



IN/SANITY TRIP



From
PSYCHOSIS to
DIAGNOSIS
to
FREEDOM

I was a relatively normal kid



I had an okay childhood



“Forgetting to Remember” a poem

**(in LEARNING TO SEE IN THREE
DIMENSIONS)**

1961-2,
we lived in England



THE HAPPIEST YEAR OF MY CHILDHOOD

Nothing too unusual or
traumatic had happened,
not at least that I
understood at that time
though I know more now...

We returned to the USA in
1963...and a few months later...



PRESIDENT IS SLAIN



John F. Kennedy, President
 of the United States, is shown in this photo.

Suspect Held

DALLAS, Nov. 22 — (UPI) — President Kennedy's most suspected slayer, a 24-year-old man, was held today.

A Dallas police spokesman said today that the suspect, a man named Lee Harvey Oswald, was held after a 10-hour search.

The 24-year-old man was found in a rooming house in the city of Dallas.

Oswald was arrested after a 10-hour search by police.

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LBJ Is Sworn In



Three months after this **A SKIING ACCIDENT AT AGE 10**

My broken leg was set twice, the first time without anesthesia at Mt Snow, the second time only hours later, without...



AIR!

**“If Wishes Were”
poem by
Pamela Spiro Wagner**

**in
LEARNING TO SEE IN THREE
DIMENSIONS**

Well, okay, maybe I had
more childhood trauma
than

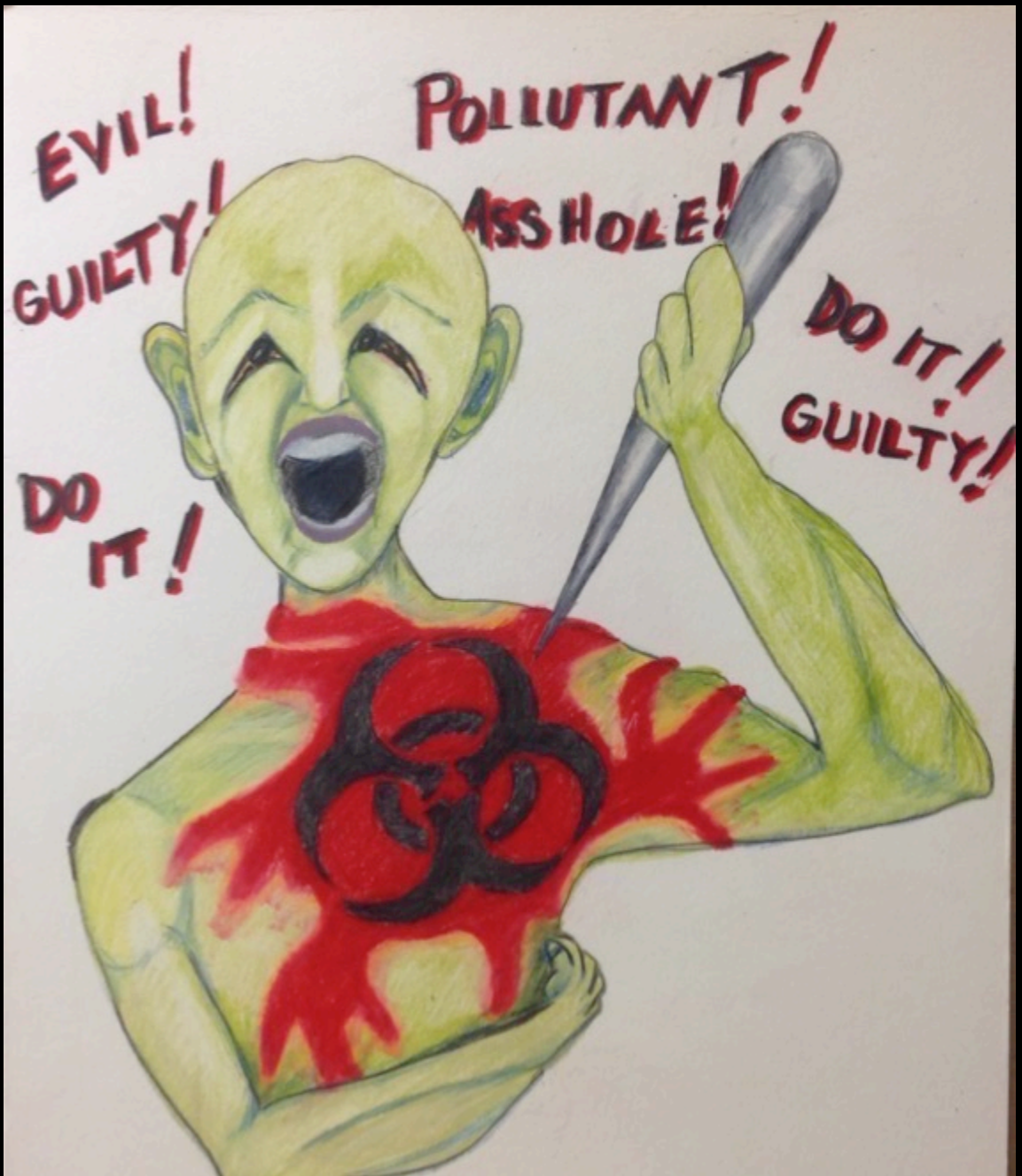
I allowed myself to be
aware of...

