



Bent Not Broken

**Story by: Colleen Marchwick, Director
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"A tree that is unbending, is easily broken." Lao Tzu

This year has been one of intense emotions like a winter storm that blows so that I no longer see, full of snow and ice weighing me down until I was nearly touching the earth.

I cancelled your dreams—no study abroad—and that weighed me down.

I furloughed you and re-assigned you to save money and that weighed me down.

I was separated from you in your time of illness and isolation and that weighed me down.

I cannot give you back what you have lost—a wedding, joys of first-time motherhood, milestones, adventures—and that weighs me down.

Bending under the weight hurts me and I cry sometimes but I am not broken.

I did not break.

Now, the sun is coming out, the weight is lifting a little, and I am following the warmth and light one day at a time.

**Artist: Joshua Brown, Professor
Department of Languages
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire**

Joshua is a professor of German and linguistics at UW-Eau Claire, and he is also a weaver and needleworker with a focus on historical forms of folk art. His textile website is <https://www.ullfrogintextiles.com/>.

For this project, I wove fabric for three stories and embroidered a recurring motif from each one using blackwork embroidery techniques. I then replicated the loss, fear, and disruption from each story by cutting the fabric into pieces. I then sewed the pieces together with visible seams and in an irregular pattern – reminiscent of 19th century piecework textiles. I was struck by these stories of loss and fear in our own UWEC community – we don't often know about the very real struggles of our coworkers, but we need to hear those stories and work as a community to lift each other up.

View all the pieces in the *Healing Reflections* [online gallery](#).