

Fortitude

Strength in the face of adversity or difficulty.



Harriet Tubman by H. B. Lindsley

Known as the “Moses of her people,” Harriet Tubman was enslaved, escaped, and helped others gain their freedom as a “conductor” of the Underground Railroad.

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About the Editor

Native Philadelphian Mercer A. Redcross, III co-founded the October Gallery with Evelyn Redcross in 1985. The gallery's first location was in the Powelton Village section of Philadelphia. Today, October Gallery is located in Germantown/Mt Airy where it continues to promote African-American art, artists, and consumer education. Redcross graduated from Cheyney University with a BS in Economics. Then, he earned a Master of Business Administration from Eastern University.

Dear family and friends, herein are many fortitudes (the origin of many, now unknown to me) that have been guideposts for me as I fulfill my destiny.

They have sustained me, enabling me to savor as well as weather life's vicissitudes.

I hope for you they will be fortitudes and not just platitudes. Pass on those that are fortitudes for you.

Peace, Love, Hope and Joy

Shirley Redcross Rhone

Shirley, my father's sister, was a Certified Reading Specialist in the Philadelphia, PA School District for 45 years. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree from West Chester State Teachers College and earned a Master's Degree from the University of Pennsylvania. Shirley R. Rhone 1928-2019.

The editor has added a few additional quotes from family members and others. These additions are by Junious Rhone, Sr., Alverta H. Redcross, Geraldine Redcross, Mercer A. Redcross, Jr., Robin Rhone, Deborah Stephens, Nelson Stringer, Kelly Harrison, Glenn Ellis, Wade Redcross, Michael Tendler, Stephanie Redcross West and Lamar Redcross.

In editing this book the editor realized that some of these sayings may be variations of African proverbs, old Black sayings, quotes from the Bible, and everyday quotations. There is no attempt to claim these quotes and/or sayings in this book.



Drawing by Aaron Douglas from *Fire!!* (1926)

This book features over 180 noteworthy and inspiring quotes that have been handed down through the ages and attributed to the wise elders who paved the way.

Dedicated to:

Shirley Redcross Rhone

Junious Rhone, Sr.

Junious Rhone, Jr.

Junious Rhone, III



"Sweet" by Sanaa

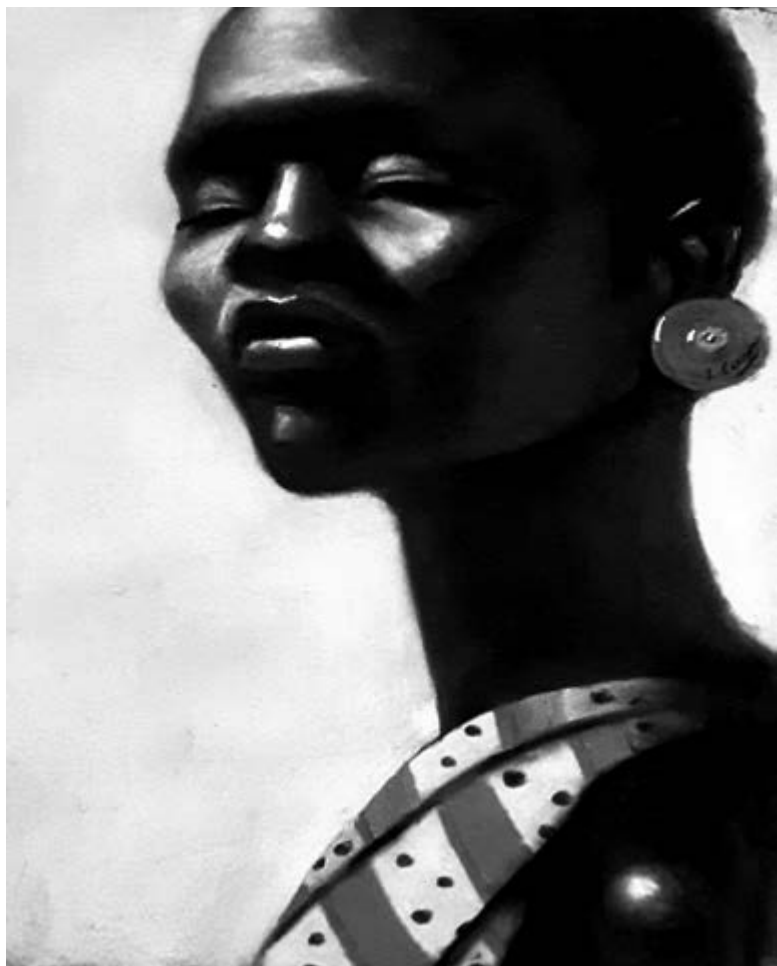


You can catch more flies with honey than vinegar.

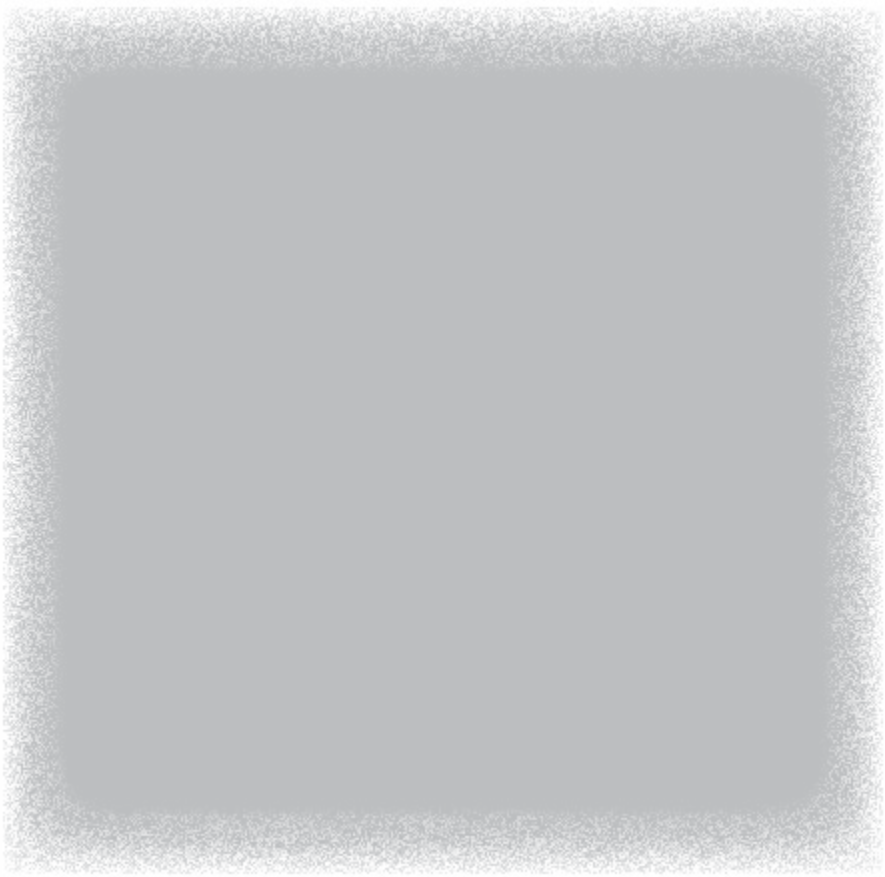
Luck doesn't last forever.

Truth is universal. Perception of truth is not.

Be the sun when you can't find any sunshine.



"Sauda" by Laurie Cooper

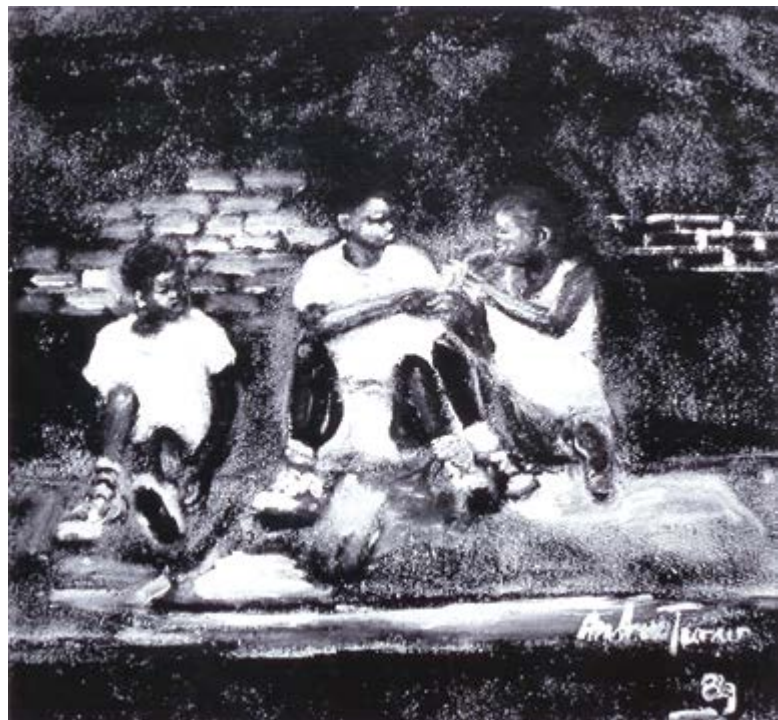


You may burn me for a fool, but you won't get any ashes.

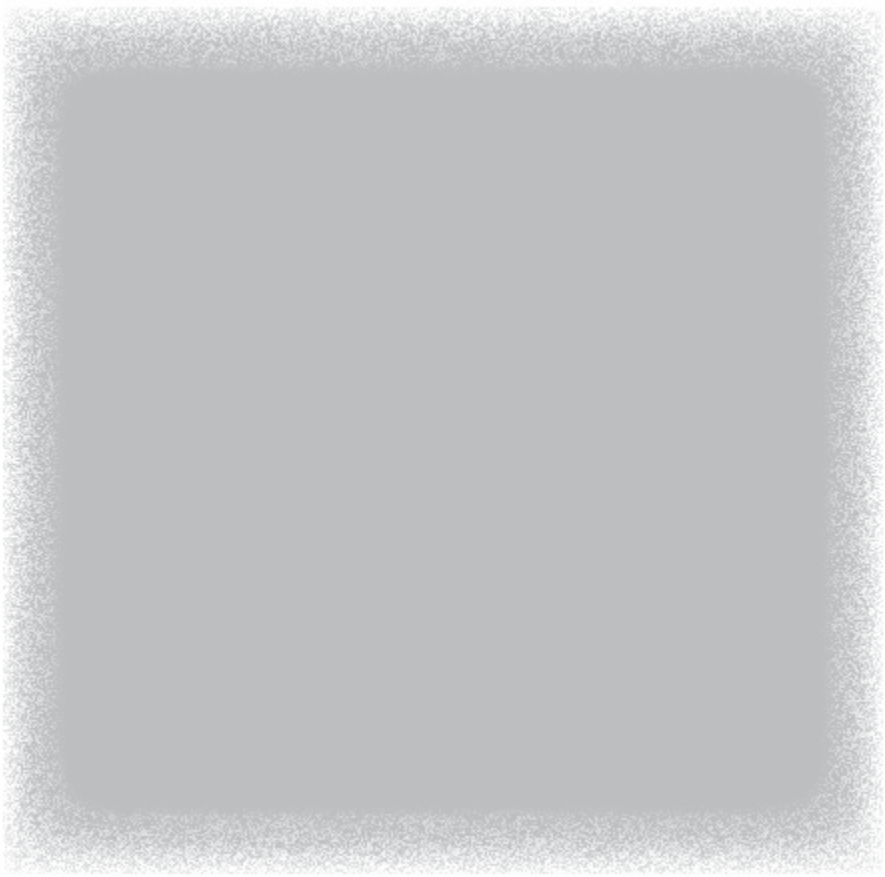
The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.

Don't bite off more than you can chew.

If you can be bought you can be sold.



"Learn to Share" by Andrew Turner



Be a cheerful giver for there is no downside to giving.

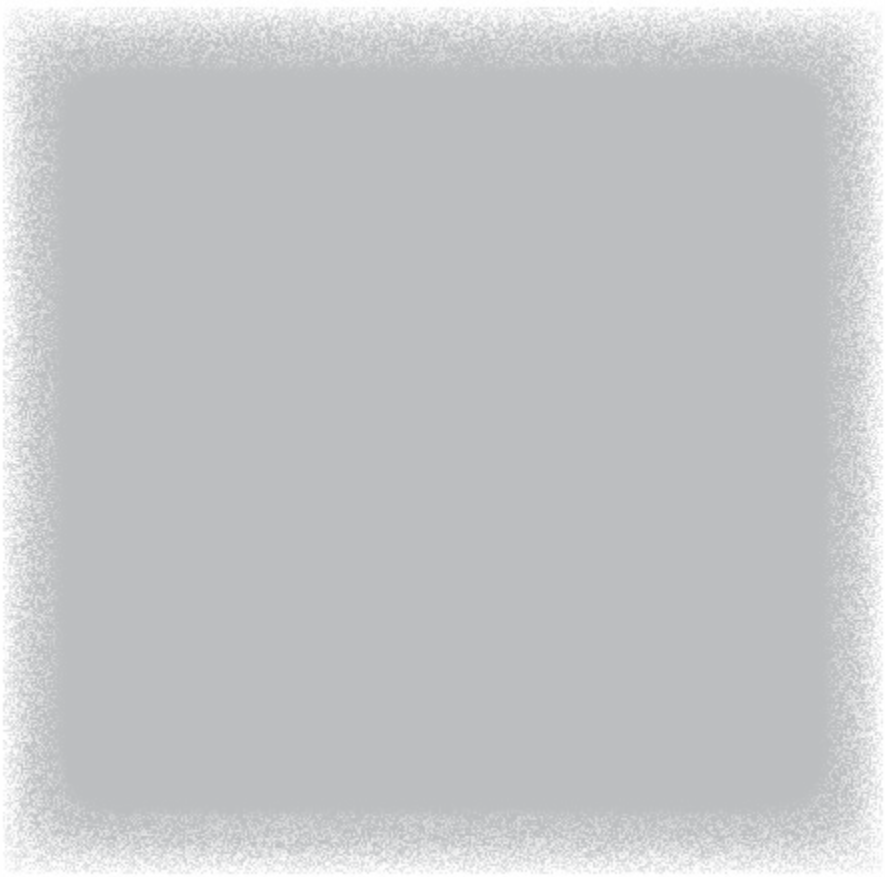
Blessed are those who can give without remembering and take without forgetting.