Let's
start
again

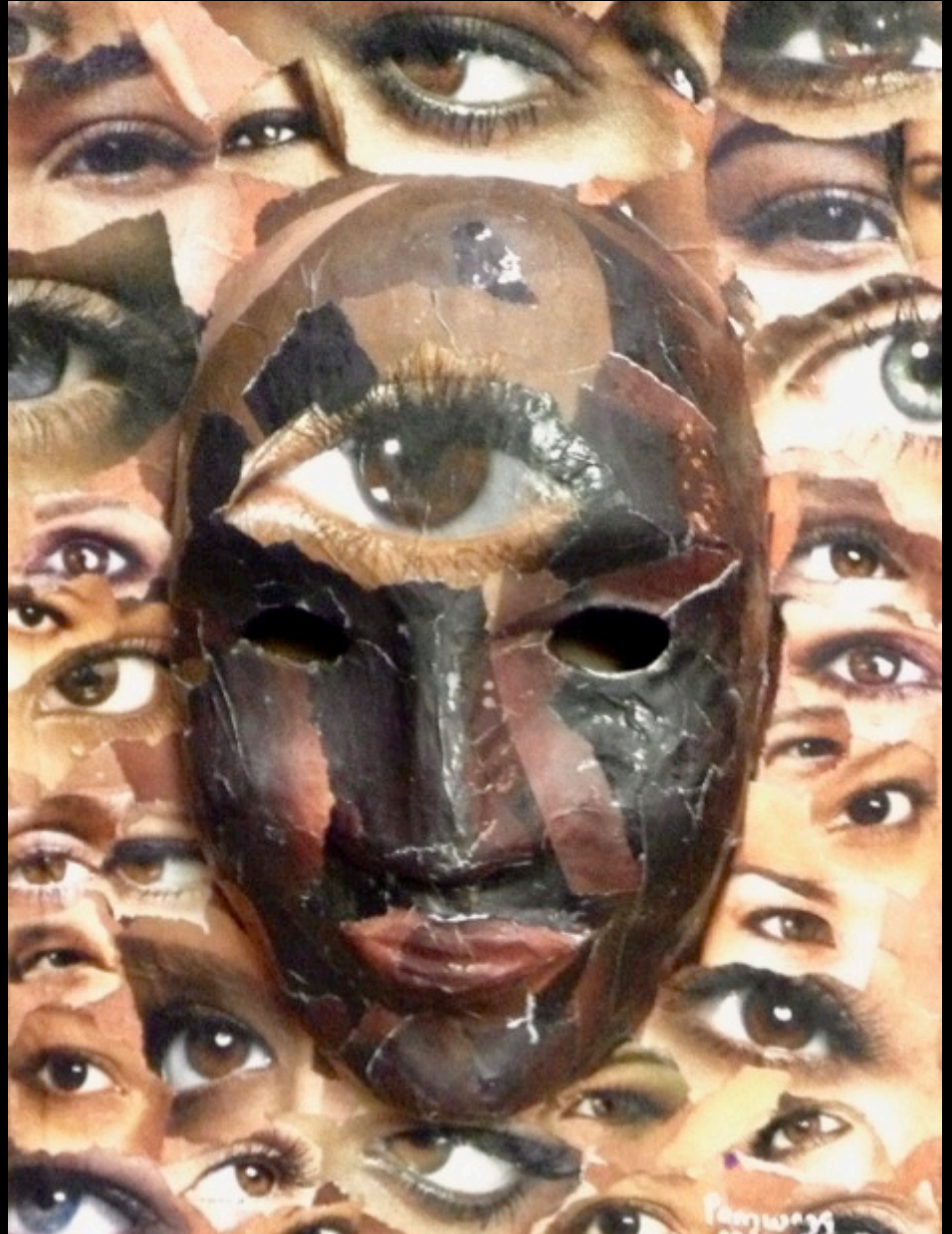
I heard voices
for the first time
starting the day
Kennedy was
killed, people
telling me that I
was the killer...



I believed
them, and
for
decades
blamed my
self for the
loss of
“Camelot”



But because I did not know how to tell anyone, I mostly stopped speaking. Being called Zombie in high school was a relief.



A LOT was
going on, and
a lot of denial

I was afraid.
I wanted
someone to
help me, to
rescue me...





So “What’s bugging me?”



**Instead of acknowledging the trauma in
my life, I was taught to believe...**



That my brain was ill...



