

**April Theme: What one masterpiece (music, art or literature) would you most liked to have seen being created?**

**Dr. Jane Brooks** -- On our first trip to Rome early in our marriage, we visited the Vatican for the first time. In order to enter the cathedral, we walked through the Sistine Chapel with its glorious ceiling.

Upon entering the cathedral, we viewed - the *Pieta*. As we gasped at its beauty and its ability to show so much emotion in marble, we felt awe that a piece of art could have such a great effect on us. It surprised us to feel almost like crying at seeing a piece of art with such emotional intensity. The remainder of the cathedral was amazing, but limited, in my view, compared to the intense emotionality of the *Pieta*. It opened me up to the world of art, a gift that I have enjoyed for over sixty years. It required no teaching to feel the statue's power to reach out.

**Kathleen DiGiovanna** -- *Casablanca* is my movie and story of choice. It is perfect in black and white in a world at that time was black and white. I've seen it maybe 10 times and find a new message every time.

**Lynn Garelick** -- I have always admired Vermeer. I just finished reading *Girl with a Pearl Earring* by Tracy Chevalier. Ms. Chevalier has created a novel in which the narrator, the girl in the portrait, tells the story of what it was like to be a maid in the Vermeer household. She was hired specifically to clean the artist's studio each day. She ultimately ends up helping him mix his paints and modeling for him for this one portrait. I would have loved to be a fly on the wall to watch this artist work so slowly and meticulously, his handling of color and paint in particular.

I attach my pastel drawing of three girls, all related by a pearl earring and their youth, which ultimately combines their humanity given their racial difference. While doing this pastel drawing, I studied Vermeer's use of color carefully and picked up on the rich use of ultramarine blue next to the gold/browns of the clothing and headdress. And the expression on the girl's face, the slight parting of her lips, the gleam on the lips, all really touched my mind/heart and ultimately my hand on the pastel sticks.



**Doris Mady** -- As an art student I studied Michelangelo's sketches. However, it wasn't until the 1964 World's Fair that I saw *The Pieta* in person that I truly marveled at his work.

Likely Michelangelo did a sketch first, but how did he translate a sketch into such a masterpiece of such strength and delicacy? He didn't have the tools we have today. How would he know the properties of marble? Why did he choose marble has a translucence to it? How does a sculptor know what would unfold with the tap of a hammer?



While a not religious person I'm sure there might have been some mumblings not meant for my tender ears! But oh, what I would have learned!



**Diane Tunick Morello** -- *Mom Was Always Right*

"We have to get there early, Diane," Mom whispered in my ear. I roused from bed and soon met Mom in the hotel lobby. Backpacks on, we left the hotel and began our trek through the serpentine alleys of Florence to the Accademia Gallery, getting spots at the front of a growing line. When the gallery doors opened, Mom ushered me inside, hand on shoulder, whispering, "Don't spend time in the front rooms right now, Di. Just go straight back to the atrium."

I split away from the crowd and marched straight toward the back. There it was: David, *the David*, Michelangelo's magnificent work, a colossus in the silent and empty atrium. His angelic face shone in natural light, slingshot draped over left shoulder, eyes distant, muscles taut. I circled the statue, captivated by the perfection of his arms, legs, head, hands, hair, toes — the man Michelangelo released from a block of Carrara marble, the man only Michelangelo could see.

I turned to Mom, standing slightly behind me, and mouthed the words, "Thank you." She beamed. I turned back to David, gazing at him in quiet and peace, grateful I followed Mom's advice. Mom was always right.

**Lee Paine** -- 2.20.22

What joy there could be in watching  
a visual art masterpiece being created -  
each stroke on a canvas  
expressing an idea that's been stated!

But what about music and writing?  
Watching Jane Austin write **Mansfield Park**?  
What would we learn by watching her  
scratch out inky lines so stark?

Watching Amy Beach compose **Gaelic Symphony**  
in dim light, late at night?  
What do we learn from that?  
Will our observations be right?

Until these kinds of works are finished,  
we won't know by watching, what's there.  
It's not *watching* the act of creation,  
but the *product* about which we care.

Artistic inklings begin in the head,  
which progress through one's gut and heart,  
where outsiders can't see what's prompting  
the artist from the start.

These processes are so complicated,  
so internal and so deep,  
that the artists themselves aren't aware  
of processing them in their sleep.

A visual artist brushes strokes on a surface,  
but the writer chews his nails,  
waiting to compose the next sentence,  
searching her memory for possible tales.

And while an artist surveys her colors  
on a palette with many choices,  
the musician considers sound colors  
as they will come from human voices.

All these different artistic methods  
are unique in their own way.  
Exactly how they become masterpieces  
is very difficult to say.

**May Theme: What little-known painting, musical piece or literature stopped you in your tracks the 1st time you experienced it?**