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2021

# She Drew It Design

By Julie Drew



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Julie Drew waits and listens, letting the details of the world around her speak beauty and wonder.

She adds her own distinct expression to create paintings that proclaim peace, mystery and love upon her reflection.

As a teacher, she helps others find their own voices and join in the song of creation.

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*Wonderful Paintings! Thank you for opening my eyes to the nature of the world. – Elsa*

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## Shaping Perspective

The Earth's beauty whispered to Julie her entire life. At eight, she drew a tree in winter with all its empty branches becoming increasingly smaller as they reached toward the sky. Still as a child she remembers watching butterflies dance in the sunlight as they flitted among wildflowers in a warehouse parking lot next to the inner-city church for the deaf where her father served as pastor. Julie has an innate ability to pause and spot splendor even in seemingly ordinary spaces. This ability grew with time into something sustainable and life giving.

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## Early In Life

### Moving around

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Julie grew up in an artistic and musical family, where she was encouraged to explore her creativity through crafts, ballet, musical instruments, singing, drawing, writing, and painting. Along with her two siblings, she explored the suburbs and natural areas of St. Louis, Missouri and Spokane, Washington where they lived.

Julie especially delighted in leaving the city, traveling and camping with her family. Her most memorable holiday was a four week journey around the western United States when she was 12. On that trip she saw the Rocky Mountains in all their glory for the first time, waterfalls in Yellowstone, the mesas in Arizona and the endless waves of the Pacific coast. The unique beauty of each location entranced her. She wanted to drink it all in, letting it fill her so it would always be a part of her. Julie's parents nurtured her curiosity and wonder by visiting museums and historical sites.

Julie's observations deepened in the summer before entering high school when she began to connect the beauty and details of the natural world with spirit and mystery. "As I walked in the woods at the top of the hill, a glade opened before me. The sun's rays of dancing light filtered through the trees, illuminating rocks covered in moss and plants. They stood solemnly, like an altar in peacefulness. It felt holy, sacred," remembers Julie. Holding onto the amazing experience in her heart, she wrote about it in school that year and shared it in a painting 10 years later. (Holy Place) Julie studied advanced biology and horticulture in high school, drawing plants as she studied them. Learning more about plants and animals was fascinating to Julie, as she dove even further into the details and understanding of nature through scientific observations and experiments.



## Education

### Learning in and outside of the classroom

Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, WA, where Julie Drew received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting and Drawing, had a unique class that combined philosophy, psychology, and art. It challenged Julie to connect more with her inner feelings and inner consciousness through journaling and art projects. Julie described two self reflection projects, "One project was a plexiglass box with the rose bursting through the plexiglass; another was the cardboard cutout of myself, split in half, part of me that was depressed and ashamed, the other side that was confident and bright." The tools of journaling and using art to process became the ground work and a way for Julie to process her feelings and experiences. Betty Edwards books, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* and *Drawing on the Artist Within* were influential as Julie continued to learn how to process her feelings and experience through art.

That desire to see, experience and observe new places was instrumental in Julie's decision to take her third year of university abroad with Scandinavian Seminars. She spent a year studying the folk art of Norway and the Norwegian language and culture at Numedal Folkehøgskole. She learned weaving, wood carving, art history, painting, silk screen, etching and pottery. She solidified her spiritual walk as she leaned heavily on her faith to see her through the year and the turmoil within herself. Julie used the journaling again to help her process the feelings. She also spent a lot of time painting and enjoying the beauty around her right outside her bedroom window. She remembers one misty morning when the beauty called her out to the river below the school. The sun was breaking through the mist, shining rays of brilliance upon the dark blue of the water. It was a magical morning. Julie took photos and later painted a version of this scene that was another holy moment for her.

For her main project for the program that year, Julie studied the art and literature of the 1880's in Norway. She was intrigued by the impressionists, Seurat, Monet, Renoir, Mary Cassatt and wanted to see what the Norwegian artists were doing. She liked the work of Erik Werenskiold and Hans Heyerdahl along with many others. It was a time period where art and literature reflected the everyday world of everyday people, giving meaning and beauty to the ordinary. The artists of Scandinavia, like the impressionists in France, were painting in the outdoors, capturing the light as it fell on their subjects.

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# Personal Growth

## Being creative and resourceful

Finding beauty in the world around her, even in the ordinary everyday things, became even more important to Julie as time went on.

Julie finished up her BFA degree at PLU in December of 1987. A month later she entered into a new phase of life, marrying Sam Drew and taking that oh so perfect last name as her own art name.

A year and a half later, Julie and Sam moved to Chicago, where Sam went to Seminary. Julie stayed home taking care of their firstborn son and getting up early every morning to paint for four hours before her son woke up. Julie put aside the oils and switched mediums to color pencils which were easier and healthier to use around children.

Within the first nine years of marriage Julie and Sam, moved 8 times, lived in 4 states, and had three children. In each place, she had at least a corner or place to do her art. Julie carried a sketchbook with her and drew whenever she had a chance or as she watched over her children as they played or slept. Julie entered craft shows and small art shows. She taught small art classes out of their home and within the homeschooling communities. Julie joined art groups, read many art books, and extended her creativity to her children with art, crafts and music.