Faith it till you make it.

Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened.



"Behind the Glasses" by Sanaa



Every shut eye ain't sleep and every goodbye ain't gone.

Just don't do something, stand there. Doing nothing is the hardest work of all.

Silence is true wisdom's reply.

A half loaf is better than none at all.



"Malcolm" by Sanaa



Someone told you that and you believed it?

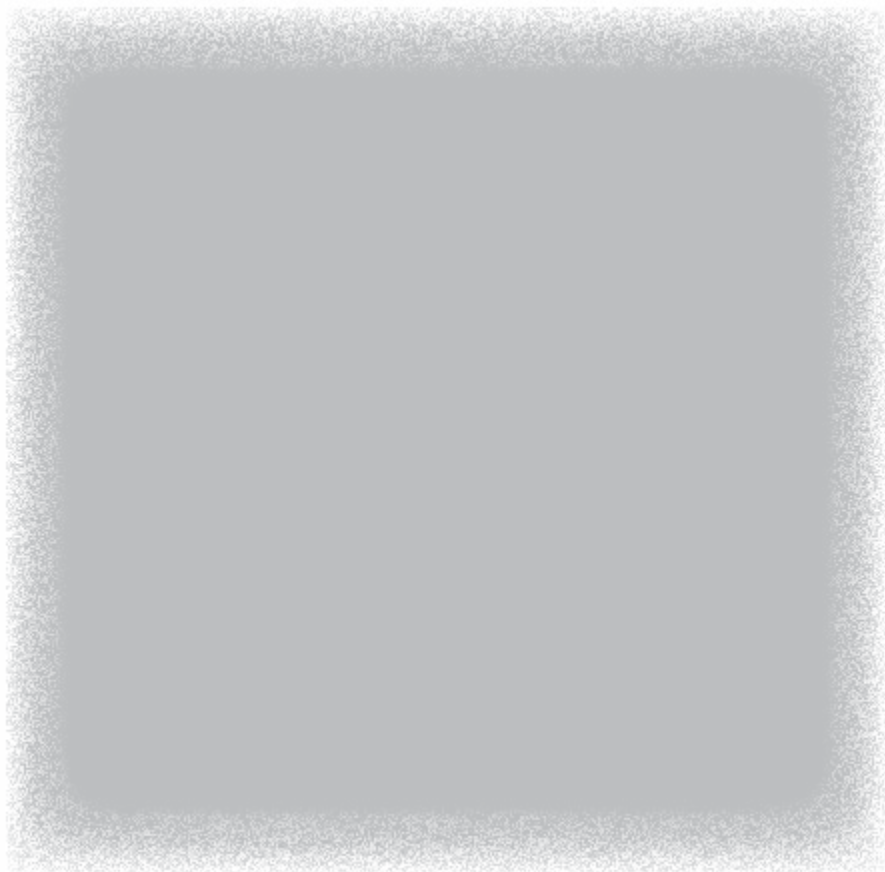
You can do anything, but not everything.

We lose ourselves in books. We find ourselves there too.

Watch as well as pray.



"White and the Black" by Sargent Johnson

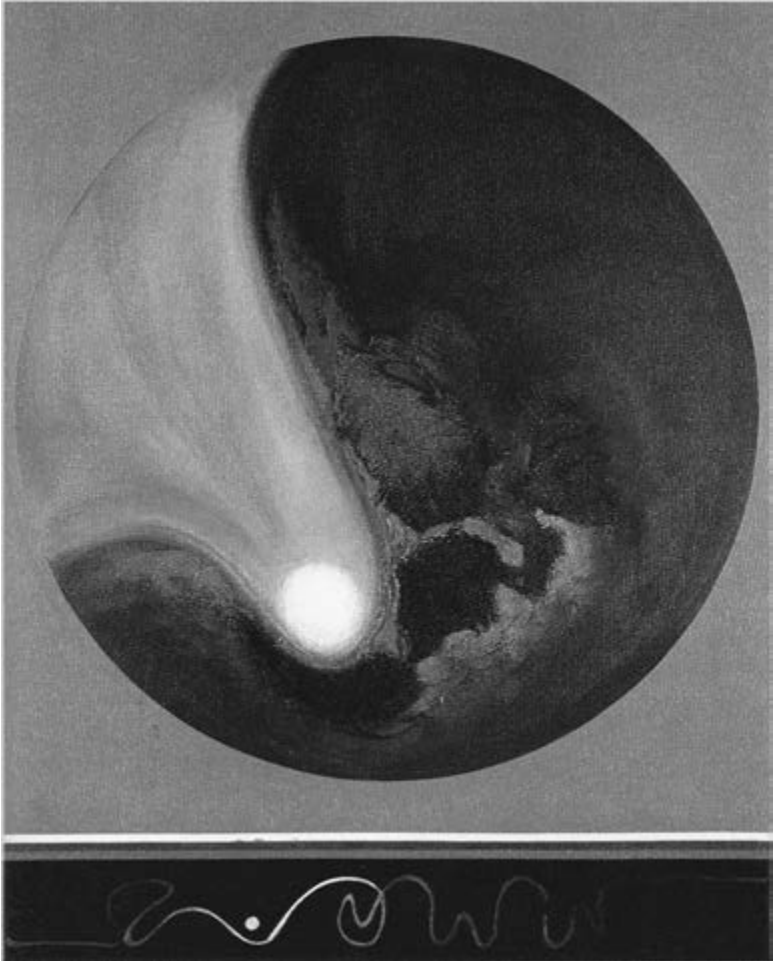


Another word for chaos is opportunity.

The fruit doesn't fall too far from the tree.

If you have a choice between being right or being kind, be kind.

Silence speaks when words can't.



"Genesis 34 B&W" by Cal Massey



You are born but not buried.

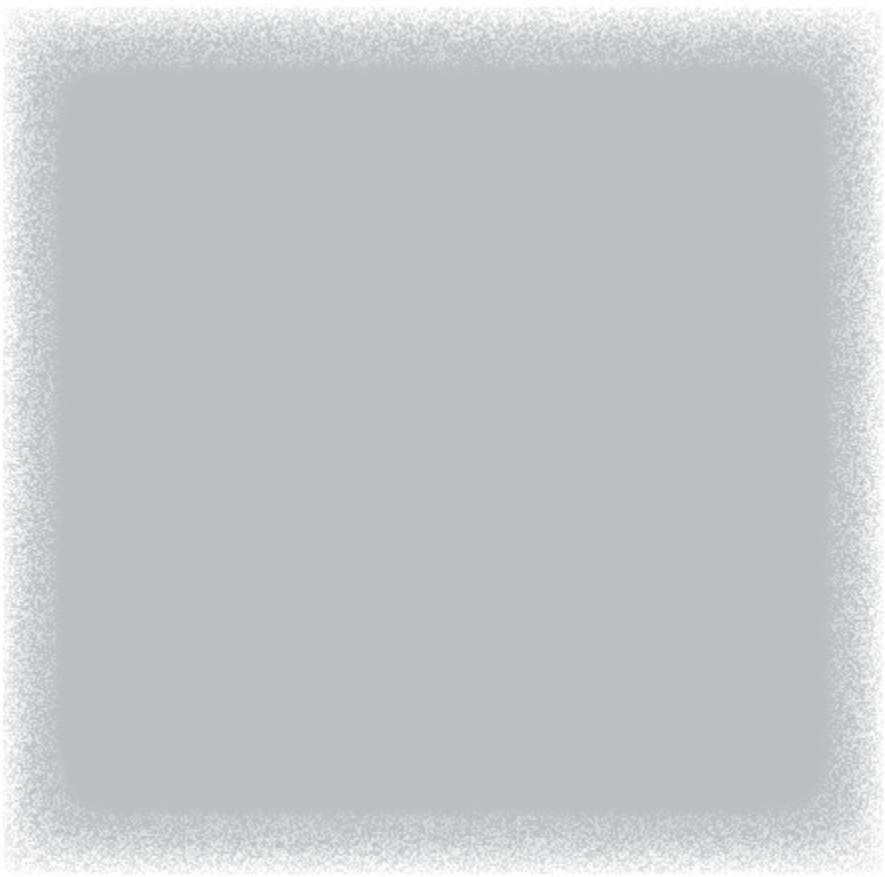
Don't become broke trying to show you're not broke to those who are broke.

Win as if you were used to it, lose as if you enjoyed it for a change.

God's storehouse always has a superabundance.



"Bridging Circles" by Sanaa



Always bless the bridge that carries you across.

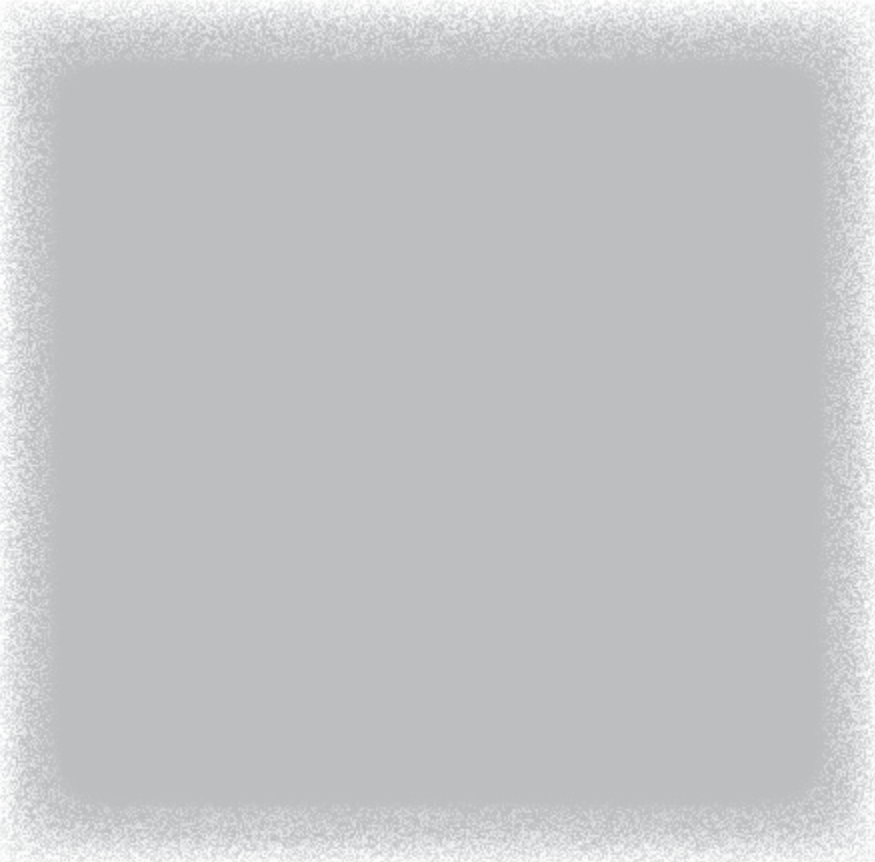
Don't bite the hand that feeds you.

The greatest measure of one's wealth is what you are worth if you lose all your money.

I'm not a failure until I begin to blame others.



"Freedom" by Laurie Cooper



Nothing can get in or out of a closed hand.

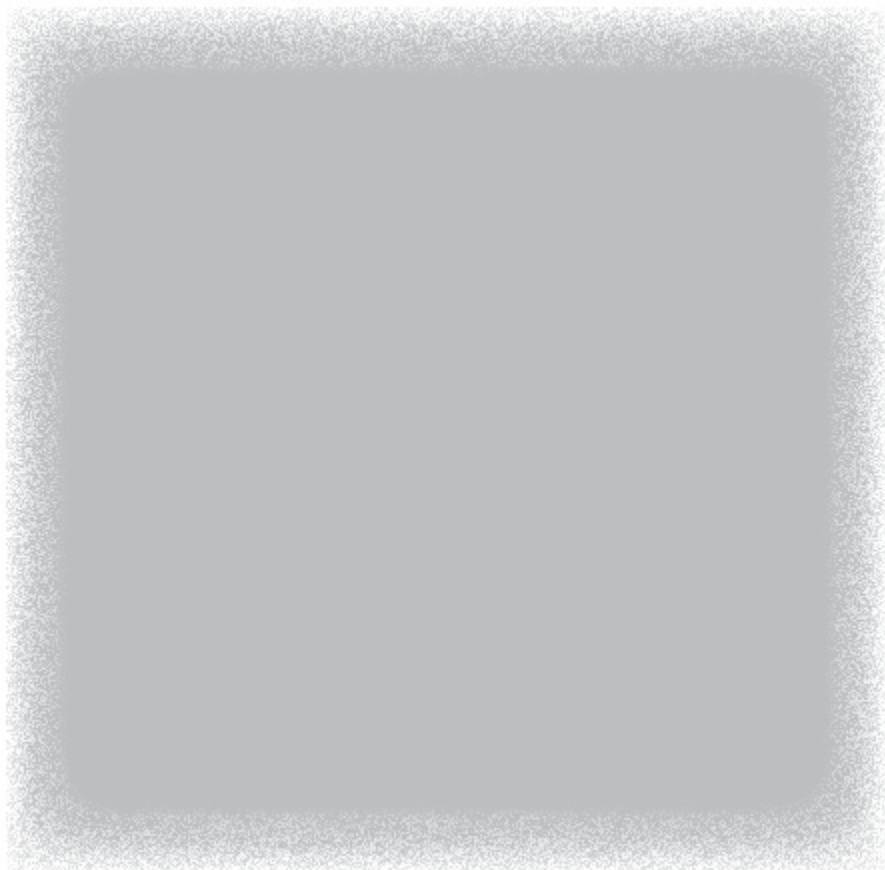
Tell me whom you love, and I'll tell you who you are.

If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem.

Regardless of your past, your future is a clean slate.



