

Oceans, Rivers and Waters



I read many years ago that James Joyce had thought of a book of the Ocean as a last text, but he never wrote it because he died. I wrote a small book called the Ocean Book in the late 1970's. I was not imitating Joyce.

Much more recently I have liked Debussy's La Mer, Hokusai's and Turner's pictures of water and the sea, as well as a few of Monet's, Holman Hunt's, Sargent's, John Brett's and Laura Knight's paintings of the sea. I also like very much the man I think of as the best painter of the sea, Frederick Judd Waugh. Very few know his work but he was a great artist nonetheless. Popularity does not come before real quality. No doubt about it, Frederick Judd Waugh is a far better painter than any of the modernist abstractionists of the 20th century. This is a good site on his work

<http://marineoilpaintings.blogspot.com/search?q=waugh>

So this is my most recent work, done in March, 2020. That is this month. I started this page on Oceans, Rivers and Waters after I tentatively stopped working on the following:



Seastack and Sea Lions with Grey Whales



I did this painting for this entry. I've been meaning to do it for years now, probably 14 years. It shows a sea stack in the Pacific of Northern California, covered with Sea Lions and two Gray Whales swimming by the same sea stack. I actually saw this in Northern California, and recorded it extensively. I knew I was going to paint it. There is a lot of geological and first hand information in this work about the Rocks and the sea as well as the behavior of Gray Whales and Sea Lions. I will discuss these species separately.

Gray Whales often swim by the northern California coast, two times a year. They mate and have calves in Mexico in winter, near the Baja, and then move up north in the summer to feed. They spend the summer in the Arctic. Then they go south again in the fall to mate and have babies. Here they are shown here moving south. An adult female and her growing child is behind her. The child imitates nearly every movement and

direction the Mom takes. They often go through kelp forests, for instance, especially down near Monterey bay. The young one can be seen doing what the Mom does, they hide in the Kelp forests to be camouflaged from Orcas and Great White Sharks, their two main predators, besides people, who are the worst predators, worldwide.



There are 44 or so Sea Lions (*Zalophus californianus*) here. There are roughly two or possibly three families. It is not clear if there is a male in the central group. You cannot see it in this view very well, but the third more distant group with the largest male is separated from the second group by an area of sea water. It only shows itself periodically, when a wave throws it up. I painted the sea spray in, but then did not like it so I got rid of it. The animal in the water may be the large male that is part of the middle group. You can see where the two groups are separated: There is a darkish line that comes down from the central tower on the rock and moves to the left that is the separation line between the two areas.

The males are at least twice as big as the females, sometimes 3 times bigger. The clearest one of these is the male in the 2nd triangular area, on the viewer's right side of the artwork. He is in the middle-right of the lower part of the painting. The nearly whitish, big male is surrounded by nine smaller females. The other male is up high on the rock a little more than an inch to the right of the one in the water, surrounded by six females.

His head is whitish but his body is mostly grey.

Humans are more or less monogamous, with some exceptions, but here it is clearly a situation of polygamy, or polygynous relations. Both terms mean one male and numerous females. This is not to say that Sea Lions do not make exceptions to this. Sometimes males on the periphery succeed in mating too,

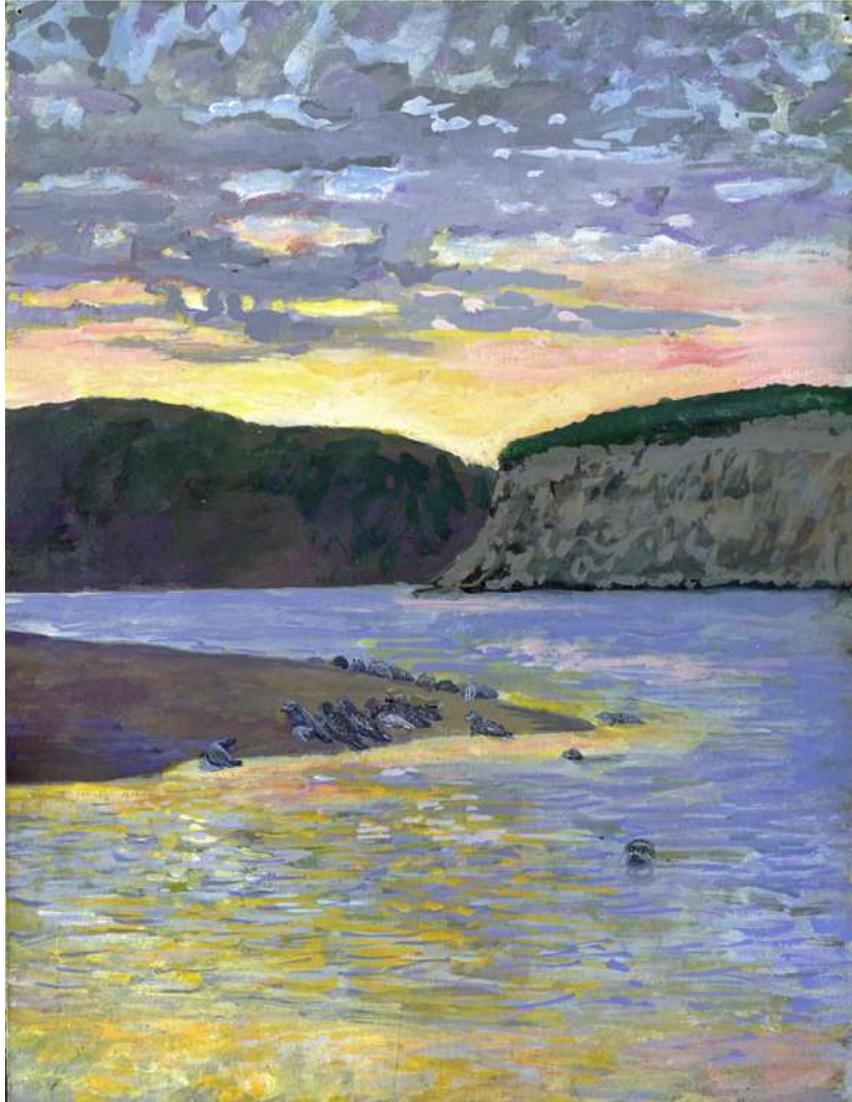
The mating of Sea Lions should not be seen in human terms. The females in these groups have a lot of control over the male and what he does or doesn't do. The females are not forced to stay either, so they want this to happen and are willing participants. The large male is central at breeding time only. Even then, it is the females who are telling him what to do, surrounding him, barking at him and communicating in various ways. If you watch a colony of Sea Lions like this for any length of time, this is obvious. Sea Lions are marvelous mammals, much like us, and great swimmers. When I was a kid it was my favorite animal. Because it was clearly so intelligent and a great swimmer. There were some at Mickey Grove where, in the summer, Mom would often take us for picnics.

There is an unnecessary conflict between them and fishermen and "game agents" on the west coast. I became aware of this in Eureka, California when I spoke with a few men who were lustily cutting up a large Salmon on a pier next to their boat. They claimed the Sea Lions were killing "their" fish, when actually the fish are not "theirs" at all, but belong to themselves and the ecological niche they live in. The game agencies tend to promote the idea that all animals, plants and so on belong to them. But this is as false as the bogus notion that Europeans owned the Americas just because they brought a flag and stuck it on a beach. They certainly do not, did not, own this land. This is imperial colonialism of nature and it is characteristic of the speciesist ideology.

The men said that Sea Lions who eat salmon should be shot. They were tourists and clearly meat eaters and ignorant as well as blinded by their own self-centered speciesism. There are game agents who also kill the Sea Lions for what they are, and again, it is the human centered game agents who make money off of killing fish who are to blame for allowing the killing of too many fish of many kinds, including Salmon. It is humans who are the real problem, not Sea Lions or Orcas.

A similar problem exists between Orcas and Chinook Salmon in Puget Sound. The Chinook Salmon have been depopulated by over-fishing, dam building and other human centered abuses. Yet the Orca is going extinct and their main food is the Chinook Salmon. The Orcas of Puget Sound must alone be able to eat the Salmon, yet the Washington State game agents continue to allow the private fishing of Salmon species in Puget Sound. This is human centered and immoral. To stop it game agents and fisherman need to be educated about non-human animals, who are not "owned" by

humans. This lack of education is the real problem. Ignorance in office is the real problem.

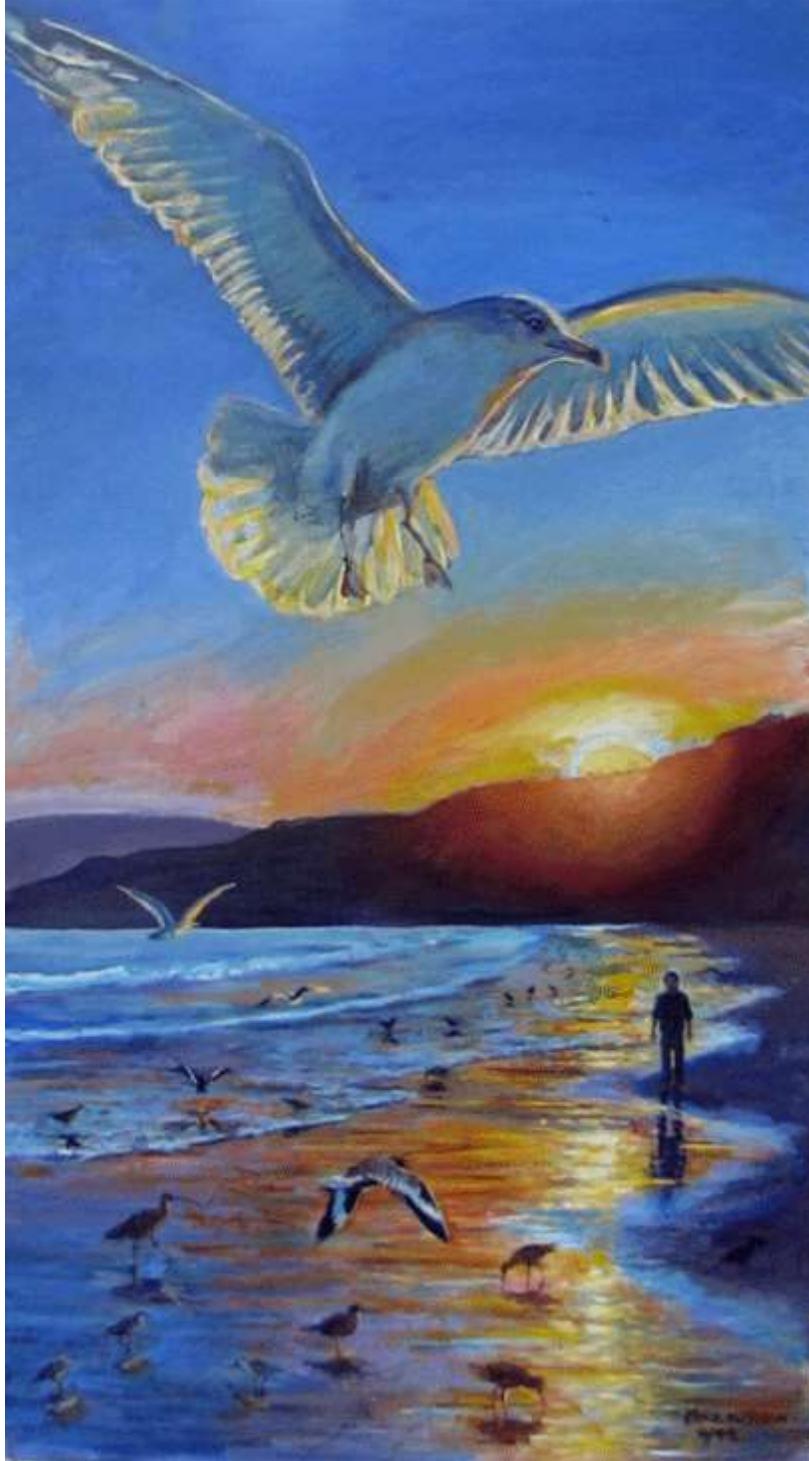


Harbor Seals on Limantour Spit

This is similar to the painting above, though here I deal with a different species, namely the Harbor Seal. The bulk of this work was done from life in the later 1980's. I was pretty far away from them and very respectful when I did this. This is near the opening the Drakes Bay from Drakes Estero. Even walking to this spot can be quite difficult, given the strong winds that happen here. The wind can be 50 miles per hour or more, and blow sand in one's face. Wearing a scarf helps. Across the bay at Limantour, looking north is Chimney Rock and the lighthouse, where the high winds are the most common in northern America.

Though they share a similar habitat with Sea Lions, the Harbour Seal is a more common and docile and I dare say a less wild animal. One often sees the Harbor Seal on inland waters, whereas one rarely sees the Sea Lion there. I have often seen the Harbor Seal in Bolinas Bay, Limantour and at the mouth of Eel Creek as well as elsewhere on the northern California coast. It is a pinniped with a great deal of charm. One will often see their delightful heads sticking out of the water, as is shown in the large head towards the front of the above painting.

I did a number of paintings at Limantour, here are two more.



