

The Creative Forum

March 2019

A Monthly Publication of Creative Wellness Opportunities
A Peer Run Service of the Mental Health Association

Gift of Story - Raquel Weaver



A 5 lb. baby girl was born on April 29th, 1974 and was named Raquel Weaver. Like other children, Raquel always had an imagination for fun, laughter, and play but was also extremely shy. She would hide away because she felt different. By second grade she had displayed eccentric ways and she was evaluated and labeled with a learning disability, a speech impediment, and dyslexia, all of which played a part in her upbringing. She did not understand why she faced shame and ridicule from her peers.

Raquel faced death and loss at the early age of 5 when the eldest of her sisters passed away at 8 years old. Young Raquel continued to take the tragic experience very hard even in her teen years. It had made her even more distant and caused her to further isolate herself from her peers and the world. That was also when she discovered that she had an inner talent of art and imagination which she somehow used as a coping mechanism for her inner pain. When she was 14 years old, she was diagnosed with depression and rage due to all the trauma that she had been through.



Her struggles continued to follow her. Throughout adolescence verbal and physical abuse, sexual immorality, violence, and deception preyed on her psyche and interrupted her growth even more. She reached legal age and decided to "run the streets" as a way to find freedom. Raquel was sadly mistaken. The concrete jungle made her into a savage. Any innocence was destroyed when with young eyes and ears, she witnessed the ugly side of life. She became involved with illegal activities that included street drug association, gang violence, and brutal assault. Even during all of this time, the constant saving grace in her life was her ability to connect with life creatively. Poetry became her outlet to vent and explore new ways to speak her most hidden emotions and truths. She discovered a kindred spirit when she listened to the words of rapper Tupac Amaro Shakur's music and the experience made the craft of writing poetry more intense. She related to the power of the written word through the wisdom and delivery of the artist and it helped her get through a lot of harsh situations. Raquel also began to use her other voice as a soprano more.

By 1995, at 21, Raquel also found herself with child, a bitter-sweet revelation because she didn't have the first clue of how to be someone's mother. She was also left disappointed because she also knew that she would be raising this child alone as a single mother. Even so, she took this challenge head on and though there were many bumps and bruises, she managed through it and took responsibility for her child's wellbeing and future. As life continued forward, many friends and loved ones were lost through street violence, murder, suicide, and mental illness.

I am Raquel Weaver. My close friends and family refer to me as "Atlantis" (due of my deep thinking, sometimes 9000 fathoms deep) and "Ruff Diamond" (a Diamond-in-the-ruff) because combined, both of these things are who I am and represents me. I've been told that I have a silent but intense wisdom when speaking



which I can't take credit for because it comes from a higher power. I'm 44 years young (turning 45 in April), a grandmother to two, and have learned from my turbulent, jagged past making me the woman I am today. While I've lost so much in my life, I am able to say that I've finally regained my identity which is probably one of my greatest accomplishments. Continuing on my journey, I want to make sure to share that I am still a "work in progress" after all, and "no one is perfect."

I am Raquel Weaver and this is my story.



UNDO the hurt
UNDO the pain
UNDO the gray
UNDO the rain
UNDO the moments I've spent with you
UNDO the actions
UNDO the I love you's
UNDO the name I've spoke of you
UNDO the errors I've made with you
UNDO the kisses I've given you
UNDO the day that I even met you
UNDO the talks at night until we sleep
UNDO the moment that you've laid your eyes on me
UNDO the pause I felt when I wanted you
UNDO these thoughts because
I don't want to have any memories of you

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Kirsten Muckstadt - First Friday Artist



“Beacons”

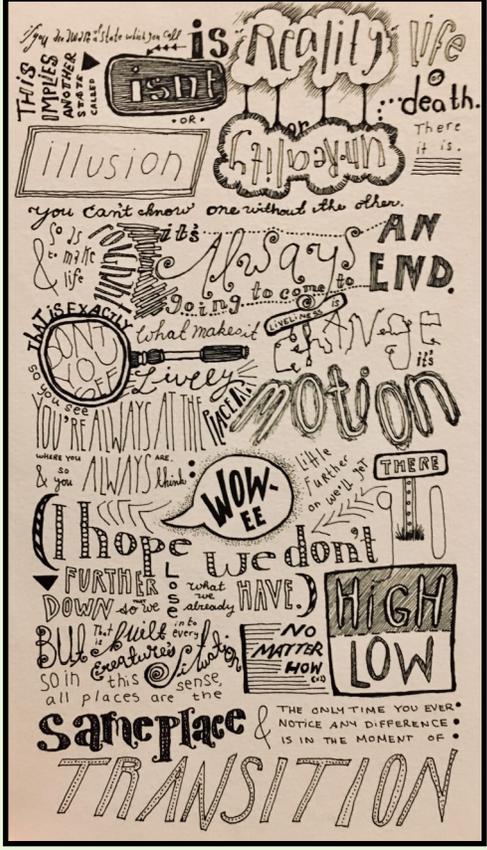
For our show this year, Aaron and I focused on the idea of *beacons*. My pieces center literal and figurative lighthouses: the lights that guide us in the darkness, that make the darkness navigable without ever eradicating it completely. Some of these lighthouses have a nostalgic value, relics from growing up on the coast of Maine, and some of them are about the sorts of beacons that have guided me more recently--art, community, connection. Art has often been this sort of map-making exercise for me, drawing experiences I can't speak aloud and ways up, out, and around that I can't seem to find in our own world. The ink and tiny

words have always been a reflection of my own intense thoughts, but one where I can bend the path toward discovery.