"Black Belt" by Archibald Motley



Be careful what you wish for, you might get it.

A new broom sweeps clean.

Count your blessings, not your problems.

Plan what to say and say what you planned.



"Getting Religion" by Archibald Motley

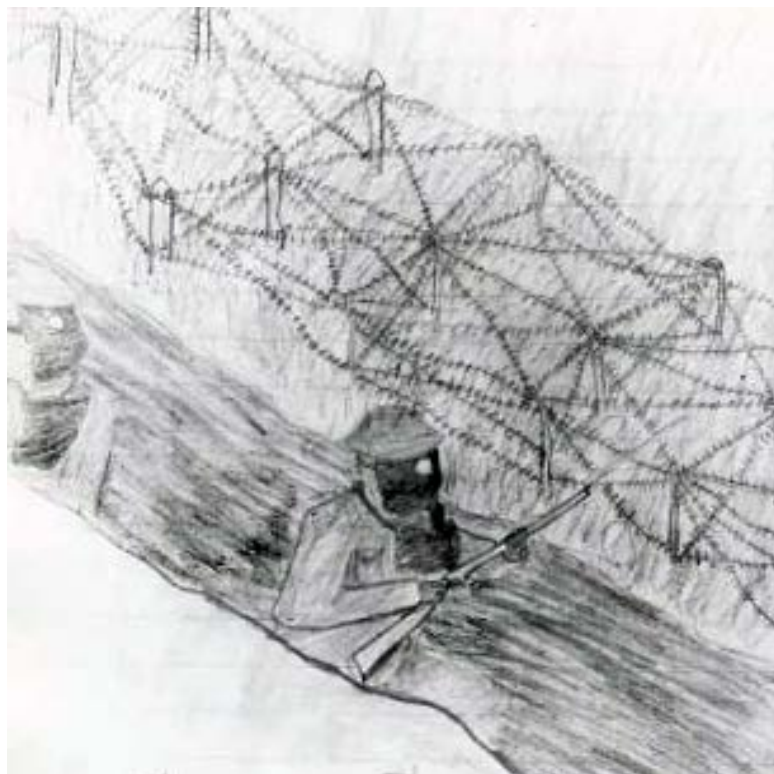


Faith without works is not faith at all.

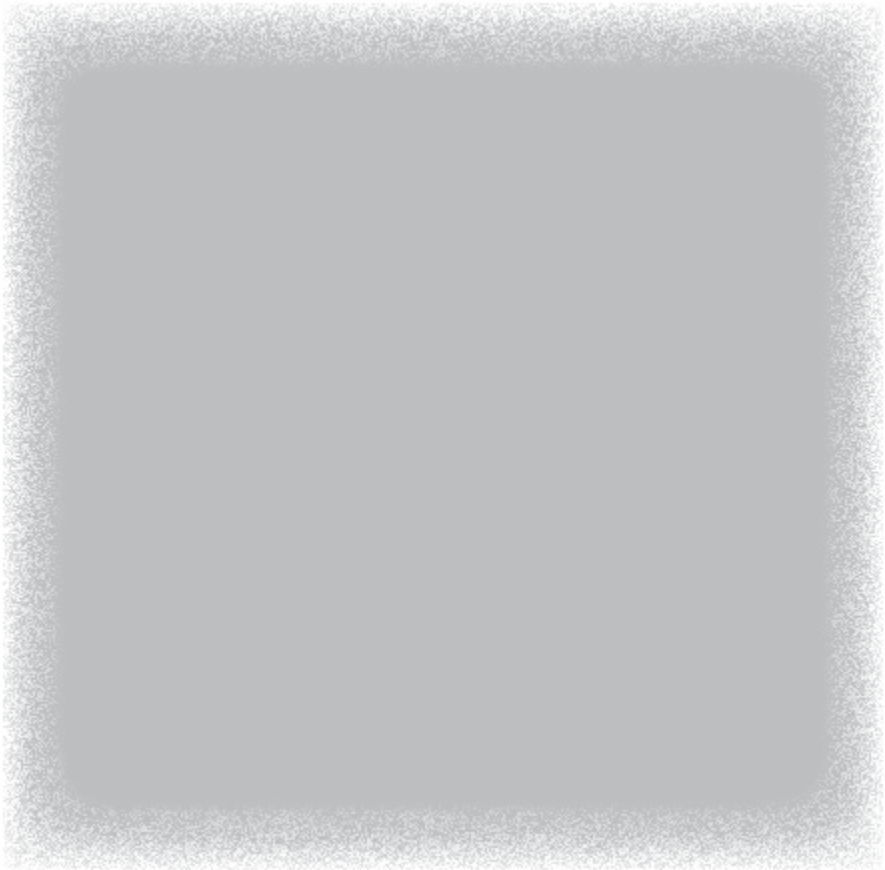
It is better to be green and grow than to be ripe and rot.

You never know what you're going to come to.

Get out before they put you out. Either way, you're going.



"Soldiers with Gas Masks in Trench" by Horace Pippin



Always be grateful. Stop crying with a loaf of bread under your arm.

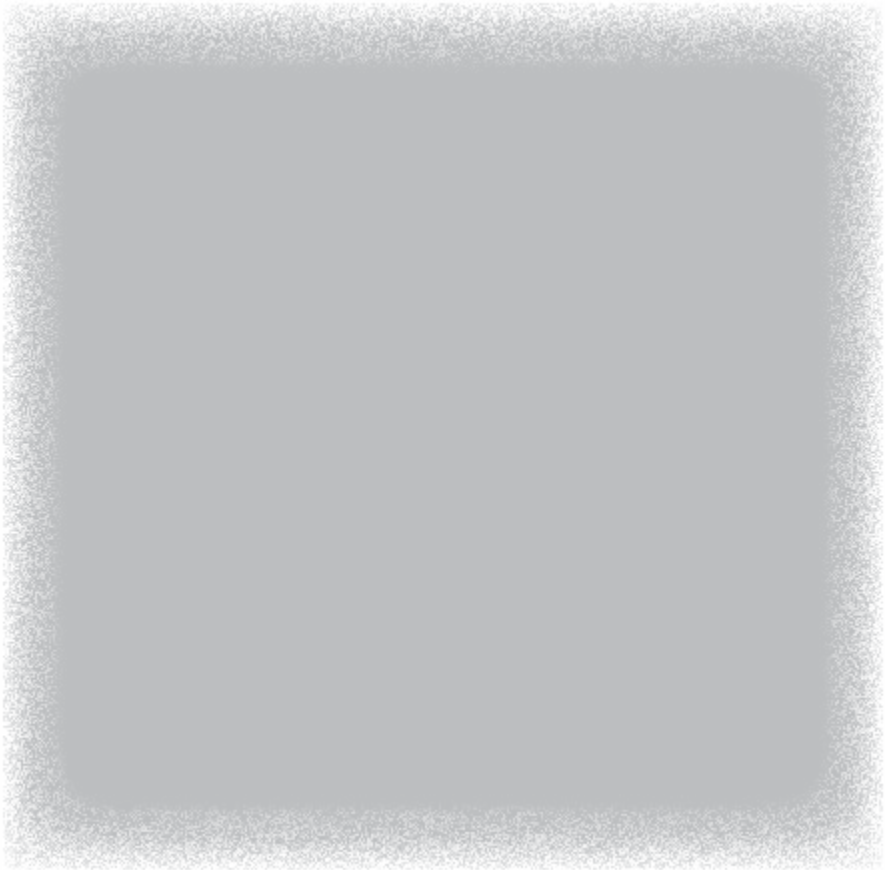
People aren't crazy, they think you're crazy.

Be kind to those you meet going up, because you may have to come back through everywhere you have been.

Better to ask for forgiveness than permission.



"Genesis 35 B&W" by Cal Massey



You don't always have to be winning. You just need to be in a position to win.

We achieve by losing and lose by achieving.

Aim for progress, not perfection.

Most often you will be remembered for the rules you broke.



"The Banjo Player" by Hale Woodruff



A good run is better than a bad stand - always.

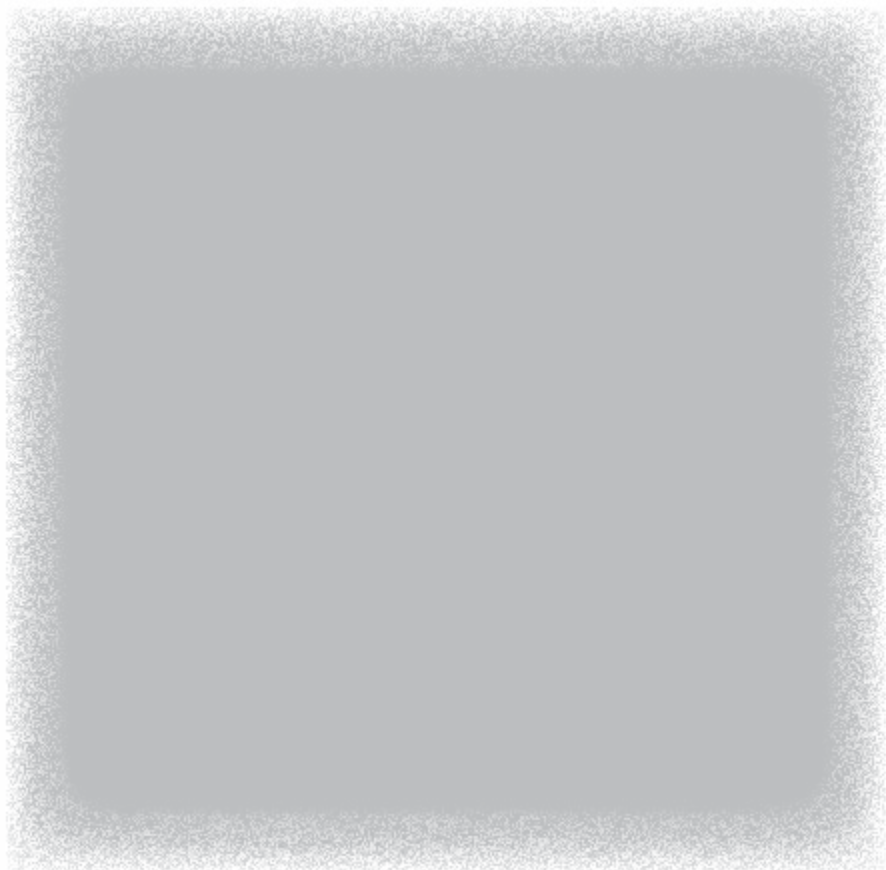
Waste not want not.

There's a lid for every pot.

We live as long as we are remembered.



"Ring" by Laurie Cooper

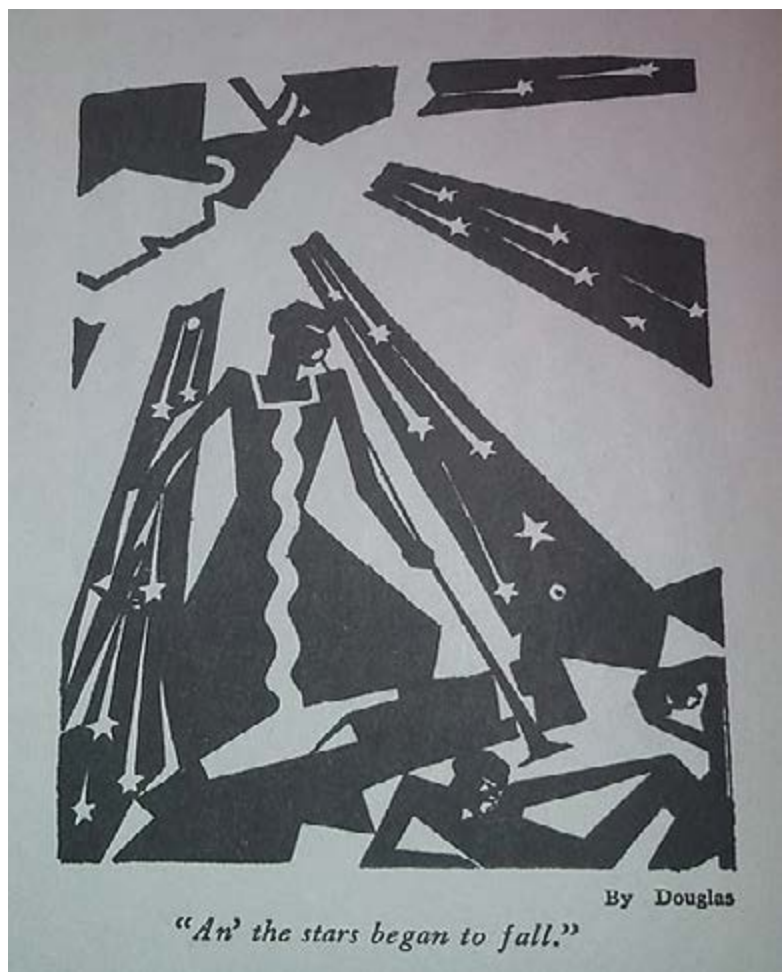


To be what one seems to be.

