

Used Canvas

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life stories with analogy to an artist's canvas

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Frankly, the artist of my life canvas could have stopped a few layers ago.

Small vignettes of each layer I'd keep:

Pre-school, Kindergarten -- a few other school years when I didn't know to have any cares: hand made dresses, always pressed, shoes shiny and panties ruffled with a rose. The Wizard of Oz was in black and white; Dad stood by the T.V. and said:

Now, imagine this all in color!

And, I did.

I miss the racing curiosity, intelligence and super human time management of late adolescence and college. Getting in trouble took nothing more than wearing blue jeans on the wrong day. Immersed in theater then, by chance, politics.

The charms of my life continued with an enviable -- if not high paying -- job, big city, friends, and the luck of youth. I could skip the fire set by robbers in my apartment, and a few parking tickets, but my memories are pleasant.

Life under thirty -- I could keep: the looks, the stamina, the innocence and decisions not yet made.

Layers of paint start to get bumpy: While I was imagining the Yellow Brick Road, there were more witches than riches in life for a while. Plenty of smooth areas with husband, children and good deeds. Colorful, we created magic on pennies.

We pretended nothing abnormal about the sign in front of the house, that had strangers coming to our door, offering to take care of our troubles. I don't remember how, but the wicked sign went away.

Joy in music and art of our children, fun in finding an expendable income for entertainment. Still, though the kids are well over twenty years old, we go to the movies together, as if there were no other way. No, I never

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saw *The Notebook*, but my kids watched foreign films and I have more than enough information about Superman, Spiderman and Batman.

My mind was lost for a while - "interesting" is how my psychiatrist described my symptoms of memory loss, sleep and physical pain. Actually, she said more; the paint is bumpy around this area.

Layers of different paints, from handmade to super tech prepared, mixed media would describe my life. A collage made by my son, hangs in my bedroom: photos of Lucille Ball, a tennis shoe, and a nuclear explosion are among dozens of images. Just now, I know why I like it so much: layers representing time, matter, and ideas.

Paint me in color . Smooth over the layers. Canvas frayed.

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