

Book Brush & Broom



Along the Red Book Road by Linda Carter Holman

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A l o n g t h e R e d B o o k R o a d



Book Brush and Broom
Along the Red Book Road
©2024 Linda Carter Holman

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Special thanks to Kimberly Santos

Printed on acid free paper in the United States
First printing 2024
Published in 2024 by Red Shoe Studio Publishing
Post Office Box 1119, Oregon House, CA 95962
www.carterholman.com

Library of Congress Number: 2024900633
ISBN 978-0-9769732-4-9



"O to make the most jubilant song!"

Walt Whitman

The beauty of diversity lies in the richness of perspective.
Hypatia

Point of View

Everyone has their own unique way of seeing the world. And it shows in the creation of any art form, being a personal point of view filled with ideas and images that were collected from their particular given place in time and space.



In retrospect it seems that things come together for a reason. Ideas, observations, doodles, experiments, conversations, poems, paintings and people all played a part in the creation of this book. There is a process going on not unlike like making a floral arrangement where the flowers came from your own backyard garden. Seeds selected and then planted in the spring. Flowered now ready for the harvest. Vase chosen, buds and blooms arranged and then placed on the dinner table for all to enjoy.

I'm usually not aware of the collecting part of the process because it occurs so naturally. For me when I'm ready to begin with a sketch for a project and the destination is in my mind the adventure just unfolds step by step. All the parts are there at my finger tips. It is as if someone unknown to me had over a period of time gathered everything I might need at this moment in the process and had scattered those elements here and there about my desk. Miraculously! Each idea, fact, quote or picture was there for discovery to be arranged in my personal storytelling fashion for the fun of it.

Collecting



The birds and their chatter overwhelm me with feelings:

At times like this I lie down in my straw hut.

Cherries shine with crimson fire;

Willows trail slender boughs.

The morning sun pops from the jaws of blue peaks;

Bright clouds are washed in the green pond.

Who ever thought I would leave the dusty world

And come bounding up the southern slope

of Cold Mountain?

Han-Shan

Dedication



'Book, Brush, and Broom' is dedicated to Han-Shan and Shih-te.

Someone recently asked me how I spent my day.

I didn't know quite how to put it.

Words came and then connected with the story
of these two eccentric characters and their symbols.

Han-Shan symbolizes theory and pureness of thought and usually
pictured with a scroll, while Shih-te symbolizes practice and contact
with the world and is usually pictured with a broom.

Han-Shan and Shih-te (active late 8th—early 9th century) were Chan
Buddhist monks who held low-level positions at Guoqingsi, a temple
on China's sacred Mount Tiantai. Han-Shan (Cold Mountain) was a
reclusive monk-poet. Shih-te, his constant companion, carries a broom
indicating his role as a temple's janitor. The pair came to represent an
iconoclastic aspect of Chan (Japanese: Zen) monastic practice.

"Linda, how do you spend your day?"

Inspiration, creation, maintenance

Book, Brush, and Broom

"Stream of Time"



*There is a lake so tiny
that a mustard seed would cover it
easily, yet everyone drinks from this lake.*

*Deer, jackals, rhinoceroses, and sea elephants
keep falling into it, falling and dissolving
almost before they have time to be born.*

Lalla



The Inside Story

For years I have been taking photographs of works in progress with the aim to see changes as they occur from one day to another. It has been an interesting tool that has provided me with useful observations of my inner workings, as well as, a way to see and solve problems on the canvas.

In the beginning I mostly took a photo of the first sketch and then one at the end when the painting was completed. Over the years I started taking more pictures along the way. Documenting. Collecting information.

However as much as this process served in a positive way, seeing what I had painted over became a source of regret. I found myself looking at the photos from yesterday or a week ago and wondering. Why did I have to change that? It was fine as it was. And yet, I could not let it be.

One painting in particular troubled me. Over a period of time the main character went from a carefree young girl to a mature woman. I felt a sense of loss. What was fresh and simple was gone. What was young and naive, matured. The girl became a woman.

That painting helped me to understand. It showed me that each painting has its own life. It rides on a stream of time, a work in progress. Beginning to end, each phase fleeting. What is visible only hints at what lies beneath the surface. And it is all good.



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*You can't grab it and can't let it go
when you can't find it that's when you'll find it
it speaks when it's silent it's silent when it speaks
when the Gate of Gifts opens
nothing stands in its way*

*Young-chia's
Song of Enlightenment*

The other day at the grocery store I had a conversation at the checkout counter with one of the employees. This chat was a continuation of a short interaction we had a few weeks before.

The subject centered around art and music. He reminisced about his mother's encouragement and appreciation for his art work that she proudly displayed in her home. And I think, he wondered somehow, why he had not continued. Then all of a sudden he said, "What about the Mona Lisa? Why do people say it is the best painting in the world?"

I didn't know what to say. There is not much time allotted at this point in the shopping game for that sort of question.

He was playing at being the grocery clerk, remembering with pleasure the past. And I was the customer, with other shoppers behind me, waiting their turn to get out of the store and on their way home.

"Some believe the painting is a self-portrait," popped out of my mouth.

Well, he must have considered that possibility before because he immediately said that he did not believe it. He thought it was all about the model.

The last item moved passed the scanner. Cash paid. Change received. End of conversation.

"Contemplating the Universe"



That question stuck with me. What is it about the Mona Lisa? Based on my recent experience of taking a look at the many layers below the surface of a painting, an idea took root.

What is there below the surface? Ideas, paint, and brush in motion. The artist at play behind the curtain. Exploring. Looking for an expression of life? Describing a moment of existence, from their point of view, using a particular subject, and then sharing the result. That sharing of how the artist mirrors themselves: the world as they know it at that period of their life? Maybe that is why some people think Mona Lisa is a self-portrait.

So my thought is that Leonardo's work on the painting Mona Lisa created not only the surface to be seen with the eyes, but also another layer beneath the surface that is imperceptible to the eye? Something left unseen, as a result of his efforts spent there in the creation. What if his experience and struggles there at the easel produced something else? A residue of his presence? A fine energy. A fragrance? An emanation? A vibration? And then one day, let's say the right person at just the right time came and experienced that special something about the painting? A seed was planted, a legend, a myth, an idea was born: that the Mona Lisa is the best painting in the world!



Who Can Say?



"Treasure Box"



Mona Lisa

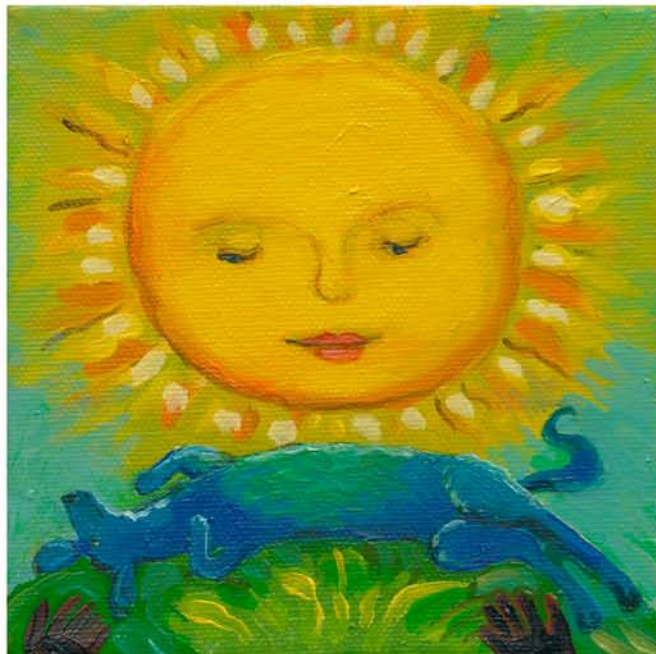
Despite being the most famous painting in the world, the Mona Lisa—like all of Leonardo's works—was neither signed nor dated. Its title comes from the biography of Leonardo written by the 16th century mannerist painter and biographer Giorgio Vasari (1511–74), published around 1550, which reported his agreement to paint the portrait of Lisa Gherardini, wife of Francesco dei Giocondo, a Florentine dignitary and wealthy silk merchant. Vasari also mentioned that Leonardo employed musicians and troubadours to keep her amused, which might explain her enigmatic smile.

As usual, Leonardo procrastinated endlessly over the painting—notably the position of the hands—and continued working for another 20 years.

Sadly, La Gioconda has become so famous and so valuable that it is almost impossible to catch more than a quick glimpse of her, as she sits inscrutably in the Louve behind the non-reflective glass of her temperature-controlled security box.

Leonardo do ser Piero da Vinci was an Italian polymath of the High Renaissance who was active as a painter, draftsman, engineer, scientist, theorist, sculpture, and architect.

Which reminds me of another theory I heard once, that if a man stands over an ant hill, the ants may be aware that something is there but have no clue to what it really is.



"Sunlight Shore Bound"



Ideas come unexpectedly,
like at last reaching the crest of a distant hill,
the valley opens revealing new possibilities,
as far as the eye can see.

Ideas



There are so many different sparks
that can set the match aflame.

Reading about Buddha one day, I came across a little story called
"The Martyr Snails." It became a stepping stone that led to this
compilation I call, "Book Brush and Broom."

