

sowing the seeds of

Inspiration

by Melody M. Nuñez

even the crow,
with its feathers,
beak, and eye of
darkness

is
filled with the
white light
of
joy
during
flight



does this provide a constant source of ideas, but it also stretches me artistically, as it forces me to create a visual representation of a theme that may be outside of my usual subject matter. A valuable part of this process is the magazine's submission deadline, as I work best with a specific deadline.

Another technique I've put into practice relates to the book club I belong to. We read a new book each month, and I recently challenged myself to create a collage based on Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*. The book was compelling, though the story was bleak, and as I planned the collage I wondered if I'd be able to successfully render my vision of McCarthy's writing and still create a collage that was "me." I succeeded, and translated the written word into a visual, with interesting materials and a design that still reflected my personal style.

Really looking at your environment in the day-to-day can also yield wonderful results. Though I live in a city, I love nature and really notice these elements in my surroundings. It was my repeated sightings of crows that led to the creation of the collage that accompanies this article. I was taken by these birds, and by their utter darkness. By paying attention to these fractional characters in my environment, I was able to create a piece that incorporates my love of the visual and of the written word.

It's important to note that inspiration is nothing without action. I find I'm most successful when I keep my art journal handy and can make notes or plan out an upcoming piece. Recording your ideas on scraps of paper, or sending e-mails to yourself would also work — whatever you need to do to nurture that seed of creation you've stumbled upon. Formulating your idea and following up with time to execute your plan is essential, and these same principles can be applied to life as a whole — your bigger picture. Take the time to notice what resonates in you. Take notes, formulate a plan, take action, and feel the satisfaction as you create the art and life that you want, and are proud of. May you sow the seeds of inspiration, and may the coming months be fruitful for us all! †

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Inspiration can be an elusive thing — a very fickle friend to the working artist. At times, ideas may flow to you and through you effortlessly and abundantly. Other times, your inspirational well may be "parched," and your muse seems to shrivel up and blow away on the slightest breeze. While it's natural to experience an occasional dry spell, simply paying attention to your life and surroundings can reap scores of ideas to use immediately, or to tuck away for a rainy day.

I began working as an artist in earnest, five years ago. Since then, I've happened upon some techniques that keep me inspired and creating — whenever time allows or a deadline dictates. One of the tools I use is this very publication: *Somerset Studio*. I monitor the themes of the upcoming issues, and challenge myself to create a piece of art based on many of the themes. Not only