

The idea came to me after my elephant in the room sauntered out the patio door leaving the door open behind her.

Now is the time to get back to simplicity. To cook simple meals like tomato soup and grilled cheese sandwiches or stuffed tomatoes with chicken salad served on lettuce wedges. Both tasty treats.

Now is a good time to create art, to get back to coloring.

Looking underneath guest beds, (what better place is there to store long ago items)? And looking past tax papers in the file cabinet are good places to start a coloring book search.

Ah, underneath the guest room bed is the Mother Goose Super Giant Coloring Book. A 16 by 22 inch of, now, yellowed sketches featuring “There Was a Crooked Man” and “Jack Be Nibble” pages which are ready to be colored into life. Alas, all the pages with little girls have been colored and signed by pre-teen hands. The “Mary Had a Little Lamb” and the “Little Bo Peep” pages were colored last century, but are ready for putting on the refrigerator door with a large magnet.

I was startled when I turned to “Old Mother Hubbard.” I now resembled this kind lady with an empty larder. She, too, was completely arrayed in color.

The file drawer with past tax papers squeezed out “The Gingham on the Farm” coloring book. The all little girls in dungarees and smiles was a popular book. A few pages, though, were awaiting Crayola magic.

Now, to find the crayons. Then the magic of bringing the illustrations to life would begin a colorful morning of quiet activity.

Coloring inside the lines of printed illustrations is an artform. “Stay inside the lines,” I tell them when our little ones began the process of hand-eye coordination learning. The rules of coloring would soon relate into driving instruction. “Stay inside the lines,” they were told.

I stayed inside the lines while coloring the young girl giving her grandpa a slice of chocolate cake with pink frosting. Next, I am ready to try driving while ‘staying between the lines’ on the road. But no, I must simply stay home.

Lana Russ