

Earth Angel
By
Lois Jones

I will tell you how the angel paintings came about.

My life has been spared four times, so I must be here for some sort of purpose.

At six months of age, I developed pneumonia; the doctor told my mother I would not last the night. My mother said her grandfather prayed all that night, and I survived.

In 1978, when I was given too much anesthetic in the hospital, my heart stopped and I had to be brought back to life. I didn't see “the light” as some people do, but I did develop a severely bruised chest and back from the resuscitation efforts. Later I saw the reports that confirmed the incident.

In 1996 I developed a megacolon abscess. Initially, I thought it was just a flare up of diverticulitis, so I didn't seek help for over a week. When I finally went to the doctor, he immediately sent me to the medical center. After I failed to improve with a two-week course of antibiotics, they decided to insert a drain into my abdomen. When the doctors discovered that the abscess was hidden deep in my pelvis, they decided to operate.

My sister, who is a nurse, walked into the room just as the surgeon yelled “She's got an abscess as big as my fist—get my associate quick!” He later told me that I was a walking time bomb and could have died instantly had they not operated.

Two months later they reversed the colostomy, but I subsequently developed adhesions. My bowels twisted; and I almost died again, because they didn't diagnose the problem. After two and a half weeks in the hospital, when I still didn't have normal bowel sounds, I underwent another five-hour surgery: they removed two feet of my small bowel, gave me two pints of blood and saved my life a second time.

That's not the end of the story. Back in my room, as I lay in my bed, the intravenous line dispensing pain medicine kinked. For four hours I was in

so much pain that I prayed to die. They had forgotten to plug in the bedside call bell, and the night nurse never came to check on me. Although I could hear her footsteps in the hall and begged for help, she never responded. When the dayshift nurse came in at six o'clock the following morning, I told her I wanted to die, my pain was so severe; I told her that no one had come to my aid. Finally, about noon, they pieced together what had happened.

After these events I began to see the angel images that I now paint.

I see a positive side to what happened to me: now I've got a new appreciation for all that I have. I developed a deep sense of empathy for soldiers on the battlefield, for those in primitive countries who don't have what we have, for the poor in our nation who don't receive the help we should give them. My compassion for the plight of others has led me to my present job working with inmates in prison, but that's another story.

We are all connected!

Bio: Lois Jones is a professional artist living in south central Pennsylvania, where she continues to draw inspiration for her paintings. After a career teaching art in the public schools, Lois now finds fulfillment in helping prison inmates to express themselves through artistic venues.