



On the Wings of a Prayer

Nicki Bruce Logan

I visited with artist Linda Miller the other night -- you'll remember that her paintings were featured exhibit at the Museum of the Llano Estacado in December.

What many of you may not know is that on the snowy December day she was to leave her home in San Patricio, New Mexico, for Plainview, her great Pyrenees was run over. While Linda was trying to help her pet, in its pain it bit her... latched onto her right hand -- her painting hand -- and caused severe damage.

So severe that the surgeons operating on her hand regarded in their expectations for full recovery. In fact, it was assumed that she would not be able to paint with the same (or even close to the same) level of skill she had before the accident.

She had the best of medical care, but there is so much that can be done when a thumb is crushed, bones chipped and damage is done to the tendons that control and movement.

Still, by Christmas, Linda was back to painting. She had some commissions to finish and she found that she *could* hold a paintbrush. It was awkward, but slowly and painstakingly, she painted.

Linda is a naturalist and is known for paintings of the wildlife found in her New Mexico rally. Particularly, she is painted a series of hummingbird nests, beautiful to behold in their natural state, but difficult to translate to canvas. She felt moved to paint another nest -- a test of whether she had lost her skill.

"When I started, it flowed onto the canvas," Linda told me. "The nest first, then a hummingbird hovering over it. It was amazing..."

The painting was so perfect, that Linda, who also creates most of the frames for her work, enhanced the hummingbird with a sterling silver frame.

"Without doubt, this was the best painting I've ever done -- there was something about it that transcended my others."

She remembered the minister friend, Rev. William "Bill" Kennedy, and his wife, Sharon, had told her that if she ever painted another hummingbird, they wanted it. Linda called them and, in January, they drove out to her country studio to look at the painting. They wanted it.

The only selling block was the price... more than a couple could afford.

While the Kennedys related that it was out of their reach, that they had just a certain amount they could afford, Linda asked what they planned to spend. Of course, by this time, after the Kennedys had seen her studio and gallery of work, they were embarrassed to mention such a low figure.

Eventually, they revealed the figure they had set aside. It was a fraction of the value of the hummingbird.



Linda accepted their offer with the provision that Bill say a prayer for her each day. The Kennedys were elated.

“For seven years, we've been dreaming of having one of your creations in our collection,” Bill Kennedy wrote Linda after they return home to Oklahoma where he teaches a seminary.

“Ever since we saw your first work, in particular the hummingbird nests, we have been captured by your talent and philosophy of art and life. Thinking we could not afford one of your pieces, we placed our dream on the shelf. Not only have you made our dream come true, but your gracious willingness to sell the piece at a price we can afford makes us very humble.”

A prayer for Linda –

Almighty God, we are thankful for the gift of Linda Miller. In the creations of her hand we can see the truth of your creation. In her paint and canvas interpretations of life we can see the beauty of your wisdom.

Lord God, we give you praise for the ways in which you speak to us. The whisper of the gentle breeze and the radiant colors of the winter sunset are reminders of that which is and is to come. May we always pause to listen to your voice as you speak in and through the paintings of our friend, Linda Miller.

Merciful God, first heal and then guide the hand of Linda Miller as she places oil to canvas with another message of life. Inspire her with a vision of eternal values... love and family. Allow her talent to bring her mental image to full and glorious focus on a small piece of canvas.

Receive us, eternal God, as collector and artist become one in a shared dream of nature's Harmony and the future's legacy. Receive our commitment, which we dedicate to you, to make the world a better place through the power of artistic creation. May the oil and canvas images of beauty and peace, harmony and hope call all people to become that which you have made... Children of God. Amen.

A powerful prayer... and the best sale Linda ever made. Her hand is healed. She has complete and full mobility of her hand.

Linda knows who is responsible for her miraculous healing. You know, too, don't you? And, what about the scars the twisted the skin on her hand?

Gone. Disappeared. Healed.

“It is truly God's miracle,” Linda says. “I don't have one scar. They are all gone. There is one small scar that I've had since childhood, but the others are gone.”

Perfectly healed... it does a hummingbird soul for prayer.

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Casa Linda Miller
Hondo Valley Classical Artist