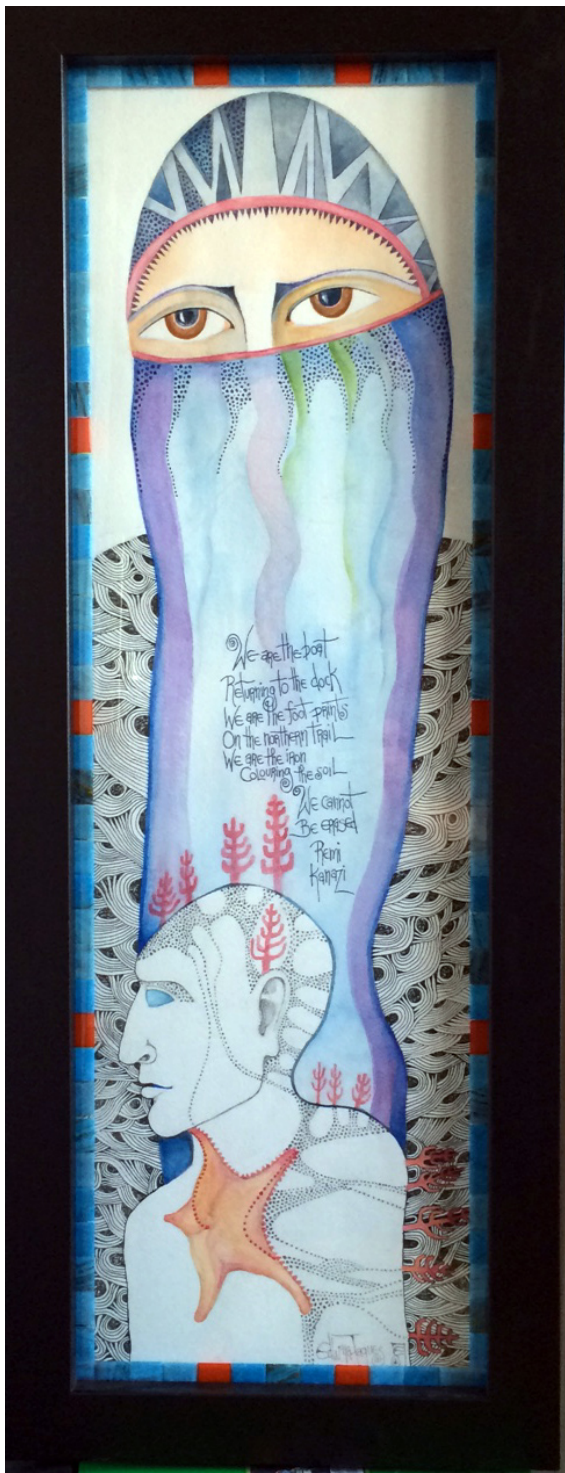


AYLIN'S DREAM



In 2015, I was in Goreme, Turkey, a magical place with bizarre vistas and warm, generous people situated along the ancient “Silk Road”. I found myself in Ibrahim’s carpet shop, not a stone’s away from our hotel.

A small taffy coloured dog known as the Turkish Akbash, greeted me and only when I had been served with tea and cakes did we begin the process of looking at carpets. There was a huge selection, both old and new and Ibrahim gently guided me through the various types to determine which I wanted. His family have been weavers for generations. He himself is not a weaver, but is entrusted with the selling of the carpets that his family creates. Everyone relies on each other in the struggle to make a living and I think of them now with concern as the very real threat of economic collapse with a decline in tourism and a change in government escalates thanks to the efforts of Syrian terrorists.

Eventually, I selected three carpets, having intended to buy only one! Ibrahim kindly offered to hold them back for a day so that I had time to think. Michael, my husband, was leaving me to decide – not always a good idea – and he would come with me to make the final negotiation. Because the shop was a place we passed by every time we set out to go into town, I would stop just to refresh my memory and if he was not busy, Ibrahim and I would talk. I asked about his family and he told me about his wife and children, all of whom, he clearly adored, as well as the little dog whose ears he was fondling. I told him that I was an artist and about my current project about dreams. He had nothing to offer, but he said that his wife often had dreams that came true and that he would ask her that night.

I returned the next day to make my final decision about the carpets. In the end, I couldn’t leave without all three! When they had been securely wrapped and all negotiations completed, we sat down for more tea and cake that his eldest sister had just baked. I enquired whether Ibrahim’s wife had a dream for me and she had. It was of a vast ocean and in the middle was a small boat filled with people. The boat capsized and nearly all of the people drowned. It was a few days later that I saw such a thing on the news, about refugees attempting to land along the coast of Turkey, fleeing Syria. In the painting, I have added a poem written by one of the refugees about their desperation and the inevitable tragedies that have ensued.