect and appreciation for self and others.

I have learned that creative self-expression helps me lead a more peaceful and loving life. It helps me feel my wholeness. It has boosted my self-confidence to express myself. There would be more beauty in the world if each person expressed themselves often. As talents grow and evolve so does our consciousness.

*Suzanne inspires people to build awareness and improve their lives through counseling, telephone coaching, workshops, art and writing. Several books, articles and INNERWORDS, a newsletter to spark the inner journey are found on her website, InnerworksPublishing.com.*

*Suzanne is in private practice as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and a Licensed Professional Counselor. Her business name is Innerworks Counseling and Publishing.*

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