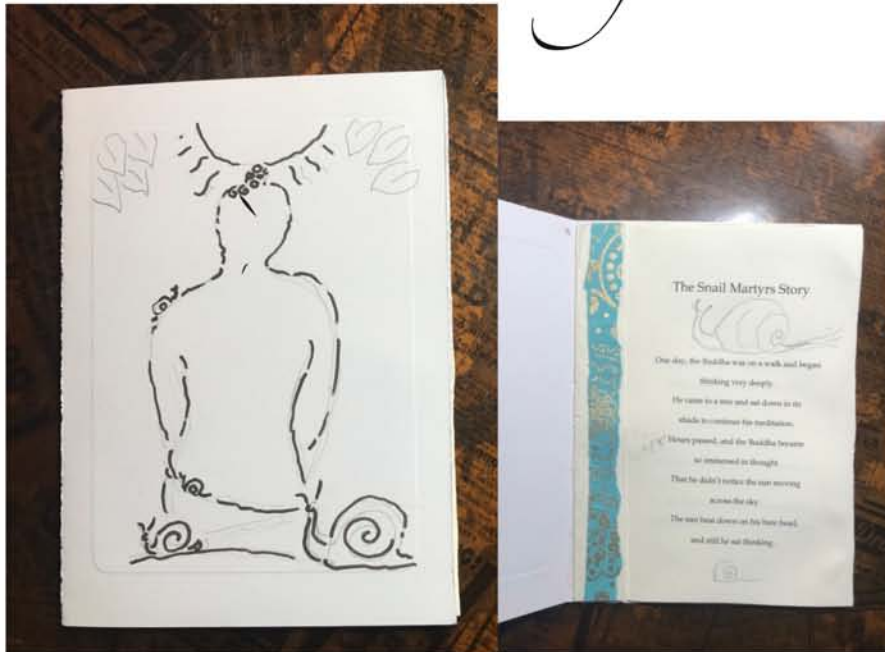
Buddha on his journey to achieve enlightenment is an inspiring story.
The thing I like about the story of "The Martyr Snails" is that it shows
scale. Buddha seems so high and the snails so low. And yet
both stories are about sacrifice: offering something for the sake of
something else.

*"The title 'Buddha' which literally means awakened is conferred on an individual
who discovers the path to nirvana, the cessation of suffering, and propagates that
discovery so that others may also achieve nirvana."
Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

*In ancient Aztec culture, the snail was considered to be a sacred animal
because of his spiral shell, which was symbolic of the cycle of life and death.
The Sumerians and Babylonians considered the snail immortal, making it a
symbol of eternity.*

We are surrounded by symbols in this life.
Visible signs of something invisible.
A symbol can be very personal, held in secret
or it might represent an idea or concept
that almost everyone recognizes like Buddha or "❤️"
Carl Jung said, "I am a symbol of my soul."

Sharing



Often times an idea will come when I am working on something to share.
A new idea will come. And I am always amazed and grateful when it does.

I like to put cards together with quotes for family and friends,
to find a theme for whatever occasion it might be that is special for each person.
One day an idea came that I thought our middle grandchild might enjoy.
So, I set about putting together a simply illustrated little booklet
based on "The Martyr Snails."

The idea was fun to work on, but in the end it did not meet my expectations.
Too messy. So I sent another greeting instead and sat this one aside for a
redo. I am not a perfectionist, but I do have a tendency
to "arrange and rearrange" until whatever I'm working on feels OK.



The Martyr Snails

One sunny afternoon, Buddha sat down under a tree and began to meditate. He became so immersed in his meditation that he was not aware of the passing of time.

Snail was making its way near by and noticed Buddha sitting in deep meditation just off the path. On such a hot day, even though Buddha had sat under a shady tree, now the sun's rays burned down upon him. Snail being concerned that Buddha might soon be distracted and lose his concentration, without a second thought made its way atop Buddha's head and came to rest. His moist body cooled the Buddha's smooth, bare skin. All the other snails in the area followed and made their way up. One after another.

Soon the snails had become a neat cap of spiral shells. Their cool, damp bodies helped to maintain Buddha's meditation for hours. Later in the evening when Buddha stood from meditation, he discovered that he was wearing a cap of 108 snails, all of whom had given their lives to aid him on his path to enlightenment.

Today they are displayed on Buddha statues and other art forms in gardens and homes around the world to remind us of their sacrifice.

Sacrifice is something we all share.
Each in our own way.

Over Here



The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the play instinct acting from inner necessity. The creative mind plays with the objects it loves.

Carl Jung

Observations

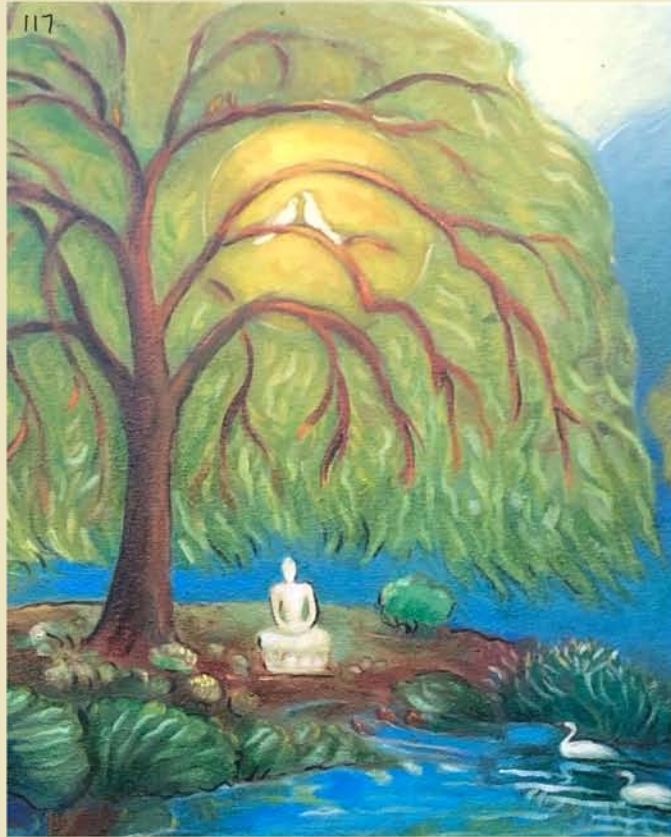


Months later I rediscovered "The Martyr Snails" there in my "Don't Forget Me Box." Thinking about it again a new idea stirred. I saw three girls standing on a bridge overlooking a lakeside garden. On a peninsula just across a body of waters, sat a statue of Buddha under an old willow tree. The middle character on the bridge is telling the story of "The Martyr Snails" to the two younger ones. The snails are present too, here and there throughout the landscape, ready to re-enact their parts in the tale.

However, an idea taken to the canvas does not always develop as it began. A story unfolds and takes on a life of its own.

From my point of view I am the driver of the cart, the observer, the servant, trying to do my best to keep the wagon on the road and keep my eyes open to changes along the way, doing all I can to deliver the cargo in the best shape possible.

For me that means keeping the destination in mind. Staying on the path, while being receptive to refinements along the way, willing to sacrifice something old for something new, when it feels right, setting fear aside, trusting my self.



"The Bridge"



“The Bridge”

Sun shines from above
See branches leafy dipping low
Fragrant petals float ashore
These summer days

We devotees stand abridge
In wonder, witness
Ephemeral lotus waters
Ripple o'er silken starry pool

Sun pierced, wild willow burned
Yet, Buddha, sat so still
Speckled shadows ruffled edge
Wafted song bird sweetened air

Here, today the selfless came
Now, and all the way
Slipping over grass and stone
Glide Dear Snails on silver trails.

Up and up each one they rose
To Buddha's Crown and stayed
And Fishes flew
And golden blossoms bloomed.

Ich



To the canvas, primed and tinted.
The idea in the beginning, is a vague impression,
as it spreads to fill the surface.

The theme radiating out from the characters
there on the bridge. Three players take their mark.
And then the focus moves over the pool to Buddha.

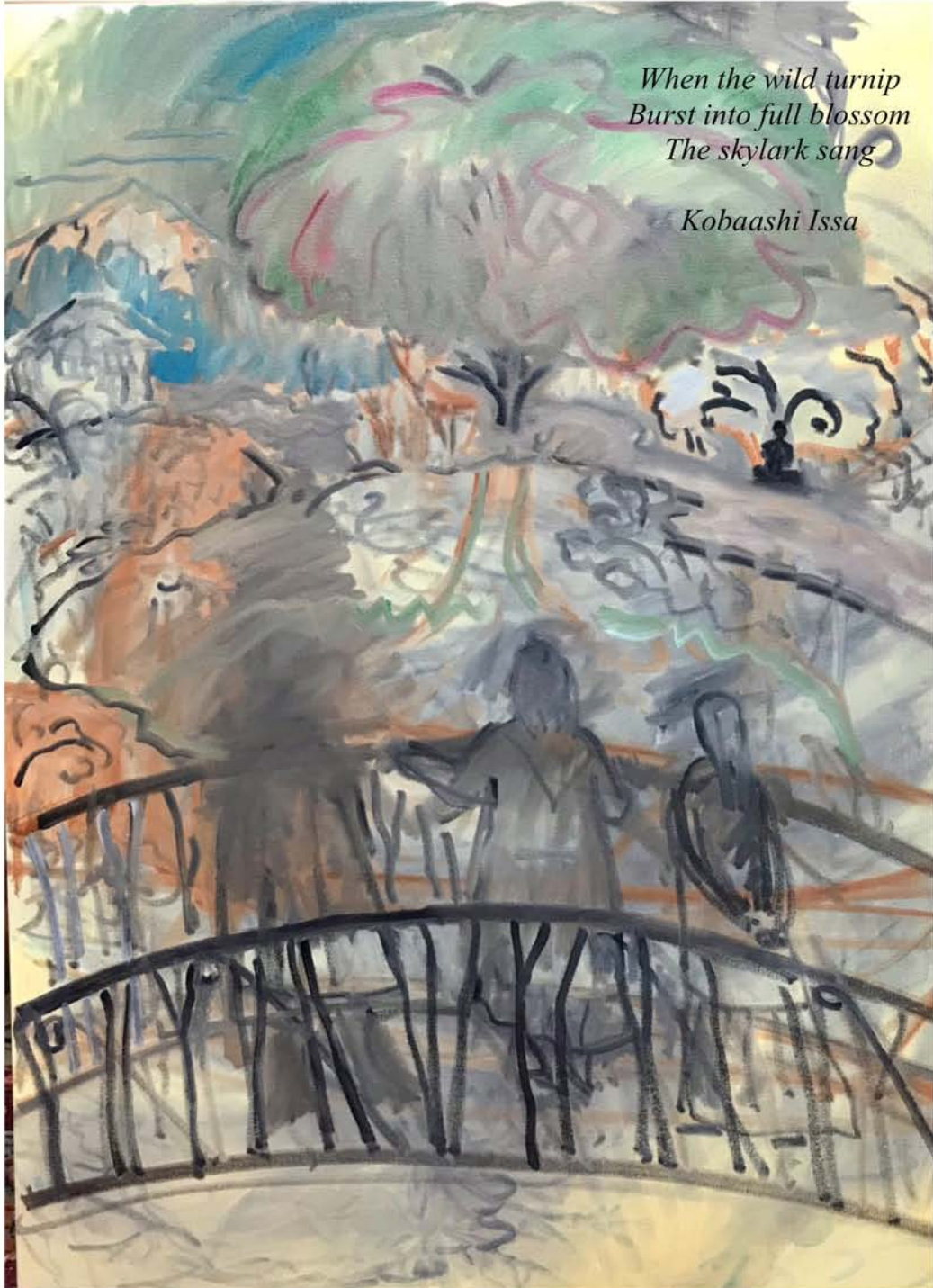
A weeping willow fills the back sky space,
branches hang and move in the breeze
and sometimes touch the ground.

