



I was born in a rural area of Danielson, CT, the eldest of four children. I wrote about my childhood in the Kislev 2003 issue of this magazine.

Twenty years later, my mother, Elsie Fetterman, was interviewed by Musia Kaplan for this magazine (Tammuz 2023) at length; if you missed it, you can read it on the website nsheichabadnewsletter.com/fetterman.

I was brought up “traditional.” We went to the synagogue for holiday celebrations, for Hebrew School, and for *simchas*. For their Jewishness, my parents depended on the synagogue, where Chabad *shliach* Rabbi Yisroel Gordon came as a *bachur* in the 1950s to inspire our family.

Frequently, my Friday nights were shared with friends. My friend’s mother lit candles before Shabbos, and they had a Bubbe in the house. Both my grandmothers had passed away before my parents were married. I never knew what it was like to have a Bubbe.

As a child I thought to myself: “When I grow up, I will have Shabbos candles lit on Friday nights in my house!”

When my husband, Richard Goldstein, and I were married, we were considered “observant Conservative.”

After our daughters were born, a new couple came on Chabad *shlichus* to New London, CT, where we lived: Rabbi Shlomo and Mrs. Esther Bluming.

One Shabbos morning, Esther suggested that I come to her shul sometime, which was Orthodox. I told her I could never do that. She asked why not. I said, “I just would not feel comfortable.”

She responded, “If you stay in a place that you are comfortable, you will

never grow.”

Well, little by little, we grew into more observance and more frequent attendance at the Orthodox shul.

Many decades and many *mitzvos* and milestones later, we and our married children have made *aliyah* to the Chabad community in Rehovot, Israel.

I teach art to English-speaking children and I volunteer a lot. I am the Israeli distributor of the *N’shei Chabad Newsletter* and I work hard to make sure every subscriber receives her issue.

Coming from rural Connecticut, I grew up with trees and a love for trees. Much of my artwork includes trees and in appreciation of Tu b’Shvat, I share that with you now.

If you would like to purchase my art on note cards, you are welcome to email me at vita.pen@mac.com.



The Tree's Silhouette

“**T**he Tree's Silhouette” illustrates candlelighting time. This is what that most peaceful time looks like to me. As a teenager, I did a report on the 39 *Melachos* and this was the cover of my report. I loved growing up with trees and I still love looking out my window after candlelighting.

**A Winter's Day
in the Country**

“**A** Winter's Day” was inspired by a winter's day in the country among the farms. Maybe that is what a Russian *shtetl* looked like, where my great-grandparents came from.

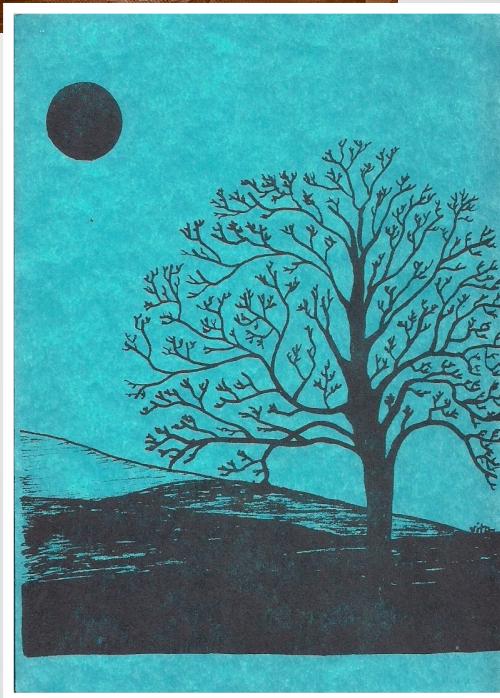




In the Pink

I love nature, the forests, the trails, the hiking. My art is how I bring some of that beauty home with me. Some people take pictures, but I draw. "In the Pink" is one of a series of sketches of flowers. Many of my sketches are made into note cards. So, I get to share them with others.

Hashem has created and continues to create beauty for us all to breathe in. That is an awesome gift!



Snowfall at 770

On Yud Shevat 5747 (Feb. 9, 1987), I came to Crown Heights from rural Connecticut, and it snowed. I looked at 770 as majestic. I felt the meaning, the depth, the history of Chassidus that radiated from that holy place. It was 770's outreach to me (in the form of *shluchim* Rabbi Shlomo and Mrs. Esther Bluming in New London, CT) that brought me back to my Jewishness.

In strengthening our own Jewish heritage, we can go higher and higher, brick by brick, as we see in "Snowfall at 770."

The snow is falling gently, with tiny flakes, on this building. When I arrived on that wintry day 39 years ago, I envisioned the snow as Hashem's way of protecting our heritage.

The Sprawling Tree

I have always been mesmerized by the seemingly infinite branches, intertwined in a winter tree. All of winter goes by, and all we see are branches. Most bare trees naturally form a perfect curve around the fading edge, which helps to create its beauty. "The Sprawling Tree" keeps me company while I marvel at Hashem's creation and apply it to my own world. We have to be grounded like trees with solid roots, but we can reach out to others in an infinite manner. ■