

Laurie Parker • Biography

When I was ten my family moved to a small village named Cloudcroft, high in the mountains of southern New Mexico. As I strolled around exploring our new surroundings that first summer, I discovered a community of artists who came every year to work with noted painter and teacher, Raymon Froman and his colleague Lavora Norman. I started hanging out around the school where art classes met and tagged along on sketching walks to try my hand. Seeing that I wasn't going to go away, Miss Norman invited my sister and me to participate in classes as junior members of the group. She was a tough and very good teacher. It is only now that I realize what she had to give wasn't just about painting.

When summer ended I found out that my family was moving down from the mountain to a real town to be near the airbase where my dad worked. Miss Norman took me aside for a very serious talk. "I want you to promise me something," she said holding on to one of my arms so I would pay attention. She continued, "I want you to promise me you will draw fifteen minutes every day. Every single day." Of course I promised solemnly. But it was a promise that was forgotten in the midst of packing boxes for our move down the mountain.

Years later I studied art at California State University at Fullerton and at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. Fast forward and I found myself a single parent making a living as a dental ceramist - an ideal career for an ex art major.

After moving my dental ceramics business to my little north end home in Boise three years ago, I found that I had much more free time in the evenings - my daughters were grown and living away. Sitting in my living room one evening, I thought about Miss Norman as clearly as if I'd just seen her the day before. I could almost hear asking, "Well...did you draw fifteen minutes every day?" That led me to wonder, "Well, why not start drawing fifteen minutes a day now...it can't ever be too late to start can it?" So I did start.

The first project was an experiment called an "apple a day" which was very non-threatening. I drew or painted an apple (or when I got daring two or more apples) of every shape and kind. It freed me from myself and my over thinking about drawing. Then, when Christmas came that year I started to draw some angels for gifts. A friend who loved the angel drawings asked me to do an original just for her - no hurry - but something I drew with her in mind. So I pondered for weeks and instead of getting an idea for an angel drawing, something completely different came to mind - a drawing of Martha and Mary figures, only divested of Biblical attire and setting. It seemed to me that those figures would speak to my friend on some level.

That is when I began to see why Miss Norman asked me to draw every day. She knew that drawing fifteen minutes a day was a key to get me to a creative flow of the unexpected in my own pathway of art. It took me a long time to keep my promise but I love the journey.