That something was wrong with me

For decades in the system,
diagnosed with “chronic
paranoid schizophrenia” I
almost gave up hope

There were hospitals...



and more hospitals

We were told we could never recover completely

THORAZINE*
a major advance in

Psychiatric Treatment

'Thorazine' is useful in controlling anxiety, tension, agitation, confusion, delirium, or hostility, whether occurring in schizophrenic, manic-depressive, toxic, or functional states.

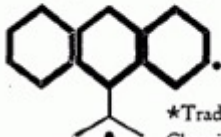
"There is no evidence that large doses [of 'Thorazine'] impair higher mental functions as is the case with sedatives and central nervous depressants . . . Intelligence, memory and judgment are intact, indeed are often strikingly improved in most psychotic patients . . . As much as 2000 mg. a day [of 'Thorazine'] has been given though the average requirement is about 400 to 600 mg. per day."

Kinross-Wright, V.: Postgrad. Med. 16:297 (Oct.) 1954.

'Thorazine' Hydrochloride is available in 10 mg., 25 mg., 50 mg. and 100 mg. tablets; 25 mg. (1 cc.) and 50 mg. (2 cc.) ampuls; and syrup (10 mg./5 cc.).

Additional information on 'Thorazine' is available on request.

Smith, Kline & French Laboratories
1530 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia 1



*Trademark for S.K.F.'s brand of chlorpromazine.
Chemically it is 10-(3-dimethylaminopropyl)-2-chlorphenothiazine.

Given drugs on top of drugs



AND BRAINWASHED WITH LIES...

After a
while,
psychiatry
controlled
my life and
all my
thinking



THURSDAY 9/10/2013

PSYCHIATRIE MACHT FREI ARBEIT MACHT FREI
AUSCHWITZ)

PSYCHIATRIE MACHT FREI (LIKE ALECHNIZO)

It's all about dopamine D D D Dopamine
It's all about Dopamine! D A A N A A B O
DOPAMINE A A Prozac Kills
Why deprive any human H U U M A N ?
of D I Dopamine? M M M S D & \$
HALDOL RIPS THE THROAT OUT OF LIFE...

But no one recognized or acknowledged the trauma I had experienced. No one helped me get better or learn how to live better with the voices and visions and what they called “delusions”...



Like many, once on disability, I was
written off and dismissed

Hospital
abuses started
early, but I did
not recognize
that this
“treatment”
was abusive...



They called this “helping me...”



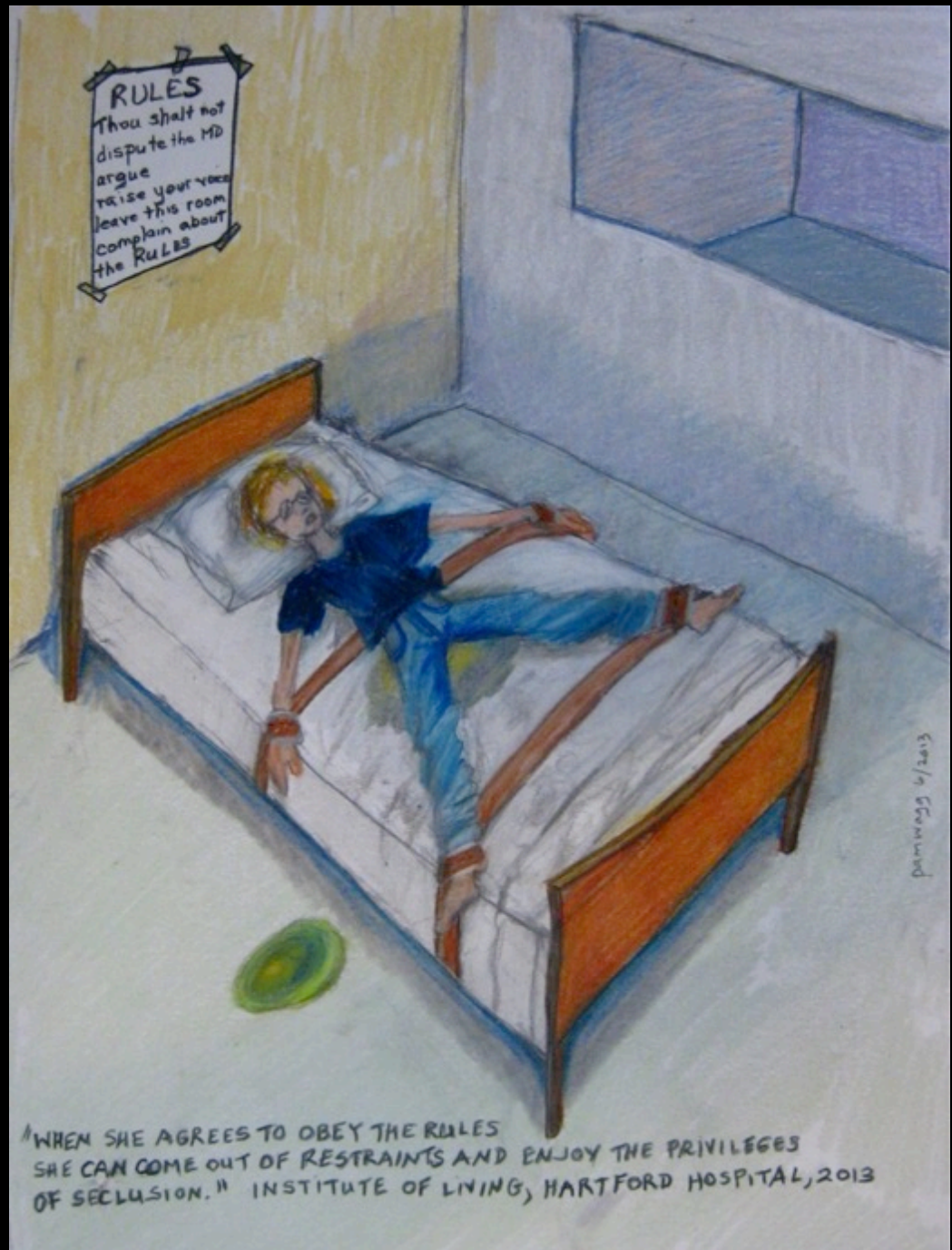
Dempsey Hospital at the University of Connecticut

