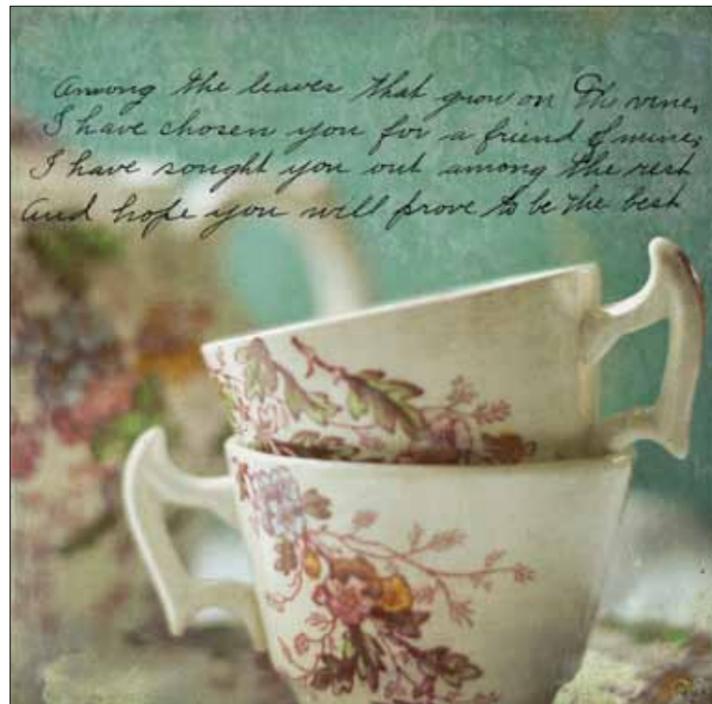


by Jamie Jamison

Connecting to the Past WITH DIGITAL BRUSHES

Recently I wandered into an antique store and found a treasure now on the endangered list — cursive writing by a teenager. On a dusty shelf, under a pile of papers was a small Victorian book from the early 1900s. At first I didn't know what it was, but as I leafed through the pages, I saw that it was a book once owned by a young girl named Leora from Pennsylvania. Before schools had yearbooks, students would write sentiments in an autograph book using their very best handwriting. Friends and family would pen their name, a kind saying, drawing, or poem — and thanks to those who had the foresight to save these books, some can still be found on eBay, Etsy, or in antique stores. These mini time capsules contain beautiful penmanship as well as a glimpse into the hopes and dreams of another generation.