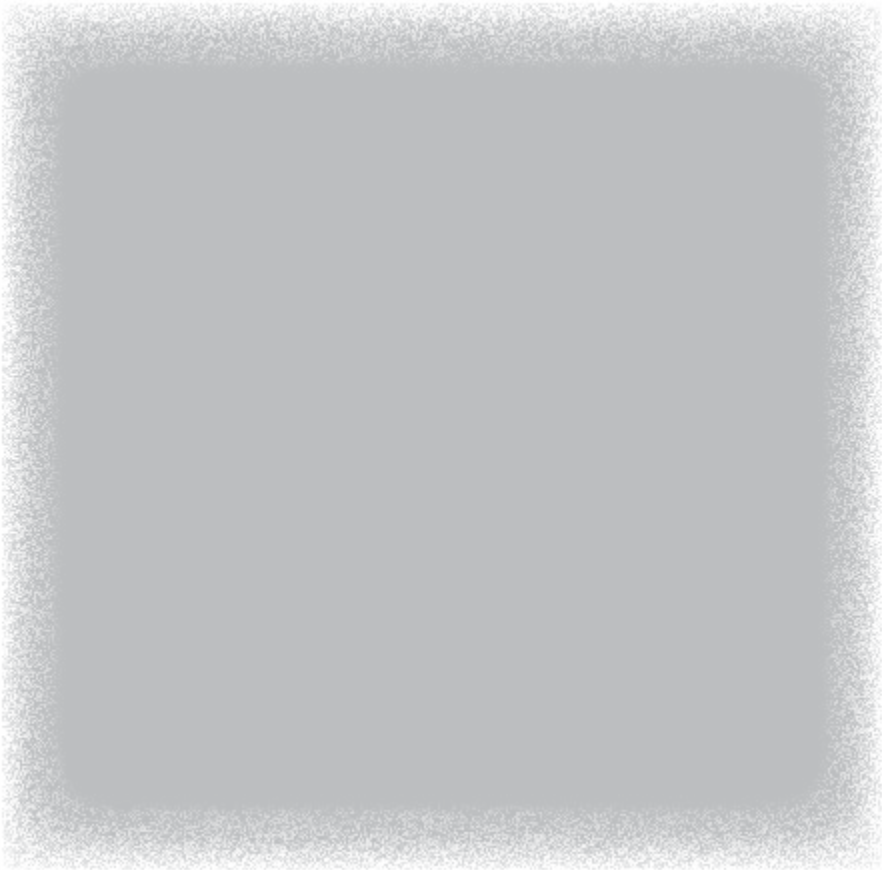
A hard head makes a soft behind.

You're not lost if you still have gas in the car.

Stop crying before I give you something to cry about.



"An' the Stars Began to Fall" by Aaron Douglas



It's not how much you make, but how much you hold onto.

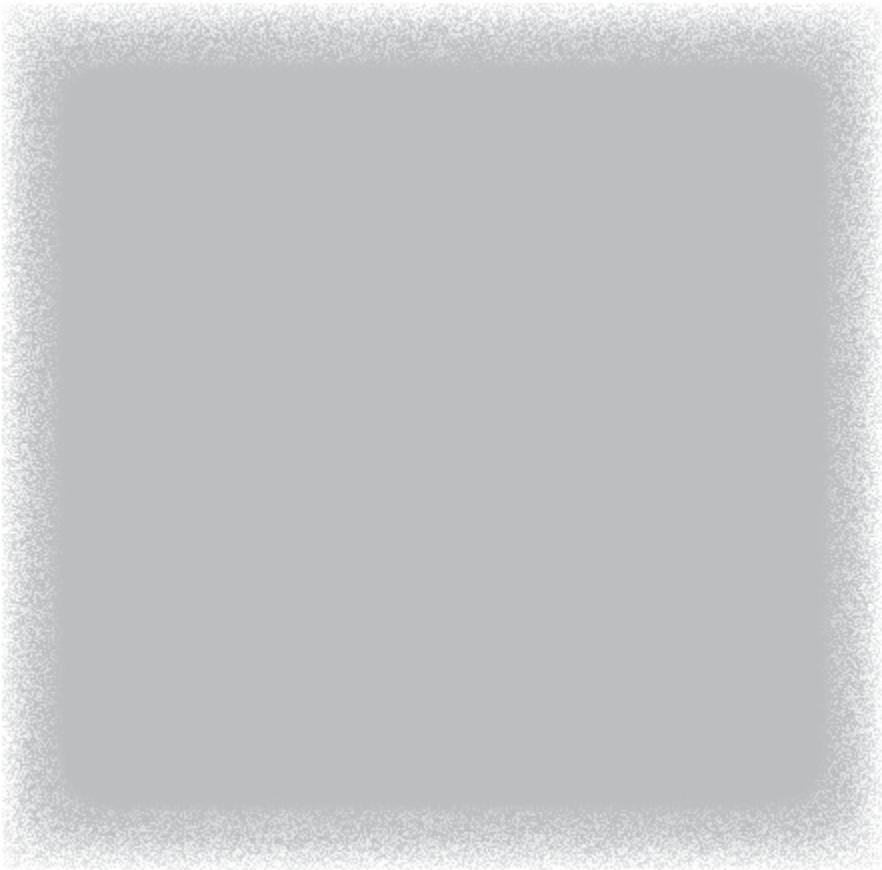
A friend in need is a friend indeed.

You can only climb one mountain at a time.

Be thankful for what you have and grateful for what you have escaped.



"Self Portrait 1918" by James Van Der Zee



You're known by the company you keep.

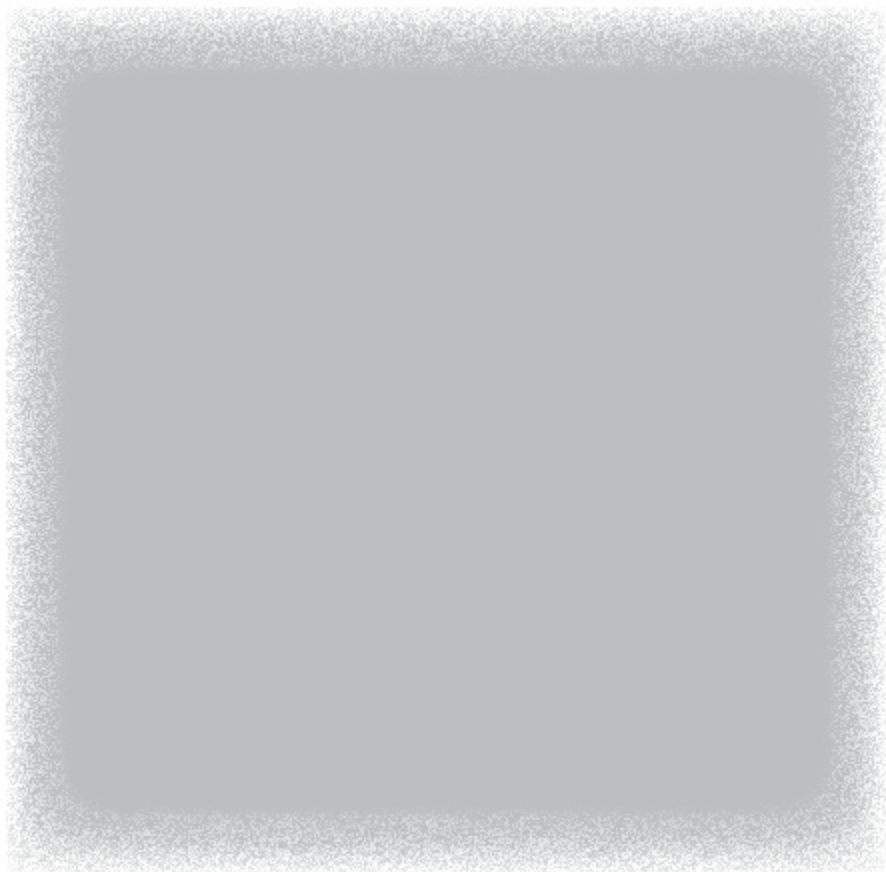
An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

A person gets caught up in their own doing.

Isn't that the pot calling the kettle black?



"Employment of Negroes in Agriculture" by Earle Richardson



Love your family.

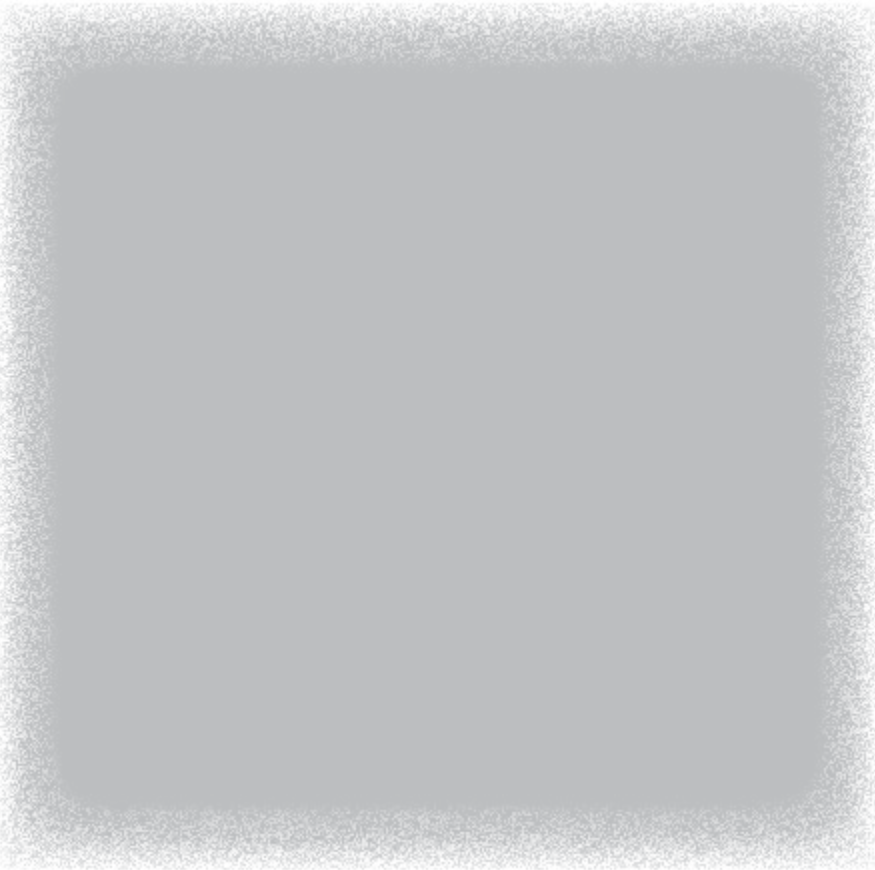
Show kindness.

Work hard.

Live. Laugh. Love.



“Winter” by AL Todd



You will always have your critics and distractors but keep moving forward. Dogs don't bark at parked cars.

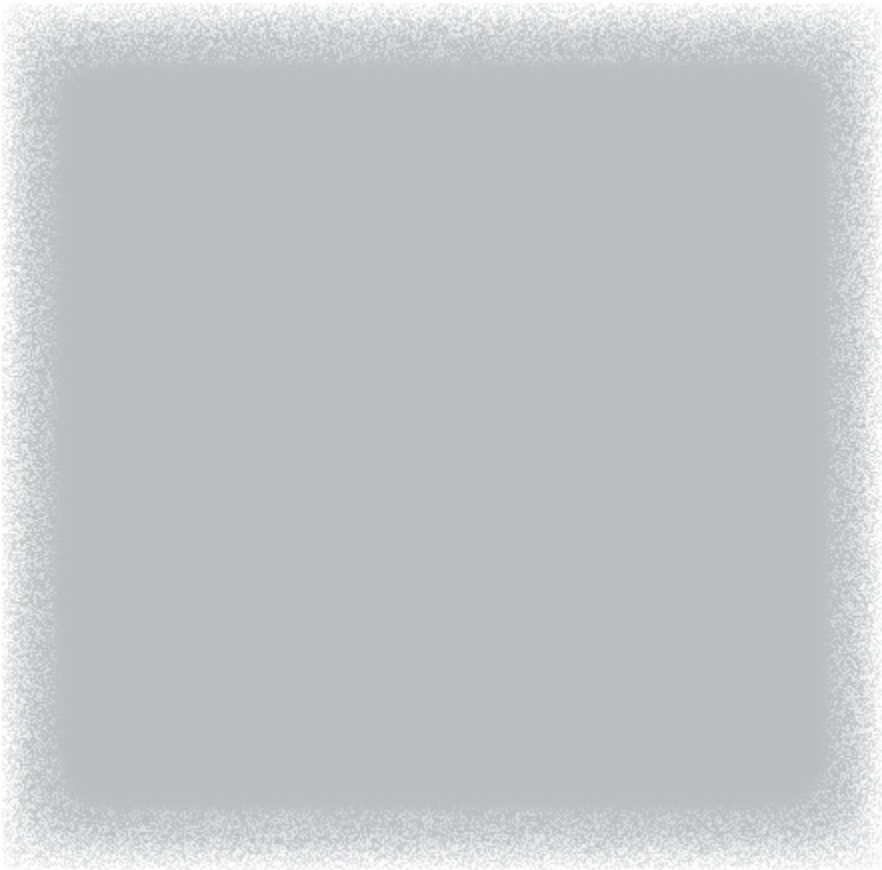
Don't let your right hand know what your left hand is doing.

Give the impression of being fearless even though you may be fearful and act fearful even though you may be fearless.

Blind in one eye, and can't see out the other one!



"Obi" by Laurie Cooper



The only people who never make mistakes are those who never do anything.

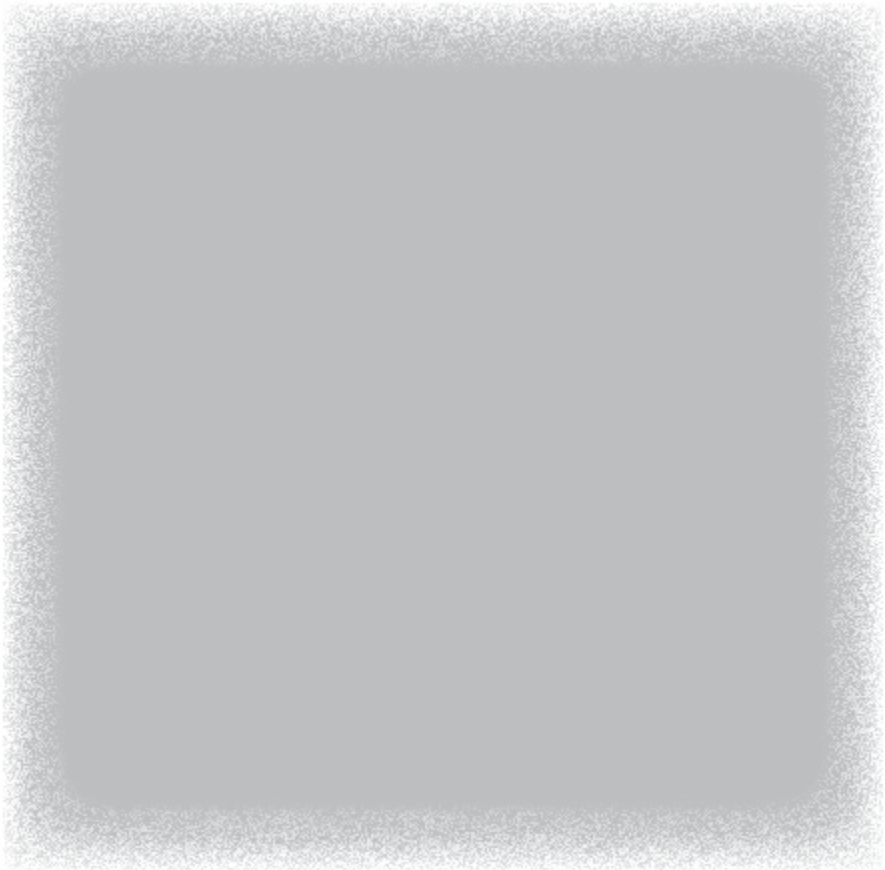
Learn from your mistakes.