Restrained like that for 3 days non-stop, I told no one for many years, blaming myself for what they did to me. Instead of recognizing abusiveness, I was taught to believe I must have deserved to be tortured.

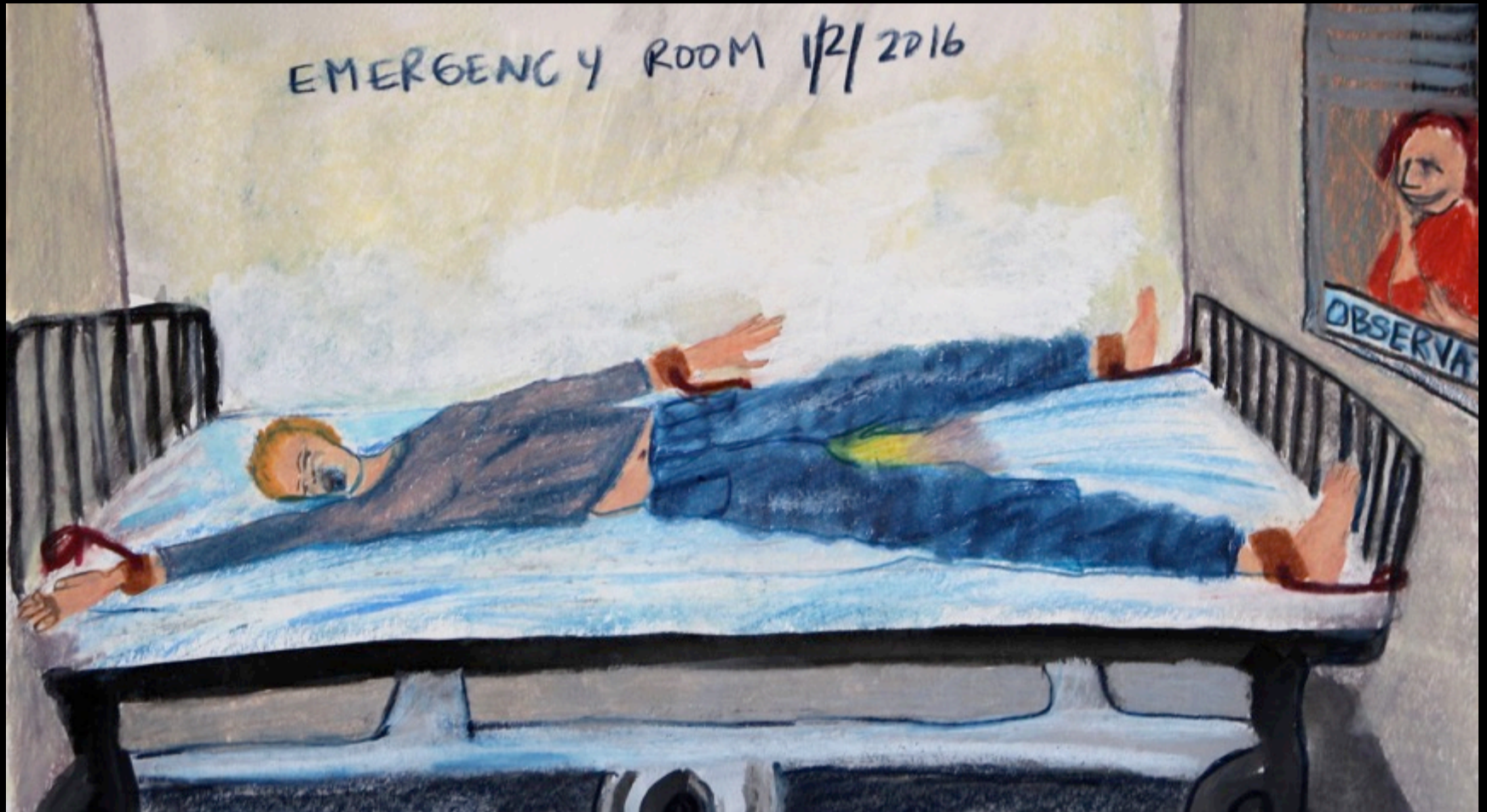
Every MD should be required to take
10mg of this drug!