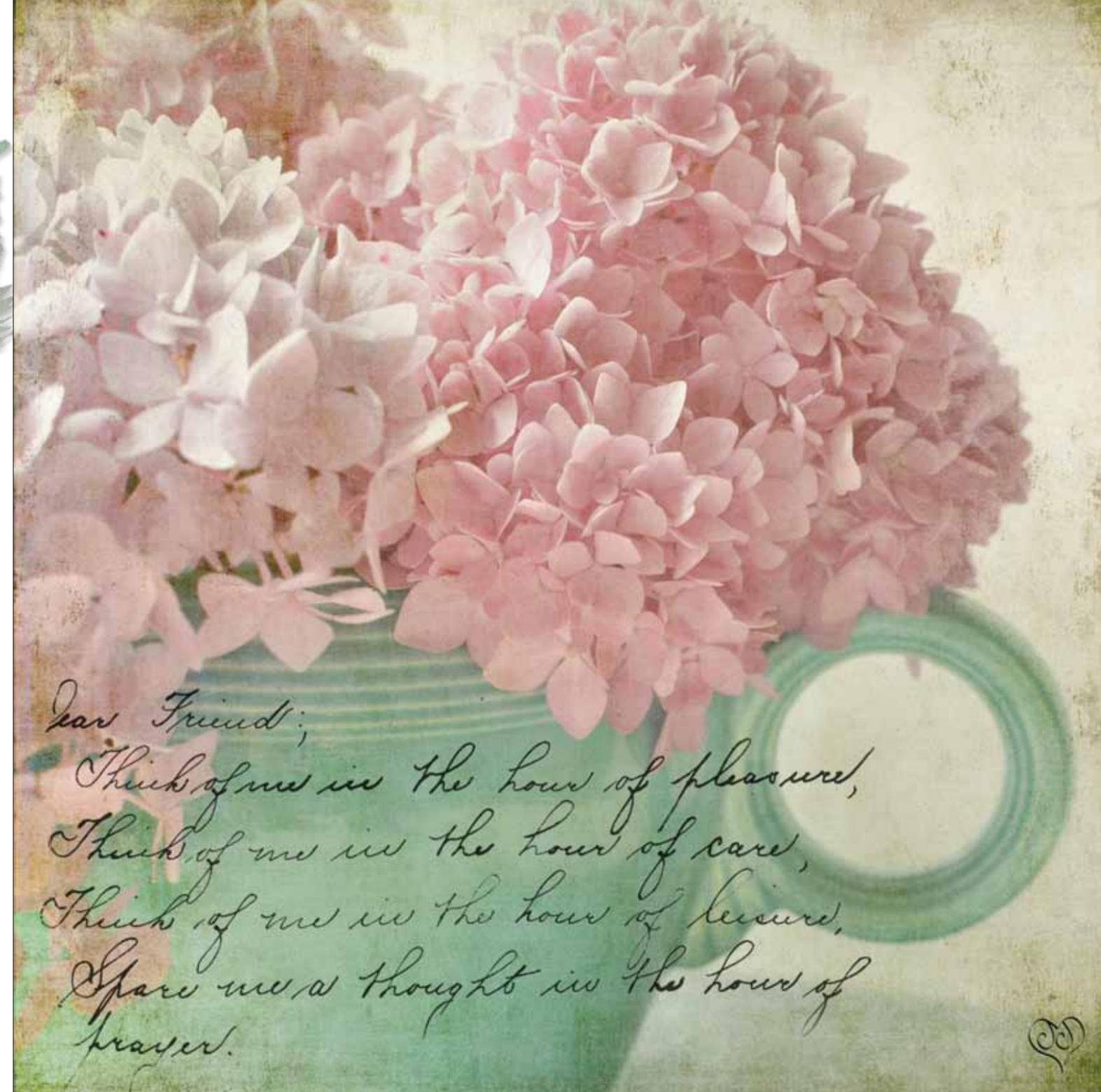


My photo art tiles are comprised of multiple layers and I often look for something that will add a unique element to my work. Once I saw these timeless sayings in the beautiful cursive, I knew I wanted to incorporate them into my photos to celebrate these wise sentiments. The "Dear Leora" series combines the brushes created from entries in the autograph book with my recent photos and some vintage family photos.

Creating your own Photoshop brushes from the handwriting from an old letter or document is an easy and terrific way to personalize artwork. Handwriting adds a unique element and preserves the connection to family, friends, or the past. Thanks to the sentiments of Leora's classmates, we are transported back to a simpler time, and one gets a sense of the heart of these students. What is even more surprising is how these simple words of wisdom are relevant even a century later.

Best Friends

This tea set belongs to my great-grandmother. The cups are very small and today we would only use something this tiny for espresso. It's wonderful to think of my grandmother enjoying tea with her friends; however, today many of these sweet sets collect dust in a cabinet. I try to pull out these lovely old pieces and



breathe new life into them. The cups together look like old friends and the sentiment complements the photo and celebrates friendship. Lots of textures and brushes were used to create this photo. Nicole Van, Kim Klassen, and some custom damask brushes add depth to this photo.

Think of Me

Perhaps it's our long winters in Ohio, but I enjoy taking still shots of flowers throughout the year. For this photo, I gathered a few large

pink hydrangeas from our yard and put them in a vintage Fiesta pitcher. Hydrangeas remind me of the long, lazy days of summer when you are enjoying time with family and friends. I thought the sentiment about thinking of that special someone worked perfectly, so I created a brush from the text and added it on the pitcher. The colors of the pink blossoms and teal pitcher were a little strong, so I de-saturated the colors in Lightroom for a softer look. In Photoshop, I added several textures from Kim Klassen to give the photo more of a vintage feel. →

Make Your Own Photoshop Brushes:

1. Scan an image and make sure it is as big as possible. Try to have it at least 300dpi.
2. In the adjustment panel, change the image to a Black and White. You can do this with the B/W icon. You can also de-saturate the image:
Apple: Cmd—Shift—U
PC: Ctrl—Shift—U
3. Now you want to make the whites and blacks very distinct and minimize the gray. This can be done one of two ways or a combination of both. Depending on the age of the document, I usually do both:
Run a Curves Adjustment
Apple: Cmd—M
PC: Ctrl—M
4. and/or use a Levels Adjustment
Apple: Cmd—L
PC: Ctrl—L
5. Sometimes there are black flecks from vintage paper. Using the Eraser tool or the Paintbrush tool on the image will take away these flecks and reduce the noise.
6. Once the image is a crisp black and white, open the Marquee tool and select the area that you wish to make a brush on the background layer. (Be careful not to use the Marquee tool on an adjustment layer).
7. Go to Edit/Define Brush Pre-Set
8. Name your Brush.
9. Open your Brush Palette and your new brush should be at the end.
10. Now you will have a brush that you can re-size, give a custom color and use on any image.

Think of me in the hour of pleasure
Think of me in the hour of care,
Think of me in the hour of leisure,
Spare me a thought in the hour of prayer.