Shore Birds at Limantour

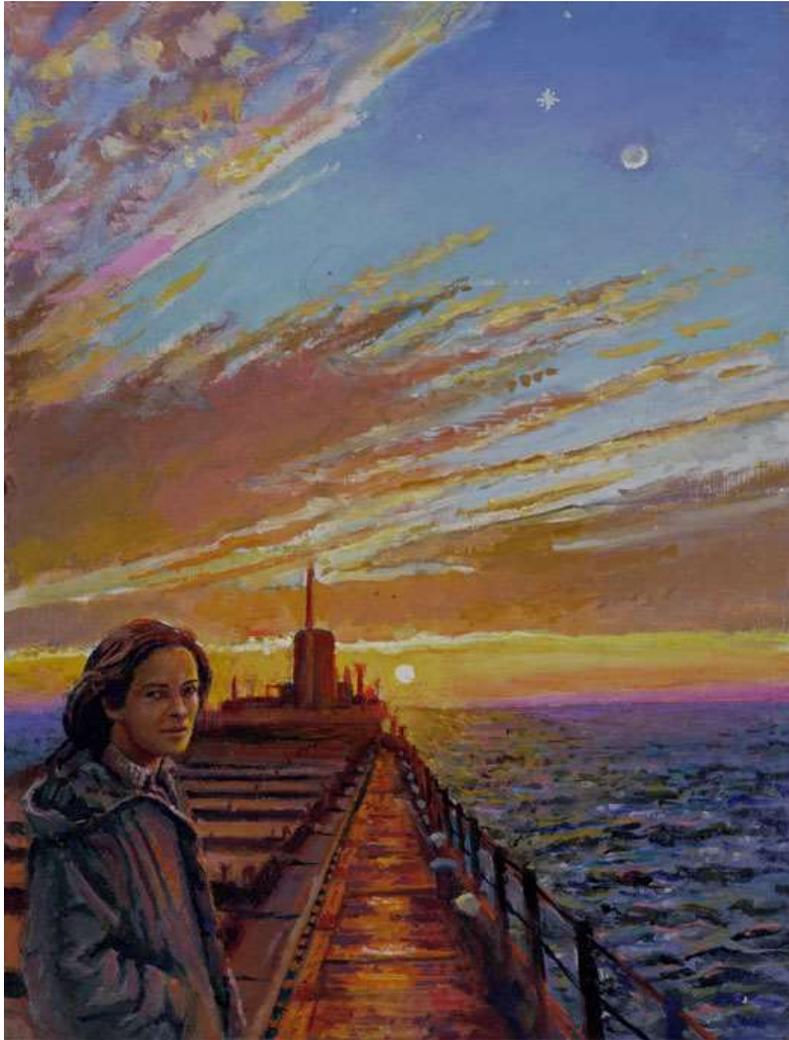
1999-2019

Looking towards Chimney Rock here. There is a Willet flying, a number of Godwits, 3 Sandpipers, and a Curlew up close, further away are various Godwits, Willets, and a Ringbilled Seagull. I worked on this one off and on for some years before I thought it was about done.



Northern Harrier at Limantour.

The original Hawk in this work was not in perspective and was poorly done. I took it out and replaced it with a Harrier in perspective. It is better now I think. It is a gouache and the lupine and grasses were done at Limantour as were the sky and hills.



Self Portrait

At 18 on one of the Ore Boats on Lake Superior, not far from Isle Royale, which is to the right of the ship, though you cannot see it yet.

I was on the Iron Ore ships for five months or so in 1974. My Mom got me the job, after my Dad died in December, 1973. She called around to people he knew, until one of them gave me and my brother a job. This is me on the William P. Synder, on Lake Superior in 1974. The other men on board--and there were 26 of us--called me Junior, because I

was only 18. The next youngest was over 25, so I was the youngest by far. I slept in the left side of structure you see behind the smoke stack and worked down in the engine room. I ate my meals down in the galley, a floor lower to the right side. The cooking was delicious. My brother dropped me off in Lorain near the Lake, at a dry dock where the over 700 foot William P, Synder was being worked on. When we finally went out a few days later, and I got seasick for a few days, and slowly got used to the ship weaving and groaning back and forth.

I was what was called a “wiper” meaning that I did a lot of painting of walls in the engine room, and mopped up and cleaned out filters and other things. The job itself was fairly empty. But the environment I worked in was nothing short of extraordinary and amazing. I didn’t have a camera then, so I took no pictures, but if I had you would see why I was amazed by it.

What was amazing was being at sea. I would wake up and immediately go outside and see the sun coming up over the waves or the sea. The waves were long on Lake Superior and I could stand on the aft of the ship and see the entire ship waffle and dip with the waves, 30 feet tall, sometimes, passing under the ship. The ship was huge to me, over 700 feet long, but it was tiny when one saw it being shaped, moved and even rippled by the huge waves. One could hear it happen as the waves bent the ship into their own shape. The welded and riveted pieces of metal of which Ore boats were made would groan and grind. The ship looked small and tiny like a toy. Lake Superior is huge and it makes a tiny toy boat out of a huge ship.

The Edmund Fitzgerald sank the next year, on November 10, 1975. 29 men died in that wreck. It went down near where I had been held up in a storm the year before, on Whitefish Bay in Lake Superior. The wreck happened close to Whitefish Bay, but not quite there yet. It was relatively calm where I was, and it was lovely in the misty fog of morning turned pink and lilac as the sun came out and slowly became visible in the mist. I was in the aft of the ship, or in the back, behind the galley, or kitchen, and was looking over the railing which was a kind of wall, comfortable to lean against. I stayed there for quite awhile, watching as the sun became more and more visible and more and

more sea could be seen. A year later, close to the same place, the captain of the Edmund Fitzgerald said it was the most wild storm he had ever seen. He died within minutes of saying that. Here are two websites on this wreck. The Gordon Lightfoot song, which is the second link, tells the story beautifully:

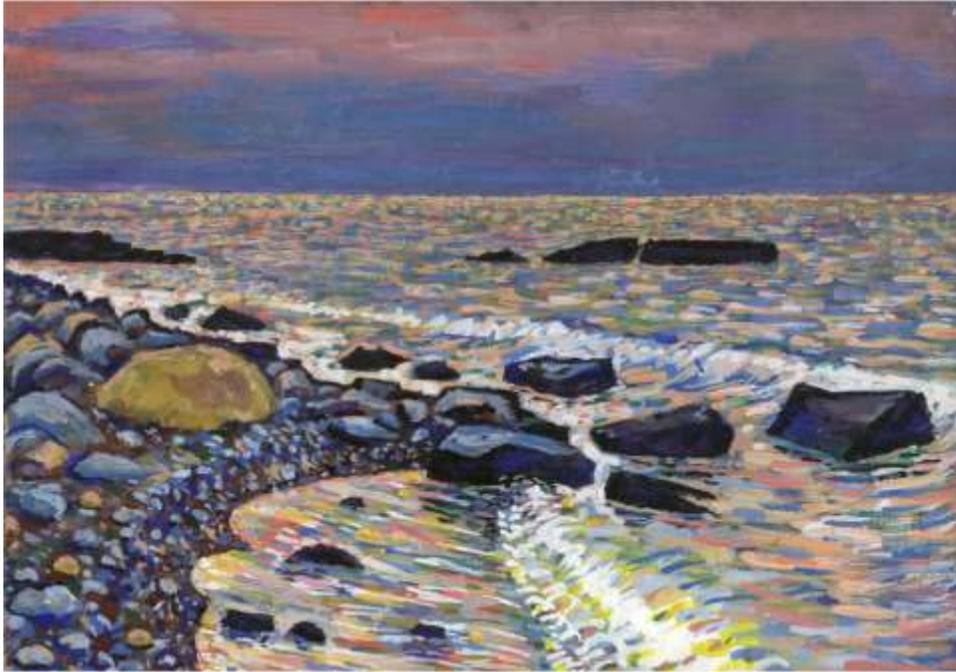
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3uOnnIv5Qs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vST6hVRj2A>

Lake St. Clair was surrounded with rushes or cattails and the sun would rise or set over it and turn it a light blue mist. St. Marys river between Lake Huron and the Soo Locks was indescribably lovely in the autumn with the leaves changing red, orange and yellow. Green White Pines were everywhere.

We often went past Isle Royal, on the way to Silver Bay or Duluth, and it was beautiful too, wild and cliffed nearly all the way around it. I thought of the Moose and Wolves that lived there. It is a rare preserved place as wild as the early lands before it was named “america” by the Europeans, who stole it. There were so many beautiful things I would spend all available time just looking at them.

Lake Erie could be lovely at times, despite it being ‘small’ in size relative to the other lakes. It is still the 11th largest lake in the world, which hardly makes it “small”. We were sometimes in a storm and once we sought safety in a cove near Toledo, Ohio. We were still there the next morning, when the sun came up, and I could see the dark brown storm moving away from the ship to the west. I had never seen a brown sky this way before. It was not pollution, it was a dark sky in sunshine. I was nearly always rapt in some ecstatic perception of beauty while I was out there looking at things. It was one of the earliest times I saw the Milky Way, as the night sky in the middle of Huron or Superior was often very clear and no lights from people could be seen.



Ochre Rock (Sandstone) on Lake Erie. Gouache; (1983-84 ?)
(Broken old pier in the distance)

I did a series of paintings I did about Lake Erie. The best one is this one:

I did not take or make any pictures when I was a sailor on the Great Lakes. (I did make one drawing on the last few days I was on board of a sailor. I made it on the black board in the galley.) But The Lakes formed my whole mentality for the love of the natural world and the love of species and water. My father had just died and I was in mourning for him, yet I was rapt in the attention I gave to the landscape around me, and all that was or is in it. I saw the landscape from the waters point of view, and this made me see reflections of the of all beings in the sky and on the earth—the sky and the sun, moon and stars. I saw land often enough that I was not always alone, and rarely “lonely”. But the end of the year ice was beginning to form on the lakes and I had had enough. I was lonely for land, and found myself singing “Michael, Row your boat ashore” all the time, even when I was working. I mean painting the cream colored paint on the walls of the engine room, after scraping off some of the damaged, old paint. We had to stay for a few days near the light house, off shore from Cleveland and I was very frustrated and wanted

to go home, I could feel home so close. Soon, after waiting impatiently for a few days, I was on the way up the Cuyahoga, and towards home.



Fairport Harbor light house,
(On the Grand River
very much like the one in Cleveland Harbor.)



Oystercatchers in Northern California

This is a rare bird. Not many of them exist and as far as I know they live only on the west coast. It is a lovely bird, and one that lives off the intertidal zone. I recorded this pair South of Crescent City, which is almost to the Oregon border. We went up there to check on the nursing home for my mother, but it was a bad place, not that the homes in Eureka were much better. I see that the atrocity of nursing homes has been made worse by the Covid 19 virus. Nearly a third to a half of the total death toll from Covid 19 is in Nursing homes, due to the greed of the owners. I have long said these places need to be taken down because they are an atrocity caused by capitalists. The record of treatment is much better in Nursing homes socialized like Canada or Europe. Now this is certain. Here is an article which rightly compares the over compensation of hospital administrators to the elderly, that is the people that the administrators are supposed to be helping, but instead they are helping themselves.

<https://healthjournalism.org/blog/2017/11/u-s-ranks-worse-in-elder-care-vs-other-wealthy-nations/>

It was good to see the Oystercatchers, and to see them so closely. My daughter was only 2 then and had a good time there too.



This is a model of a skin boat made by Native Americans. It is a somewhat scary thing in terms of being a sort of Seal, or Sea Lion killing machine. But it is so well conceived and made that I had to draw it,

One of my favorite sea photographers is a man who I only found out about when he died. His name is Kawika Chetron and he died on March 17, 2007. That was around the date I read about him in the newspaper in Eureka, California. His small boat was found abandoned with his camera equipment still in it. Strange. Equally strange is where the boat was found off the "lost coast" area in northern California. His boat was found at Blunt's Reef:

"Blunt's Reef is a hostile place. The currents are strong -- "ripping currents" the divers call them -- and the seas are often rough. The nearest land is 5 miles away. There are no roads in that part of California. They call it "the lost coast."

"That is the wildest place on the Pacific Coast," said Chuck Tribolet, another diver. It was the kind of place that Kawika Chetron loved: wild, almost unknown, pristine."

He died in a place he loved, at least. Poor guy. He was told by various friends that he should not travel there alone. They were right, of course. But he is a great photographer as you can see on his lovely website, Here: <http://www.coldwaterimages.com>

He explains how difficult and hard it is physically, underwater, to manipulate the camera equipment. He also explains how many of the pictures he took were done with a great deal of calisthenics work and finesse of movements in the ocean current. The ocean current can be a menace. If he died in the strong currents of Blunt's Reef it must have been a very powerful current as this guy was a great underwater swimmer. If he was killed by a shark that is also tragic, though it is said this was unlikely. In any case, this goes to my whole point that the ocean is a dangerous place for humans. But that said, even dangerous for people who know what they are doing, as Kawika did. His work is an amazing resource of images about why this should not be a place that we mindlessly exploit and profit from, destructively. Here is one of his pictures, of which there are many. This is one of a Sea Lion.



Kawika Chetron: A california sea lion (*Zalophus californianus*) and a late afternoon sun.

"Local's Ledge", Carmel Bay, California
November 19, 2006



Stellar Jay.

I thought of this in the high Sierras, and photographed the rock on which the bird stands. The actual bird on the granite rock was a Canada goose, but I had a Stellar Jay in mind already.

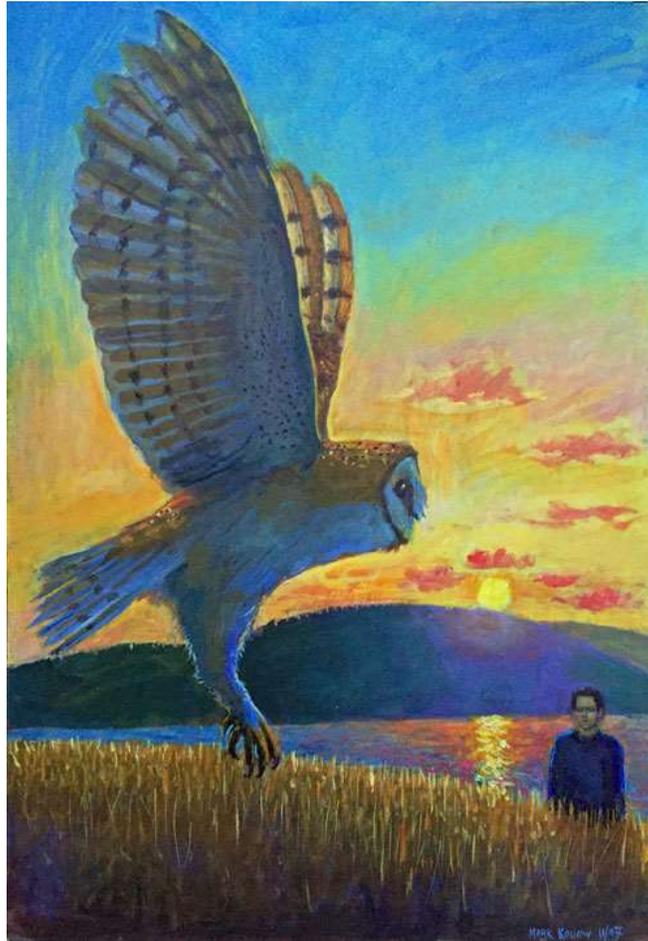
The leaves are from my wife and I floating leaves in the water.