Now the water's surface takes shape.
What else is happening there in the background?
The stage fills with possibilities. Sculptor's brush in
hand, laying down color, developing composition,
setting the mood for the next day.

A tinted wash of oil with darker lines accentuate.
Smudges left where reshaping took place,
perhaps in the space of an hour.

In the Beginning



A painting in a loose, expressive style. In the foreground, a person with dark hair, wearing a greyish-brown robe, stands on a curved wooden bridge with a simple railing. They are looking out over a landscape. In the middle ground, there are fields of turnips with green leaves and some pink blossoms. The background is a mix of green, blue, and orange tones, suggesting a hazy or sunset/sunrise sky. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

*When the wild turnip
Burst into full blossom
The skylark sang*

Kobaashi Issa

Color Sketch

While the first sketch attempts to lay down the idea
more in shape, balancing the main elements
and setting the mood,
this next step focuses on a balancing of color.
Choosing shades and combinations.
A colored structure that will be built on in the future.

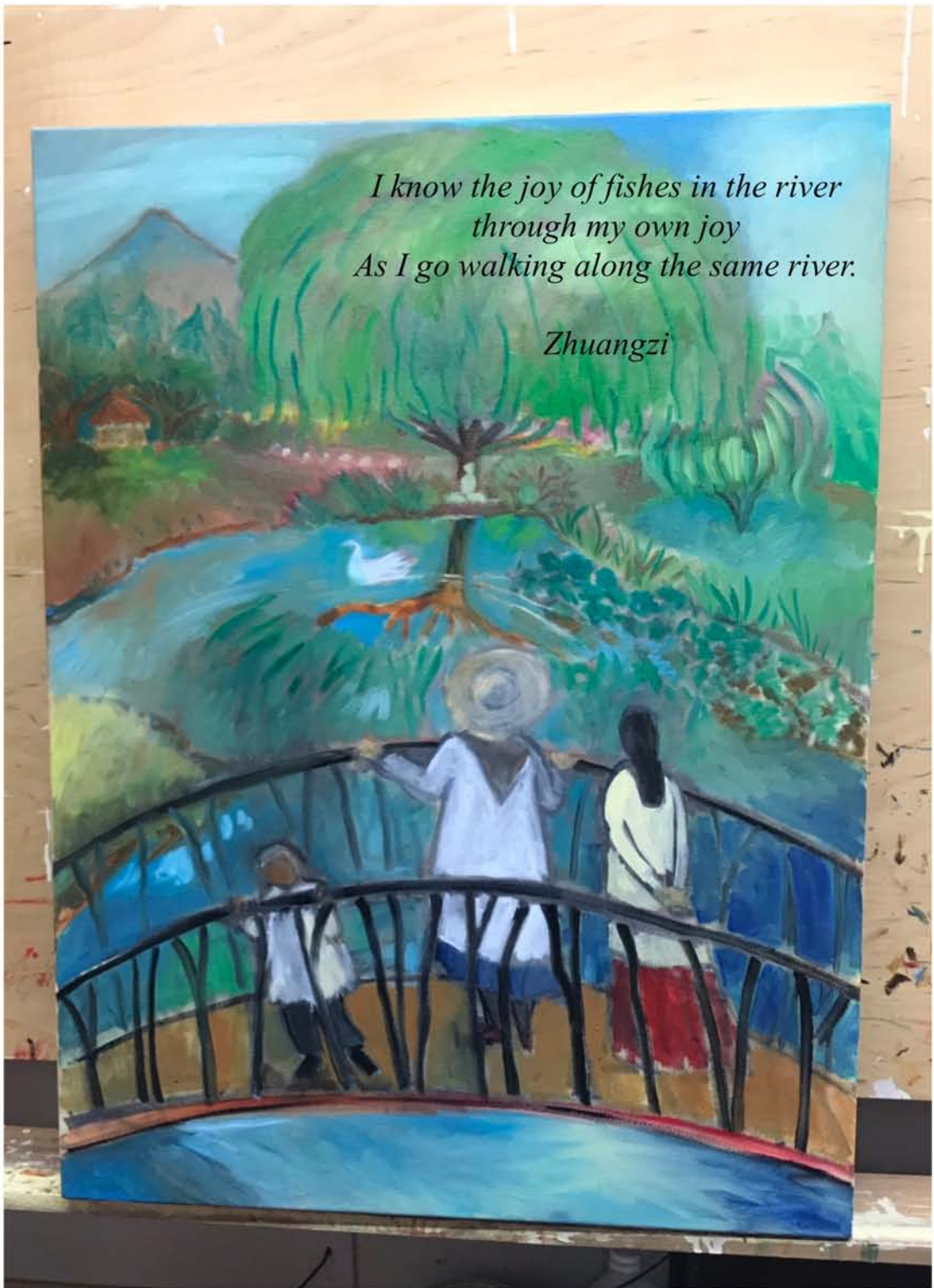
Yesterday the three characters
were in shadow form.
Now they begin to fill from the inside out.

With my method of painting coming closer to shaping,
a standing girl comes forth on the bridge.
She is sculpted with feelings inspired by who the girl is
and the part she will play
and what she might be experiencing,
symbolically, on her face, her hands, and the way she stands.
Shaping and reshaping,
changing as the story ripens.



*I know the joy of fishes in the river
through my own joy
As I go walking along the same river.*

Zhuangzi

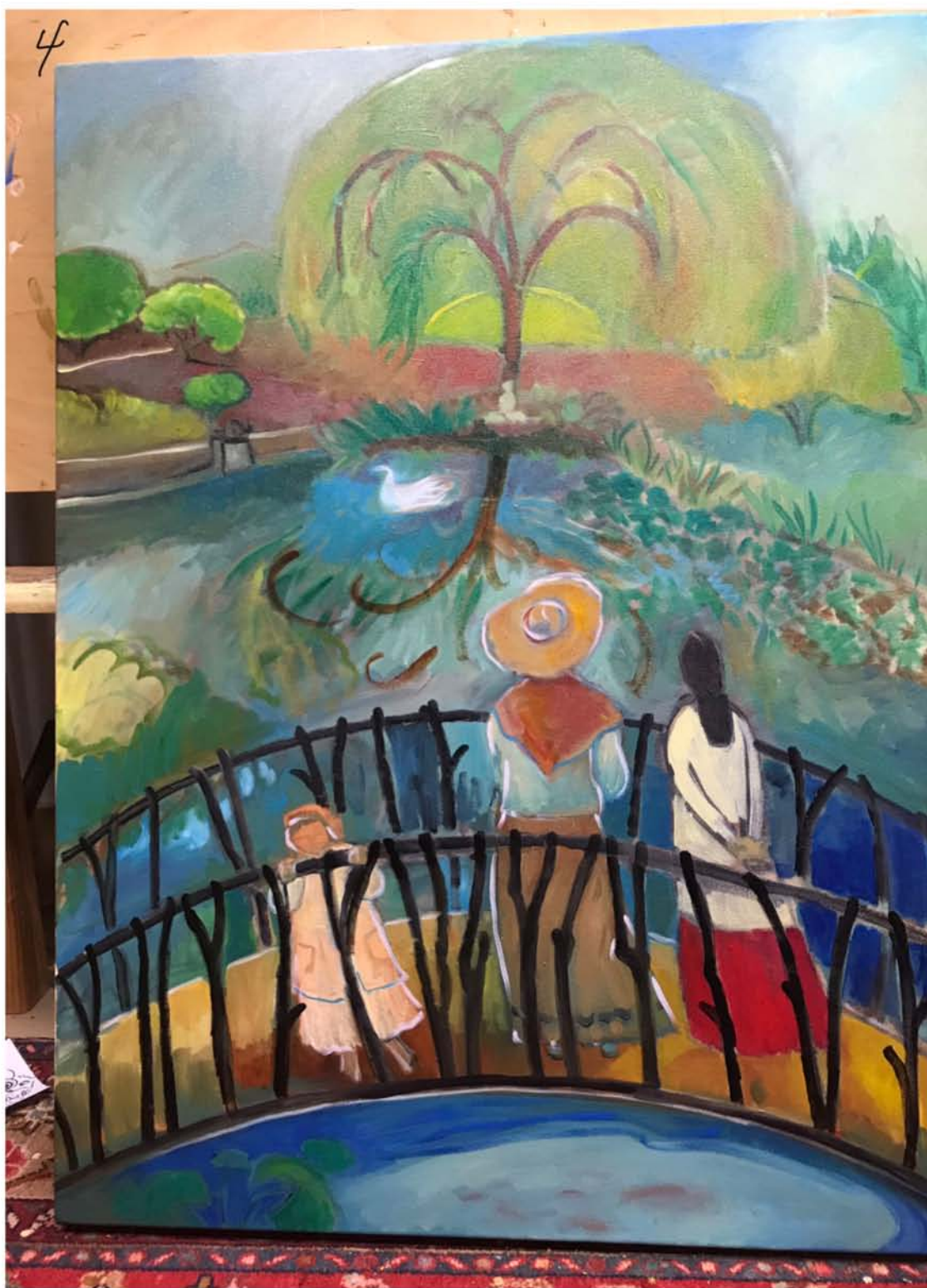


Shaping

The willow opens up to the sun shining through.



Hut and mountain fade.
Girls begin to awaken from their dream.