At the Institute of Living in 2013 they did not even pretend. This drawing was the first time I depicted abuse in hospitals. It was difficult but liberating to draw.



I also knew when staff enjoyed
hurting me



and when it was just punishment



**“Poem in Which I Speak
Frankly, Forgive Me”**

from

**LEARNING TO SEE IN THREE
DIMENSIONS**

Meanwhile the voices
got worse and more
persistent, despite
years of psychiatry
and dubious meds.
No one helped me
see these things in a
non-pathological
light



Complicating matters...



In 1999 I was bitten by a tick...

Lyme disease in my
brain altered my
world forever

After a complete meltdown in “Y2K” I was
psychotic for months



In 2004, voices told me to set myself on fire



And I obeyed...

Hospital abuse continued...



Hospital of Central Connecticut in New Britain - 2014



Rutland, VT 2016 – 9 point restraint chair, used as retaliation



I have depicted the voices, and
hallucinations of other senses,
in many ways

but always it seems a failed
attempt. They would remain
utterly terrifying until seen thru
a healing lens, instead of
“mental illness”





Pamela 2011





Then there were
the “little
people” –non
abusive,
bragging,
nagging voices
that usually did
not bother me



Art first came into my life one morning in 2007

I woke with a different voice, coming from inside my head this time: *Build a human, you must build a human...* And since I saw no reason not to, I did. In 3 months life-size Decorated Betsy was born.



A real miracle, art had changed my life completely...

Making art was how I took charge and communicated my experiences to others. I began saying how I felt and what I wanted. Alas, hospital staff did not always like this.

When I was made mute by trauma
or the voices, my art spoke for me



2012 Natchaug Hospital

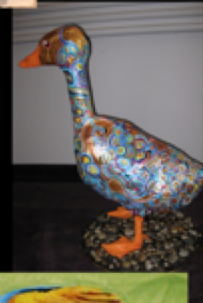
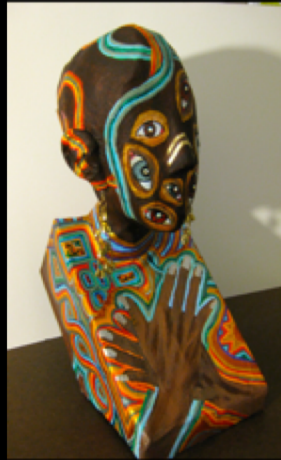
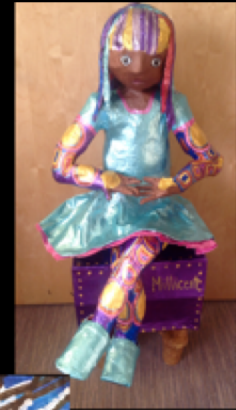


I thought I could never draw faces.
But a passion to learn changed
everything...





This is just a
tiny selection
of my art
since 2008
when I first
began, at age
55.



Other life changes

- I left my home state of 58 years and moved to Vermont where I knew literally no one.
- I met people who were not interested in keeping me “mentally ill.” I met the woman I call my Guide, who sees the real me, and treats me with unconditional positive regard.
- She taught me NVC which helped me to feel more compassion and empathy, even for myself.

Despite
childhood
messages, I
found out I
could love
others, and that
I fell in love
easily, once I
felt safe.



Fear and paranoia faded



This huge collage, made of scraps of magazines And computer printouts, depicts a new hope. Even though the hand mirror outside reflects a seclusion room and restraint bed, if we look closer we notice that the bed is empty and the window opens onto a green vista, fresh air blowing the curtains wide.



“Ice Hospital”