Tomales Bay and Environs

Tomales Bay is one of the very few inlets into California from the Pacific Ocean. I have lived on three of them, San Francisco Bay, Humboldt Bay and Tomales Bay. (I mean

San Francisco Bay itself and the inland waterway of the San Joaquin and Sacramento River and the dyked system of “sloughs” attached to it, which itself is fed by runoff from the Sierra mountains and the rivers like the Mokelumne, the Tuolumne and so on) South of these there is Morro Bay, Monterey Bay and those further south, down to the Baja. I don’t know well the ones in the south. I was born and grew up in northern California and have lived there as an adult.

There is enough images to make a blog entry about Tomales Bay, but I prefer it here, with oceans, rivers and creeks. So below you will see a number of images of Tomales Bay and then Lagunitas Creek, which is the source of the Bay. Salmon know that this is a continuous system of waters. Humans have largely forgotten this, though some people are learning this knowledge again. The weather cycle is an important thing as water moves in a cycle and while it can seem static at times, it really is not. It becomes rain or snow, and comes down. It moves down creeks into rivers and down to the sea and evaporates and becomes clouds again.



Me and a Barn Owl Flying.

1997-2018

I went camping near where this is. That was in 1988 or 89. I found a Barn Owl who had been killed in the grasses. This is me imagining him still alive and flying.



Barn Owls and Tomales Bay.

This is a little bit brighter than it should be to be accurate. I liked the ability to see the detail, though. You can see Tomales bay behind the roof of the barn. Here:



Mist coming over Inverness Ridge and Tomales Bay
in the above painting



Barn Owl, me and Lagunitas Creek



One can see in the side by side of these works below that this is the same field at different times of day or night. One of the vantage points is much higher.. The one on the left is the same as the right side of the painting above. One is done from imagination and the other, on the right, is done from life. If you look down the path on the right you can see where I sat on the trail and did the wild radish, the hills and the fog coming in.



Barn Own Flying Tomales Bay.

This is not far from the town of Marshall. I went there pretty often. It is a small place up the coast from Point Reyes Station. There is an Ocean Pine (so called Bishop Pine) growing on the right side. I changed to foreground only a few years ago. I like the Bay in this one, you can see how big it is.



Heron at Heart's Desire Beach, Tomales Bay.

This is the park side of the Bay, the other side, which is roughly east, is not part of the peninsula of Point Reyes. It is Marin County proper.

This is across the Bay, looking roughly at where we were in the above painting. We are looking past the Heron toward the West Marin shore, Marshall is over there. The two paintings above, side by side, are the same painting. I want to show here how different slight changes in the settings can change the entire aspect of a picture. Both are pretty accurate to the actual picture. I had made some minor changes to it in between taking these. Neither, however, are perfect copies of the actual thing.

The water in this one is the result of various studies I made, somewhat in regular photographs, but moreso in digital video. I was trying to understand water itself, the way it reflects light, in concavities and convexities, independently of what it reflects. This means, in part, that I had to understand what causes how it reflects and how the reflections behave.



This is a subject that is hard to talk about partly because water abstracts nearly everything it reflects, except in the case of still water, which turns water into a mirror. The following study of water is pretty much a straight mirror. There is a beaver swimming in the mirror, and a log on the opposite bank of the lake, which is slightly askew.



Whereas the Heron at Heart's Desire Beach is not a still mirror but very chaotic. But the chaos has an order in it, which produces a kind of design, depending on the degree of convexity of concavity, rather like reflections on liquid mercury. It is the liquidity of water, of course, which is reflective. The area in the Heron painting which I am referring to is a few inches to the viewer's right of the Heron, which the water makes a kind of reciprocal design. This mutual influence on itself is normal in water and happens often. This is not as obscure as it sounds in our language, which is poorly visual, being too abstract itself. It is much easier to see what I am saying in the Heron painting above. To the right of bird the water is deformed in a design and this design is studied and real. I studied water deforming light in just this way in man films.



Towards Inverness Ridge.

1987

This is the basin in which Tomales Bay is. I remember doing this painting. It was a cloudy day in the winter of 1987 and drizzled lightly off and on. That is a young Eucalyptus tree on the right side. I think there are deciduous trees in the middle right and a pine next to that more in the middle.

It was still private land then, before it was bought by the park and became the Point Reyes Ecological Preserve. I thought it should not be privately owned even then. I am pretty sure this is a runoff canal made by the farmer who used this land for cows to make veal, which is baby cows, or calf meat. If the wind was blowing the right way I would sometimes smell the smell of cow poop. I lived right around the corner from the meat barn. I was still eating meat then and did not give it up till the later 1990's. I would sometimes amble over to the barn where they kept calves and look at them. Little did

they know what was in store for them? They would soon be killed. Fun loving little beings. Even back then I found this repulsive. I should have done an artwork of them, but I was “cowed”, ironically, by the family that made money unjustly off the killing of the young. There were a lot of farmers in that area, and I a little afraid of them. I don’t think I would be now. They tended to be all about money and somewhat cruel.



Egret on Tomales Bay 1

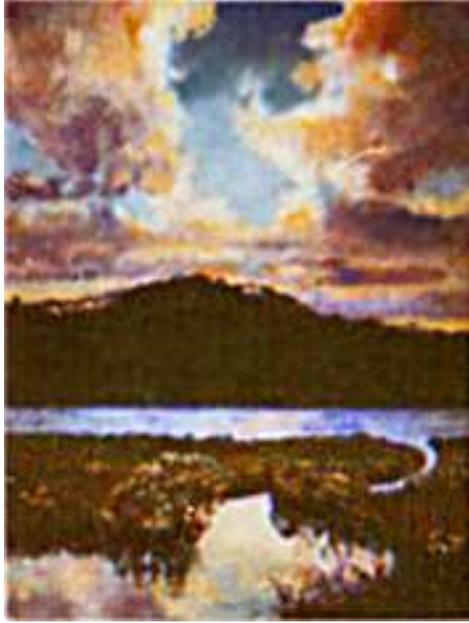
1987-2017

This was done looking from a blind in the salt grass half way across the Bay up near Inverness. In other words I am again looking toward Marin and Marshall. The one below is taken from this watercolor sketch. The Egret caused me some trouble. I only finished it a few years ago. I kept the immediacy of it.



Egret on Tomales Bay 2

1997-2017



Gumplant in Wetland near Marshall on Tomales Bay

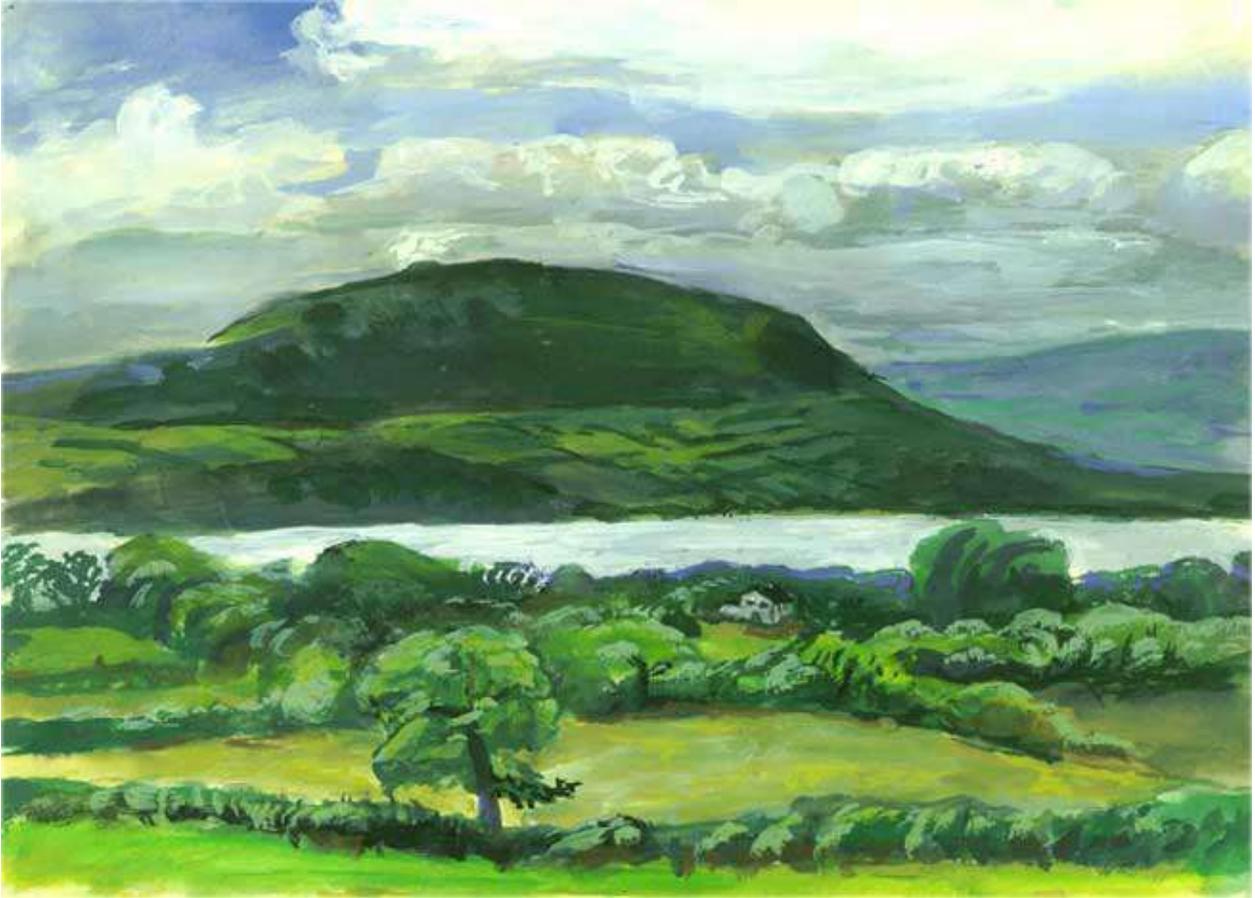
I have worked on this one for years. I should just do a copy,, but sometimes us humans are irrational and we persist in doing things that move very slowly. I am often fiddling with this and I do not get very far, though it is better than it was. It was one of the best paintings I did in Point Reyes, probably in 1988 or 89. But I was leaving that day and in a moment of weakness I made the mistake of selling it and then not getting to woman's full name that bought it. She only gave me 75 dollars. Hardly worth all the misery that selling it has caused. In art it is "let the seller beware". It was stupid of me, not the first time either. Then I gave away the good photo of this painting to a young woman who was very insistent about having it. She was young and foolish and didn't need it, but wanted it so bad she could taste it, so I gave it to her. It was a tiresome thing: I did not want to do it. Then, the negatives of these photos were taken by a woman who was very selfish and/or thoughtless, and there it is: lost painting. This is partly why I do not like selling work. It is never worth the money, money is not a good exchange for things like this. I put too much into these things to sell them, or to give them away for nothing. The work is gone now and I will never get it back. The money meant nothing. Giving it way is rarely appreciated. Money is often an unjust thing, as if the rich were innocent by

default and the poor are guilty by definition, even though this is manifestly not so. If anything, the opposite is true. The rich are guilty, the poor victims of the poverty caused by circumstances. The bogus nature of the social structure is to blame. By neither giving away or selling my work I am protesting or economic system and by not giving my work away I am serving my own need to not be humiliated, as well as not giving away for nothing what I love.

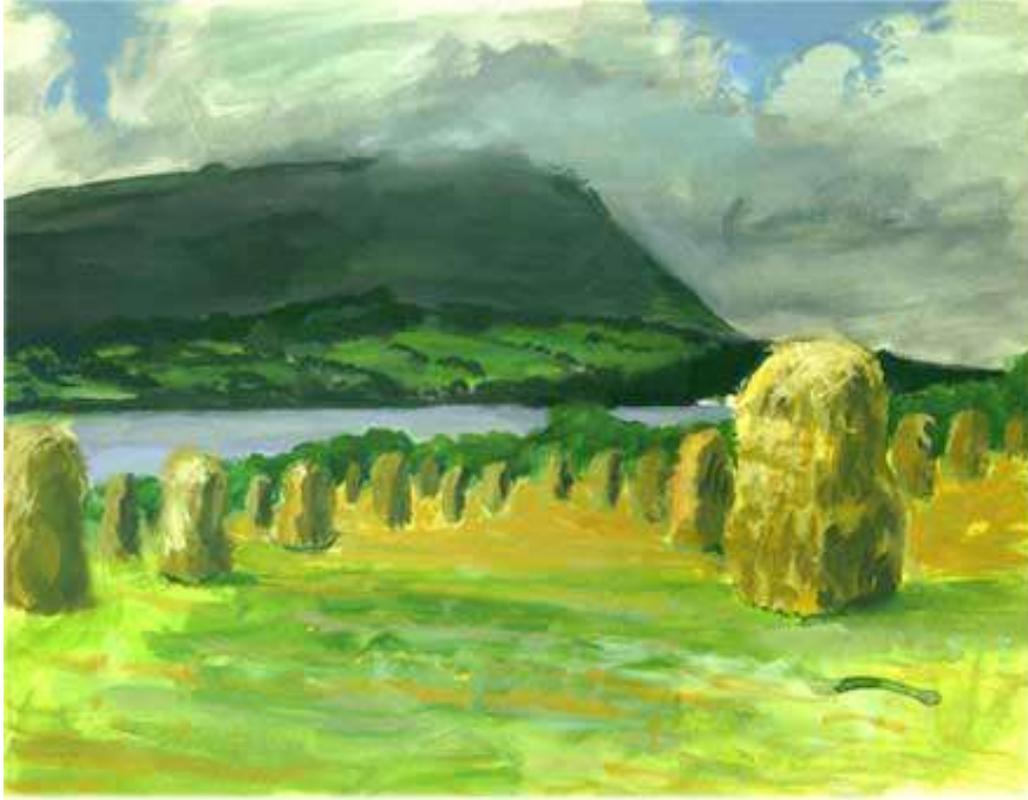


Acorn Woodpeckers

This might be my best view of Tomales Bay and environs. It was done in the last twenty years and is based largely on memory and photos. It is on up the hill along Balboa Rd. that goes near the road to Limantour Beach. This is the site of St. Eugene's monastery, apparently sold off now, and probably destroyed, to a private man. I worked here for a while as laborer, helping out and doing work to build a church for the nuns. I also made post holes for gates. Working was fine but my real work was listening to the Acorn Woodpecker colony that is (was?) here. It shows me surrounded by these birds and their granary trees, looking down to Tomales Bay, which was then visible from there. My real work always seemed irrelevant to making money. This made some people unhappy about my seemingly wasted or "loser" status, but this assumes the supremacy of the Market system, which I deny. What I was actually doing was really absorbing the life around me as deeply as I could, especially visually, and this was my real work. I might even like to think I was wrong about that, but I fear I am not. Being consistent is really difficult if one lives in a world where many around you follow a different reason for existing. They live for money. I don't, mostly all the time.



