Sewing Together Inner Peace
By: Jenna Hiltsley

She sews. What does she see as she weaves her needle in and out of her fabric? Does she gaze beyond the cotton in her hands to some far off place only she can see into? Or does she perhaps see what her hard labor will turn into? A blanket, a shirt, a quilt, a tiny stuffed doll for her grandkids? A little bunny in a yellow dress? What does she bring together with those careful even stitches? She sighs as she works; the deep lines that age has lent her, crinkling around her eyes as she struggles to see what lies in her hands. However, she is used to this. Perhaps that is what getting old is all about – surmounting challenges which you always took for granted as easily accomplished. In, out, in, out – again and again the needle darts through the fabric, a silver guide to the thread that comes after it. Her arms raise and fall with the movements and she sways slightly to her own rhythm made by the needle, by her heartbeat. She shivers slightly under the thin blanket covering her legs and she pauses for a moment to pull it up a little more snugly. Was she always so cold all the time when she was young? Ahh, much better.

She glances up at the small room around her. It’s not much, but then again nursing homes aren’t ever much to look at. White on white trimmed with white. The scent of disinfectant permeates the air, and no matter how long she is here she just
doesn’t think that she’ll ever get used to that acrid smell. That ridiculously cheery Santa Claus cut out is still sitting above the fish tank. It had been cute at first. Then April came and it started to get old. June just made it ridiculous…. Her eyes wander to the others sitting around her, consumed in their own tasks: baseball around the TV screen while bickering about the plays, a few playing chess or checkers. Marjorie was at it again with the aid. (Did she really think she’d get a second helping of pudding being as bad a diabetic as she was?) The usual group was watching the fish tank, absorbed in the movements of the little creatures within. Poor things, there wasn’t much hope left for those people. At least they were better off than the aptly named “Droolers” – they were even worse off. Or had they found the same peace she had?

She shook her head at such thoughts, turning back to her work. At least she had a purpose, and that gave her a sense of peace. Once again the needle continues its flight through the soft fabric, smooth despite the shaking of her hands. The world around her is falling away again, as if the small distraction of adjusting her blanket never even happened. All there is to the world is her and her work, connected by that single thread, and she finds comfort in that. No worries, no memories, no thoughts – a sort of meditation where the world drifts away and all that is left is a sort of inner peace that can only be found in work that you love. The end of the thread comes too soon, and with a sigh she knots and
cuts it with practiced movements. The spool of the thread spins in her hands in a flash of color as she lets it fly. It takes a while for her to get the thread through the eye of the needle. Did they have to make it so small? Was it even that small the last time she needed to thread it? Her hands shake a little harder under the pressure of such a small hole and soon she is squinting her eyes until they become thin slits. Her pink aged tongue sticks out slightly and the wrinkles fan out even deeper, likening her face to tree bark more than a human’s skin. With an internal leap of joy and a brief smile the thread finally darts through the eye of the needle and away. With a quick knot, she is off and sewing again, in and out, in and out, resuming her internal peace once more. Yes, she has a purpose and she is content.