Good judgment comes from experience, experience comes from bad judgment.

There's no fool like an old fool.



"Say What" by Nica

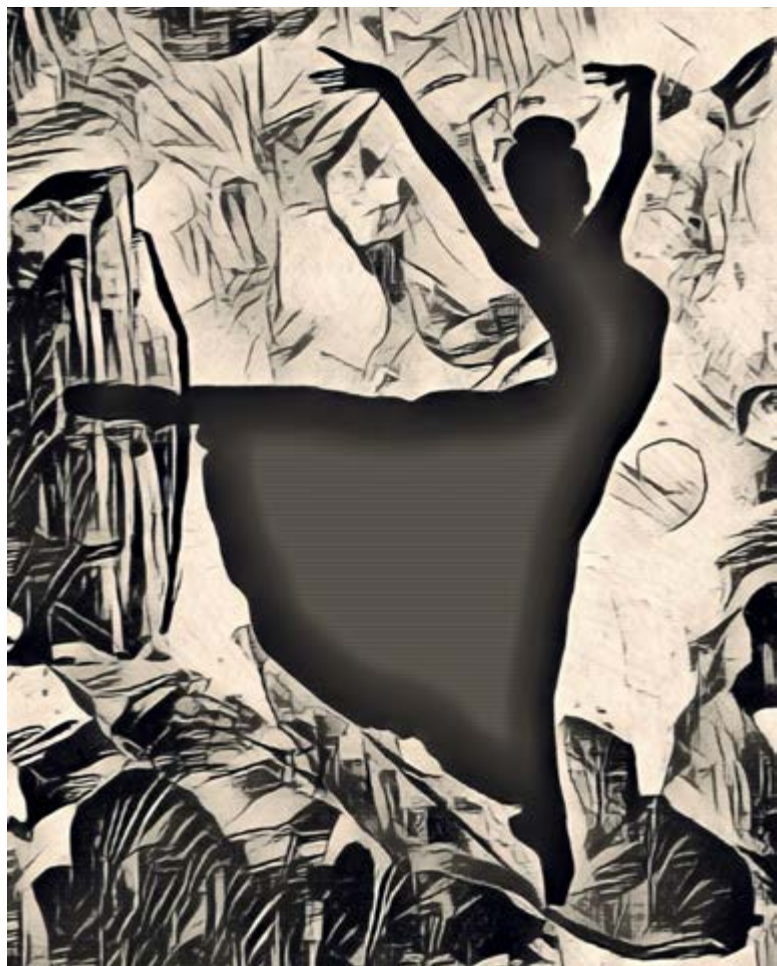


A wise person will listen to a fool, but a fool will
listen to no one.

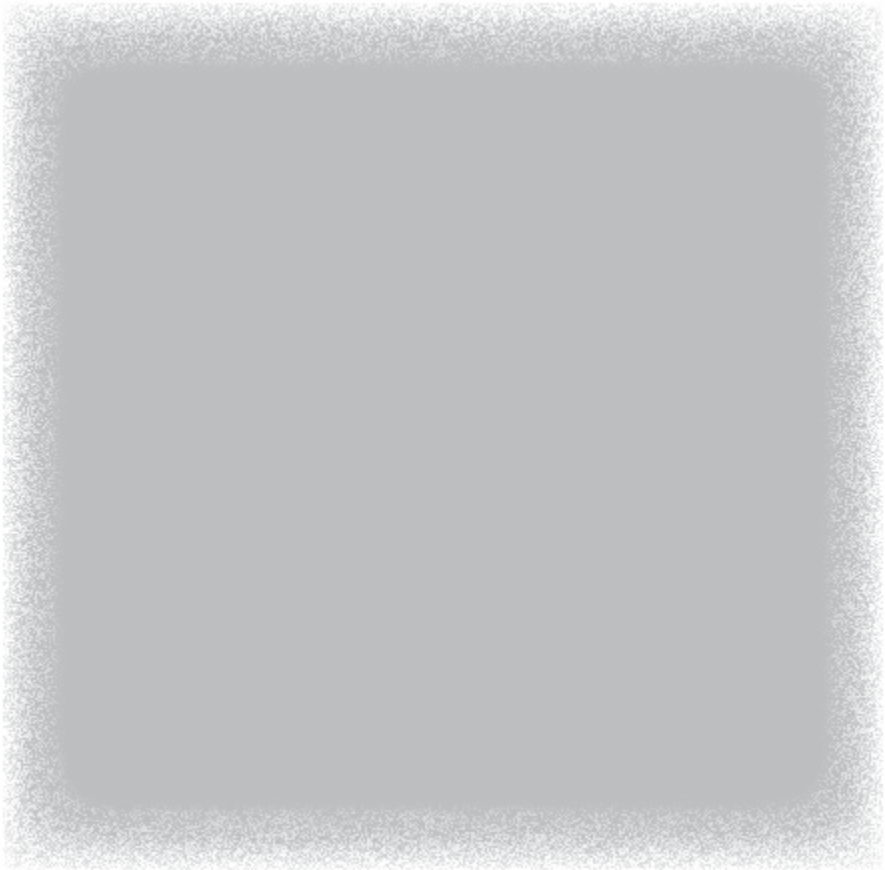
Fools rush in where wise men fear to tread.

Too many cooks spoil the gravy.

Better to be poor and contented than rich and
tormented.



"Dancing in the Air" by Sanaa



Have faith because the ancestors are always dancing around the pot.

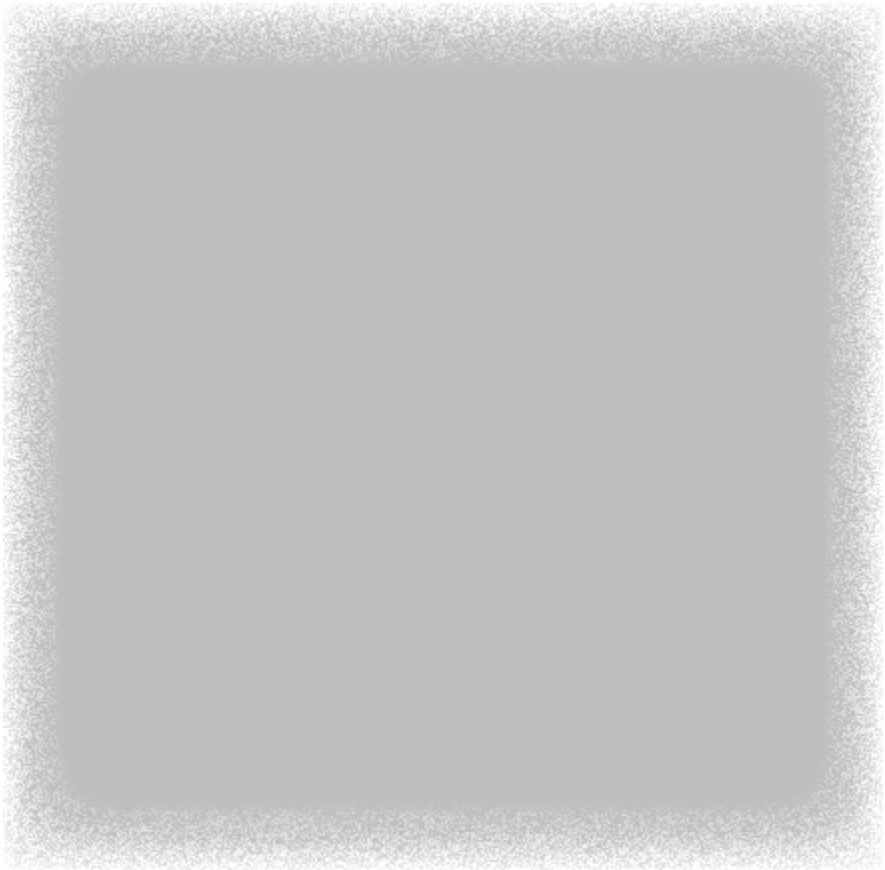
The golden rule - do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

You can get a lot done if you don't mind who gets the credit.

Leaders must exercise humility.



"Lovers" by Sanaa



It takes me to see you and you to see me.

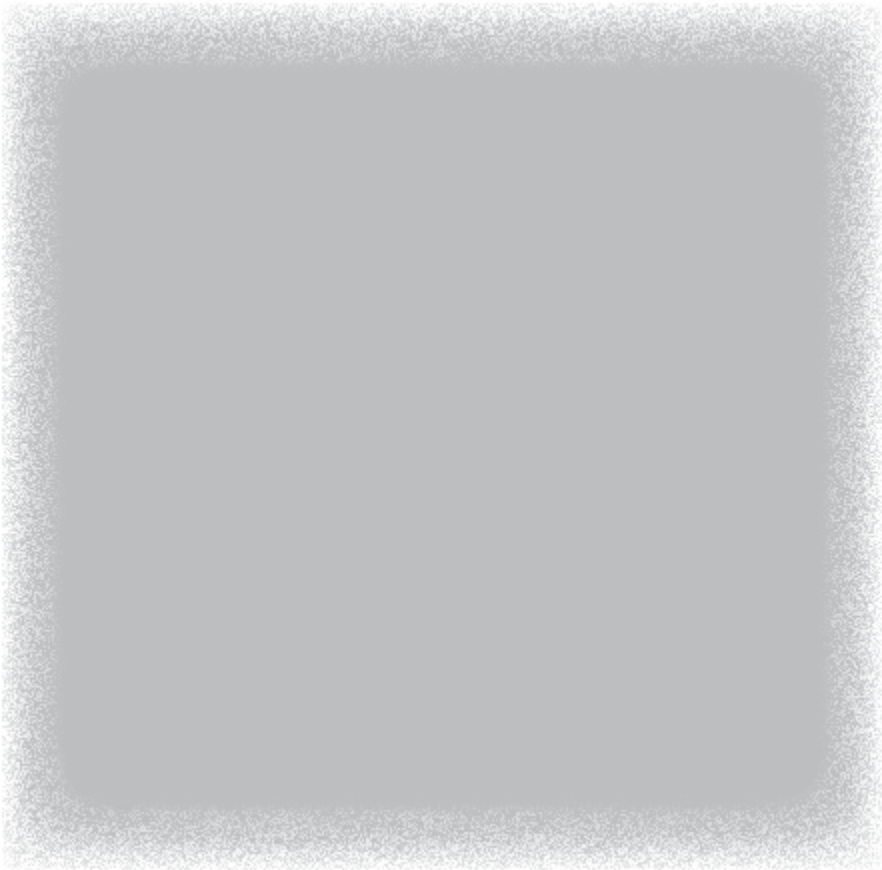
The wheels of the gods turn very slowly but
exceedingly fine.

Don't burn your bridges behind you.

More kindness, less judgment.



"Going Up" by Sanaa



There is no elevator to success. You have to take the stairs.

A trouble shared is a trouble halved.

Hard work never killed anyone, but why take a chance?

Don't carry a tale.



"Girl Jumping Rope" by Andrew Turner



Be courageous.

Stay humble.

Be considerate.

Know thyself.



"The Banjo Lesson" by Henry O. Tanner



Practice makes perfect.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

A heap see but a few know.

Done enough, have enough, am enough.



"Blind Beggars" by Jacob Lawrence



Hope is the belief in things unseen and unknown.

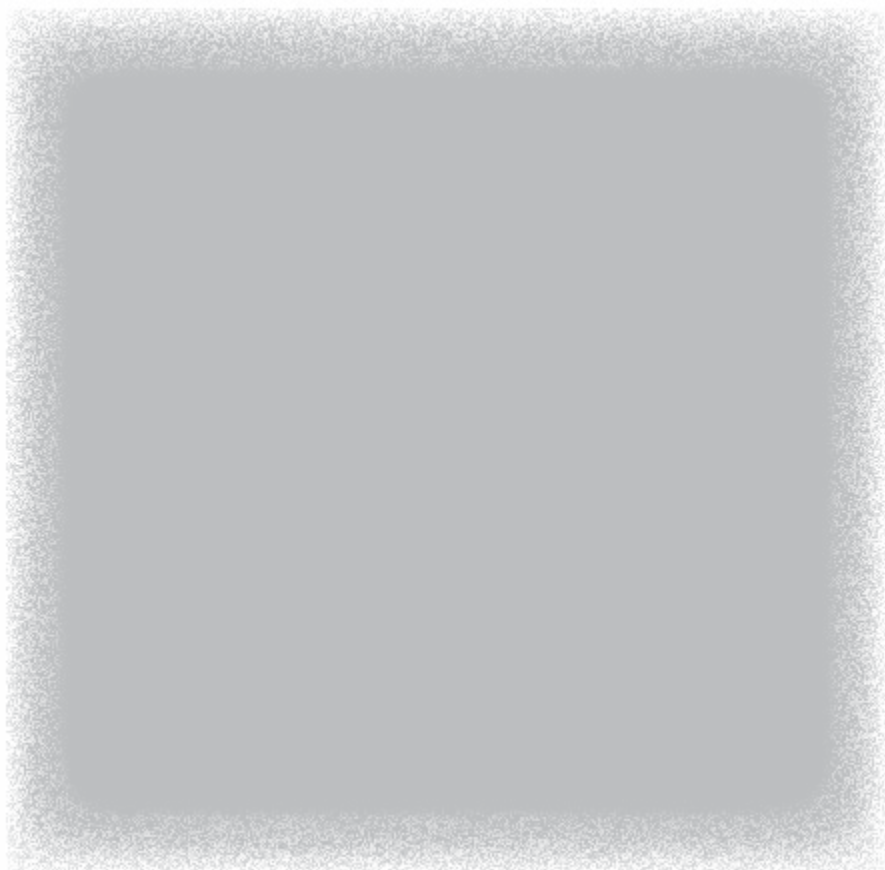
Man does not live by bread alone.