I lived in England for 6 months, and while there I went to Ireland for a few weeks. This is Sligo Bay which reminds me of Tomales Bay, which I did not go to till a few years later in 1986. It is on the north west coast of Ireland and that is a cairn on top of Mt. Knocknarea. They say that Queen Medb, or Maeve was or is buried there. There is a small Irish house in the middle foreground. We were allowed to stay for free in an old Irish house for a few days, and it was well worth it.



This was done further inland, also of Mt. Knocknarea and Queen Maeve's tomb, In the foreground are some Haystacks. This and the one above are from 1984, both done on site in County Sligo.



Lagunitas Creek under Elephant Mountain in the moonlight.



Done from life, this is Lagunitas Creek and Elephant Mountain in moonlight. My little apartment was under the tallest part of Elephant Mountain. I could easily walk to where this was, and did many paintings around here.

One of my main interests since I moved to Point Reyes in 1986 has been life in water, water as life, life giving seas, the sea or water as holding and sustaining beings. My early writings on this are largely mistaken. The water, or the sea, is not just a background. Three quarters of the total area of the earth is water or sea. All life begins there. It is definitely not nothing and not a background. Sometimes it seems a background in various works I have made, but more often it is the main subject. "The words and pages of written wisdom do float lost and scattered across the waves of the sea." I wrote this in the Ocean Book. It is a profound sentence, it seems. But the ocean is hardly a lost subject, "scattered across the waves of the sea."

I write in the Ocean book in 1978, and it is clear that this was not inspired so much by Joyce but by the abortion of a woman I was close with in 1976 and working on Ore Boats on the Great Lakes in 1975, earlier:

“o white bones lying by the shore of the sea moaning over the sorrows

and the deaths of time, the sea breaking over the bones;

o sickly child pleading for your father and your mother, helpless child whose body is
killing you and whose mind does not understand,

o my dying child crying for your father and your mother to stop that which killing
you, pleading with us to stop that which is killing him; crying for us to stop his
pain, weakly pleading, in his sorrow, his crying, his beauty and his innocence,
crying to live, pleading to live.

o my child, born upon the virgin sea, rise out of your sorrow and your pain and look
upon your father in the sky. rise up out of your sickly body that has so harmed and
injured you and look with your father out over the healthy sea. “

The whole argument of the Ocean Book is in this. The child is largely, not entirely, the aborted child of my youth. The Ocean Book tries to resurrect the aborted child, impossibly. It could not be brought back in fact, or rather it could only be brought back as a literary conceit. The woman who had the abortion went on to abort another child by another man, in fact. I tried to talk her out of it and even offered to care for it with her but she was adamant and went ahead with it. She is old now and childless. That is very sad as she really wanted children.

I had already tried to bring back the dead child in my long poem, and had failed. My confusion between doing things in reality and doing things in fiction is not yet firmly established. I did not see yet that what had to go was the whole pretence of religion, make believe, false superstitions. I did see this eventually. There is already a tendency to doubt the validity of the god idea in this book. But it is still unformed and inchoate. But doubt about the validity of deities is certainly there.

The Ocean Book is largely an attempt to define my relation to the whole cosmos of nature. I was trying to finish a book I was then working on, the Creation Cycle. I was 22 when I wrote this, in 1978. I am not at all sure if it succeeds or not. It does not really matter. What does matter is that I am still trying to define the human relationship, my own relations, to that of nature as a whole as well as specific nature, these waters, this creek, this wildflower, this sun, these clouds. Beethoven was trying to define his relation of the cosmos or nature as well, musically. The thesis of J.W.N. Sullivan is that Beethoven was trying to understand and use music as “knowledge of reality”. Though Sullivan defines reality as having a spiritual component, whereas I do not. My contention is that the spiritual does not exist, it is a fictional grab bag of what you will, hence subjective and uncertain or inchoate, ---possibly, indeed very likely, nothing at all. Reality for me is the array of what there is in fact, and fiction is still fiction.



McClure's Beach

1989-2018

This one I put away and took it out and put away and then took it out, many times, I am happier with it than I was, which is good, but there is still something not right in it. Maybe more detail would help. I saw the invasive Green Crab (*Carcias Maenas*) on this rock, for instance> I also saw the native Pilot Whale when I was on the opposite side of this area, sunbathing.

I was not yet out of the woods, as it were, which is still to say, I was in trouble though it was clear that I should not be. I was seeking into religion, which I still thought might have some truth in it. My painting was going along different, non religious lines. I was aware of this as a contradiction. I still had a quasi-mystical perception of the unity of nature, but hardly knew what that was, though I painted this awareness over and over. Was the natural world a theophany? Did a god shine through all the facts that I was seeing and feeling? I imagined what that would mean, though I rebelled against the illusion. It took me some years to decide this question and painting such as the one above as well as the one below helped me to see through my own illusions. I was interested in reality, not fictions, in realism, not abstraction. The process of coming to see reality was a slow and painful one, but a true one nonetheless.



Mom at McClure's Beach at Sunset



The outcrop of rocks at McClure's Beach actually goes this way. I turned it around because I wanted Mom to be facing to the right instead of the left. I painted the

moonlight scene at McClure's in the crevice between the mainland and the outcrop of rocks.

I wanted badly to do this picture of my Mom. I knew she did not want me to, just as I knew I had to do it, and made various video and still references. I knew she liked that sweater, just as I knew she was getting some kind of dementia and she was drinking a lot to try to cover it up. I tried pouring out the alcohol. I took her keys and stopped her driving. I tried to enlist my two sister's help. They both refused.

Except for my wife I was alone. I could see that my siblings were only interested in her money. I did not care about that very much. I could see what they were doing and knew they harmed her. I saw they would harm her further, so I fought them. I won eventually, in the worst year of my life. I did this before all that happened. I have always liked it. None of my works are perfect, and this is no exception, but it is pretty good and true. Yes my mother preferred the Atlantic, of course she did, she grew up looking at it, had many memories of it. I only had a few memories, and most of my memories were about the Pacific. So I had to paint it as I did. Was it selfish to do that? Not really. I included her in my world. There is nothing selfish in that.

It would have been better to put her near her childhood, no doubt. But I couldn't do it. I just did not have the means or the references. I hung the painting up for a year over her fire place, and went there nearly every day, before she was forcibly removed from her house, by my brother. Mostly she must have thought well of it. She often said she liked it, when she was not drinking, and I made changes when she was critical of the mouth or the nose. Occasionally she would hurt my feelings and say she "did not recognize that woman", or "who was the woman in the painting, it certainly was not me", she would say. Yeah, those comments were negative, usually said when she had too much to drink. She must have liked this on some level. Or maybe I am kidding myself and she really did not like it.

I *do* like it, it reminds me of her. It looks like her. She is being there, I am being there: this is McClure's Beach: I put her in one of my favorite places of all on the west coast. I had struggled with various paintings at McClure's Beach. The seascape above, of the dark rocks and the bright sky is in this same place as is in the portrait of my mother, only horizontally reversed. It means a lot to me I was able to do this. I cared for her for many years. Indeed, the picture shows how much I loved her.

So, to return to the Ocean Book. The idea of the ocean, in this book, is not entirely fictitious. It is largely based on my experience of being on the Great Lakes a few years earlier. The growing awareness of the detail of reality is coming upon me but is not entirely there yet. The enchantment of unreal symbols and fictions is still there.

O little being, you have seen the sorrow and the dream, you have gone down to the sea. The sorrow and the beauty of the sea has gathered around you with all the seabirds crying and the moaning waves droning upon the seashore, with the wind within a seashell and the sad bell ringing upon the buoyed waves.

O you hath come and you have gone, back and forth over the sea. You have wandered long and you have wandered lost until you have come to stand on this small beach where the waves break long and rumbling upon the hard shore, where the seagulls shriek their forlorn cries into the foggy winds, where the sheep wander aimless and lost about the dunes.

O you have wandered to where the scratched earth meets the sea. And you have seen the sorrow and the dream come over the sea like long lost voices.

You have seen the longships set out upon the waters and you have known that the men on those ships would never come home.

O and as if in a dream, you have seen the bodies of those men floating about under water, dead, their lifeless eyes staring into an empty sky. You have looked out into the distant sad sea and you have remembered. You have seen the sad

dream called the sea melt before you and you have been frightened to see what has come up from those dark depths, with a monstrous eye towards death.

O my little man, can you not remember, can you not see the dead eyes looking from out of the past, -how they see you ? Do you not hear the voices from out of the past, how they speak of you ? The dead come out of the mist covered sea like murmuring shades and they do touch your heart with pleading hands trying to reach you.

O will you be afraid of yourself little man ? can you not see that the heart of those dead is your own heart ? that the voice of those dead is your own voice ?”

This is lovely. Sad and lovely, like the Edmund Fitzgerald, which lost 29 men, all drowned, like the Viking Ships all of which did not make it. Many ships did not make it. It is true that the “sad dream called the sea stretches out to an unbearable infinity”. The ocean is a dangerous place, a place one came from and should respect, not a place one should abuse and profit from. In the midst of this danger the characters in the Ocean Book rise to a crescendo and there they unite with the myth of the aborted child, who returns now

“O little man, touch the flesh of the stars and write your name across the waters of the sea and burn the image of your face upon the vault of the sky. Cup thine ear to the timeless sea, as if to a spiraled seashell and listen to the churning forces of the world. Move thou through the sea like a ship, cut through the deep like a proud woman’s figure, cutting through the waves of the sea.

O spin thou down into the depths of time, whirl up into the highest depths of the warmest stars for your love calls you home and the stars call you into the depths of the sea.”

What this means is that the ultimate inclusion of all the things that matter has been reached and are joined again in the sea. I did return home from San Francisco. I thought I had brought the aborted child into some kind of spiritual awakening. The vision of the sea in the Ocean Book is the return of all things that really matter to the sea. I still agree with this, though I might disagree now with how I get there, now I am far more real world, less idealistic, less spiritual, more accurate now than I once was. The aborted child was gone, I had to face that. The sea had been sorely abused by overfishing, long line fishermen, drag nets, bottom trawlers, pollution, and plastics. I began to see all this, and to see that little was actually known about the ocean and waters. A lot of what I have done in the last 40 years is learn about this, among other things. I have learned a lot from people like Kawika Chetron, as well as various ocean plankton studies, plankton species diversity, insect populations, and other such matters, which show us the deleterious effect that humans have on the environment. The Ocean Book was a mistake but it was a good mistake—one learns through good mistakes---- and one that eventually led me to see things more realistically. (the mistakes of the Ocean Book are various, for instance, it uses an archaic thee and thou language which is deliberately archaic. I have abandoned this sort of experiment here)

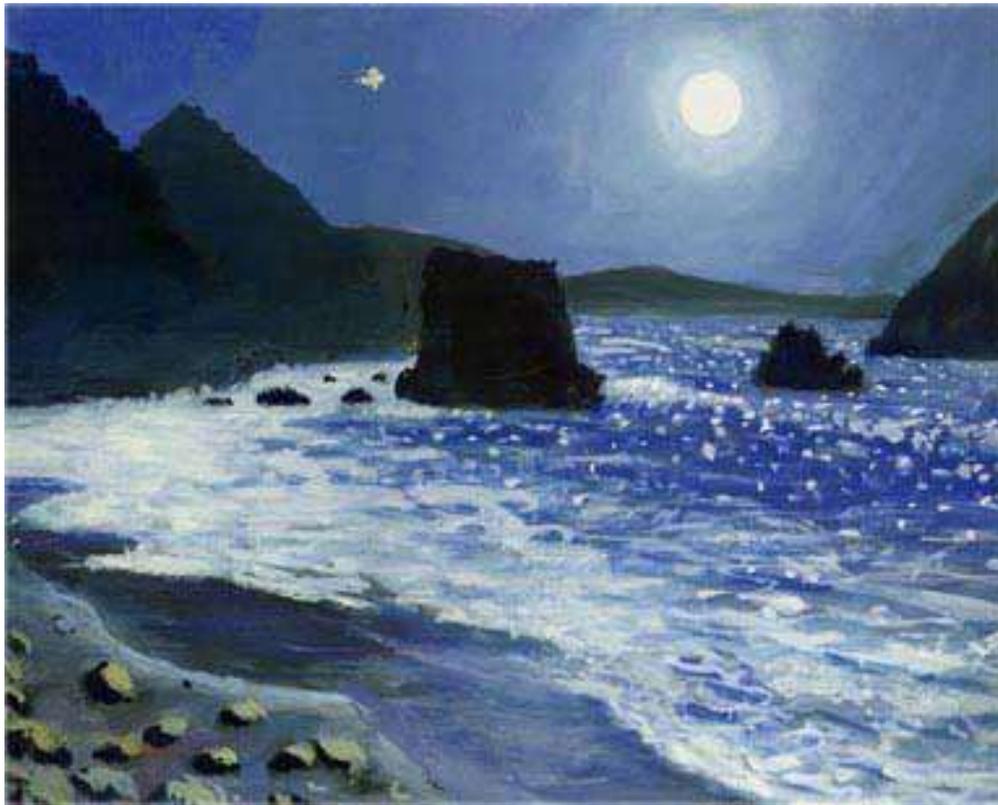
Plankton diversity is really only the beginning of what is knowable about Oceans Rivers and Waters. There is the weathers, El Nino and El Nina, this evolution of fish, bivalves, mammals, sea stars and single celled organisms. There are the reasons why the Seastars all died off in 2014, all along the west coast of North America. Pinniped die offs due to Climate change There are cetaceans which include the Whales, Orcas, Porpoises and Dolphins and the Cnidarians--- jellies, Medusas, Portugese Man of War and the By the Wind Sailors.. The Sunfish or Mola Mola and Baracudas, Cod and Herring, Manta

Rays, kelp and Kelp Crabs. There is the chemistry of water itself, as well as seaweeds, sands, Anenomes, Urchins, Fungi, warm Waters, and the Sea Bottom, the Arthropods, Bryozoans, Seabirds, Islands, the Galapagos, volcanism, bioluminescence, abyssal plains and deep water Trenches. There are Sharks, Whale Sharks, which are plankton eaters, and White Sharks, which love meat, and 11 near extinctions due to shark fin soup weddings in China. There are sea winds, currents, algae, flatworms, mollusks, drifting animals, fast flying fish, and coral reefs. are Ocean bottom destroying Trawlers, plastic pollution, dead zones, biocide riparian corridors, deltas, Wetlands, Pinniped Birthing areas, schools of fish, ocean going Penguins, sea icebergs, Albatross's Dynamic Soaring, endless flying without much effort. There are more aspects to the waters and the sea which I have not mentioned. Look it up, there is a lot on the sea, more and more all the time...