The thought comes
that this part of creating the painting is (for me) comparable
to creating a garden or putting a room together.
Size and purpose once determined,
I see what I have on hand and what I need to get.
Carpets, furniture, and wall art.
Arranging, balancing, and rearranging.
And when it looks OK, on to the next level.

So here I am rearranging and playing with the background.
Those areas that tend to connect with the sky, like a cloud or a tree, etc.
It seems to me that the background can be compared to the walls,
windows, and doors. And the earth is the stage floor where
the actors play their parts.

I get to play all the parts, even the set designer.

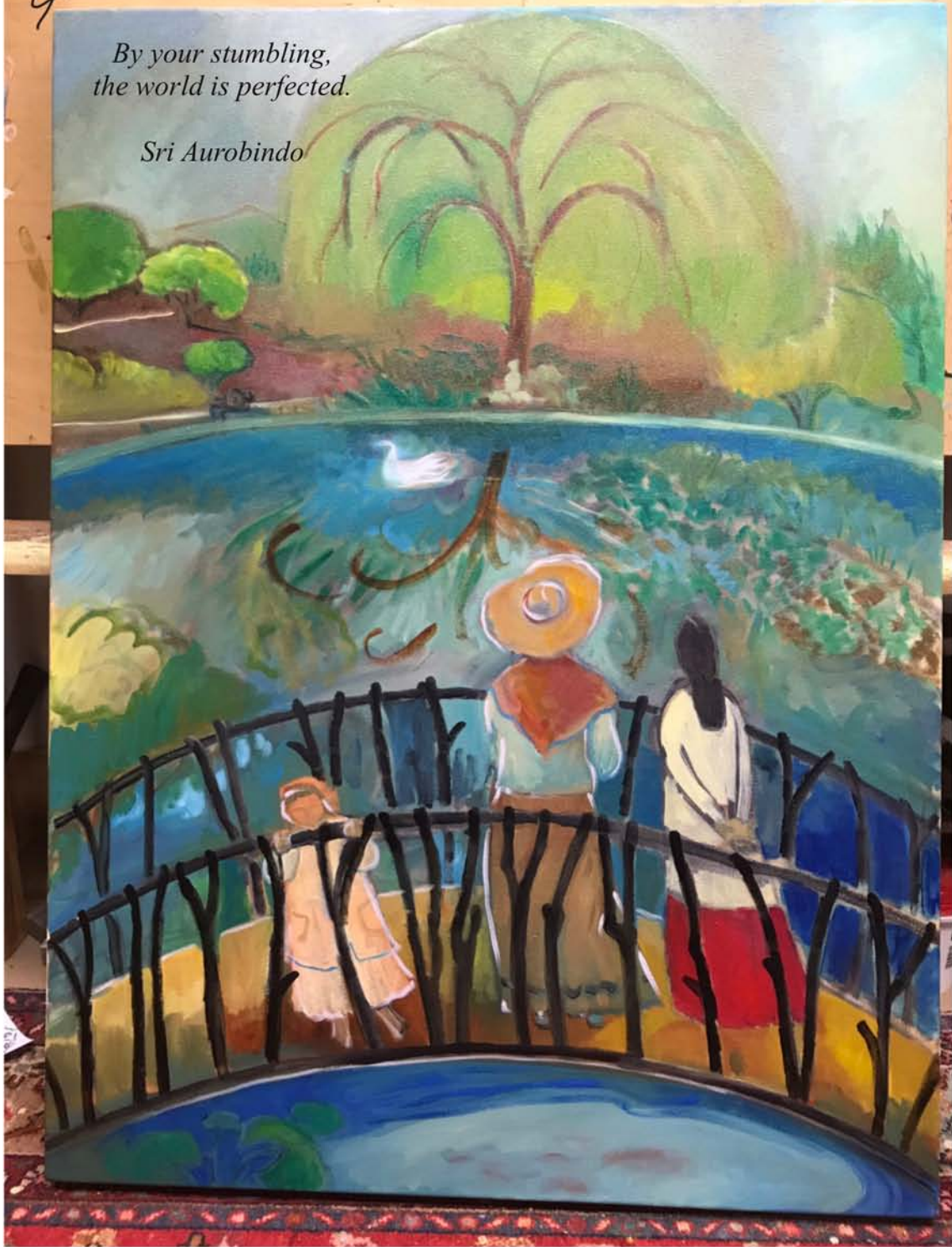
Carpets & Furniture



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*By your stumbling,
the world is perfected.*

Sri Aurobindo



What It Should Be

The bridge railings seemed wrong, too busy, wrong color, or maybe that I was just unable to paint the lines straight? One thing after another. In retrospect I think any of the railing styles that I played with would have worked. The most annoying part was that I just couldn't seem to be able to paint the lines straight with the precision that I thought they should be. I'm not really a linear person.



Back in the mid '90s I had the opportunity to share studio space with a desert landscape painter. Paul Davis was more of an impressionist. He was able to capture the feeling of desert land and sky more than just the facts. That period of my life was the first time I had the opportunity to observe another painter's process and to see his choice of color and how he handled his subject.

It was enjoyable.

One day I commented that he made it all look so believable.

And he said, "Well, you know, it's all an illusion."

An illusion is not quite what it really is. But makes you think it is. It can be so easy to become rigid and believe what is happening on the canvas is wrong or not good enough. There is something inside us that wants to compare and condemn because the painting is not becoming what it **SHOULD** be.

Playing. Experimenting with shapes and colors without judgment. Seeing what a feeling, an idea could become. Exploring the possibilities. Creating the illusion.

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*Life is like a spring dream
which vanishes without a trace.*

Su Shi



Experiment in Curves



Decorative curves
like rainbow corn stock up
and just for fun repeated arches
with whipping earthen banks.





Settling In on the Day

A calmness settles in as dusk draws near.
The pool bank wangles on. Snails remain unseen
and yet they make their way to Buddha.

The idea is still there that the snails should be seen and
have their own story going on. Symbolically or surreally.
I'm open.



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Reconnoiter

Here at my feet, waiting for the show to begin.
Another day deep in, but how to proceed?
The colors did not change as I thought that they would,
But rather had their own way. I listened,
and adjusted my course.







Shaping & Reshaping

Buddha moves. The horizon changes.
Sun set high in the sky.
Reflections float here and there, as they choose.

For me the process is like looking at something from afar.
I have to imagine what might be there in the distance
because everything at this point is a bit fuzzy.
And at times I discover that what I imagined
I was seeing or hoped, was not.

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Symbols

Nature's symbols dove and deer come and go.
Golden fishes splash and nibble at Buddha's feet.
Water greens bloom
and three on the bridge look on.

Choosing just the right dress for the day takes
time. Time to try different styles and colors,
searching for what is appropriate to the theme
and satisfying to my eye.

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Creating the Illusion

Buddha in his spot now. Grounded.
The world has become more lush and to the point.

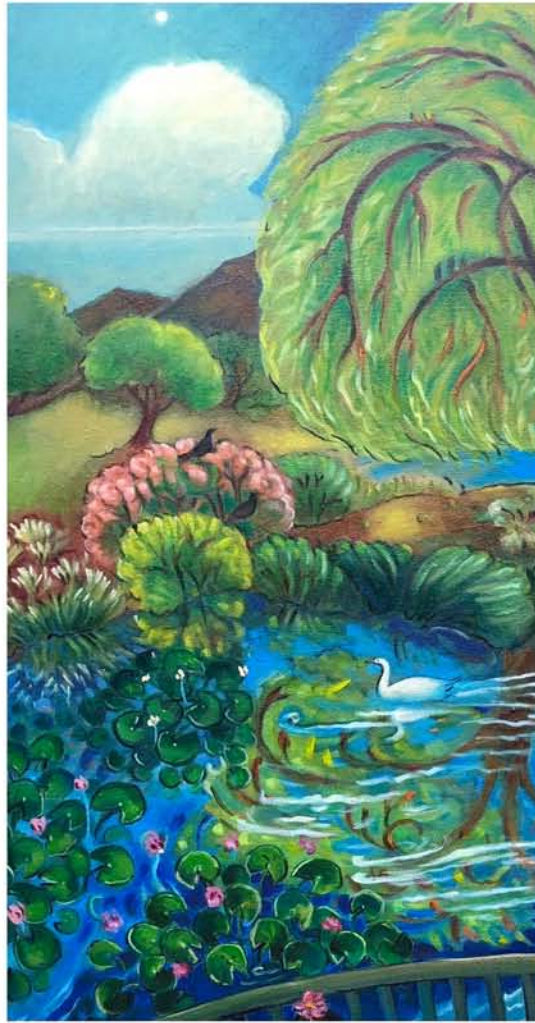
The furniture all seemed to have found its
harmonious spot in the room, but I'm
still trying to figure out the bridge.
Bringing the surface of the water, plants
and all, to meet the pilgrims and at the same time to be
separate entities remains a challenge.
I won't know it till I see it.



47 *Every where is here
and every when is now.*

Dante





To a Visitor

*Listen to the cicadas in the tree tops near the waterfall;
see how last night's rains have washed away all grime.
Needless to say, my hut is as empty as can be,
but I can offer you a window full of the most
intoxicating air!*

Ryokan



Pink

Water swirls, patterns appear, pinks call to one another.
Faces smile and begin to understand what is happening.

It's not just about the sacrifice.
The sacrifice has become the joy.
Fading into pink for a moment
in preparation for the next step.





Shadows



Sun shines bright and shadows fade.

Reflections are not always what we imagine.

They can serve their own purpose,
be what they want to be.

Often there is resistance to that idea,
forgetting it is all just a story
being told with illusions.



Two Steps Forward One Step Back



Little Lotus, red book in hand, knows the story well.

At this point the story teller in the middle has pretty much settled into being. Once I tried to show her face without success.

The girl on the right, still in change, sun reflecting like a halo round her head, flowers bloom and shower to her feet.

The bridge railings continue in search of their true selves.

Colors of the mountain,
streams in the valleys;
one in all, all in me.