It ain't what they call you it's what you answer to.

Don't judge people until you've walked in their shoes.



"Billie Holiday" by William P. Gottlieb



You don't become what you want, you become what you are.

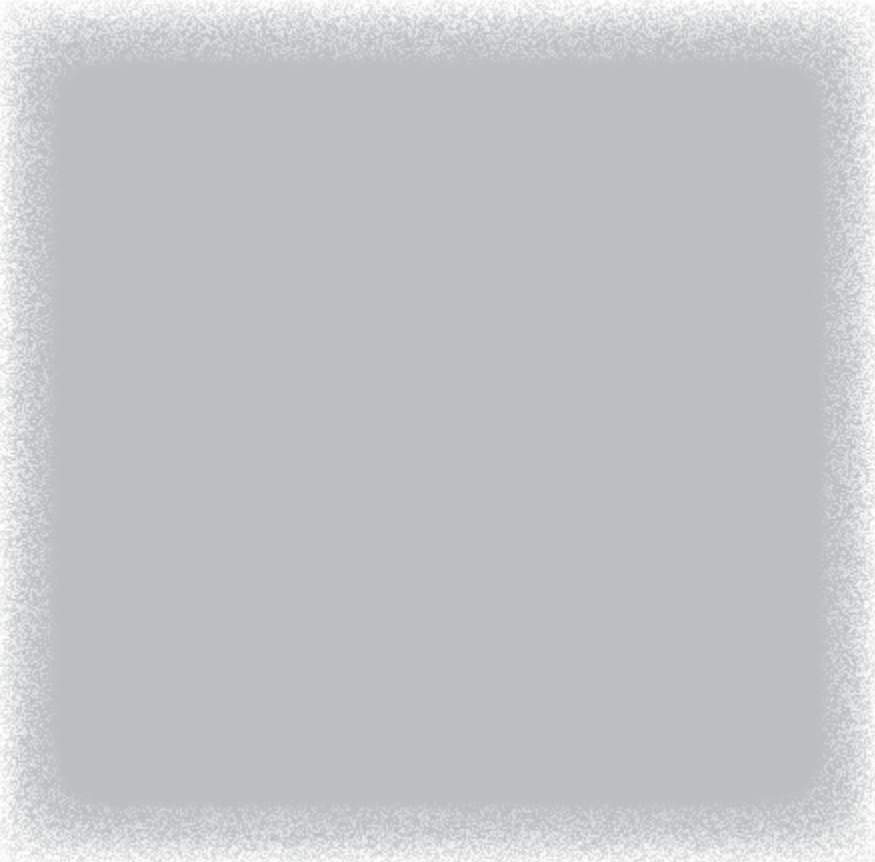
If money can solve your problems then you have no problems.

Do as I say, not as I do.

The eyes of the world are always on you.



"Realization" by Augusta Savage



There's room at the top. The bottom is crowded.

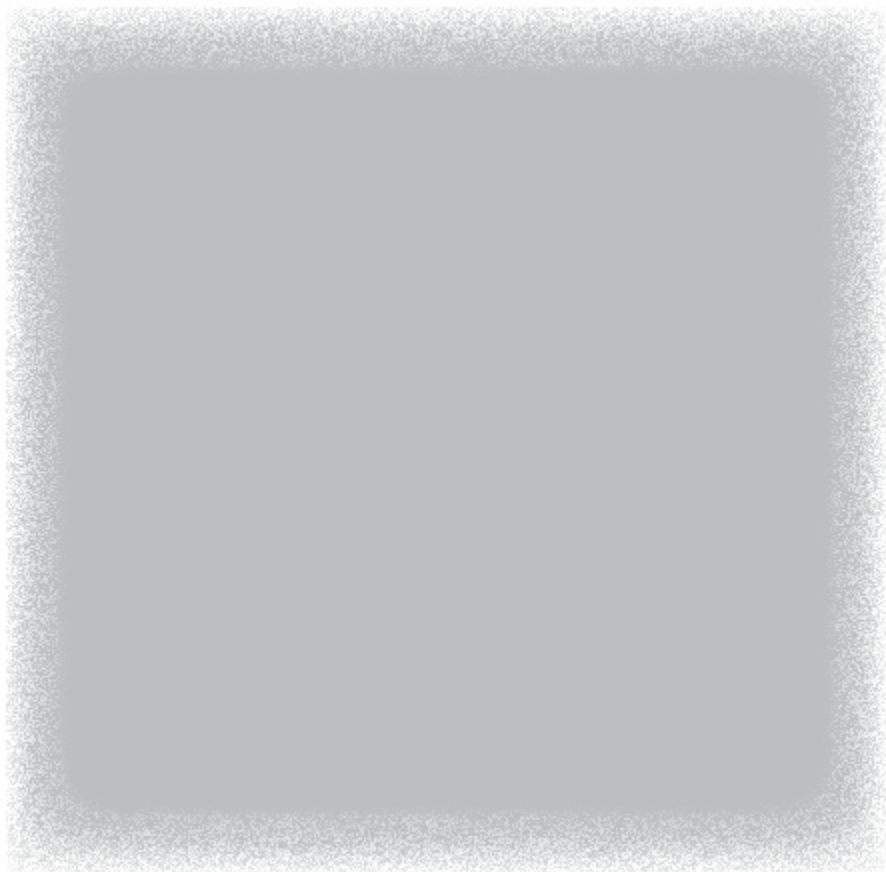
The bigger the pond the more steps backwards
you must take to jump it.

It's overpriced and too costly if the price to pay is
your peace of mind.

All advice you get is not always good advice even if
you paid for it.



"Legends of Hip Hop" by Gabe Tiberino



You may remember a hero, but legends never die.

All you need is already on the table. Just look.

Better to tread water than sink.

Do you want to win or do you want to get your way?



"American Gothic" by Gordon Parks



Life is an illusion.

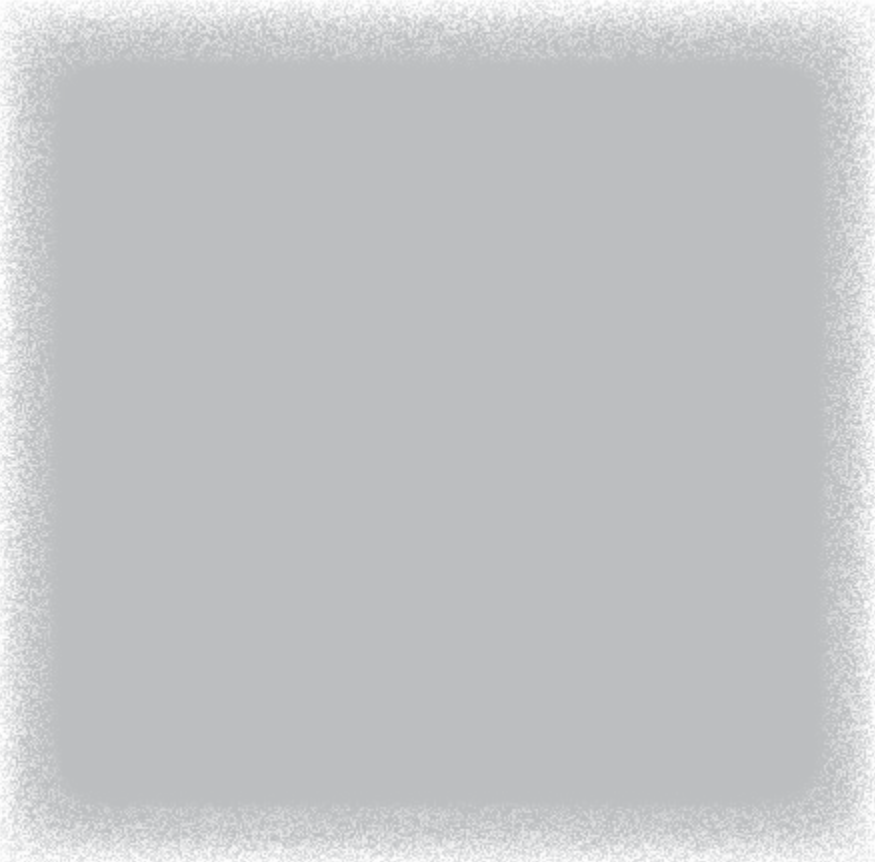
What's done is done and can't be undone.

Complaining is ungrateful.

It is better to be safe than sorry.



"Anuli" by Laurie Cooper



If you want to know the end, look at the beginning.

Look before you leap.

Had no shoes and complained until I met
a man that had no feet.

The grass seems greener on the other side of the
fence.



"My Path" by AL Todd



Stay on your course. Don't get distracted. A lion
doesn't always turn around when a dog barks.

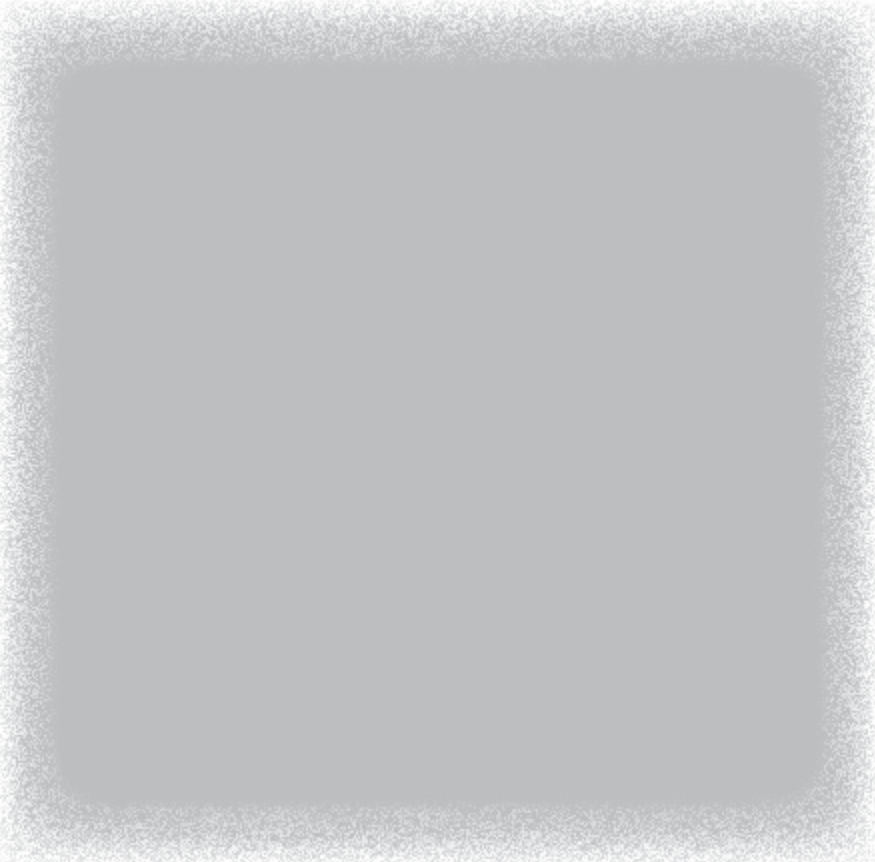
Good habits, bad habits, either way, you fall on
your sword.

Take all you want, but eat all you take.

A bird in hand is worth two in the bush.



"Albert's Horn" by Staci Watson



You are exactly where you are supposed to be.

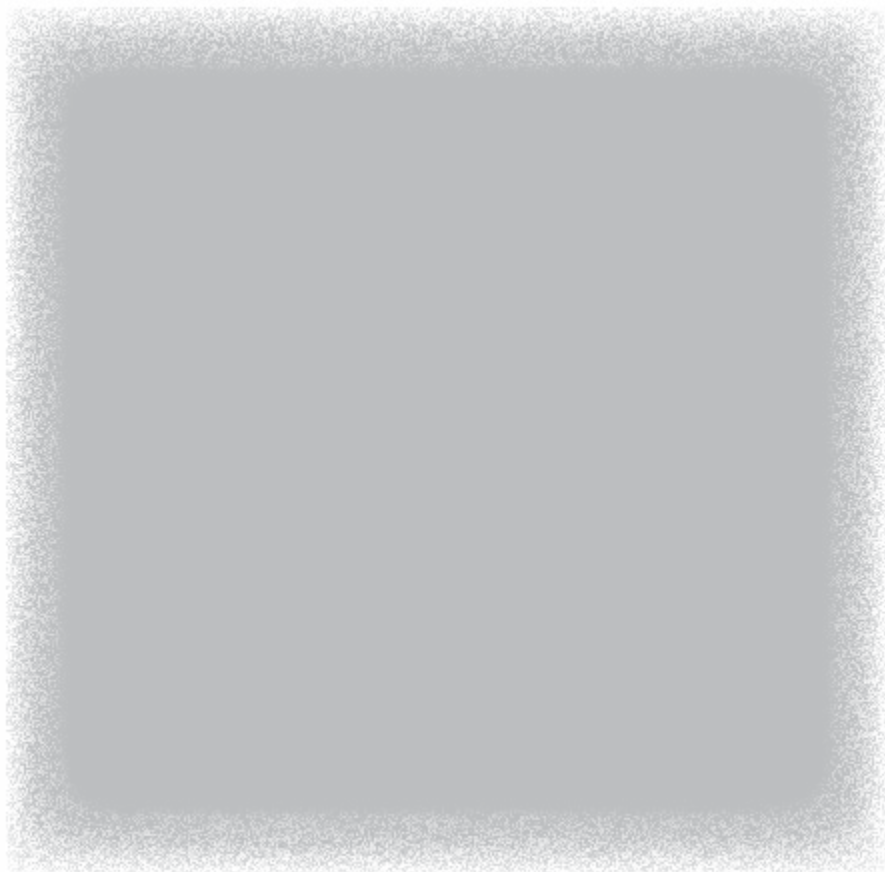
If you can't take the bad, don't take the good.