So, for instance coral reefs are dying world wide, yet still people talk about it as if it were not our fault. When in fact it is totally due to human caused global warming. "Coral bleaching" is a misleading term that should be eliminated from use. Zooxanthellae, are a photosynthetic algae, or dinoflagellate, and they form a symbiotic relationship within corals. The beautiful colors of many corals come from this. Overheating corals—common in our age of bank and fossil fuel corporation caused global degradation--causes the algae to leave the coral, killing it in many cases. The coral turns white, as if it were bleached, but an analogy should not be a descriptive term.

Bleach has nothing to do with it, it is misleading to call death "bleaching". Too many writers give in to this kind of misleading double speak. We are killing off corals due to our addiction to fossil fuels, primarily. Call it global warming caused coral killing, but do not sanitize it, excuse it, or falsify it by calling it coral bleaching.

One could as well use the name starfish, which maybe is a star shaped being, but is not even remotely a fish. Calling it a Sea star is far better. But even star fish is better than coral bleaching which bleaching has nothing whatever to do with coral. The Human centered world is destroying the seas and the planet itself. If this means that all should question every instance of human centeredness, then all should question it and we should call them Sea-stars, and using the term coral bleaching and call it as it is, namely coral killing.



Full Moon at McClure's Beach

I did this one with a flashlight propped on a rock next to me as I worked. I don't remember how many times I drove out there and walked down to this site on the sea: at

least 4 probably, maybe 5. It was a journey, and I often got caught in the fog that would come in, in the afternoon, and stay all night. It was the thickest fog I ever saw and visibility was only a few feet. I had to drive incredibly slowly and leave my car door open and look out the open door to see the side of the road. Otherwise I was likely to drive off the road. It took hours merely to get back home. It was well worth it, though: I have often thought this the best moonlight picture I have done: The clarity, the sparkle in the water, the dark sea stacks and cliffs, the hint of mist at the base of the cliffs, these are all things I managed to express.

This is a dangerous bit of coast, south of McClure's Beach. I found this out myself, the hard way, as it was 1986 and no one I knew, knew anything about it. People later died there and got caught on the cliffs or had to be saved by helicopter. There is a short beach after the big rock on the south side of McClure's. And beyond this is a series of cliffs and dangerous rocks that are heavily and unevenly eroded. I tried to walk along this but ended up being brought very close to my own death, and turned back rather than go ahead. I could see I was going to die in the rough ocean if I went further.

There were areas that were walkable but the sea would jut into the walking space right up to the cliff and it was impossible to go on without the real possibility of falling into the churning dangerous waters. I could see that I would be chopped up by the waves and hurled against the sharp rocks by the swirling waters. I could see that if one went into there at low tide one could not get back a few hours later. One could be caught by the high waters. I saw how, in later years, this actually happened to some young people who did just this. The only way they could go was up, and they could not climb up the cliff and once they tried, they could not get down, So, luckily, they had a cell phone and called for help. Others were not so lucky and there was a sign on the large rock that jutted out into the sea that as of 2006, 6 people had died near there. More have died since then: I looked it up and the figure of death's at McClure's Beach now stands at 9. A woman was killed by a sneaker wave there, presumably dragged into the sea by the strong undertow. There are also Great White Sharks that like to patrol there. The sea can be a dangerous place and one needs to be very careful.

The following 3 paintings show a small wetland area that is next to Tomales Bay, man-made. I liked it because it showed the background hills of Inverness Ridge but was also an intimate small area. I tend to think of it in conjunction with Tomales Bay, which dominates the whole area.



Tule Reeds in a Wetland.

1988



Great White Egret in Wetland, 1987, 2018

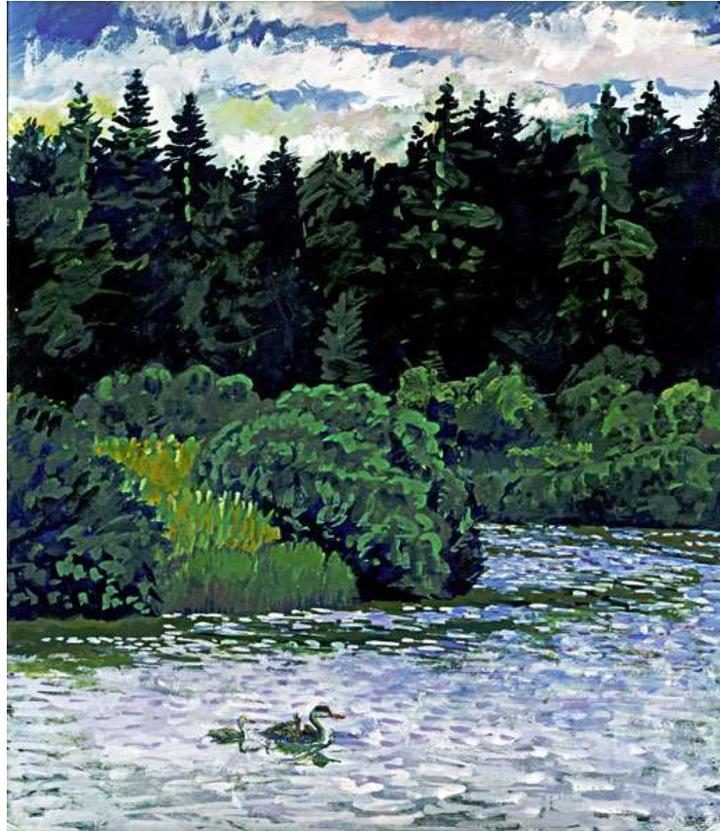


Untitled.

1988

This one was originally called theophany, or “contemplation” which was a word used by Tibetan Buddhists and Russian Orthodox monks. I thought it was appropriate at the time, as the concept of “theophany” or “contemplation” was that nature is a manifestation of the void, or the plenitude of being, nature etc. This might be an ideology I subscribed to in the Ocean Book, but I gave that up eventually. The more I thought about it the less I thought that nature as an example of a metaphysical concept. I was open to the idea, but the more I studied the facts of the matter the less what the Church and the religious, or what the naturalist mystics thought about it seemed true. I came to see it as true that human beings project onto nature what they want to see there, but this hardly means that that is there.

Nature is not a theophany, not an object of Tibetan or Russian Orthodox contemplation. The truth is that nature is not at all symbolic. It is its own self, itself, its own thing. It evolves according to the dictates of itself in its environment. It evolves according to its own efforts and direction according to how it actually lives. No market or religion decides what it will do or not do. It is a mistake to think otherwise. So I took off the title. Now it is title less, though “sun setting over many colored pond” might work and be accurate.

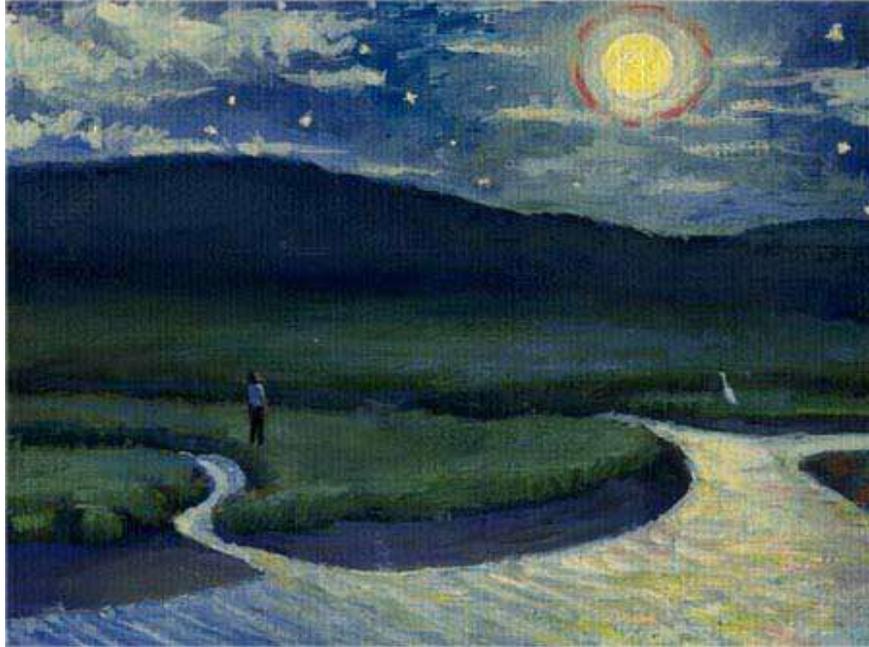


Western Grebes in Lagunitas Creek



Mt. Wittenberg from Lagunitas Creek

This is a view of Mt. Wittenberg from Lagunitas Creek, which was pretty close to where I lived. It is a lovely and accurate picture. I followed a Opossum who was walking along the creek here some miles, and learned a lot about the creek from him. Near here is where I saw a Western Tanager for the first time. Lagunitas creek flows into Tomales Bay, indeed it probably created it, and Tomales Bay flows into the Pacific ocean. None of these separate bodies or water are actually separate. That is a misnomer of human language. Creeks, Streams or Rivers flow into Lakes, Seas or Oceans. Weather returns waters to the beginning of the water cycle. Language makes things individual and separate that are not. Humans like things in nice neat little packages, but that is not the way things are. Reality is much more continuous than people think it is.



Viewing the Moon

Looking east again, this is the beginning of where Lagunitas Creek turns into Tomales Bay. There is no point where one can say this is the creek and that is the Bay. It is a continuous thing. The difference really is arbitrary and not real, due to human language alone. To prove this is not why I did this one. I did it because I felt the pull of the moon,, which helps the sun create high and low tides. I felt an identity with birds too, and wanted to say something about that. Most of them sleep at night, but occasionally they get up to, as we do.

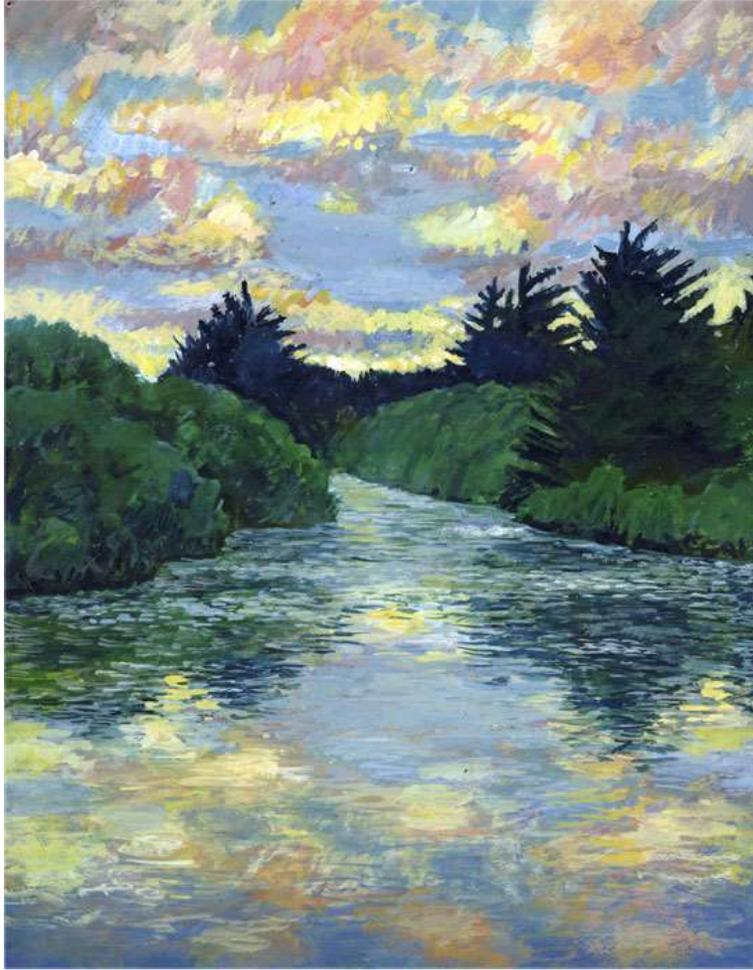


Tomales Bay from Mt. Wittenberg. Lupine



Lupine on top of Mt. Wittenberg
((Tomales Bay far below))

This is a detail of a larger work and shows the view atop Mt. Wittenberg, looking down from the mountain top. You can see the mountain top from below in the work above this one. In this one you can see way down to the bottom of the mountain where there is Tomales Bay. Next to that is the town of Point Reyes Station: across the Bay to the left.