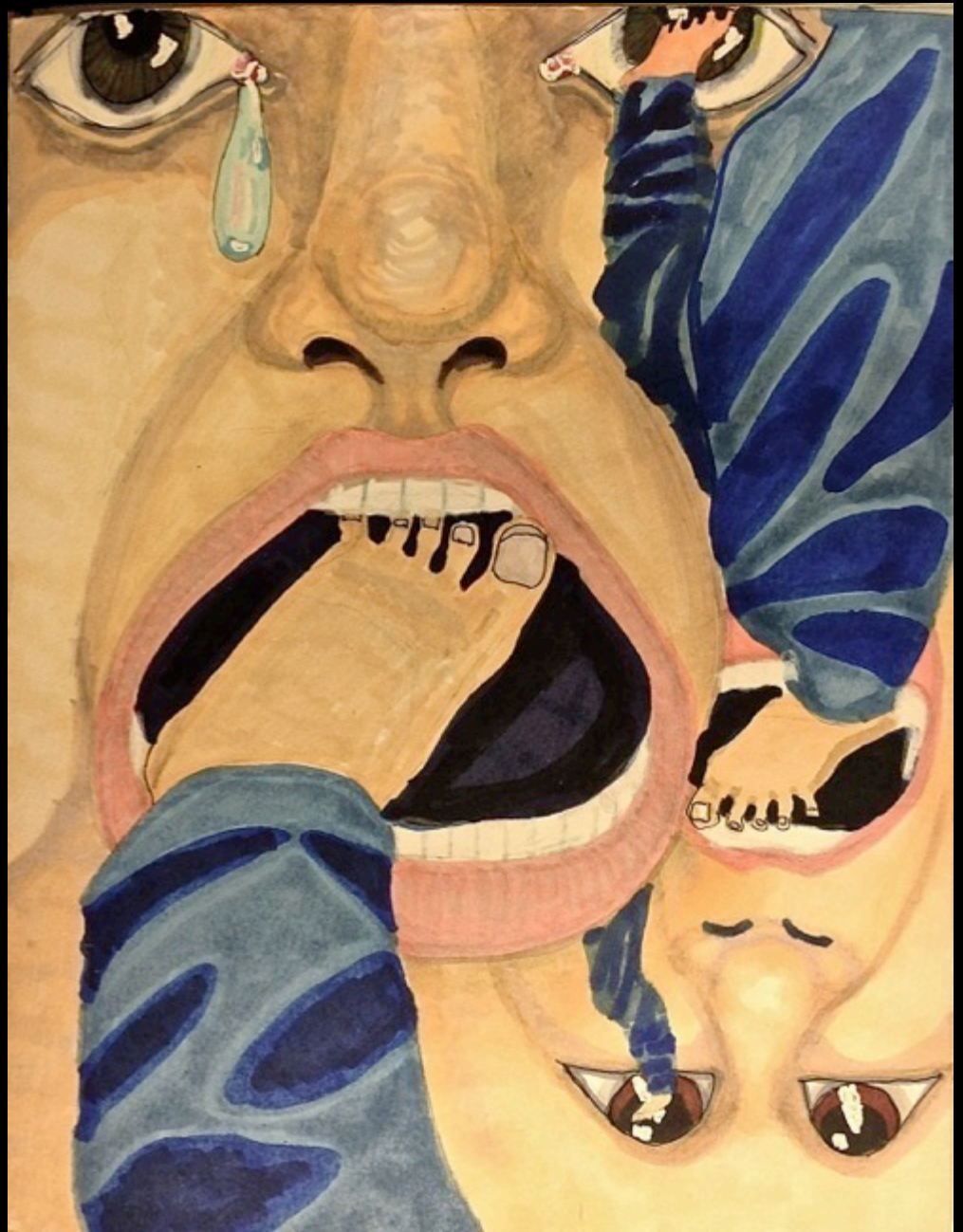
a poem in

LEARNING TO SEE IN THREE
DIMENSIONS

by pamela spiro wagner

**Marshal Rosenberg's NonViolent
Communication changed my life
completely. With its refusal to
assign blame or make hurtful
judgments, NVC's quest is simply
to find a path to inner peace
through empathy and connection
with others**

Thru NVC, I
learned I
could
control my
feelings and
reactions.
Amazingly,
the voices
grew less
intrusive



**In NVC, no one can make me
feel anything.**

- **I choose my response to other people; I can reframe my perceptions.**
- **I choose how I react with regard to others' words or behaviors.**
- **When I stay aware of my emotions, I can pay less attention to the voices, because their source is clearer.**