"May your life be as deep as the ocean,
Your sorrow as free as its foam."

For-get-me-not,
For-get-me-never,
For I will be
Your friend forever.

Waterford Pa.,
Jan. 8, 1909.

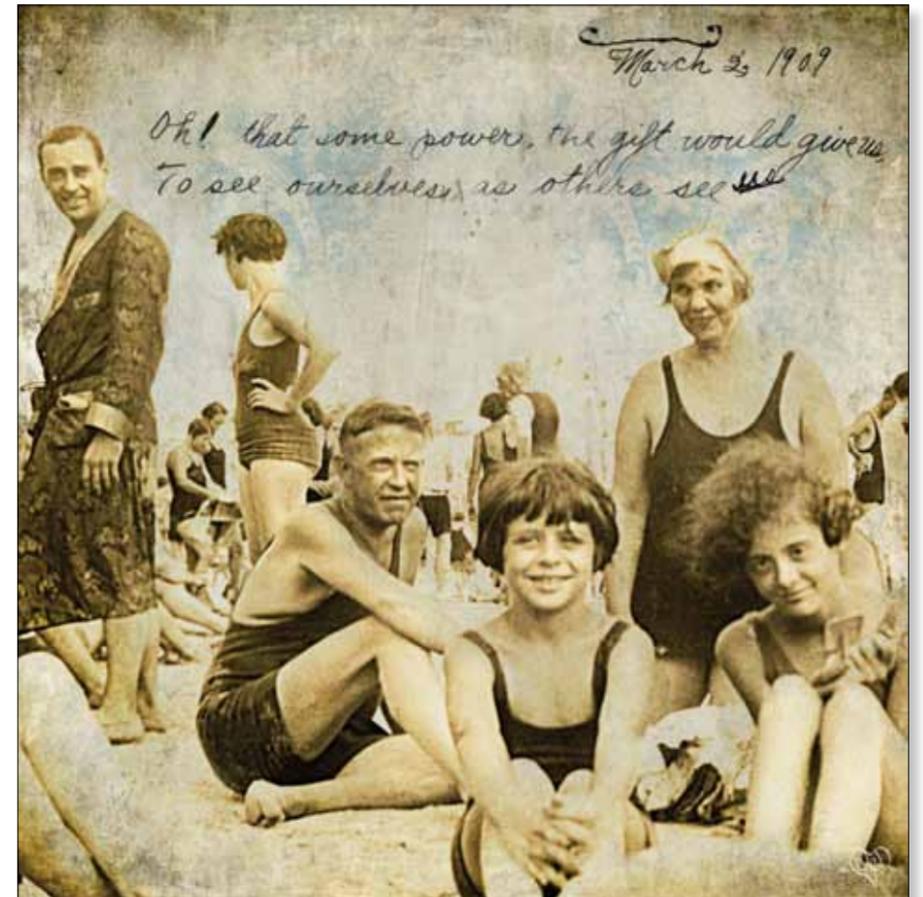
Free Download from Jamie

Artist Jamie Jamison has generously shared some of her handwritten vintage text as a free download for our readers.

Go to <http://stampington.com/Somerset-Digital-Studio-Autumn-2014>.

Beach Smiles

This is one of those old photos that you often find in a shoebox in the back of a closet. When I sorted through some old family photos, I found this and immediately loved all the faces and the great beach scene. I believe my mother-in-law is the small girl in the front. It's fun to imagine who else is in the photo and what they are doing—the Cary Grant look-alike in the robe, the girl with the curly hair, and the lady with the white bathing cap—everyone looks so happy. People are always so concerned about how they look, but when you look at this photo, there is no judgment and all that you see is a wonderful day at the beach many years ago. I loved this quote, because it reminds us that we are often our harshest critics and others look at us with much kinder eyes. This photo has several Kim Klassen textures as well as some textures that I created.



Life Is Like an Ocean

This photo is from a family vacation in South Carolina, but the inspiration for the finished piece came from the handwritten wish in the autograph book. I took many pictures on this trip and truthfully this photo was not one of my favorites. When I found the saying about the ocean, I searched my vacation pictures and found this one. Sometimes, it takes the inspiration from something else to really make a photo come to life. To give the photo a more tranquil feel, I added some of my textures and some from Kim Klassen in Photoshop. After adding the brush of the sentiment, the image now tells a more lovely story. ♦

Jamie Jamison is a mixed-media artist and part-time college instructor living in Canfield, Ohio, and Chautauqua, New York. Her Photo Art Tiles reflect the simple beauty of the layers in life. To see more of Jamie's work, visit her website at alajamie.com, follow her on Instagram (@alajamie) or contact her by e-mail at jamiemj@me.com.