Dogen



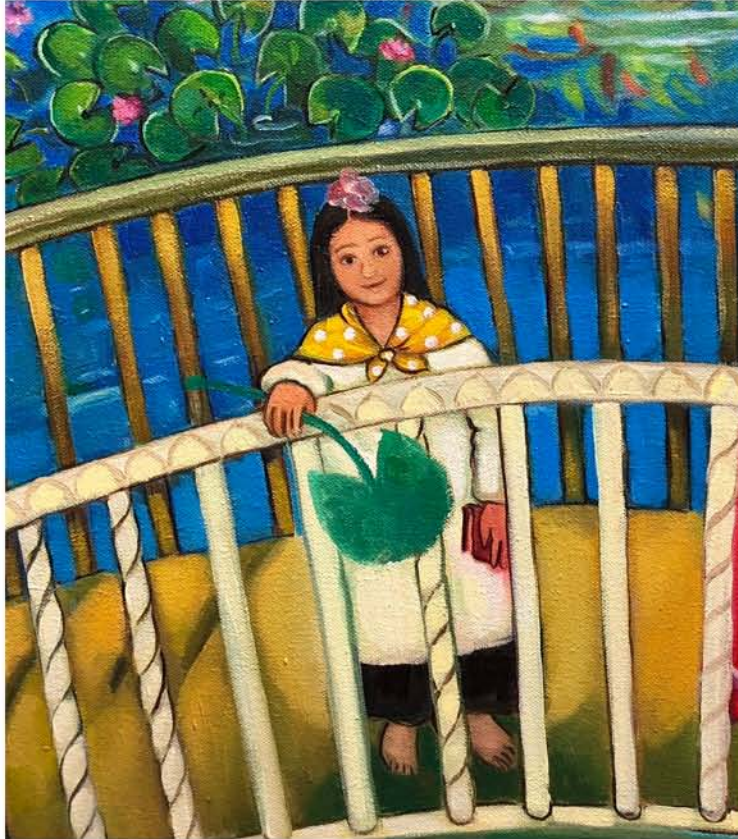
The Sun Reflects



Still, beside her now,
storytelling without words.
She with sun a bloom evolves,
not settled into solid form just yet,
but near.



As Close as Close Can Be



There is a kind of magic when, seemingly
all of a sudden, how things fall together.

Strawberries growing,
like footsteps along the garden path.





The Red Book

Each little gesture is a reminder, a breadcrumb that leads the way, like a dog settling into his special spot. Round and round until the just right spot is found. Sometimes I go in circles, too. Sometimes what is right can only be realized by what it is not.

The red book is one of my favorite symbols, appearing and reappearing. Little Lotus carries her book at her side. Sister reads on. Everything changes and doesn't.

*The world is a spell
that blinds the eyes.*

Rumi



With Brush in Hand



Deep in, creating a story, words become expressions on faces or colored fishes caught on the breeze of a wave. Everything seems to bloom. Being in love can be illusory. The whole experience is energized and that zeal can create a high. By the next day the heat of the creative process may have cooled down. Something is different. But what? Snapping pictures to mark daily progression has become a ritual to help me see the development on the canvas from a less subjective perspective.

At this stage the whole surface of the canvas was being brought together from the many to One. Where the attention was once placed more on the development of certain areas like settling in on the shape of a tree. On this day the work was more about marrying each element to the other in hopes of providing a little Shangri-la where the characters and all might thrive and encourage the story, having a life of its own, to unfold.

Nature is God's art.

Dante

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As a Child



As a child
not knowing what tomorrow will bring,
having expectations, but always surprised.
Playing, exploring, seeing what might happen
for the fun of it. Free to move on
without fear or regret.





*How do stories end?
Who shall explain them?
Every story is us.
That is who we are,
From beginning to end
No matter how it comes out
This dance is the joy of existence.*

Rumi



"As Above So Below"



There's as much to learn along the way as on arrival. In the universe, ALL is ONE, only the scale differs. In the infinitely small we find the same laws as in the infinitely large.

Marcus Aurelius





*Sunlight made visible
the whole length of the sky,
movement of wind,
leaf, flower, all six colors on tree,
bush and creeper:
all this is the day's worship.*

Akka Mahadevi



Procreate



If something is troubling me that doesn't seem to be resolving itself on the canvas, at the end of the painting session I'll take that final photo of the day to my iPad. Procreate is a digital illustration app. It is not as satisfying to me as painting, but having learned some basics, it does serve. At a certain point I'm able to take an image from the canvas to the art program and experiment.

From the canvas, to Procreate, and take that idea back to the canvas.



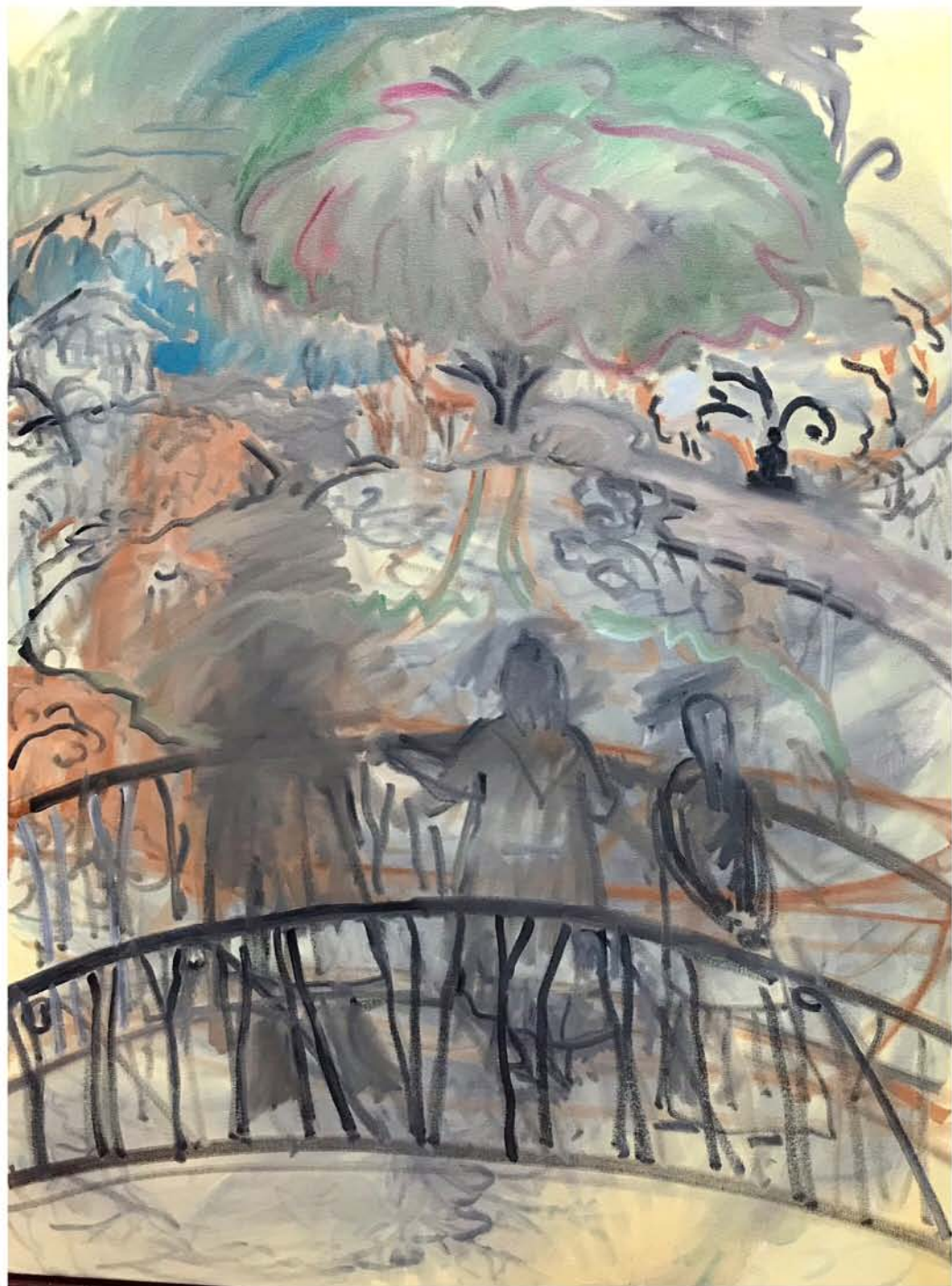


Oh, little Novice
Shadow into form
Sleepy little baby
Born to be reborn.



*The seeker who sets out upon the way
Shines bright over the world,
Like the moon,
Come out from behind the clouds!
Shine.*