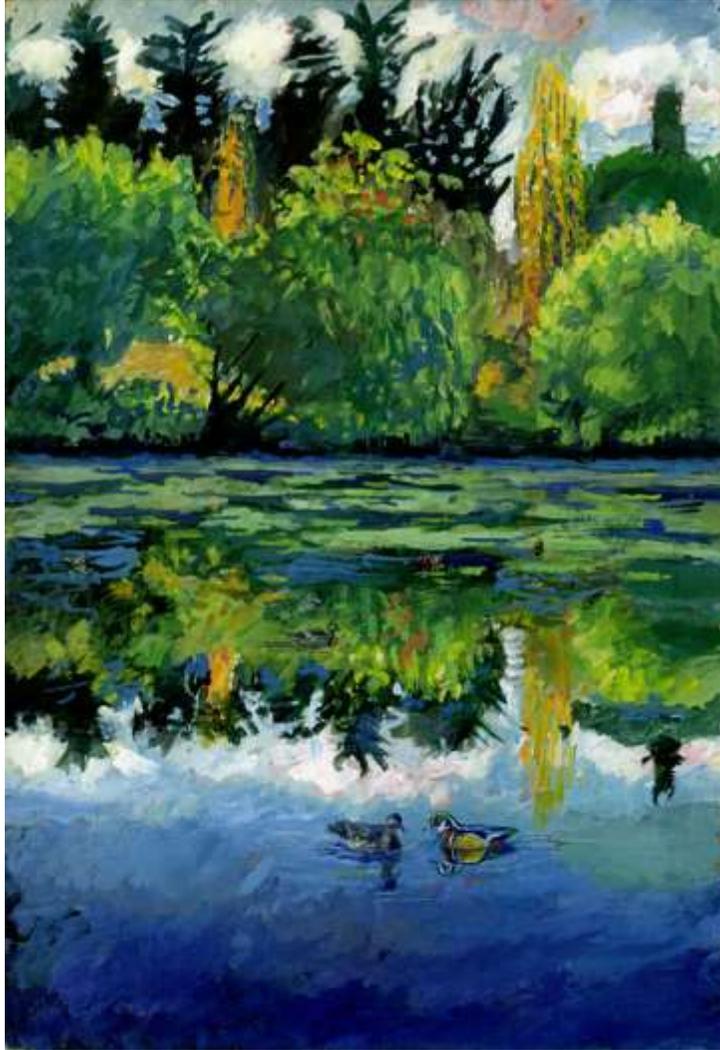


This again is Lagunitas creek, nearer the dam that the Giacometti's made every year with their digger. I would go swimming here so I knew its depth and what was in it, This may have been done from the middle of the dam, looking up river. I was glad when I learned that this land had been acquired by the Park system and the dam had been taken down. I later did a painting of a king fisher in this area. I saw a Sea Lion along here one day, down river of the dam, and this is about where, one night, I saw the bioluminescent fish I have recorded elsewhere. I was on the sea side of the dam, of course. Here I am on the non-sea side of the dam.



Kingfisher on Lagunitas Creek

This is something I have tried to paint or draw more than once. This time it works pretty well. A Kingfisher.



Wooducks in pond

1988- 2018

This is atypical for Point Reyes. There are Weeping Willows here. This is not even an American tree but Asian. I associate it with France and England, where it also imported from Asia. Monet used it in his great Water Lily series. The reason they planted these trees next to this pond in Point Reyes might be because of a fantasy about English or East Coast Weeping Willows being around the pond of every rich person that makes too much money in England or America. If this is the case, why then did I paint it?

It was not about a fantasy. It was about painting wooducks. I really wanted to paint

them and where they were was irrelevant. I liked the space in the water that the trees made possible. I liked the mirror like clarity. The ducks themselves are not great. I am aware of the shortcomings of this work, but it is mine, and I did it at a time and in place where Woodducks chose to only live in this pond, nowhere else. It is not nothing and I have some pride in it. It was a hard work to do, and involved physical discomfort. I won't tell the long story of it,--I tell it elsewhere--- but it cost a lot to do this work, and do not regret doing it. It adds yet another series of facts to this entry about waters and ponds and seas and that in itself is something.



Blue Jay over Stinchcomb's Hill and the Rocky River

We rowed our small blow up raft down this stretch of river coming from North Royalton, I was quite a bit heavier then, before my daughter was born and so my back side got a beating on the rocks made famous by the term, "Rocky River". I can tell you, it is indeed a rocky river. The ochre/yellow maple tree closeup and under the Blue Jays tail is from my mother's street in Bay Village, where I lived off and on.



Fossil Seeking
(The Secret Of Color (1984))

This is based on an experience with my older brother, who had been into finding fossils. We were staying at a relative of his girl friend's beach house at Geauga on the Lake. He was avidly seeking fossilized beings in rocks along Lake Erie there. I helped him and did this painting from the memory of that. I called it "the secret of color" at the time, because I put the fossil in red blue and yellow, in his hand. At the time, I was researching the history of color, reading Newton and Goethe. I made the sky itself and the water a kind of rainbow or abalone shell, as the sun's setting and the sky influences water to be multicolored. He never liked my work much, whatever that means. But I put him in it anyway. In my family only my mother approved of my work. Now he is dead and I am not, and this is a good little painting that memorializes a real and existing part of his life. I am glad of that. Before he got sick he was a very interesting person. I remember this about him. His illness made him quite impossible and very hard on my mother and her relations to others. He said he wanted revenge on her, not that there was any real reason for it, but, undeserved, he gave her harm, she and I did not deserve, for a year or so, until I would win in court against him. I was not fighting for myself but for my Mom. On second thought, maybe I was fighting for myself a bit too, and that is not wrong.



Seeking (1984)

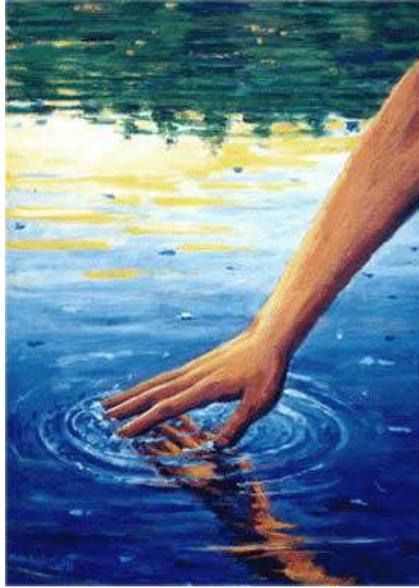
This is also a memory painting done of Maine around this time, somewhat before the one above. It shows me in the water swimming toward a white bird, a kind of Egret, about the take off and the Pines on the coast, the trees absorbing food from the sky. The sun shining.



Redbird and Columbia Run Creek (June, 2014)

This one went through various stages which I have recorded elsewhere. The wing feathers were wrong and the place was undefined at first. But I eventually got the feathers more or less correct and discovered a place along Columbia Run I could paint and it was perfect. It is a small painting but it took me a month or more. The creek is low so it is early or mid summer and I like the woods and how it looks just like the place it depicts. It is small only in size, the painting itself is one of my best bird paintings, I think. One can almost hear the water bouncing and gurgling on the pebbles and small rocks of the little stream. It is a great place to be a redbird.

This one is a good example of the background being as important as the foreground in most of my work. I like the creek, and it shows what I have learned about the importance of cleanness in creeks.



Human Hand Touching Water. (1999)

This is a hand study, touching water. I liked thinking about this one and then trying to bring it about. I was again thinking of the sense of existence and my own frequent interactions with nature. Touching water has often seemed to me to be a primary act of humans and animals. Even Giraffes and Lions do it. As primary as the sexual act, it is a true universal action. We all need clean water, and hence the necessity of not messing it up, not polluting it. Rocky River, where the water could be cleaner, is messed up by humans who live in towns along it. Town governments are largely to blame for this. Governments make bogus decisions based on making profits for human businesses. Business should not be treated so reverentially, as it has no proscriptive right to pollute rivers. Nor do people in general. There needs to be care for rivers, not so much care for the rich. There should be a more draconian law that forbids any development hundred of feet, maybe thousands, from any body of water. Business has no prescriptive right to harm nature and if they do, it is the corporate or the rich, not nature, which should pay the price.



Remembering Northern California Near Lake Erie
(Allen's Hummingbird)

1998-2019

An attempt to tie together east and west into one thing. I was always trying to see nature as a whole, not giving too much to locality, unless I had to. My devotion to the local is itself poly-local, and in some cases, universal. Think locally act universally.



After the Rain

2001

This is the so called Back Lagoon at Heroes Wetland. I would often sit on a log there, sometimes with my wife, though this was done after we got married. It shows the time before we got married. We were together for 7 years or so before marrying in late 2001. This was done a month or so later. I was fascinated with the Red Headed Woodpeckers that lived at Heroes and the lichens on the tree, as well as the Wood Ducks the Heron, and, of course, the trees in their autumn beauty, as Yeats says, in the reflection of the opposite bank at Heroes Wetland.



Rocky River: Redbird and Maples

1998-2018

When I worked on this again, I only worked on the bird itself.



Canoeing down the Grand River

2019

(Fresh water mussels) I have often read about Darby Creek, south of Dayton and wanted to see the multi colored Darters or minnow like small fish there. I have not done that. But I have seen rivers near me, the Rocky, Vermillion, Chagrin, Cuyahoga, and Grand, as well as the Black, a little. This is on the Grand, one of our best canoe trips. We went some years back on a Canoe trip on the Tuscarawas River, which was partly ruined by

the pollution of that river, largely state caused, since people are encouraged by corruption in Government to throw their old tires, cars and other junk in the rivers of Southern Ohio. Corruption in government makes it too expensive to get rid of tires and such things.



Beaver Swimming down the Cuyahoga River
fall, 2012

There are Cottonwoods, Oaks and willows in this painting as well as invasives such as Japanese Knotweed. I enjoyed making it. The Beaver swam by as I was working on it a few trains went by me too. I was standing near some railroad tracks.



The Cuyahoga River



My Family: Emerald Creek in Winter

This is called Deer Lick Cave, but I don't think the creek is named. I called it Emerald creek because this entire area is so green. There is a waterfall to the right of the rocks, and all you can see of it here is the creek coming toward the viewer. This is a sort of family portrait, with all four of us in it. My daughter hides partly behind the rock and my son in his puffy red coat is in front.



Kid, Clean Water, Rocks.

(My Son Getting Wet in Tinker's Creek)

I liked going here for awhile. My kids liked it too. As you can see here, with my 4 year old really enjoying it in a wild area. I thought it might show them that clean water is what matters, as in the streams of Jamaica, where my parents went in the 1960s. There are photos of them from the early 1960's, standing clean and smiling in shin deep, clear waters rushing down gentle waterfalls around them. The water looks fairly clean here in the painting, but after a rain the wastewater treatment plant up stream sometimes lets the human pollution mix with the water in the creek. There is also a landfill area, a high, long hill, with exhaust pipes sticking out of it, right next to Tinker's creek, which certainly leaches pollution into it. This I have seen myself. One day someone told me the water is really polluted. I looked this up and it was true. Tinker's Creek is 28 miles

long and goes through a lot of urban areas that show only a little care about it. There is a sort of 'restoration club', but I am not at all sure what good it does. The problem is, as usual, speciesism. The particular area we went to was a tributary of Tinker's Creek called Hemlock Creek. It was wonderful in many ways. But the pollution appears to be serious, at times. It was enough to make me stop bringing my little ones there. My kids like to say this is mere paranoia, but I am not so sure. Jamaica is badly polluted, water quality is terrible, Kingston Harbor is a mess. My parents saw Jamaica before it became like this. How is Hemlock creek different? It is not..... The polluters are nearly everywhere....

I am not sure how to deal with them, corruption is so thick. They need to be legislated out of existence, but given the corruption of the Senate and the presidency, how is that going to happen? According to Howard Zinn in his great book the Peoples History of the United States, the Senate and Presidency would serve to check the "imprudence of democracy" as defined by Hamilton. (pg 95) The Senate was suggested to be chosen for life by Alexander Hamilton, modeled largely on the House of Lords in England. The Senate was largely a corrupt body that served the interests of the ultra rich and helped check the "amazing violence and turbulence of the democratic spirit.", Hamilton wrote in June 18, 1787, (quote in *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787 Reported by James Madison*) .

Hamilton hated democracy and wanted rule by the few. He favored the aristocracy and wanted that. So he wanted senators and the president to be lifetime appointments. They would make sure that the upper class would alone be cared for, as it is today. Out 'august' Senate decides only for them. Like the House of Lords in the UK, which the UK has tried to abolish, the U.S. Senate exists to filter democracy out of our system and make sure that the interests of the upper classes are served. It is the body of our government which is the most corrupt. We should abolish it. The presidency is also corrupt, and should be abolished. Trump has shown the presidency is: capable of great abuses, lies, crimes and harms.



Redwing Blackbird at Lake Erie in Spring

I saw some feral cats when I was here. They live in the rocks at Edgewater Park. The practice of dumping off cats in areas where they will be harmed by doing that is so common, I admit I am disgusted by the ignorance that thinks that is a good thing to do. It causes huge suffering not only to the animals that the cats prey on but to the cats themselves who often die of cars other wild animals or exposure. Letting them go in our area means death by car or Coyote, which is a very unpleasant death. The feral cats in our area wiped out my long standing areas of wild Moles. For a few years the piles of dirt they often made at night were all gone, and I missed them. Some have come back now that the cats seems to be gone, but it was a nightmare for the cats. We saved a few of them. Humans have created a huge problem with cats in Australia. I discuss this in more depth in the entry on animals.



Barn Swallow and Geese Families on Rocky River
(Blue Heron Resting in Sycamore tree)



About midline in this painting is a portion of the mid-summer flock of Geese which will probably fly south, together. It comes mostly for Heroes Wetland which is west of here, or to the right. You can see the babies on the right of this work.

