



**JRB ART**  
**AT THE ELMS**  
Pasco Arts District

---

## ART IS LIFE

By Joy Reed Belt

---



Behnaz Sohrabian, "Roya," Oil on Canvas, 40 x 40 in., \$1,000

In the last several months, practicing the art of staying alive has become increasingly important. COVID has not only rearranged how we live, but it has also taught us that the gift of life is fragile and it is temporary.

A week ago last night, after not being able to get rid of a sore throat, I went to my favorite St. Anthony Urgent Care Center and was diagnosed with Strep Throat. While there, I was also tested for COVID. The next morning, I found out my results were positive and was instructed to quarantine for 10 days. Subsequently, I telephoned a wonderful friend to tell her about my test. She immediately said, "Let me make a call and call you back." A few minutes later a doctor called me, asked a few questions and told me that due to my age and chronic asthma, I was eligible to be admitted in an investigative trial being conducted by INTEGRIS for Eli Lilly. I enrolled. This past Friday, I was one of the lucky few given an infusion of synthetic antibodies, called BAMLANIVIMAB, designed to help the body fight COVID. The journey I started that day has not been unlike visiting Dickens' ghosts of Christmas, Past, Present and Future.



"God Bless Us Everyone" by Norman Rockwell  
December 15, 1934

On that Friday, I decided to drive myself to the infusion center to avoid contaminating anyone else. My destination was the Jim Thorpe Rehabilitation Center on South Western, which has been repurposed to take care of COVID patients. Once parked, I called the phone number I had been given. A man came to my car, walked me to a building and into a large room. The room was divided by heavy, somewhat eerie looking sheets of plastic that could be zipped and unzipped. Most of the people I could see and hear appeared to be very, very sick. I was seated in one of the lounge-like chairs where the infusion would be administered. The front line hero who gave me the treatment was competent, thoughtful and somewhat serious, but not without a sense of humor. After getting me hooked up, he noticed that I had an art magazine with me. When asked about it, I told him I owned an art gallery. His immediate response was "Do you know who Charles Banks Wilson was?" I said "Yes. Of course! I met him years ago and visited him in his studio in Miami, Oklahoma several times and much later his studio in Fayetteville, Arkansas." I also told him that I had exhibited and sold Wilson's work in my Gallery. He told me he was also from Miami and that his father had been an artist, as well as one of Wilson's models and that the family owned some of his work. The sheer terror I had been feeling since learning of my test results began to subside. After all, I was being treated by someone who loved art! I was sent home with an iPad and oximeter and was told that INTEGRIS would monitor me three times a day.

I got in my SUV and started the engine. The fuel light came on, so I used my navigation system to find a travel center. While filling the tank, a wave of extreme fatigue hit me. I had to sit in the car for a bit, resting for the drive home. As I waited to regain some energy, I saw a handsome couple walking in front of me. They appeared to be so happy, healthy, and so in love. As they caught my eye, they called out, "Have a wonderful day!" That scene was such a contrast to what I had seen at the hospital.

Finally, with the help of my navigation system and, I think, a bit of divine guidance, I made it home. Totally exhausted, I immediately went to bed with my little four-legged companion, lovingly curled up beside me. Since then, friends and colleagues have been checking on me, delivering food and other necessities. I have been able to handle my work responsibilities with the assistance of wonderful staff and by using my own version of a "Queen Box" placed outside my front door. Alas, mine is not red nor as well crafted as are those of Queen Elizabeth. Mine is plastic with a clear bottom and a blue plastic lid.

But, just like The Queen's mail, my mail and papers to read and sign are delivered and picked up every day. This morning, Denise Duong put a lovely Christmas bouquet in my Queen Box along with a book that her partner Gabriel Friedman created about her pregnancy and the birth of their Christmas miracle, Francesca Rosalee, a.k.a. Frankie Rose.



Francesca Rosalee, a.k.a. Frankie Rose

This period of isolation has not only given me the opportunity, I apparently needed to physically recharge, it has also become emotionally therapeutic. If it is true that “tears wash away the residue of the soul or of life,” then I am getting a whole lot cleaner. You see, on day four or five of my confinement I accidentally discovered the Lifetime Movie Channel. For those who are not familiar with their programming, this Christmas season they are hosting Christmas, made-for-television-movies 24/7. All the movies have roughly the same plot: a lost or unrequited love, living an unhappy life and a resulting obsession with work; going home for the holidays and being put back in touch with what is really important in life. All of them end with a miraculous and very happy ending. These movies are absolutely wonderful! At least they are for me right now. I needed a reason to cry and be comforted. When not crying, sleeping, or enjoying the art I live with, I have been reading through an old leather-bound set of Agatha Christie mysteries. All restorative things.

Testing positive for COVID has substantially changed my life. It has become simpler, emotionally richer and more appreciated. I am thankful to be alive and for perhaps being given a chance to live a little longer. Merry Christmas! As Tiny Tim once said, “God bless us every one!”

[More Blogs!](#)

---

2810 N Walker Ave | [jrbartgallery.com](http://jrbartgallery.com) | 405.528.6336

---