Yes, I am still expected to take prescribed meds



**But frankly, I stopped them weeks ago,
without negative consequences.**



I can cope with the voices that
remain

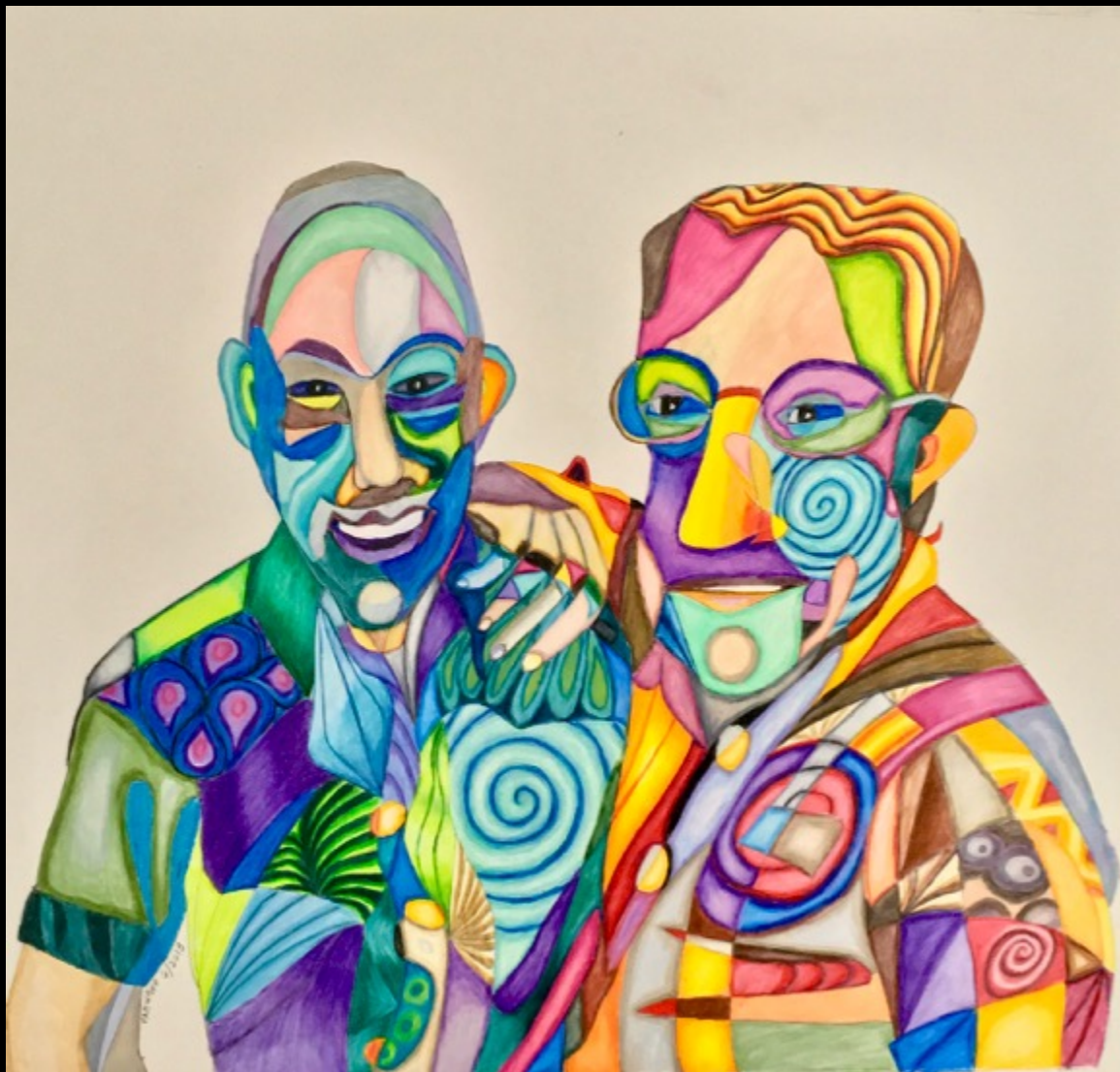


**Meanwhile my style of art
has changed dramatically...**

“Dreamscapes” depicting psychosis gave way to Fractured Portraits



Tim and Don, 2018



Tree of Life Beaded Bowl



“To Forgive is...”

**a poem in WE MAD CLIMB
SHAKY LADDERS
by Pamela Spiro Wagner**

Beaded Donkey 8" high



**Finally, I decided to change from my
birth name, which I always hate to my
true name:**

PHOEBE SPARROW WAGNER

phoebesparrowwagner@gmail.com

Art, my fourth
miracle, is
deeply fulfilling.
Nevertheless, I
keep my options
open to changes
and other
miracles in the
future



“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...All is a miracle.”

Thich Nhat Hanh



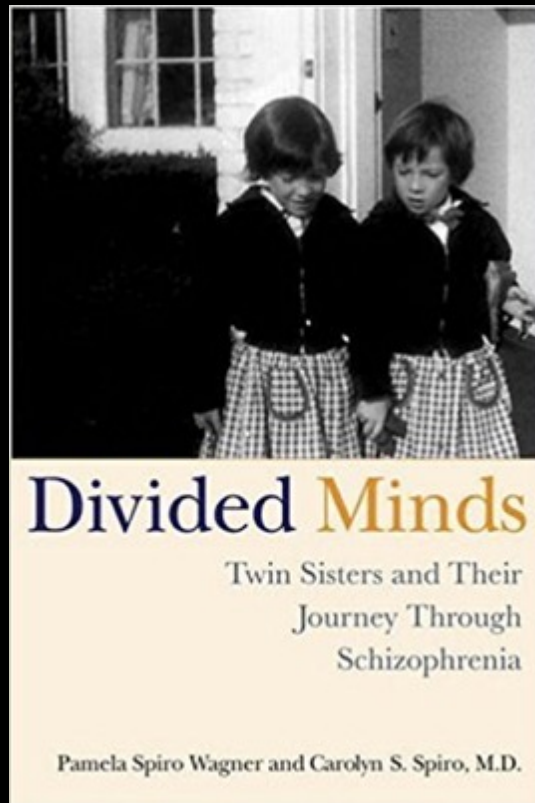


Thank you for coming

I hope this has helped you and that you can take something from it that will be of use. Please help spread the word that schizophrenia is not hopeless or even a meaningful diagnosis. People can get better and move on into happy lives.