Friends come and go, but enemies accumulate.

You have to take the bitter with the better.



"Harlem Street Scene" by Charles Alston

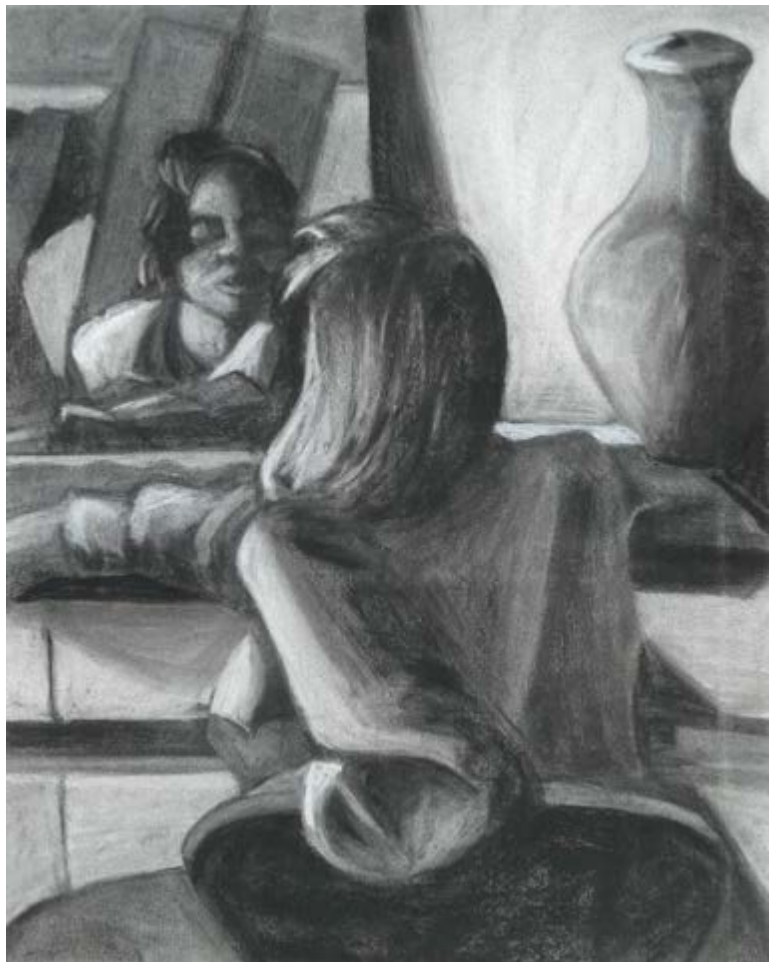


What you water grows.

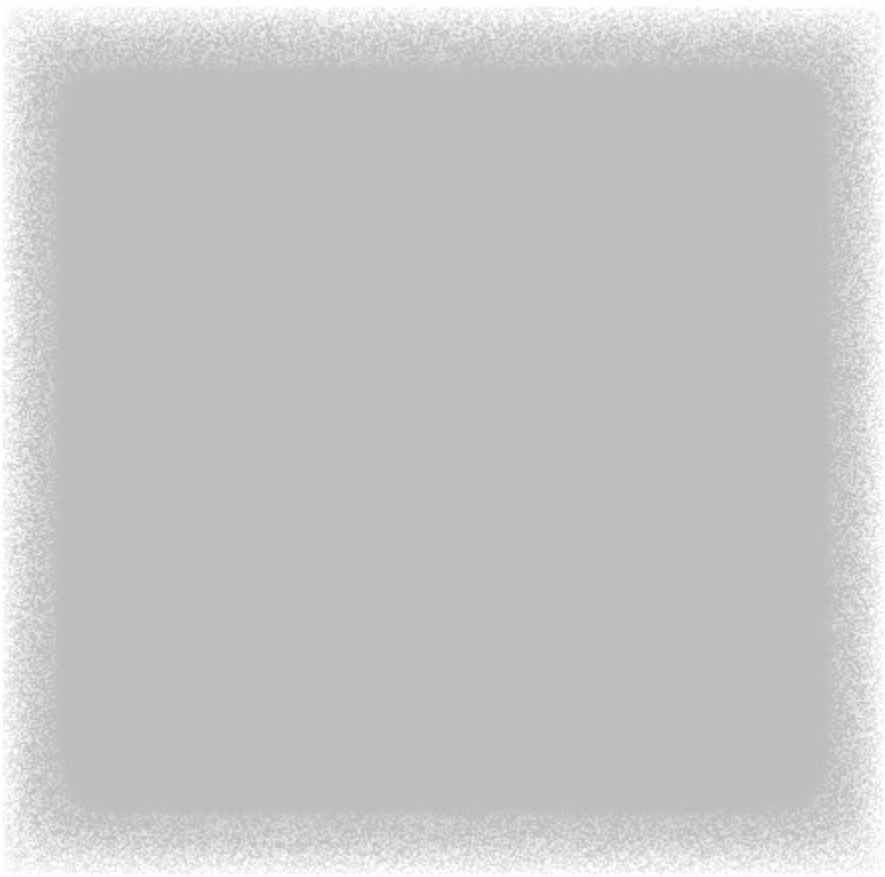
Silence is golden.

Avoid extremes.

Choose people who choose you.



"Reflect" by Chet Highsmith



How will you shine sitting in someone else's sun?

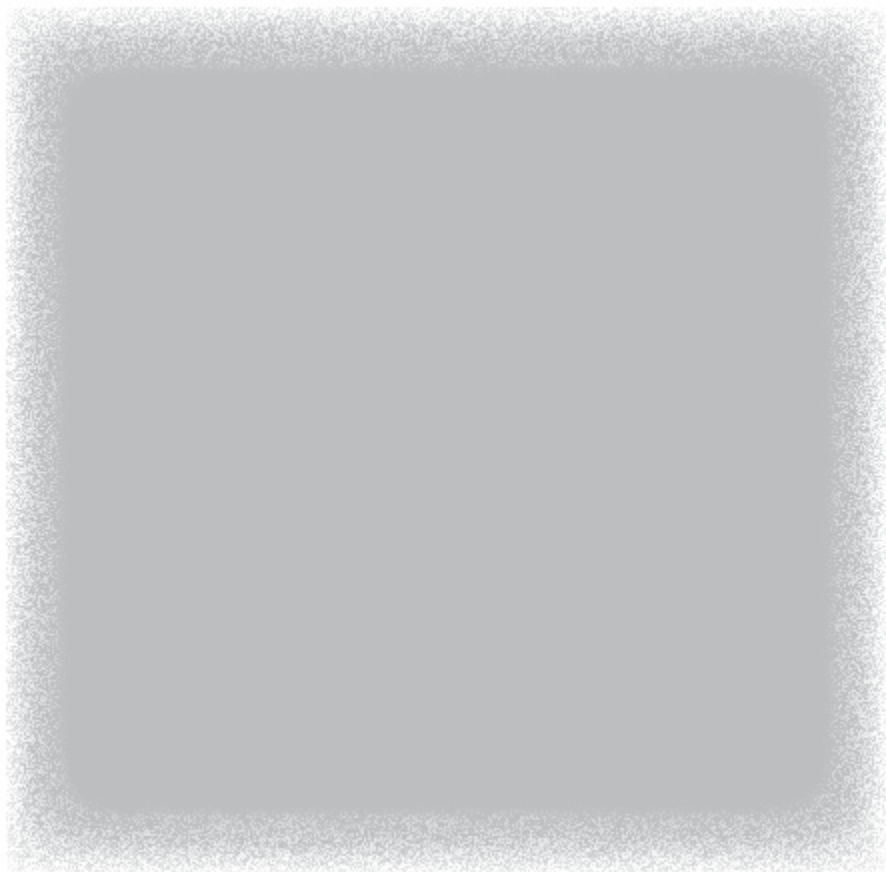
Happiness comes from within.

Everyone is a reader...Some just haven't found their book yet.

Pride cometh before a fall.



"Card Players" by Andrew Turner



The higher the monkey climbs the more he is exposed.

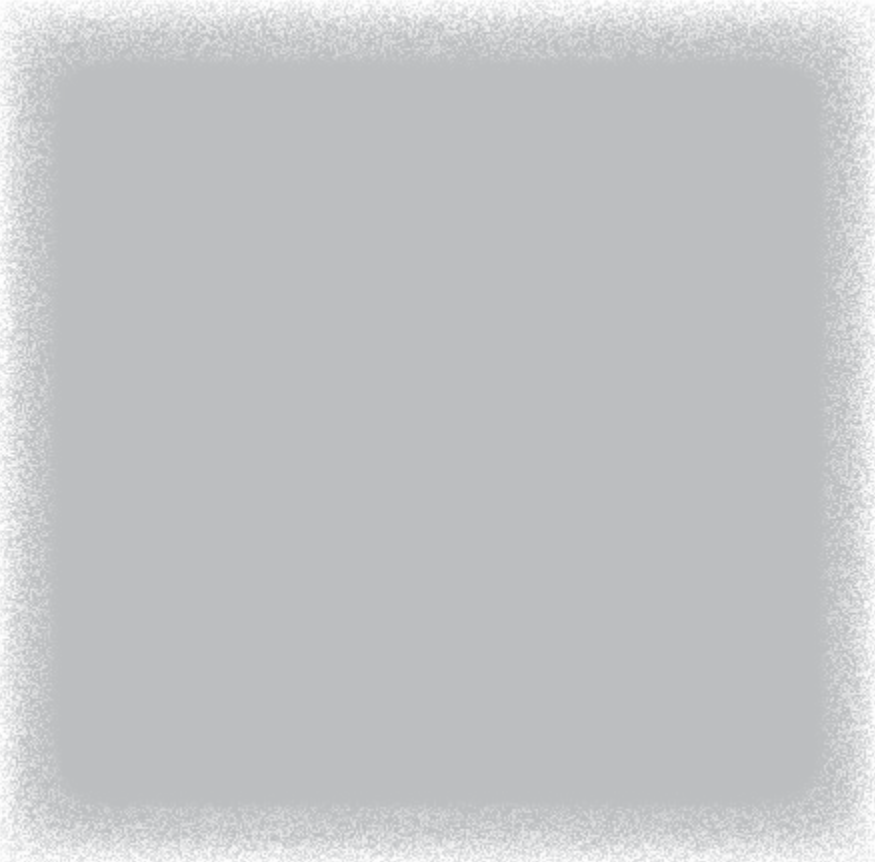
You can only give what you have.

You'll never find a rainbow if you're staring at your feet.

Four quarters make a dollar.



"Out in Front" by Andrew Turner



When you're in a race keep your eyes on the person in front of you.

Don't take any wooden nickels because you can't spend them.

Judge not, unless you are judged and found lacking.

If life is a lemon, make lemonade.



"Legacy" by Samuel Byrd



Never give up hope.

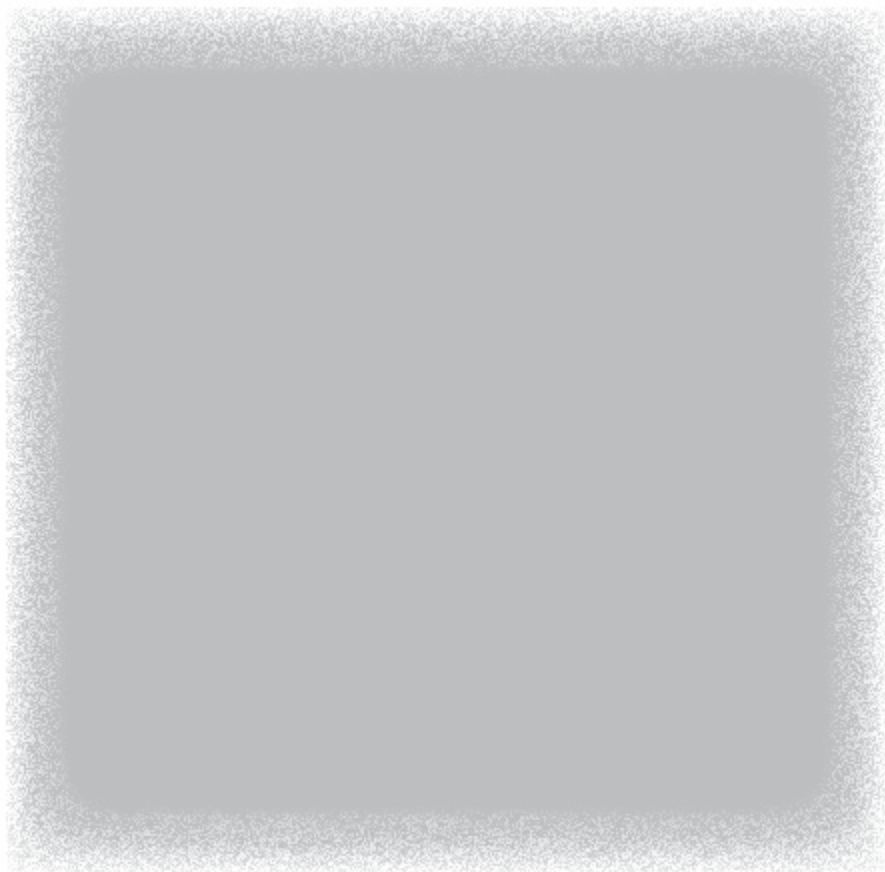
It ain't over until it is over.

Be patient.

A kind word turneth away wrath.



"MLK" by Bob Jefferson



He who refuses to obey cannot lead.

Lead not by force but by example. And if you must - beat them with a wet noodle.

Don't believe your own hype.

Every king must bow.



"Faith" by Laurie Cooper



Begin and end every day with a prayer.

