



**JRB ART**  
**AT THE ELMS**  
Paseo Arts District

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## THE SEASONS OF A WOMAN'S LIFE

By Joy Reed Belt

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### ACT I

"Fast Tract II" by Eugene Bavinger

One summer, my late husband, John Belt, and I spent a couple of weeks in Cape Cod attending a workshop with Daniel Levinson entitled "The Seasons of a Man's Life." A psychologist and a professor, both at Harvard and Yale, Levinson had recently published his book of the same title. The workshop was accredited for attorneys through the American Bar Association and also met my continuing education requirements as a therapist. It was a wise and wonderful workshop. As fodder for his book, Levinson had conducted a 10-year longitudinal study of men and women, ages 35 to 45. He looked for and documented patterns and developmental stages that occurred throughout the subjects' lives. When he published his second book, "The Stages of a Woman's Life," he noted that the stages and crises in men and women were remarkably the same, but that their goals, dreams, and scripts about what kind of life they wanted were different. He not only believed mid-life crises occur, he believed in a predictable crisis for each stage of life.

All of this was interesting and heady stuff. Each night after eating yet another delicious seafood dinner, John and I would get into long, animated conversations about the meaning of our lives. We would stay up half the night, pacing the floor of our rental while discussing our hopes and dreams for the next stages of our lives.

and exclaiming, "now I know why I did that!" Adding to the excitement of this truly lifelong learning experience was the fact that Professor Levinson was in litigation with Gail Sheeny, who had allegedly used his research for her New York Times best-selling book "Passages." During the breaks I would scrounge coffee while the Professor and John would huddle to discuss the lawsuit. Ultimately the Professor received quite a lot of money from Ms. Sheeny. The covers of Levinson's books now say statements noting that this book contains the research from which "Passages" was written. And the covers of Sheeny's books state that her book is based on the research conducted by Levinson.



## ACT II

A piece by an unknown artist that was purchased on a business trip in Russia.

I have been thinking about the "Seasons" workshop for several months now as I have been feeling that my life is again "shifting" to a new developmental stage. I felt something shift when I started this blog in January 2020. It became important to me to write. Typically, the stages of my adult life have been characterized by career shifts. True to the vocabulary I acquired earning my undergraduate degree in Drama, I speak of my developmental stages as Acts. For instance, I often tell people that the Gallery is my Third Act. My First Act was spent as an educator and administrator. I have taught in grade school, high school, and college as well as served in an administrative position at a University. Shortly after completing my Ph.D. and LPC, I launched a business in Career and Organizational Development. A few years later I started an Executive Search Firm and later an Outplacement Firm. All of that work, which essentially dealt with personal, career, and organizational development became my Second Act.

In 1999, after I had been the Managing Partner of an international Outplacement firm, with 200 offices in 33 countries, John Belt gave me a series of painting lessons which he hoped would "make me relax." They did for a while. I have loved art all my life as evidenced most strongly by what an accountant jokingly referred to as my "nasty little habit of buying art." In 2001, I started leasing a small studio on Paseo Drive where I began transitioning into my Third Act, that of a Gallery Owner. In 2003 the Gallery moved to The Elms. In my Third Act, I still use the training and experience I used in Acts I and II, but the scenery is better. I don't just have an office full of art, I have a building full of art. But on a daily basis, my job is to educate and advocate for art and to launch and contribute to the management of artists' careers. Instead of finding employees for companies, I find art for them. Having all the training and experience I have had in other organizations and professions provide me with the tools I need to do my job better. So even if this developmental shift I am beginning to feel results in starting my Act Four, in a very real sense, I suspect my life will remain the same. It will just continue to evolve for the better.



ACT III  
"Flower Inset" by David Crismon

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