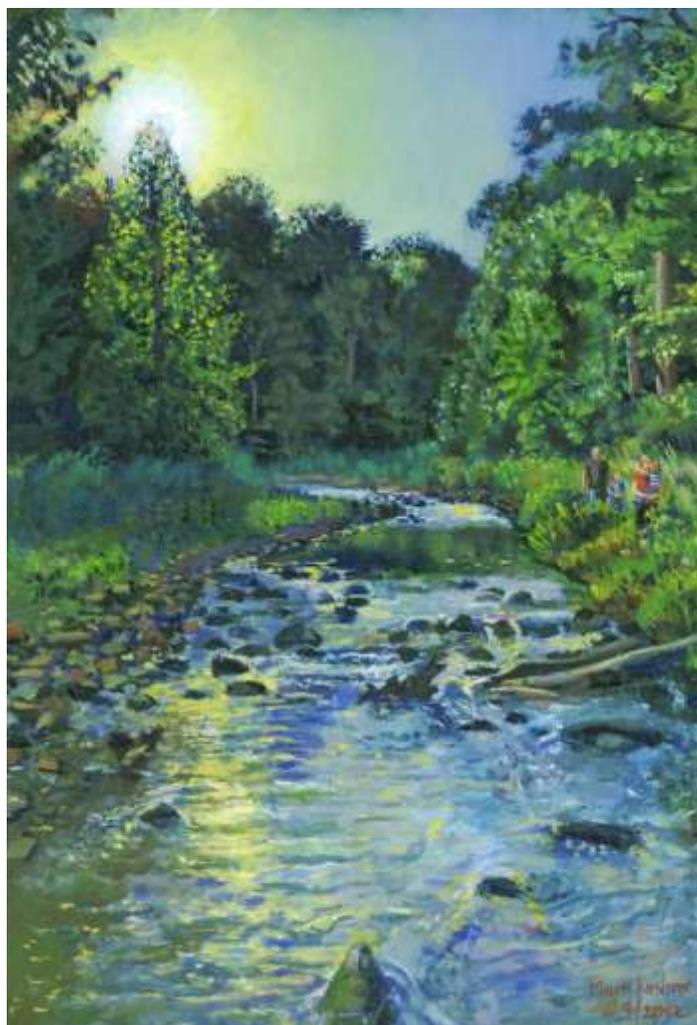


Here are some of the babies or goslings. They sometimes are babysat by a male and female, who are generally a few of the parents, sometimes by a number of them. It is an interesting community. The main thing is safety. The Geese will spend a few days at Heroes itself but they are off to the river and this flock as soon as the goslings are able. I like the gathering of five or six goslings next to the female on the left side of the work.



Running on the Waters.

This shows The Canada Goose running on the water, But various other birds do this too, The most daring in some ways is the Western Grebe, which runs on the water in tandem with another bird, as part of their mating ritual. I have only seen it happen a number of times at Tule Lake in Northern California.



Portrait of the Sun Over Chippewa Creek

Hard to think of this as already eight years old. But such is the nature of time passing. One gets busy taking care of children. The kids and me and my spouse are of the right side, we have walked his creek all the way to the great cliffs a few miles down. I was thinking about the sun on water. I was thinking how light depends on the sun and how the sun is directional and goes different ways during the day. It is a fairly complex motion with the earth turning around a thousand miles an hour and the going around the sun one a year. I waited until the sun came down the creek valley and painted that.



This is when I was going to Heroes everyday for two years or so. This is a female Mallard swimming down the Rocky River in early Sunlight. The water is pretty shallow here, so you see the shadow of the female duck on the river bottom in front of her.



This is just a small study of snow geese for a larger painting of Tule Lake and Mount Shasta. I am still thinking about that one.



About to Mate



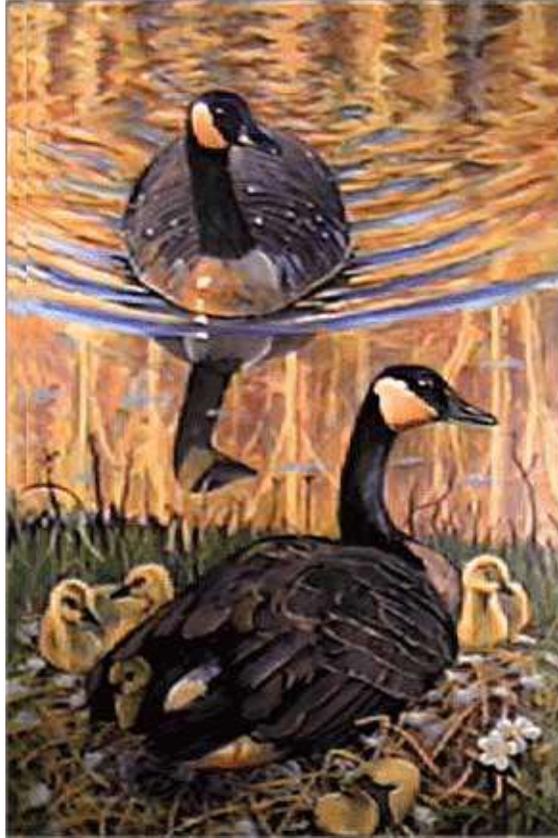
Again, this is a detail of a larger work. Here:



This is a study of mating Geese at Heroes Wetland.



This was exciting. It is always exciting to see the Geese take off. One cannot be unaffected by their excitement. This is at the pond in North Chagrin. They do it in concert and prepare in advance, the male usually starts calling out and shaking his head and the Geese line up near him. I did not notice what happens to the mate of the Male then. It may be she calls out too and shakes her head. Then with a great clamor they all start running in loose formation on the water. They take off, one by one, and before long they are all airborne, they are largely in formation already. They will often wheel around and apparently make sure no one has been forgotten. Then with the flock entire they will go where they are going.



Goose and Her Family

I spent a lot of time studying Geese.

Marvelous animals. Humans seem to only understand Geese pooping habits, which are fairly minor. Humans seems to make an exception for their own bad habits on this subject which are polluting the whole world.



Sleeping Goose

The Geese would sleep very calmly like this some mornings. It was lovely to see, compared to the raucous calling out of injustice once a new pair of Geese would come onto the pond and disturb them.



Henry Thoreau rowing on Sudbury River,
near Fairhaven Hill

I did this over a year ago, in 2019.

I made these in an image editor. I probably made 10 of them as experiments but only used 5 or so. It is based on some photos I took when I was next to the Sudbury river in Concord. The design of the boat itself is Henry's. There was a copy made by a guy online. I can't find it at the moment. But Henry himself describes the boat well as says

Our boat, which had cost us a week's labor in the spring, was in form like a fisherman's dory, fifteen feet long by three and a half in breadth at the widest part, painted green below, with a border of blue, with reference to the two elements in which it was to spend its existence. It had been loaded the evening before at our door, half a mile from the river, with potatoes and melons from a patch which we had cultivated, and a few utensils, and was provided with wheels in order to be rolled around falls, as well as with two sets of oars, and several slender poles for shoving in shallow places, and also two masts, one of which served for a tent-pole at night; for a buffalo-skin was to be our bed, and a tent of cotton cloth our roof. It was strongly built, but heavy, and hardly of better model than usual. If rightly made, a boat would be a sort of amphibious animal, a creature of two elements, related by one half its structure to some swift and shapely fish, and by the other to some strong-winged and graceful bird. The fish shows where there should be the greatest breadth of beam and depth in the hold; its fins direct where to set the oars, and the tail gives some hint for the form and position of the rudder. The bird shows how to rig and trim the sails, and what form to give to the prow that it may balance the boat, and divide the air and water best. These hints we had but partially obeyed. But the eyes, though they are no sailors, will never be satisfied with any model, however fashionable, which does not answer all the requisitions of art. However, as art is all of a ship but the wood, and yet the wood alone will rudely serve the purpose of a ship, so our boat, being of wood, gladly availed itself of the old law that the heavier shall float the lighter, and though a dull water-fowl, proved a sufficient buoy for our purpose. (From **A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers**)

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4232/4232-h/4232-h.htm>

Notice he describes the two masts. The interior of the boat including the figure of Henry is my own and it is very small. I am not sure about the two masts, if Henry mentions that an early boat had two, he made more than one boat at different times, if I recall. I put in two as it made more sense, somehow, though I am sure about how historically correct this is. He mentions using two sails when he took the trip with his brother John.



House Finch in Cherry Tree above Rocky River.

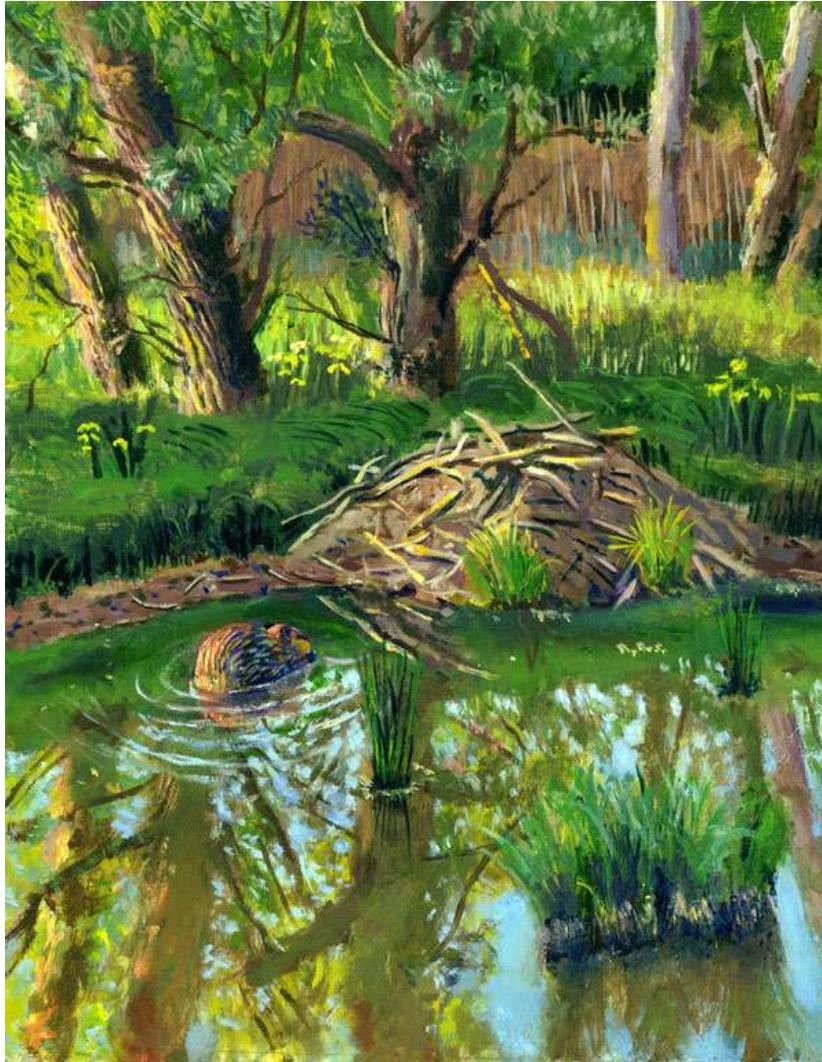
There is a deer across the river and I am in the woods looking up at the wild cherry tree. The branch of the Cherry tree was done from an actual branch. I brought it home to my studio. Cherry blossoms are especially lovely and delicate in their colors. I expressed something of their loveliness here. I especially like the overlapping, size based, and linear perspective in this one, as well as the color of the whole.



This self-portrait appears on the opposite bank a little to the right of midway. It is, as it were, the fulcrum of the whole work.



Beaver and Lodge at Allegeny state park in NY state.



Beaver Lodge

This one is near where I live in Cuyahoga Valley National Park. I find beavers to be especially intelligent. Humans think there are dumb only because they are easy to kill with high tech implements, high tech bows, or rifles etc. Humans tend to speak relative to their own concerns.

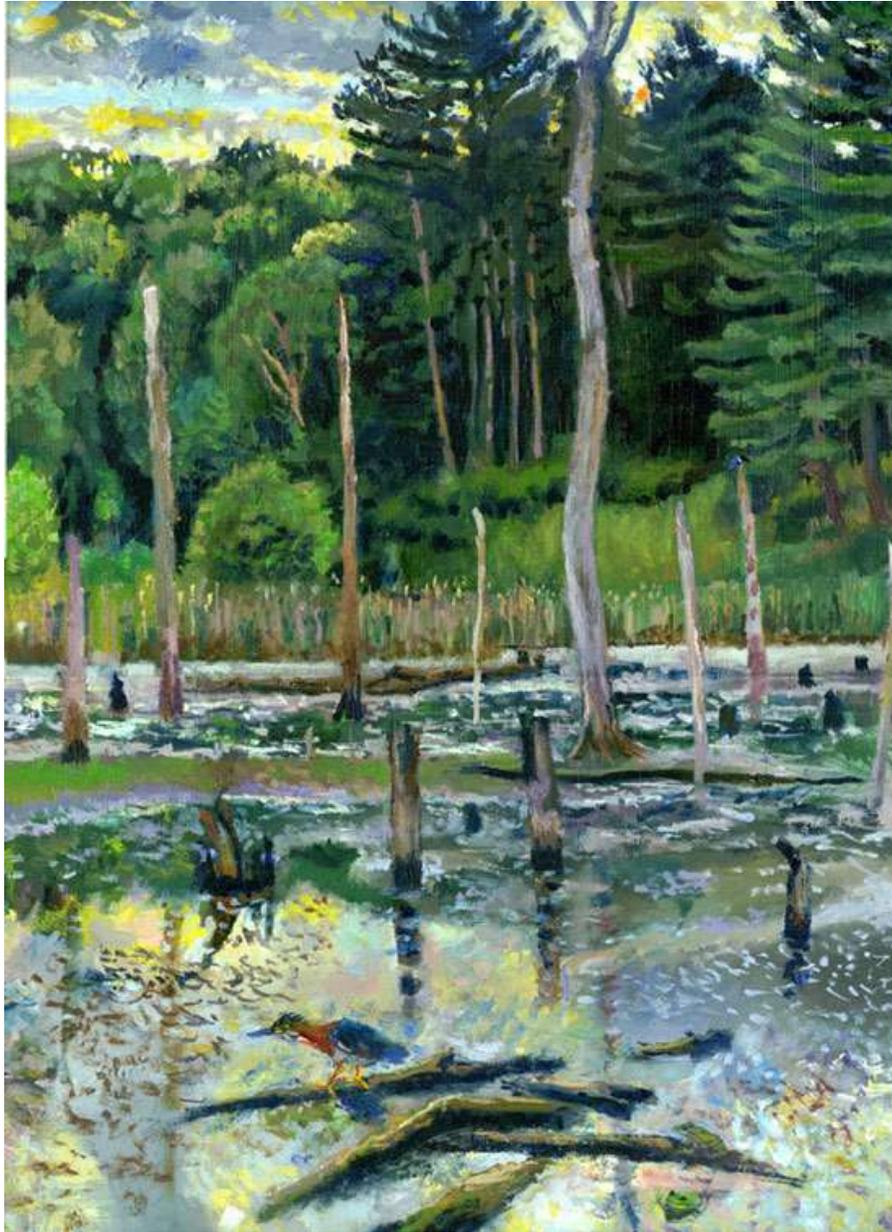
Using such high tech implements is not difficult and certainly does not prove that Beaver are lacking in intelligence. It may prove that humans are lacking in intelligence, as they nearly hunted the beaver to extinction. That was pretty stupid and showed real lack of understanding of this species. Beaver are hugely productive animals and make areas rich in man kinds of life.



