



Painting Diary  
"A Quiet Place" by Linda Carter Holman

occasionally someone will ask me  
if i give art lessons  
no.....replying with a smile  
thinking how can i be a guide  
if i don't know myself  
how i am going to get there  
i do have confidence that i will  
so i think i might be able to teach theory

in this painting diary  
i will offer observations  
as the creation of  
A QUIET SPOT  
comes along  
the words and pictures  
will hopefully show  
that the process of painting  
is no different than  
any other adventure  
we might embark upon

obstacles and deviations  
appear and disappear along the way



"I reading in this dreamlike, illusory realm,  
Without looking for the traces I may have left;  
A cuckoo's song beckons me to return home:  
Hearing this, I tilt my head to see  
Who has told me to turn back:  
But do not ask me where I am going,  
As I travel in this limitless world,  
Where every step I take is my home."

Dogen (the founder of Soto School of Japanese Zen: 1200-1253)



## from a Painting Diary

Sitting at the canvas ready to begin...

from my observation the creation of a painting  
begins with an anxious state  
excited...fearful...uneasy  
the unknown can be accompanied by that state  
but that is where the fun begins

nowadays the painting begins with an inspiration  
something i saw or felt or understood...  
a color...a shape  
there is an idea  
and it goes to the canvas  
sketch....resketch  
i use thinned oil paint to sketch directly  
on the canvas and if the drawing doesn't work  
i wipe it off with a turpenoid moistened cloth  
the idea is trying to take form  
the idea is symbolized  
by a person and her surroundings  
that tell the story

shaping...defining... color



looking for the right expressions



The expression i am looking for  
is untouched by the passing world  
she "being there"  
elevates the moment  
and brings everything to life....  
the guide  
and the story teller

like a child growing up  
the baby becomes the toddler...  
a teenager  
the trip to maturity  
one thing becomes another





started... set aside...and begun again





how to begin again...  
reconnect  
go back in and find the way....

The painting sat there in limbo for weeks  
while the duties of my personal world  
required attention

now sitting here at my easel  
with "A Quiet Spot"  
paused in time before me....  
curiously unfamiliar  
the path not remembered

where was i going

how to begin again



new day  
going forth

and so the story begins anew  
my lady remains the same  
she is still the guide  
but the idea of what is happening  
has altered in my mind  
like a dream  
some parts fade

trying to find the way again  
exploring  
experimenting  
this is where i have been today

my morning was spent rearranging  
the Baby Grand Piano Cafe  
what i like to call our front room

same principle  
begin with an idea  
move forward  
and with grace  
something new may be discovered

keeping to the aim





Friday

things have a way of changing  
ideas of where the story is going  
composition  
what balances with the color  
what is interesting  
intriguing...fun.....  
an idea sometimes seems  
perfect!  
only to realize the next day  
that as good as it is  
the whole of the story is what counts  
the aim  
what distracts....doesn't promote  
must be given up.





with tomorrows eye anew  
look and see

the painting began  
with the idea of a calm spot  
when the world that surrounds  
is in a flurry.....





still working on the floor...  
how many different ways were tried?  
being fond of the black and white  
checkered floor  
gave it a chance and yet  
after much thought and time.....  
painted over it

the parts alone may be interesting  
and successful by themselves  
but they must give way to the vision of the painting  
they need to lend themselves to the whole  
not to be distracting

that busy floor seemed to take away  
from the face of the sitter





i remembered today that the lady in the painting  
was inspired by a picture i saw of a saint  
her face was joyous and she sat on a chair  
with her feet not touching the ground  
sitting and yet more like levitating....  
of the world but not touched by it



taking a trip on the train  
along the way looking out the windows  
making notes...having fun  
seeing what's around the next corner  
feeling close to the destination

and then falling asleep  
and upon waking  
the train is still moving  
but some how things are different

all those bread crumbs dropped along the way  
have vanish  
the aim...telling a story  
about the world and the calm spot  
.....faded.....  
how to begin again





now back on the train  
remembering

passing through time  
the story changes in my mind  
but the character is still the guide  
her face directs the play  
she is the rudder  
that holds the ship on course.

now after weeks away from the painting  
the idea that gives me inspiration  
is the three graces  
to give..receive and create

with color...form...composition  
creating balance.....  
the challenge is to see in a new way  
this is always the challenge  
to be fresh  
not to fall into old thinking

returning to the original idea of wind  
trying one thing then another  
the sky opened  
faces fill with new color  
leaves and flowers bloom



to serve  
the aim of the painting



the composition has become fairly settled  
enough for the tuning to begin  
trying not to totally repaint at this point  
which was my habit in years past  
now the aim is to keep some of the spontaneity  
not to over refine  
but at the same time  
bring the whole together in a solid form

this particular painting  
has had it's own personal life  
like each person  
each road has it's own special characteristics  
some smooth...some bumpy  
each still with a beginning and an end

looking back on the pictured diary  
it seems that most any of the ideas  
that appeared on the canvas would have worked  
or should i say could have been worked with

it is a balancing act  
so i try to go with what seems as at the time  
is simple  
harmonious  
what seems to serve the aim best

lining



starting today to begin painting  
the black lines..  
defining..  
usually starting at the top and working down

i don't want the out lining....  
to be severely linear  
colors have a tendency to mush together  
i like to see a solid form  
that doesn't mean that i want two pure colors  
separated in a harsh way  
i want the colors to have a commonality  
and at the same time be distinct

the black lines hold the parts together for me  
define colored areas  
give some order in my mind  
reminding myself that the lines  
connect to the whole  
not to stick out  
but soak in

today while something in me feels  
that the end is near  
another part of me  
knows this is not the end





that chair...  
something was bothering me  
about the long legs  
to begin there was the idea of the chair  
going out of the picture....out of time  
i liked that idea  
hard to give up an idea  
if you really like it

this afternoon  
while painting the black lines  
the chair began to change  
the back of the chair first  
then the arms and the legs...  
letting go....  
the alteration took form

the work day ended  
and looking back seeing that  
i had stopped my daily describing  
told me the  
the destination was  
all but here  
no more words





near the completion of this painting  
a friend sent me these quotes

"My art form is freedom from imagination."  
RB

"The artist must be at the same time actor and spectator."  
Rembrandt

looking for a quote yesterday, i came  
across one that said something about thinking of  
the past...imagination about the past takes up  
the space for being alive now....  
(that kind of imagination that is unintentional)  
it takes up the space  
for being creative in the moment

painting for me has become  
a practice of letting go of the past  
which includes ideas, techniques  
subjects that i have explored before  
it is not difficult to just paint without attention  
so there must be some part of me watching  
to keep firmly on the path...  
as the story unfolds  
unsure of the how...  
holding on till the end





Linda Carter Holman Books

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