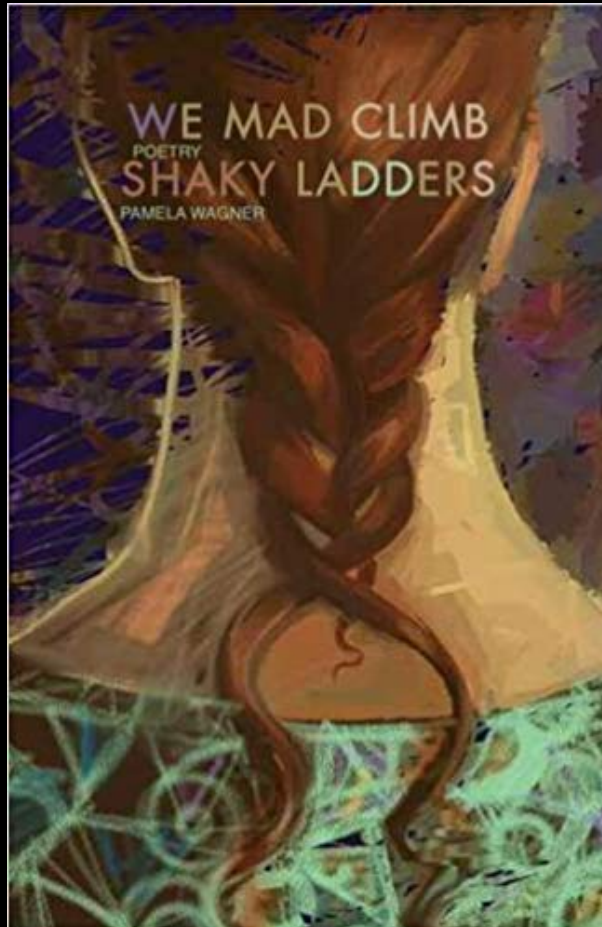
WAGNER's BOOKS at Amazon.com

- **DIVIDED MINDS: Twin Sisters and their Journey through Schizophrenia** (St Martins Press, 2005)



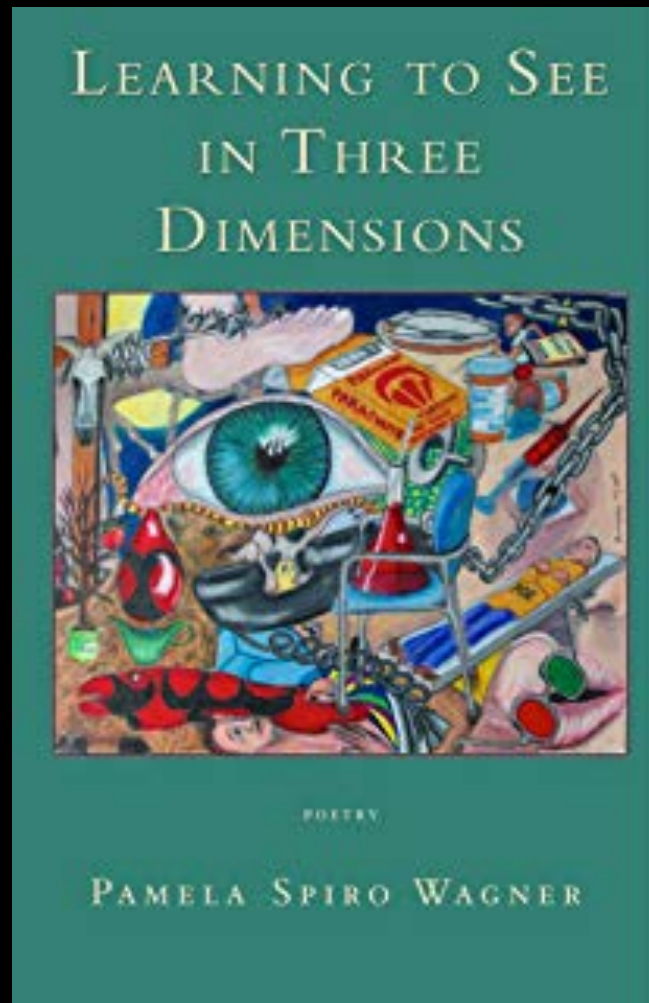
WE MAD CLIMB SHAKY LADDERS

poems about the experience of “mental illness”,
(Cavankerry Press, 2009)



Learning to See in Three Dimensions

poems and art, (Green Writers Press/Sundog Poetry, 2017)



For more info:

<https://arteveryday365.com>

<https://pamelaspirowagner.com>

CONTACT:

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@gmail.com

THANK YOU

THE END

**ALL ORIGINAL ART 2008-18 by
Pamela Spiro Wagner**

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20018- 2018**