Buddha



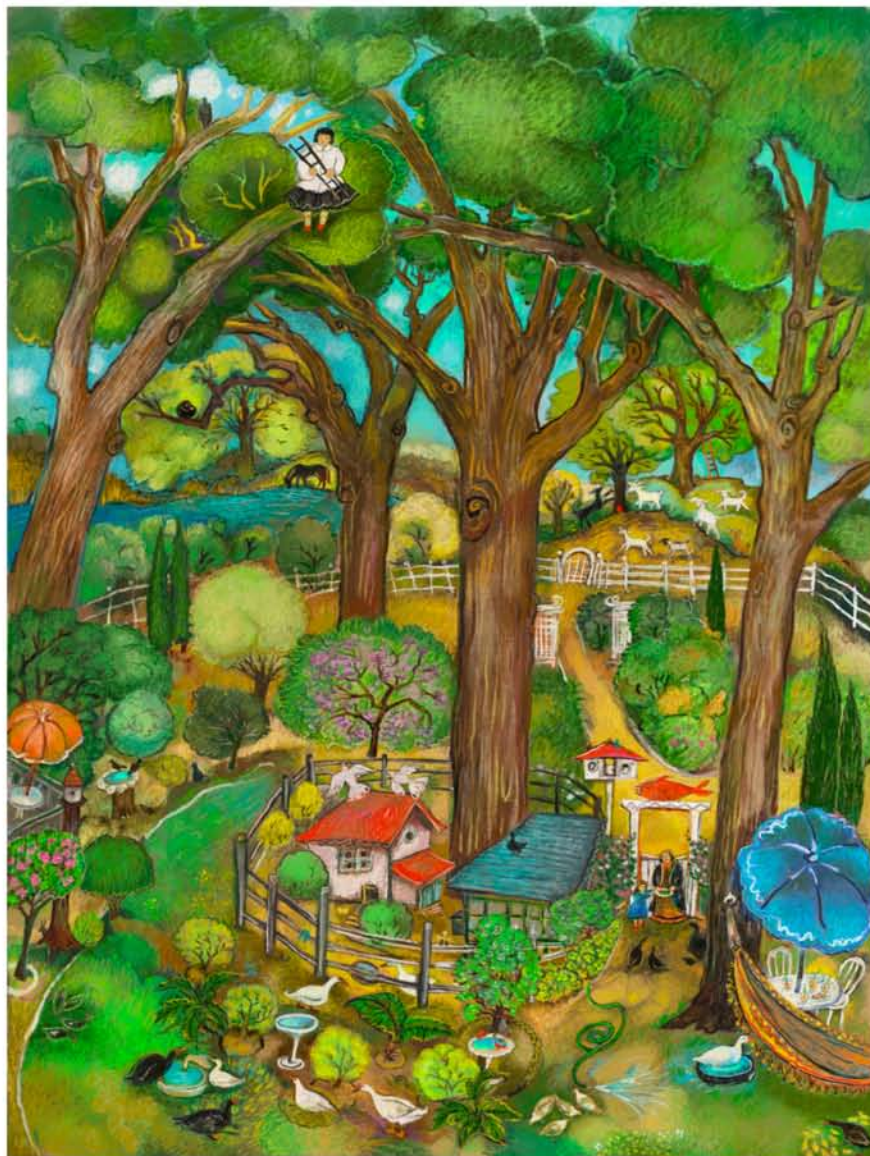


*Life is an unfoldment,
and the further we travel the more truth
we can comprehend. To understand the things
that are at our door is the best preparation
for understanding those that lie beyond.*

Hypatia

My World





This World

inspires me. All that nature holds and more is out there. Though cruel at times there are so many different layers of life and I get to be a part of it all. Here in this world where I am able to share what it says to me and how I feel about it. And more.

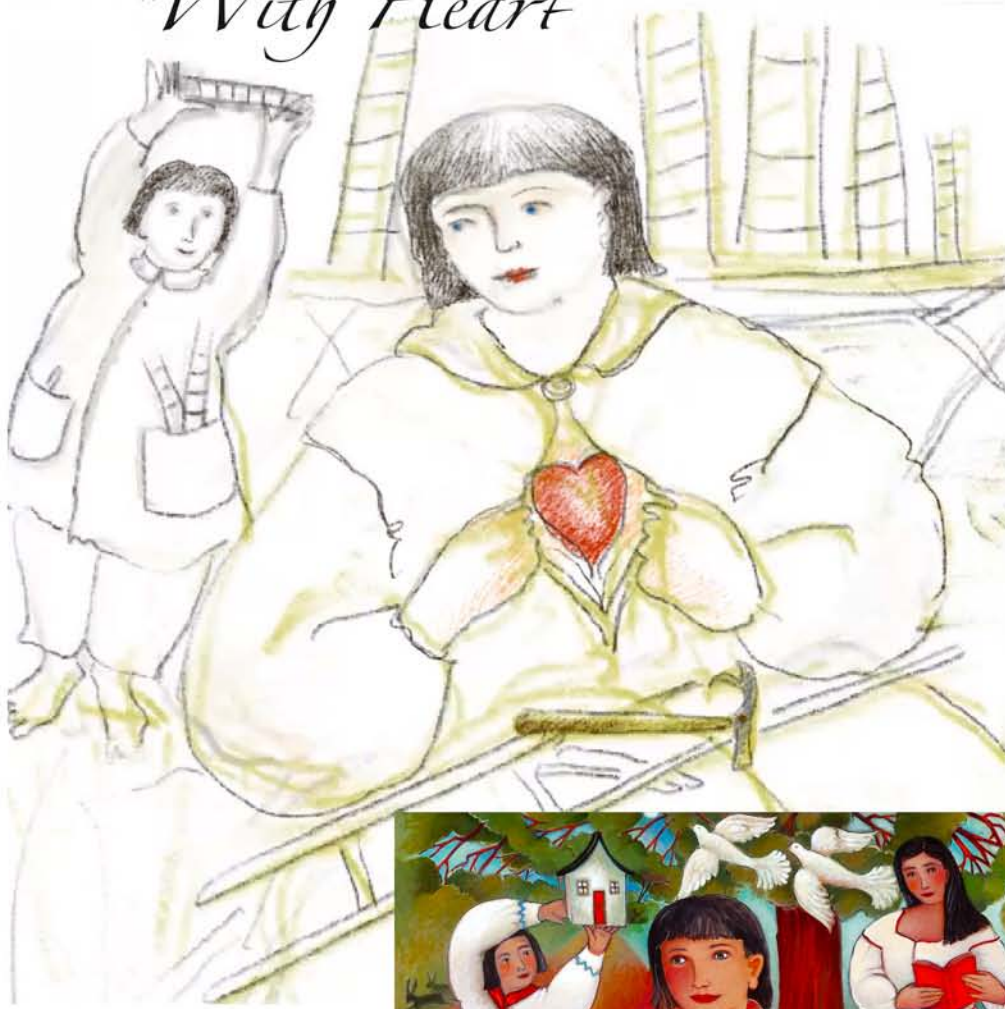
Inspiration



*Greater still than dominion over the worlds,
is the joy of reaching the stream.*

Buddha

"With Heart"



*Am I a beast more
complicated and savage than
Typhon, or am I a tamer,
simple animal with a share in
a divine and gentle nature?*

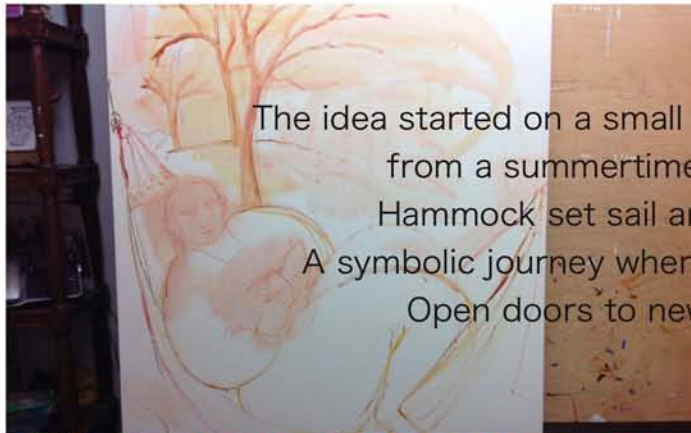
Phaedrus





This character has been showing up on the canvas for years. Sometimes a girl sometimes a boy. One or the other, the same. They represent for me, simple being, essence, the grown up child in us all.

"Pilgrimage to Mt. Fuji"



The idea started on a small canvas. Inspiration
from a summertime tradition.
Hammock set sail and became
A symbolic journey where special books
Open doors to new worlds.



*In rivers,
the water that you
touch is the last of
what has passed and
the first of that
which comes,
so with present time.*

Leonardo da Vinci



"My Little Corner of the World"





*The events that shape the future
Are working themselves out.
We are space travelers made of stardust.
The roots of the past are planted deeply
In the present.*

Hafiz

"Remembering the Day"



Remy at the piano
Being so Remy
Playing, almost music
With such great confidence
Left a mark on me, a sketch, an inspiration
and blossomed.



Dance has been a recurrent theme in my storytelling
from the very beginning.

A flourish of movement, emotional joy
with grace, and a bit of compulsion.

These girls are barefoot, but I imagine that their red ballet shoes are
hanging from a tree branch on stream's edge just down the way.

"The Red Shoes" is one of my favorite movies.

Released in 1948 and is considered one of the best movies ever made.
Based on "The Red Shoes," a fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen.
When I first saw it back around 1976, I was overwhelmed. It had
everything! The thought came that, if I ever have a studio, I will call it
"Red Shoe Studio" and I do, and it is.

“Rejoice”



*I am a feather on a bright sky
I am the blue horse that runs in the plain
I am the fish that rolls, shining, in the water
I am the shadow that follows a child.*

The Delight Song of Tsoai-Talee

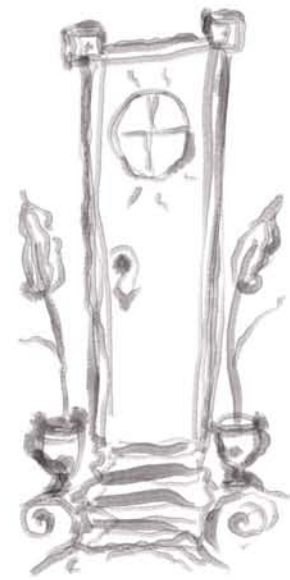


"Dear One"

A few years ago deer became a symbol of interest for me. When something catches my eye, I want to know more. I'll often read and see what I can learn. And if an idea resonates with me, I make it my own.

Alice in Wonderland is also a theme I enjoy. Tea parties, the pocket watch for time, rabbits, swans, umbrellas? moving water, clouds on sky, they are all words in the dialogue and my blue vase with goldfish.





"Invitation"





"The Tree of Life"



Like looking up to the sky.
Cloud watching. Creatures
imagined taking form
and then morphing
into the blue.

When I first looked at this
picture it was very pleasing.
I enjoyed the colors, shapes,
ideas, the whole thing.

And then,
I saw a goldfish.
Inspiration rose and
the painting below took
form.

