

H A R L A N   R I C H A R D S

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The Art of Drawing

I used to think that certain people were blessed with artistic talent and the rest of us had to go through life making stick figures and envying real artists. I was wrong.

In 2010, when I turned my life over to Christ, he gave me the gift of poetry. In 4 years, I wrote over 600 poems and had dozens of them published. Prior to this, I had no poetic ability whatsoever. Then, in 2014, after 4 years of writing poetry, the Lord called me to become an artist. Since He had already astounded me by creating a poet where none had existed before, I deferred to His will for me and decided to learn to draw. I bought a book called Everyone Can Draw, by Barrington Barber, and some drawing supplies.

I followed the instructions in the book and, sure enough, I began to draw recognizable pictures. For the last 3 years, I've been drawing every day - sometimes up to 6 hours per day.

I do mostly graphite and colored pencil drawings but I'm experimenting with ball point pen and pastels. And even though I enjoy working with colored pencils more than graphite, my graphite drawings are far superior to my colored pencil work.

Practice makes perfect, as they say, and my constant drawing has enabled me to develop the ability to draw. I'm not a great artist or a master of drawing, but I've reached a point where I think the quality of my work is good enough to be proud of. There are many skilled artists in prison. They seem to have a natural ability to see things and accurately render what they see on paper or other medium. I like to say that there are two kinds of artist - those with talent and those with perseverance. I'm the latter kind and if it had not been for God speaking to my heart telling me to draw, I never would have started. His inspiration enabled me to venture into unknown territory and experience something which would otherwise have remained hidden to me.

If you are one of those people who say you have no talent for drawing, take it from me: anyone can draw.

See an assortment of my artwork on my FaceBook page.