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## Ten Photos with Anecdotes and Quotes

Some of these photos by Barbara were first published on BarbaraBrabec.com when she was featuring a "Photo of the Month" on her home page.

### "Winter Dreams"



Winter Dreams  
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*who suffered from*

HERE, BARBARA'S CAT companion, Charlee, takes a "cat nap" in a sunny spot in the kitchen. Did you know that cats sleep an average of 13 to 16 hours each day? And that, according to EEG studies on cats, they have REM (dreaming) sleep for 30 percent of their sleeping time?

According to the National Sleep Foundation, we could all use a short cat nap from time to time. Unlike a slumbering cat, we aren't likely to dream then, but such a nap can improve our brain function, job performance, alertness, stamina, and mood.

*"Cats are rather delicate creatures and they are subject to a good many ailments, but I never heard of one insomnia." –Joseph Wood Krutch*

*"Authors like cats because they are such quiet, lovable, wise creatures, and cats like authors for the same reasons. – Robertson Davies*

### "Kaleidoscopic Art"

LIFE is full of surprises when you approach it with a mind open to the possibilities. I had fun one day taking digital pictures of views from a couple of my kaleidoscopes. Frankly, I was amazed by the delightful images I was able to capture, each one unique and impossible to recreate. Try this sometime: Just hold the camera lens against the eye-hole of the kaleidoscope and click away.

"Creativity is a lot like looking at the world through a kaleidoscope," says speaker and consultant Rosabeth Moss Kanter. "You look at a set of elements, the same ones everyone else sees, but then reassemble those floating bits and pieces into an enticing new possibility. Effective leaders are able to shake up their thinking as though their brains are kaleidoscopes, permitting an array of different patterns out of the same bits of reality."



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*"The world is your kaleidoscope, and the varying combinations of colors which at every succeeding moment it presents to you are the exquisitely adjusted pictures of your ever-moving thoughts."*

– James Allen

### **"A Paper Cutting Story"**

WHETHER YOU CALL IT paper snipping, silhouettes, or Scherenschnitte (the German word for this popular folk art form), for centuries millions of people have used scissors to make intricate paper cuttings. Art historians say that this art form dates back to A.D. 750 in China, from where it later spread to many other countries in Asia, Europe, and eventually America. Today countless individuals all over the world make Scherenschnitte art for both fun and profit.



This particular piece, given to me decades ago by a friend who found it in her mother's attic, is very old. I have always treasured it and been fascinated by the scene portrayed here, imagining that Garden Fairies are welcoming Spring as Old Man Winter slips away. Since winter went begrudgingly this year, holding on well into April, this picture seemed appropriate for my May Photo of the Month, and my serendipitous find of the charming verse below couldn't have been more timely:

*"Faeries, come take me out of this dull world,  
For I would ride with you upon the wind,  
Run on the top of the dishevelled tide,  
And dance upon the mountains like a flame."*

– William Butler Yeats, *The Land of Heart's Desire* (1894)  
William Butler Yeats, *The Land of Heart's Desire* (1894)

### **"I'm Not Done Yet"**

ONE YEAR I PLANTED two varieties of Clematis on my arch, the white "Sweet Autumn" on the right side and the purple "Miss Bateman" on the left. Miss Bateman gave me about a dozen blooms on the bottom area of the arch in the spring and then nothing until early September when the Sweet Autumn practically brought the arch down with hundreds of blooms. One day a couple of weeks later, on passing through the arch to the other side, I found this single purple bloom hogging the spotlight, almost shouting to me, "I'm not done yet!"

I think many small business owners must feel like this when they're competing with thousands of other businesses that offer similar products or services. "Look at me!" they proclaim from their websites. "I offer something others don't have or can't deliver."

There is much to be said for being patient and persistent as we continually strive for excellence in everything we do.



## "California Hummingbirds"



IN 2019, for the first time in my life, I set up a hummingbird feeder and took great delight in being near the birds once in a while when they were feeding. I tried without success to photograph them then, but finally achieved that goal while visiting my sisters in California earlier this year. Sister Mollie's patio feeder was attracting one hummingbird after another, so I grabbed my camera and only had to wait a few minutes to catch these shots.

I remain in awe of the speed at which these tiny birds take flight after they've had a drink of nectar. In fact, according to Humming-Birds.com, their flight speed averages 25 to 30 mph and they can power dive up to 60 mph, hover in space, and fly backwards and sideways. These are truly the tiniest and most fascinating birds in God's Creation.

## "September Sky"

MANY AREAS of the country had record-breaking rainfalls the year I snapped this picture, and the Chicago area was no exception. But I was thinking then about all those in the Northeast and South who had lost their homes due to hurricanes, tornadoes, storms, or massive flooding. As I looked at these clouds, I was comforted by the thought that the sun would eventually peek from behind the darkest cloud if one only waited long enough for it.

*"Life is not about waiting for the storms to pass . . . it's about learning how to dance in the rain."*

– Vivian Greene, author, artist, and speaker



## "Rainy Memories of the Golden Gate Bridge"



SHORTLY AFTER my husband died, I went to California to be with my sisters in the Bay Area for six weeks. It did my heart good to revisit the city Harry and I had fallen in love with back in the sixties when he was on tour with the Chicago Symphony.

Rain could not spoil the day relatives gave me a grand tour around the area and this magnificent view of the Golden Gate Bridge.

## "November Leaves"

GAZING THROUGH my kitchen windows is something my cat, Charlee, enjoyed as much as I did. I take some of my meals here, and from different angles I can see most of back yard, which now contains several perennial gardens. This is an older picture that doesn't show my newest landscaping features along the fence, but it remains my favorite fall picture of this particular tree, which I consider the anchor to my whole back yard.

I almost lost it one year when it was attacked by disease, but I treated it and prayed for it and God restored it to health. Thus I always feel blessed when it gives me glorious color in the fall and then fills out again in the spring to give me a summer shade umbrella for my little patio.



## "A Respectful Christmas Cat"

ONE YEAR when I was blessed to be with my sisters over the Christmas holiday, I happened to be in the right place at the right time with camera in hand to catch this shot of sister Mollie's cat, Jivette, kissing Baby Jesus in the Wakeman's crèche.

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**BARBARA LAUNCHED** BarbaraBrabec.com in 2000 and quickly began to populate it with home-business articles and resources. Over the years she added hundreds of articles on several other topics related in one way or another to the larger topic of LIFE.

Now, LIFE itself is Barbara's focus. Unlike her original website, her new domain launched in 2021 features only her own writing—new content and an archive of timeless and relevant articles in fourteen life-related categories, all updated and reformatted for republication on the all-new "[Barbara Brabec's World](http://BarbaraBrabec'sWorld.com)." It reflects Barbara's current writing interests, latest books, and professional services.

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