"Crossing Over"



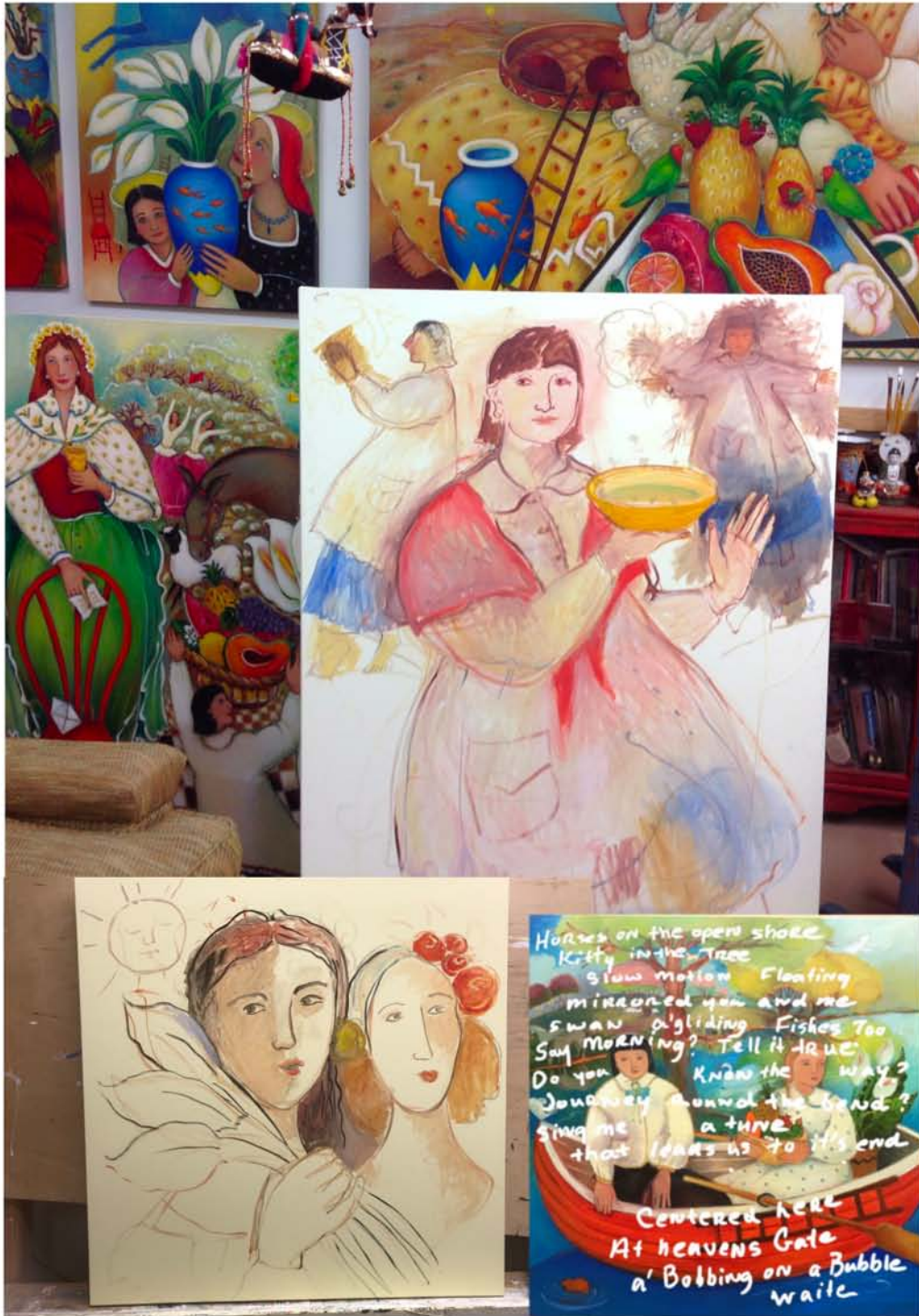
"This Green Earth"



It seems that most anything placed on a stage or pedestal appears more significant, meaningful or treasured. And a little collection of chairs is no exception.



Red Shoe Studio



Houses on the open shore
Kitty in the tree
Slow motion Floating
mimicked you and me
Swan gliding Fishes too
SUN MORNING? Tell it true
Do you know the way?
Journey around the bend?
Sing me a tune
that leads us to its end
Centered here
At heavens Gate
a' Bobbing on a Bubble
waite

My Studio

is not just a place to paint, it is also a private gallery where I hang my favorite paintings. Some of which were so personal that they were never offered for sale, depending on the circumstances of the day. Sometimes I did not have that luxury to keep and ended up selling one I would like to have kept. That's part of the job.

I try to have things close that are inspiring. Color. Ideas. Trinkets.
Books. Whatever makes me smile inside.





"Still Alice"

Most everything is in daily motion except for the carpets and other really heavy things. I had the easel built years ago and is attached to the wall. Some book shelves at the top. I discovered that this kind of setup works best for me. There are holes drilled for pegs on each side that support a long board to hold my stretched canvas. I can adjust the canvas to fit my needs, sitting or standing and it doesn't take up much space.





Down the Rabbit Hole



A view to the right of my painting area down the long multipurposed room around the corner to the printing and cutting area there at the end.

Then just across the way there is a large storage room full of who knows what for sure.

Print files, books, supplies, paintings, Christmas decorations, etc. With narrowing aisles stacked to the ceiling.

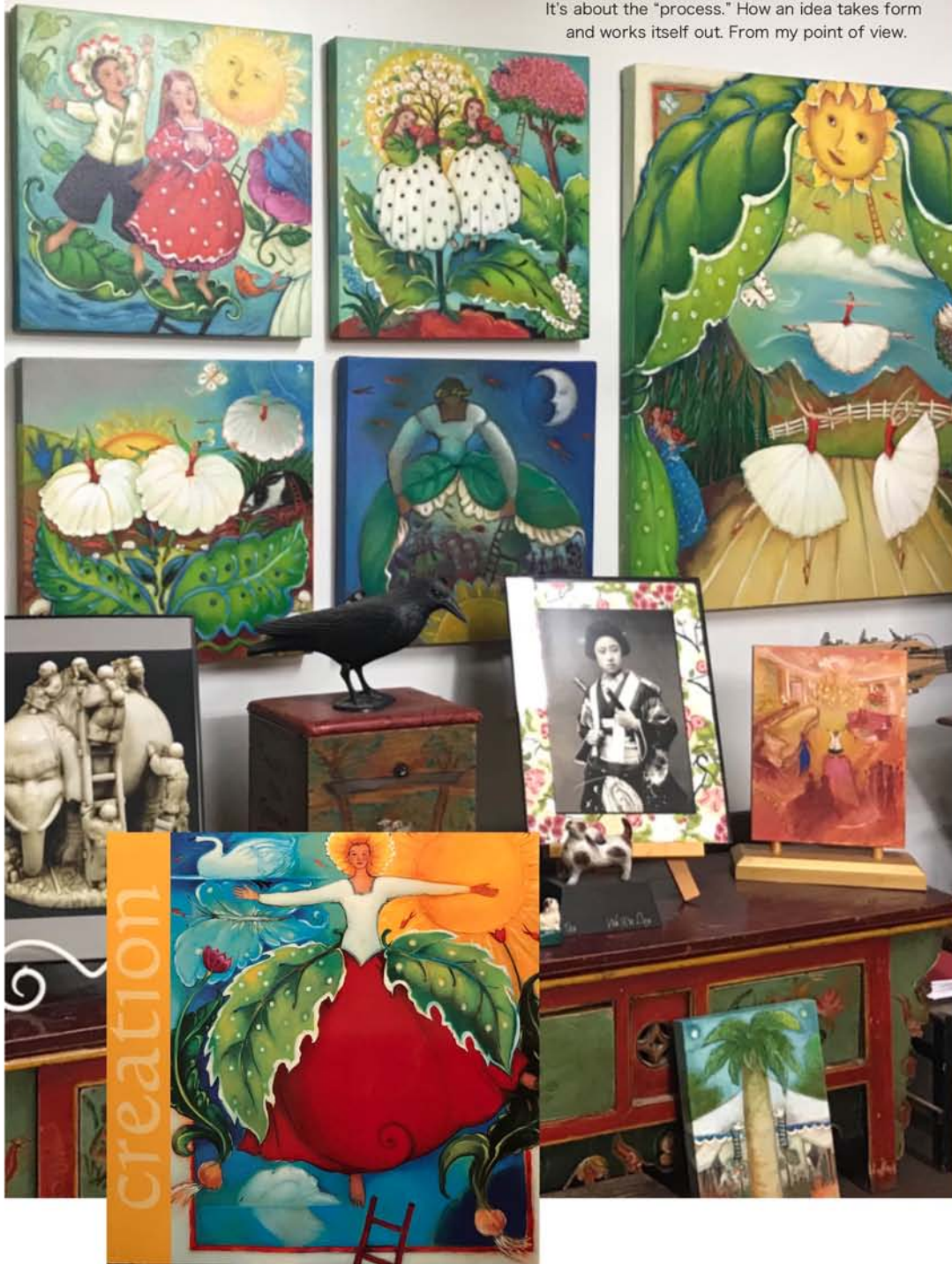
Regularly like foot steps and sandcastles along the beach the studio is swept clean and rearranged.

And the cycle to begin again.



"Creation"

Here hanging in the studio, you see five of the six paintings from my little book called "Creation." It's about the "process." How an idea takes form and works itself out. From my point of view.



Walking Home



I walk to work and home again over the bridge where water flows during the winter. The studio is about 100 feet from the yard gate. We are working to move a couple of our goats to this field. They will make fine greeters and mowers. Nibbles and Bell, our bottle fed babies, are always with me when I visit their side of the Wayback.





Suspend Disbelief

Shangrilala



Our place is called Shangrilala. This name was inspired by the movie "Lost Horizon" 1937. I first saw it as a teenager and it is still a favorite of mine. A plane crashes and the survivors find their way to the mythical Shangri-la valley deep in the mountains of the Himalayas. The part I like is the idea of living in a secret world outside of time, where the inhabitants live in a timeless state. However leaving the valley resulted in growing old and death.

In my twenties someone said to me that they would never have imagined that the lamp I bought at a yard sale looked so good inside our house. After we moved to this house years later it occurred to me that most everything we own, if put out on the front yard for sale would lose its energy and become just another old piece of furniture like what would happen to the inhabitants of Shangri-la.

For our Shangrilala, I believe, it is the mass of personally collected objects and their story telling arrangement that creates an illusion of a timelessness.

(The extra "la" is in honor of Lalla, Lalleshwari, a Kashmir poetess of the 14th century. A friend of mine introduced me to Lalla when I was working on an idea, a sketch for a ballet years ago called the "The Shadow King.")

For me Shangrilala symbolizes this place we call home.

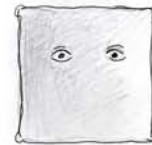
Very personal and alive.

There is a balance to be had between aesthetics and practicality.
To find that spot in the middle. A give and take.