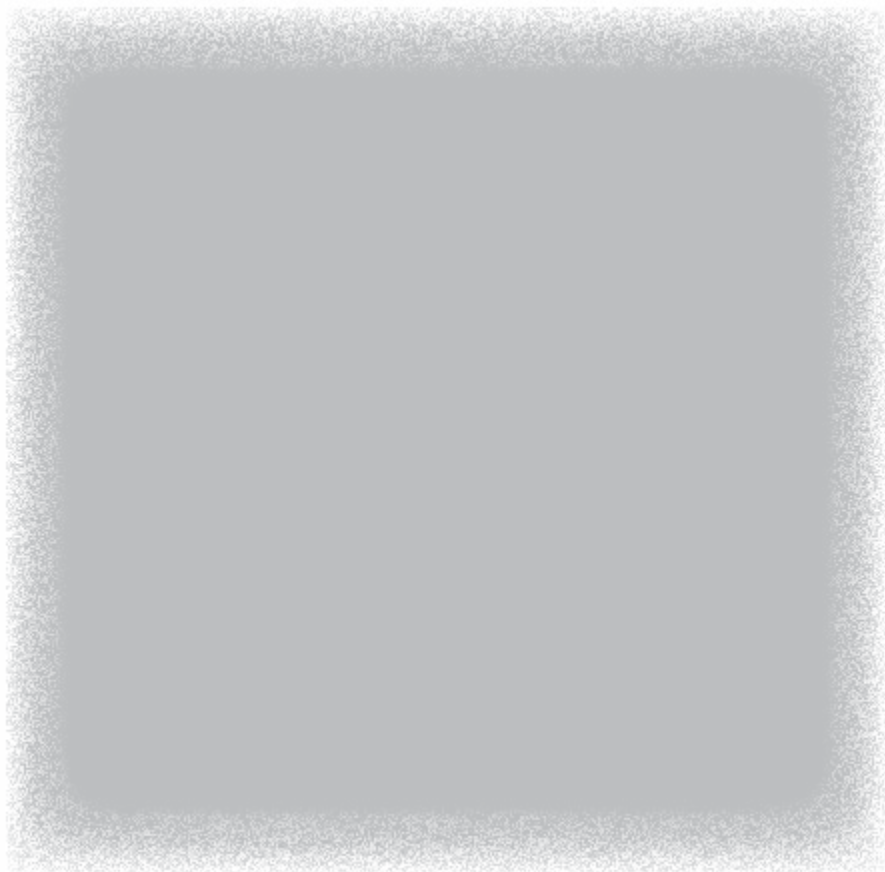
We are never so high as when we are on our knees.

Choose your battles. Some battles are best fought silently, with actions rather than words.

Saying nothing is saying something.



"The Artist" from Fire Magazine by Aaron Douglas



Believe in yourself.

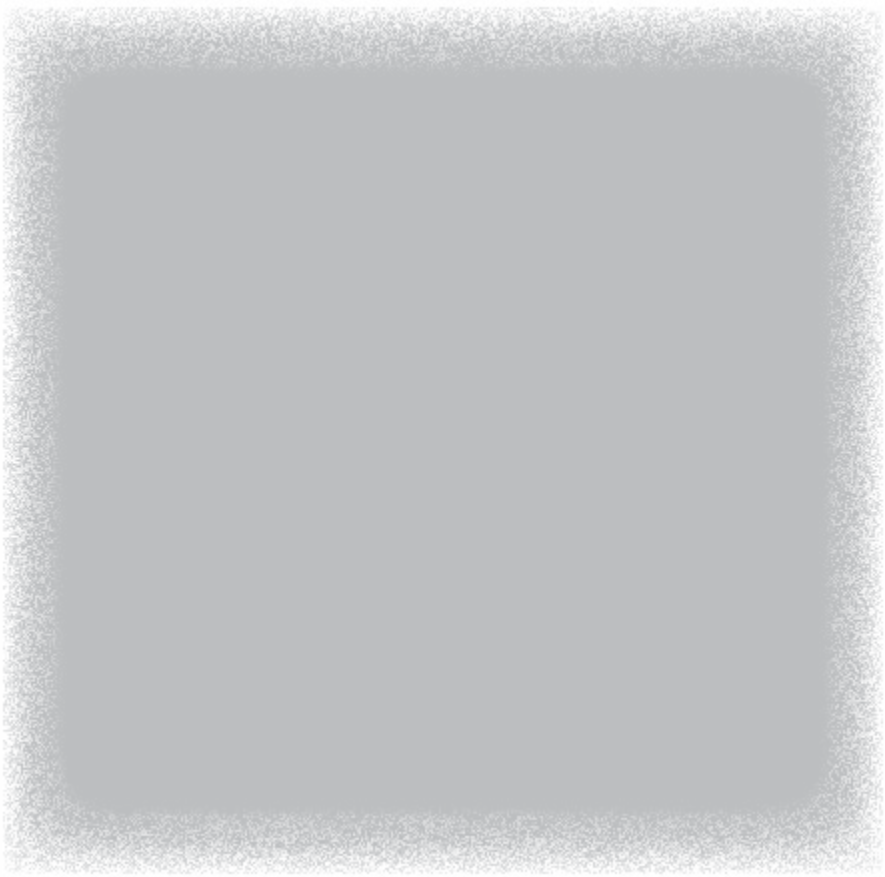
Be true to yourself.

Respect yourself.

Love yourself.



"Spoken Word" by Staci Watson



The elders don't like to talk much. They know that
an empty wagon makes a lot of noise.

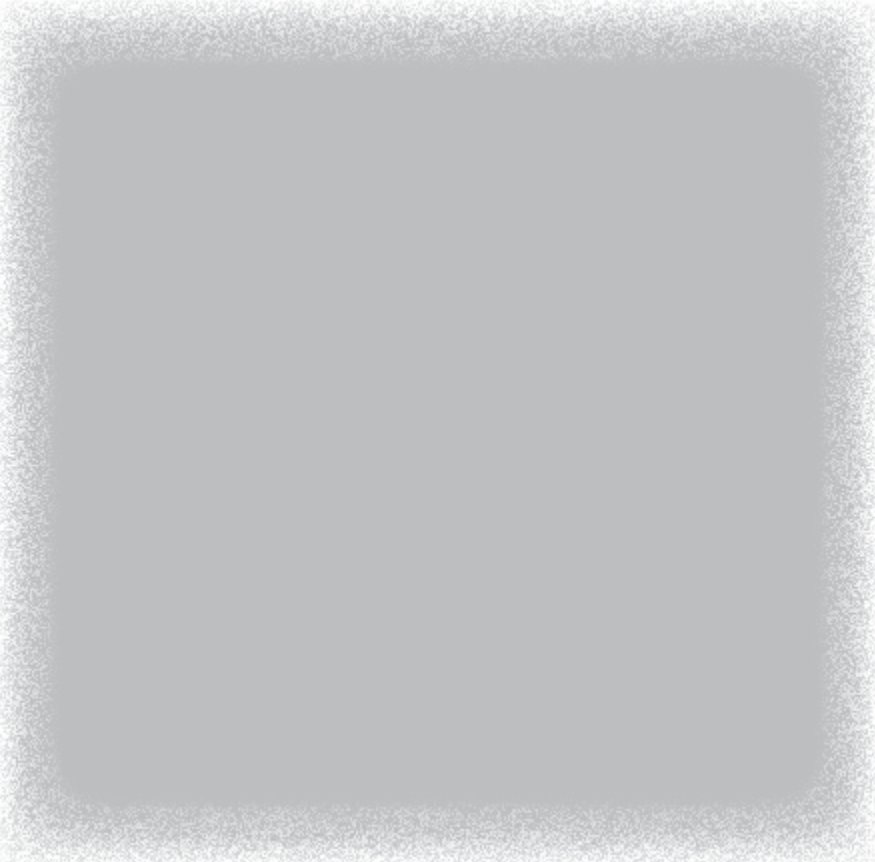
We die from birth.

Don't be a sacrificial lamb on the altar of change.

It is better to be loved than to be feared.



"Dr. Rebecca Cole" by Leon McDuffie



Don't try to hide. Sooner or later everybody knows everything.

What you do in the dark, will come to the light.

Familiarity breeds contempt.

The only people that can hurt you are the ones that know the most about you.



“Blu in Black and White” by Gail Gaines



Don't be afraid to be embarrassed.

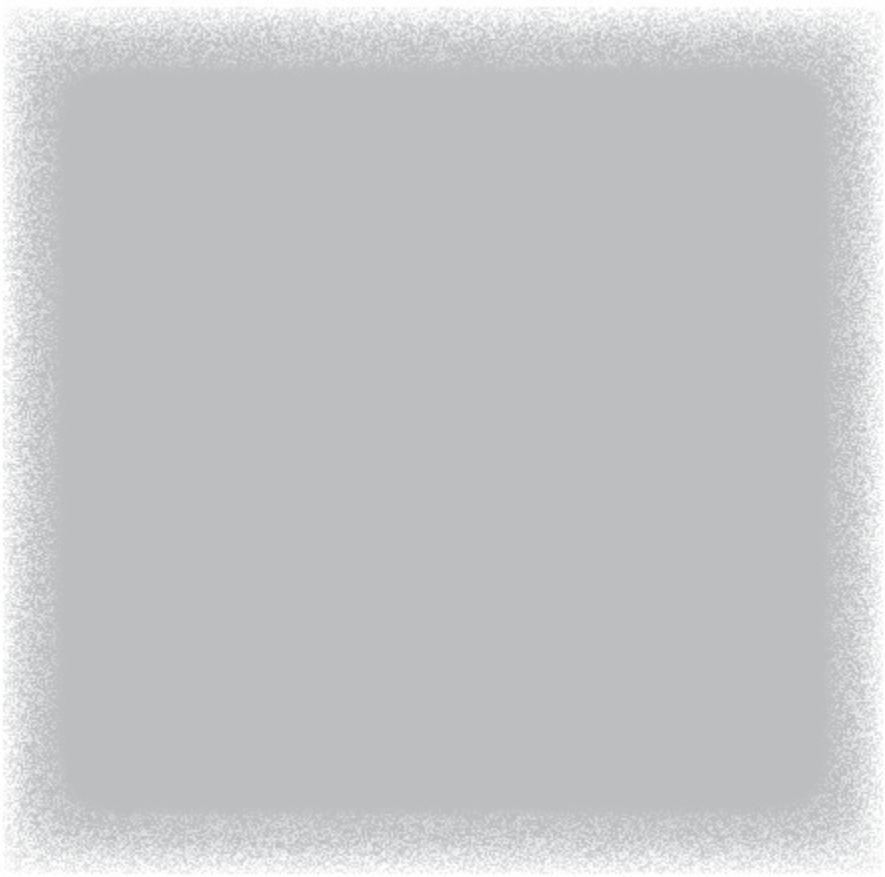
Little by little, a little becomes a lot.

What's good for the goose is good for
the gander.

Be careful of people who will never admit they are
wrong and try to make most things your fault.



"Forever Free" by Edmonia Lewis



Make hay while the sun shines.

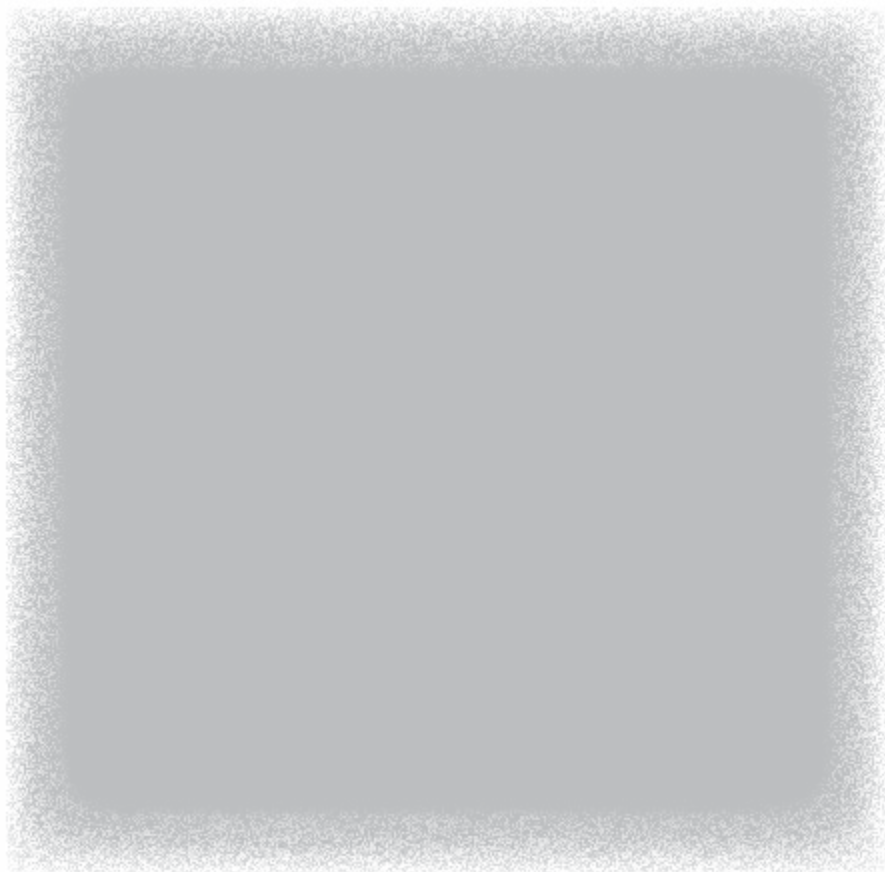
People have two ears and one mouth. It seems to me they should listen more and talk less.

Losing is part of winning.

There is no advantage in winning an argument and losing a good friend.



"Douglass Square, Boston, 1936 " by Allan Crite



Be joyful, not because everything is good, but
because you know there is good in everything.

Let there be peace and let it begin with you.

What makes you so special?

Better to be seen than viewed.

Acknowledgments

The editor would like to sincerely thank all the artists for sharing the artwork displayed in this book, not only with us, but the world.

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