During this time, Julie learned the process of making handmade paper from recycled newsprint. The desire was born to make an archival paper that she could paint on. As a homeschooling science and art project with her children, she began experimenting with different paper pulp and adding natural "fluffy" fibers to the paper. Julie collects the different "fluffy" fibers as she hikes at different times of the year: i.e. poplar seed in June, fireweed in September, cattail and thistle in October. She gathers the fabric she uses from discarded clothing and fabric at reuse centers.

In the fall of 1997, Julie and her family moved to Edmonton, AB Canada where her husband had taken a call to be a pastor. Julie's time was divided by family, homeschooling, churchwork and still she continued to work on building her body of artwork. She accomplished this by painting portraits of the children, the beauty around her and journaling how it connects with her feelings and her faith journey. Metaphors related to nature would come to her mind when reading scripture that inspired her artistic expression.

Madeleine L'Engle's books, [Walking on Water](#), [The Rock that is higher](#) and [Penguins and Golden Calves](#) were inspiring for Julie's own journey of writing and expressing herself in art and her spiritual journey.

# Living Water

## Nature speaks

As Julie started working on the theme of Living Water, she was noticing how the drought Alberta had been experiencing the past few years was affecting the ravine near her home. This led to the use of the water shortage as a metaphor for the thirst for living water. Julie researched the water crisis around the world and used the images she gathered to tell the story through her paintings and meditation display.

Julie finished these and presented the Living Water series at a conference in the spring of 2010 and in a couple of hospitals as a meditation display. She shared some of the series on Earth Day in Edmonton and taught a workshop on handmade paper making sourced from recycled papers as part of the festival.

The listening for where the theme was taking her was still not complete. In 2013, Julie came across some photos of Plitvice Lakes National Park in Croatia, and felt a strong urge to go there. She and her husband, Sam, went there as part of their European tour that summer. As Julie stood on the boardwalk surrounded by flowing water, cooling the air around her and so loud, she couldn't hear someone talking in her ear. Julie recalls the moment and felt, "God didn't want to trickle through me, what I could control. He wanted to saturate me." The Living Water series needed to be taken one step further to "Saturation."

Living Water spoke to me. – Linda Forbes



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NEVER CEASING  
LOVE

| 15"x22" | Watercolor

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# Professional Landscape

## Spiritual reflection

In 2002, Julie had enough paintings to participate in the Edmonton Whyte Ave Art Walk. And in 2003 had her first solo art show in a gallery. Julie began showing her art in local galleries and festivals and juried group art shows.

Spring 2004, Sam invited Julie to do a series of paintings for Lent. She would select the scripture and paint something and he would preach on the text. By Easter, they had a 'way of the cross' painting series around the church.

The following year Julie started work on a series based on the phrase that kept coming to mind, "God is My Refuge." As Julie researched the Hebrew words of refuge, she found six different Hebrew words that the English translated as refuge that depicted different aspects to the relationship with God in the Old Testament. Julie wrote, "When the phrase "God is my refuge" came to mind I thought I would be painting a lot of rocks. Instead, it was so much more. I found that my own story, and my husband's story was becoming interwoven in the process. Each of the paintings had a part of our story. And as I worked on the paintings, specific songs came to mind." After a year of creating, what had started as a series of paintings had become a meditation series and a full worship service.

Julie shared the God is my Refuge series in churches and conferences around Alberta both as a meditation display and the full worship service. She published the paintings and meditations in a book, [God is my Refuge, a Devotional and Study Guide](#) in 2006, with an expanded and revised version in 2017.

*Long have we needed the bold strokes that could connect a splendidly made world with the truth of Logos held up against the light of own anguish (and delight) of soul. Bless you in your calling to draw those lines! – Neil White*

Julie was invited to teach an art retreat with King's Fold Retreat Centre. She used it as a way to help others create art and connect with their spirit. Julie continues to run the Art Vocabulary for the Soul Retreat yearly.

Julie approaches everything creatively, and artfully. Julie and Sam expanded her art business to include website design, using her gifts of seeing beauty and communicating it to others and expanding it to seeing possibilities in design and business. Julie's paintings have been featured in several editions of the Centered magazine. Her paintings have been on the covers of a series of books published by the Urban Center for Evangelical Spiritual Formation.

# Recent Work

## Northern Lights series

In the winter of 2021, after experiencing a -28C midnight trip to see the Aurora Borealis with her youngest daughter. Julie spent a couple months painting the Frosty Northern Lights series. Since the temperature was so cold that night and the two weeks following, Julie had ample time to experiment with frost, the cold temperatures and wet watercolor paintings which resulted in lovely, subtle and delicate frost patterns that appear in the skies of the Northern Light paintings. Julie continues to wait, listening with an open heart and mind to where life leads and where the art themes will take her next. This continual theme of watching, waiting and listening is epitomized in her most recent series of the Frosty Northern Lights.



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**DANCING NORTHERN LIGHTS 5**

| 9.5"x22" | Watercolor and Ink

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**FROSTY NORTHERN LIGHTS 1**

| 12"x13.5" | Watercolor and Ink

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