A Peaceful Haven at Battles Edge

Buddha at the Entrance



And Buttercup
the Sulcata tortoise
in the backyard.
He was the size
of a half dollar
when we adopted him
as a hatchling,
over 25 years ago?



We lived in Scottsdale for 20 years. During that time many things were collected that are here today in Oregon House. Ornaments arranged and rearranged for the fun of it throughout the years.

Marching On





Maximalism

This year I discovered that there is a name for people who, like me, are happy to collect and fill the house to the brim. If you are the same, then you know we can always find a place for something else, if it really speaks to us. And the world is full of so many interesting things. That's where the art of arranging and rearranging comes in handy.



Pickle in the Kitchen



Fish in the Bowl



Our kitchen is full of all sorts of impressions, symbols. Reminders of a myriad of things I don't want to forget. All sorts of objects, practical and impractical. Carl Jung said that everyone should have a room where they can paint pictures on the wall or whatever they want! And only people invited may enter. The kitchen may not be that room. But what a good idea.

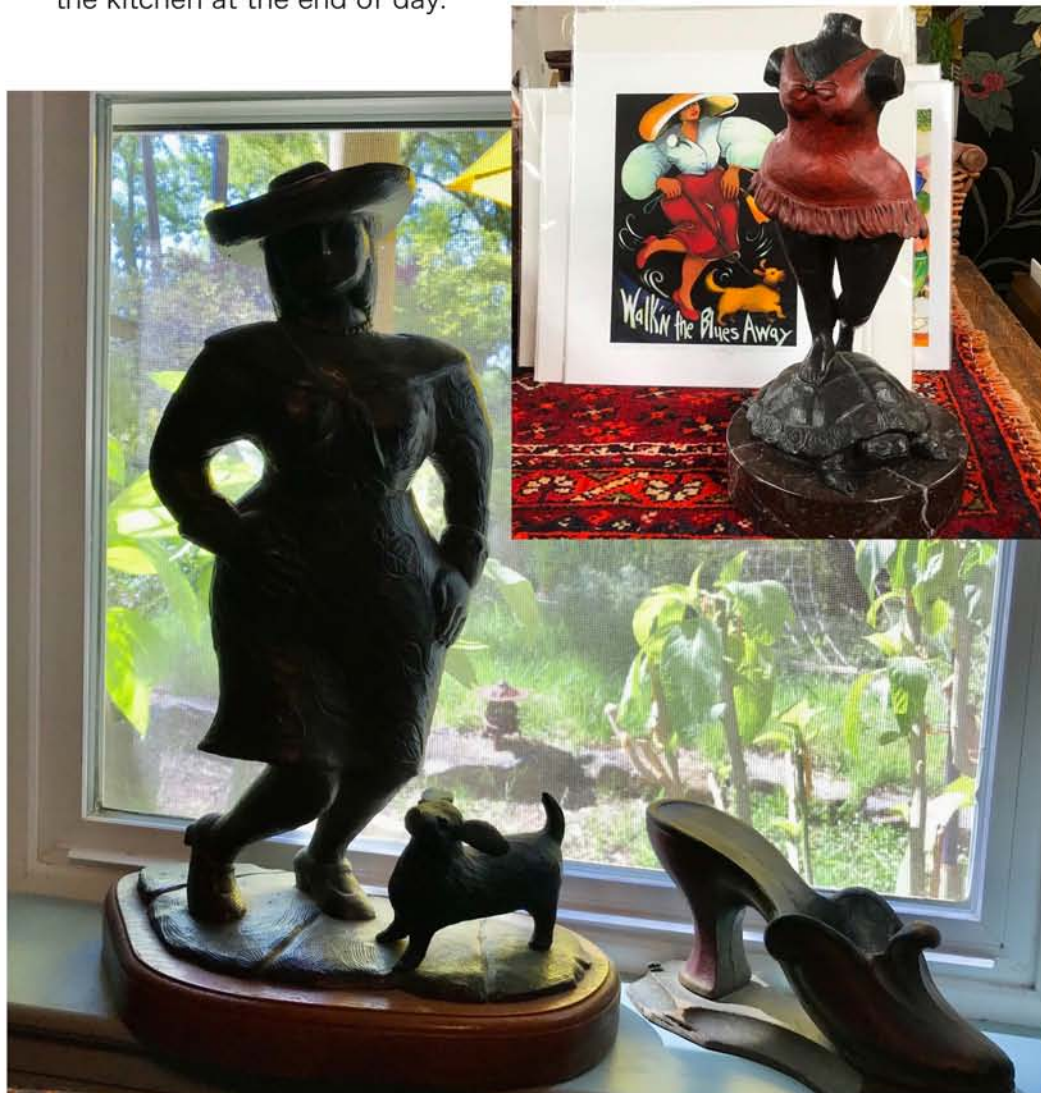


Time is a moving image of eternity.

Plato

"Walking the Blues Away"

began as an idea for a painting. At that time I was working in the late evening on sculpture. She appeared first in oil on canvas, then clay, and bronze. "Creation Riding the Back of Time," was also conceived during that period of working in the studio during the day and then sculpting in the kitchen at the end of day.



A House is a Home is a Studio

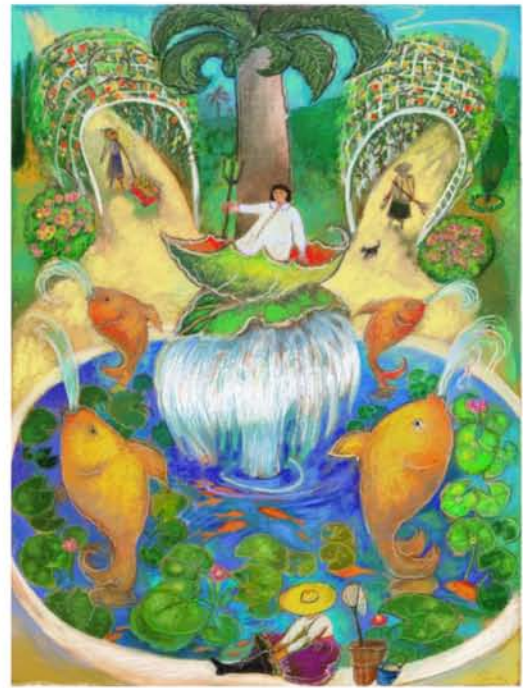


Coldish wet winters make for a slippery wet path over the bridge to the studio. It ends up being a good excuse for staying inside. Greg says the whole house is my studio anyway. It is true, I do take advantage of all the space. That little spot there under the stairs became my winter painting place when the need or desire called.

The last couple of years a variety of changes have occurred in our lives. We try to make the best of it. Creativity continues to flow in many different directions making life interesting. The idea came to me years ago that during the last part of my life I would focus on creating books. I had no idea what that meant at the time.

LCH from Paradiso!







Resistance

Can bring us to our knees
From beginning to end
And all the inbetweens
"Along the Red Book Road"

Showering doubts, fears, excuses,
Imagination galore
Anything and everything
Whispering shadows just off the path beckon

It is bound to happen
But on the happy side
Resistance slows momentum
And friction creates energy

So, a new perspective is possible
A sharpening of direction, a surge of the creative spirit
And if it's meant to be
the Will to continue.

"Tale of the Koi Dragon"

The koi dragon legend originates from ancient Chinese mythology. It tells the story of a koi fish that transforms into a powerful dragon through its determination and perseverance. According to the legend, there was once a massive waterfall known as the "Dragon Gate" located on the Yellow River. It was said that any fish that could swim upstream and jump over the waterfall would transform into a dragon. Many fish attempted this feat, but none were successful except for a brave and determined koi.

The koi fish swam upstream for many years, overcoming countless obstacles and challenges along the way. It swam against the current, jumped over rocks and waterfalls, and battled fierce currents that threatened to sweep it away. Despite the challenges, the koi never gave up. It remained determined and persistent in its quest to reach the Dragon Gate. Finally, after many years of hard work, the koi was able to leap over the waterfall and transform into a magnificent dragon. His destiny was fulfilled.







Things have a way of changing from moment to moment, as the story unfolds and I get deeper into what it all means to me.

How many times does it take to finally see the end at its fullest? How many tries can be made to get there all the way?

I can see the door there in the far away, an opening, an idea, a spot to aim for. But how to get the feet moving? How to get the heart engaged?

Once the process truly begins all the parts come forth and take their place like magic to the end.



*This whole creation is essentially
subjective, and the dream is the theater
where the dreamer is at once
scene, actor, prompter, stage manager,
author, audience, and critic.*

Carl Jung



Linda Carter Holman

I was born in Cushing, Oklahoma, 1949.

At around seven years old I realized
that some day I would become an artist.
My career as a self-taught painter began in 1970.

The characters that tell my stories are mostly
women and children, nature and animals. Happily on
the canvas I get to play all those parts even the birds
in the trees.

Today I'm continuing to explore the narrative style
with words, verse and image. Having fun seeing what is
possible, engaging the process. Discovering just what is
waiting there on the other side of the door.

If you are interested in learning more about my work,
I suggest "The Evolution of a Self-Taught Painter—a work
in progress." It's a chronological look at 35 years
of paintings and our the journey along the way
from 1970–2005. Carterholman.com

Albert Einstein said,
"Play is the highest form of research."





Books by Linda

www.carterholman.com

"Evolution of a Self-Taught Painter"

"The Rubaiyat"

"When Poppa Brought the Rain Home"

"Creation"

"The Friend"

"Book Brush & Broom"

Notes



"Book Brush & Broom" is a narrative describing the process of creation from a self-taught painter's point of view. It is a personal approach to life seen through the art of painting, poetry and lifestyle.

The reader is given the opportunity to see what lies under the surface of a painting, as well as the internal process that goes on in the mind of the painter as the story unfolds on the canvas.

"The Bridge" a painting by Linda Carter Holman is the core of this book. Its creation is chronicled in an informal, self-help storytelling style that offers over 100 illustrations to accompany the artist's thoughts and the painting's daily progress from beginning to end.

Someone once asked Linda how she spent her day. After some thought she replied,
"Inspiration, creation & maintenance."
Book Brush & Broom

www.CarterHolman.com