

Starting a new quilt can take the stuffing out of us. The energy needed to find a design, find the fabric to fulfill the idea, and find the right place to put the cut pieces can lead a quilter to (s)nap.

When the timing is right, however, nerves settle, creative juices flow. Now, the flip and sew blocks are forming a gem of a quilt. There is no stopping. Choosing the proper piece strips that stitch volumes of color into this tapestry is fun. Only 35 ten-inch blocks to go. Perhaps a trip to the quilt shop is on the To Do List!

Sometimes getting started on a new quilt project is a struggle after a long hiatus, perhaps, of two to three years. For some of us Creativity can stop during a catastrophe. For others an upheaval can prompt a surge of inspiration.

“Each time my husband was deployed I created huge quilts,” says a quilter. And when COVID shut down the community, I again made queen and king size quilts, one for a wedding gift and another for a graduates’ gift.”

A trip to the quilt shop was enlightening. “Welcome to my store,” says the owner of a new shop. “Let me know if you need anything.” Thank you,” I mutter. “All I need is to get the quilting magic back into creative form,” I confess

She nods as if to say, “I understand.”

Big pieces and little pieces of colorful fabric gather inspirations. Various patterns displayed in a corner with morning sunlight casting whispers of “Buy me, choose me” give off a surround sound. Quilts can put the energy solidly back into the quilter’s decisions resulting into a new lifeline, even those quilts not yet under a needle.

For some of us, a quilting studio is the dinning room table, a floor for a design board. The sewing machine has a special place in the coat closet until it comes out of that space to Sputter and Humm as it happily tells the needle what to do. When company comes a-calling the machine scrambles its way back into hiding. Fabric scattered on the floor is again tossed into a basket. The dining room table is now a centerpiece in the room with a quilted table runner for show.

Getting the machine and the fabric pieces back into center focus, however, is a difficult move for the quilter. The Dance of the Quilter must be with the right beat

of the music and at the right time, between the next company arriving and the spur of inspiration.

Quilting together fabric pieces is an art form. Putting energy and inspiration together with time and space along with the ingredients of texture and color is the stuff we, as quilters, love to perform, no matter how long the journey takes to find the “This Way” sign.

Lana Russ