So many people have supported this art and encouraged me to return to it time and again, especially when I am feeling the most lost. Family, friends, and co-workers have all supported me in turning meeting-note-scribbles and love-letter-drafts into something more, and for this I am grateful. Creative Wellness has been an essential source of inspiration and accountability in this process as well--as many have said before, a truly unique place. We all have our own ways of surviving this world, and of all the beacons in my own life, picking up a pen has proved one of the brightest.

-Kirsten

Please join me and Aaron Gardner at our First Friday show “Beacons” from 5:30PM to 8:00PM on March 1st, 2019 at the Creative Wellness Gallery.



MHA PEER COMMUNITY OUTREACH



MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
FIND WELLNESS

Anatomy of Wellness

Learn how to be well and also how to determine the differences in healthy or not so healthy foods. Learn how the body works and how we fuel it with our attitudes.

Ogden Baptist Church - 585-352-1077
721 Washington Street, Spencerport, NY 14559
Continuing every other Thursday @ 7-8 pm March 7th

Chili Senior Center - 585-889-3550
3333 Chili Ave, Rochester, NY 14624
Continuing every other Wednesday @ 9AM March 6th
6 Sessions Left

6x6 IS BACK

Join the CWO CREATION PARTY of 6X6 artwork for ROCO's 6X6X2019 Art Exhibit.

March 21st 1-7:30PM

March 23rd All Day

Featuring 2D & 3D artwork that is ONLY 6 inches square in size from all over the world for a charitable cause.

A 12 Year ROCO Tradition

Aaron Gardner - First Friday Artist



“Beacons”

Beacons is the title of the collaboration show between Kirsten and me. These pieces have a kind of a guiding light theme to them, maybe some more obvious than others. Flashes of light, lights in the darkness or a light or force guiding you forward. Most of the subjects for the pieces in this show have to do with relationships, nature, and World War I. The mediums include acrylic, watercolor, pen and marker, and glow-in-the-dark paint. I ended up painting and drawing many of the pieces on to plastic film and then used solar print fabric to make the final image (so there is a lot of blue and white). Many of the pieces are pretty small. Music is a life-saver for me, and I am constantly listening to music when doing art. Not too sure if it seeped into any of my work I but was listening to a lot of Radiohead, Amen Dunes, and Chance the Rapper while working on these pieces. This is the second show that Kirsten and I have done together.

I don't actually remember it myself where my interest in the arts began, but from history lessons from my family, I drew a lot of dinosaurs and skeletons when I was younger. Then as an adult, two local artists, Rebecca Rose, and Leslie Werlin really helped get me to get into painting and drawing again and use it as part of my recovery. My family, friends, and the staff and everyone at Creative Wellness Opportunities have encouraged me along the way. Creative Wellness is a unique and magical place of recovery and discovery to me, a refuge of creativity and community. I am extremely grateful to be able to show my work at Creative Wellness Opportunities.

Where I live there is a lot of art hanging on the walls done by my two younger sisters and my Grandma, and I find inspiration in their works. Always am blow away and inspired by all of the artists' works on display at the Creative Wellness. Kirsten's fusion of words and images are easy for me to get lost in.

In my work, I am trying to express and to capture an image in my head and the interwoven assortment of feelings that go with it. Without actually using words. Life in general influences my work. I have a really hard time with intrusive negative thoughts and negative rumination but I actually try hard not to make pieces about the darkness and war raging in my head. I think dreams and surreal waking dreams sometimes influence my work. Trying to capture a particular feeling or maybe more so the knot of feelings in a moment inspires me to create. Trying to get the image in my head to appear on paper. Think partly because of my very significant memory loss (due to side-effects

from depression treatments), trying to capture something in my head before I forget it and the sense of mastery if I can is very important to me and therapeutic. Painting and drawing have given me a way to capture and preserve what I have hard-putting words on.

I really like using Gesso to paint a whole painting, versus using it as an undercoat or for preparing surfaces to paint on. It is thicker than regular acrylic, and sometimes I water it down and use it like you would watercolor paints. There are two pieces that I made before I can remember, that I would not want to part with. Both of them have a couple in them, the first one has a couple that looks more like bathroom symbol people than real humans. The second piece is similar but the couple is starting to become more realistic looking and more complex, and I guess they represent how my pieces have changed and yet still stayed the same.

- Aaron



Please join me and Kirsten Muckstadt at our First Friday show “Beacons” from 5:30PM to 8:00PM on March 1st, 2019 at the Creative Wellness Gallery.

Gearing Up for this years Annual Art Show

"What do I need to do?"
- Get Answers
March 7th.

Annual Show
May 3rd
5:30-8PM

March 7th
Show Theme Poster
Winner
Announced!

"Illuminations"

Pick-Up / Drop-off
April 9th 1-3PM
April 10th 10-12PM
April 11th 3-7PM

2D and 3D pieces
Accepted

3 (Three) Finished
Pieces per Peer
Artist!

Originality is
a MUST and
appreciated.

Come join us @ the Community Circle, March 7th from 12-1PM, for an informal discussion regarding this years Annual Art Show "Illuminations."

Mental Health Association's
Drop-In Center
539 South Avenue
Rochester, NY 14620
(585) 454-3530



*Need to talk to someone but your therapist's office is closed?
It's not an emergency room situation yet, but if you don't find someone to talk to it could be?*

The Drop-In Center may be just what you need!

The Center is open seven (7) days a week
5:00PM - 9:00PM

*No referral or appointment necessary.
SIMPLY DROP-IN!*

#5 South Avenue Bus will bring you right to our door at the corner of South Avenue and Hamilton Street. Support is provided by individuals who have overcome mental health concerns and now offer support to others as they find their own path to mental wellness.

MARCH ARTISTS' CIRCLE

Annual Art Show

Bring an art piece of your choice for constructive feedback of any theme **OR** to share for this months suggested art circle theme.

Share @ CWO @ 3:00
Thursday, MARCH 21st

* Finished pieces but framing not required