Scarlet Tanager Bathing

2013

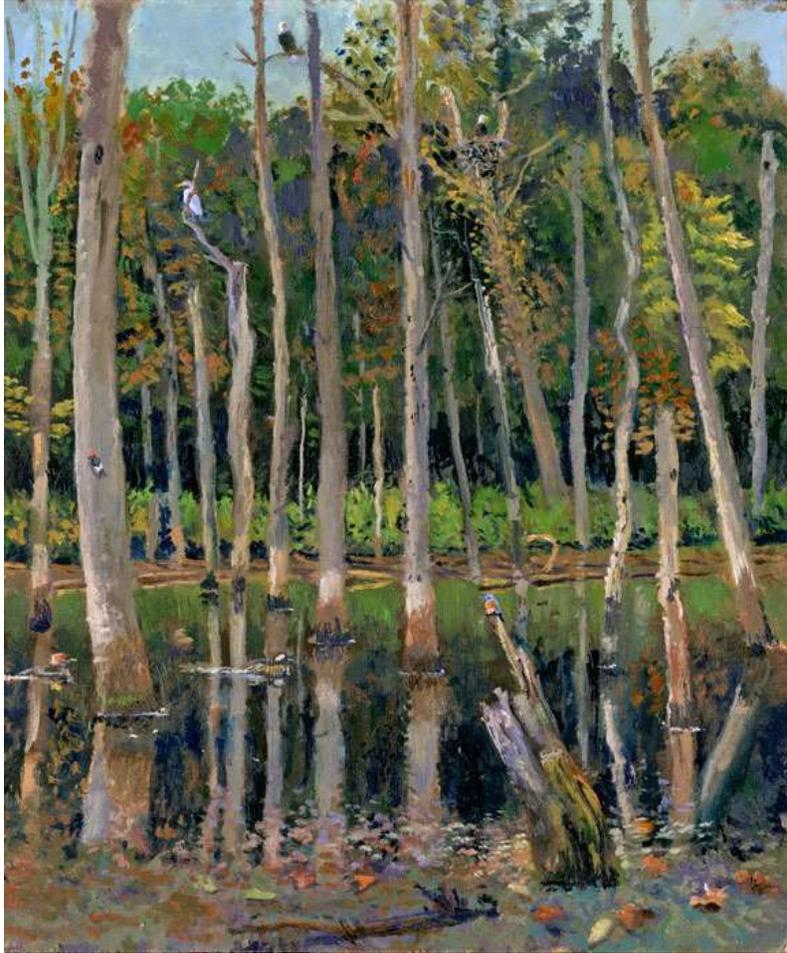
This is near the mouth of Chippewa Creek, where the Chippewa and the Cuyahoga flow into one another, or where as some would rather say, the smaller Chippewa flows into the larger Cuyahoga and the Cuyahoga flows some miles down river into Lake Erie.



Green Heron's World

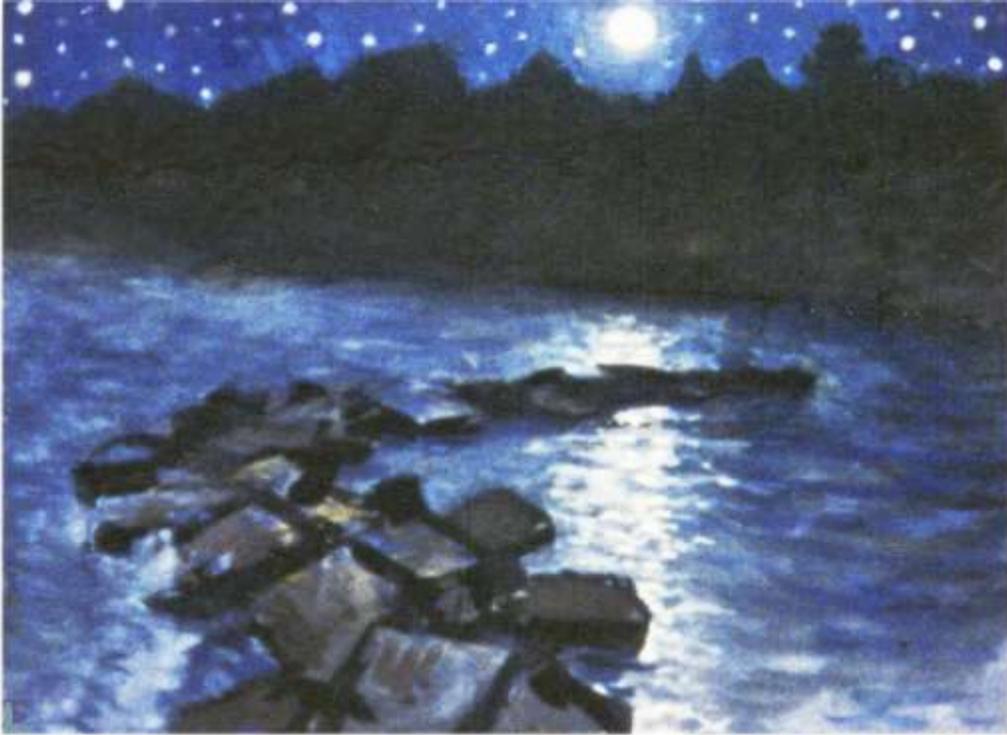
Human centered design tends to make selfishness and speciesism into a first principle. It is basically a lie for which no one apologizes. Only the human community exists and has needs, it says. In actual fact other species need water just as much or more than humans do and humans need to put them first. Frogs, for instance, can only live a few days without fresh water. Fish, clams, worms, birds, mammals, elephants, all need fresh, clean water. Yet humans think it should all go to them. “Draining the Swamp”

filling in the pond, these are normal activities for humans. Yet all beings need water, and how does draining the swamp or wetland, serve them? It doesn't. Humans clearly need to be educated about other species and what they require to live on this small planet. I am trying to do this above. The Green Herons lives largely on frogs and fish, and so "draining the swamp", would kill it or force it to find what is missing. It might not be where it can find it. Hence humans are killing off the Green Heron and the frogs that it needs. This water might not be perfect for humans but it is good enough for the frogs and Herons and Kingfishers that use it. Human's need to learn to leave wetlands and ponds alone and stop "draining the swamp".



Birds Near the Eagle's Nest

This little pond or wetland services many animals that depend on it. I show many of them here. I show the Great Egret, the Eagles, the Hooded Merganser, the Bluebird, and the Red Headed Woodpecker. They are all pretty rare and need this to survive. It might not be an area that is useful to humans, but it is an important area for other species, and they matter as much or maybe more than humans do. There are way too many humans and few Egrets, Eagles, or Hooded Mergansers. Which matters more, which should have babies and raise them up to be adults? We all know the answer to this question. The question is how many babies should a human have? Two or ten?



Moonrise

This again is one that I rather stupidly gave away. It is probably gone forever. I have a mind to copy it one day. It is a good painting. It was dumb of me to give it to someone who does not care about it. I should not have given it away. The notion of “ownership” is too strong in our society. Even if one creates something like this it becomes merely a thing. The rather incidental act of giving it into someone else’s “possession” and it is gone. Is that fair? I do not think so. I created it, it will always be mine. No matter who

has it temporarily, it will always be mine. Of course if someone destroys it, which is not entirely unlikely, then it is truly gone, except for this facsimile of it.



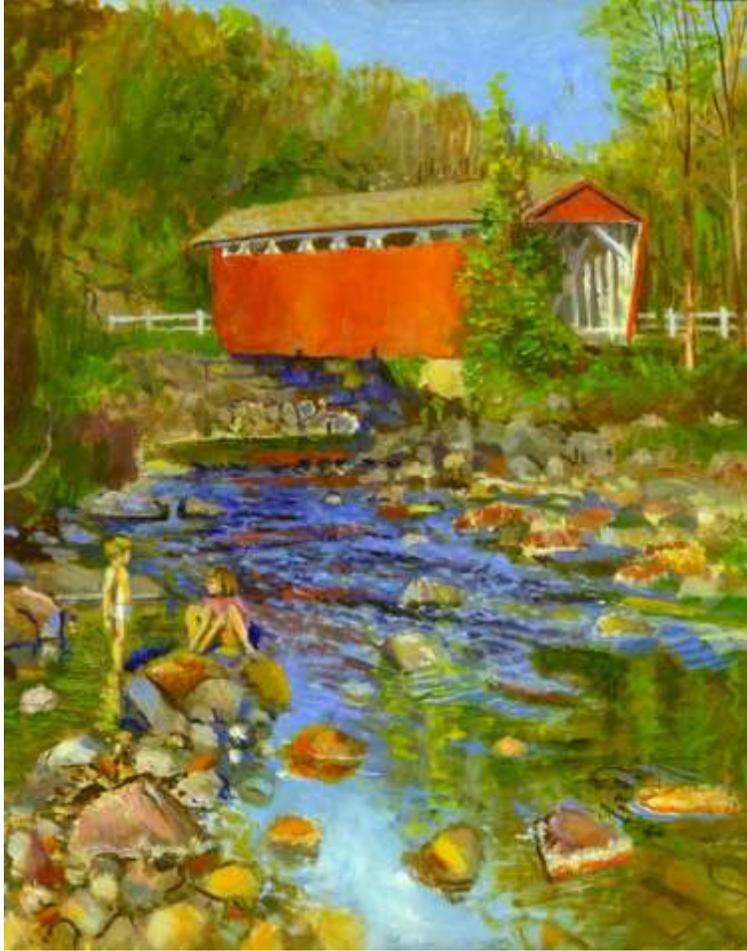
Dam Building on Chippewa Creek

Again, this one was done from life. That means that I stood there in Chippewa Creek for hours while the kids played and I painted this. It was a fun day and the kids were getting along, which itself is a good thing.



Wetland and Train past the Oak Trees Changing

This done up the hill from where I did Green Heron's World as well as the painting of the Turkeys.

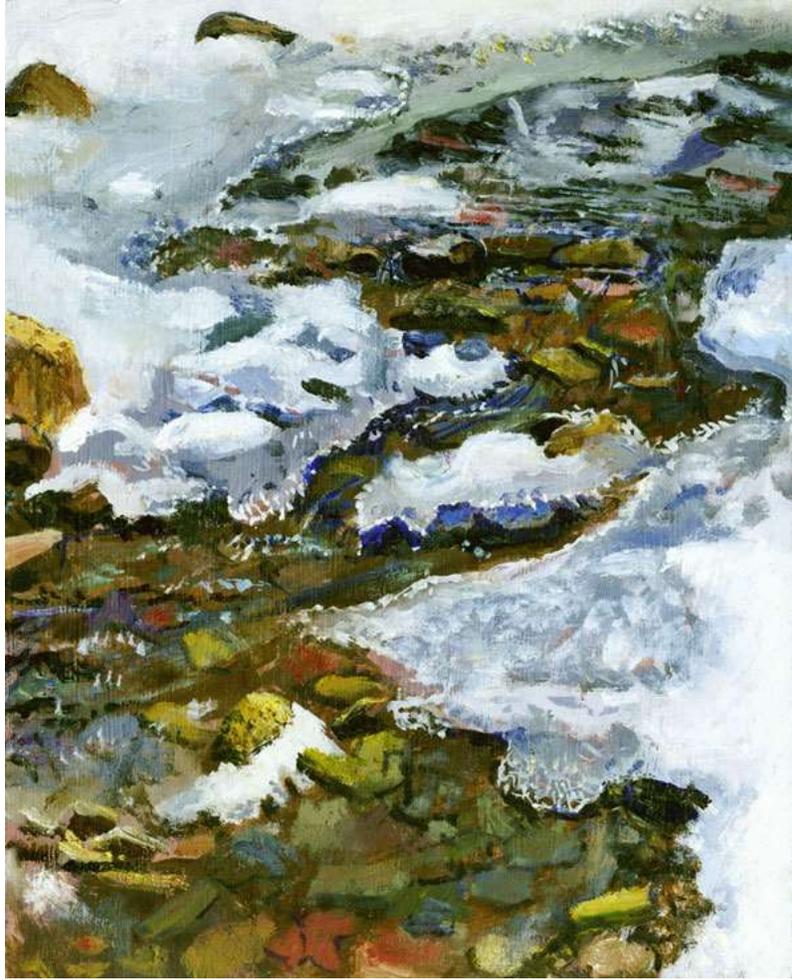


My Kids and the Covered Bridge at Everett Road



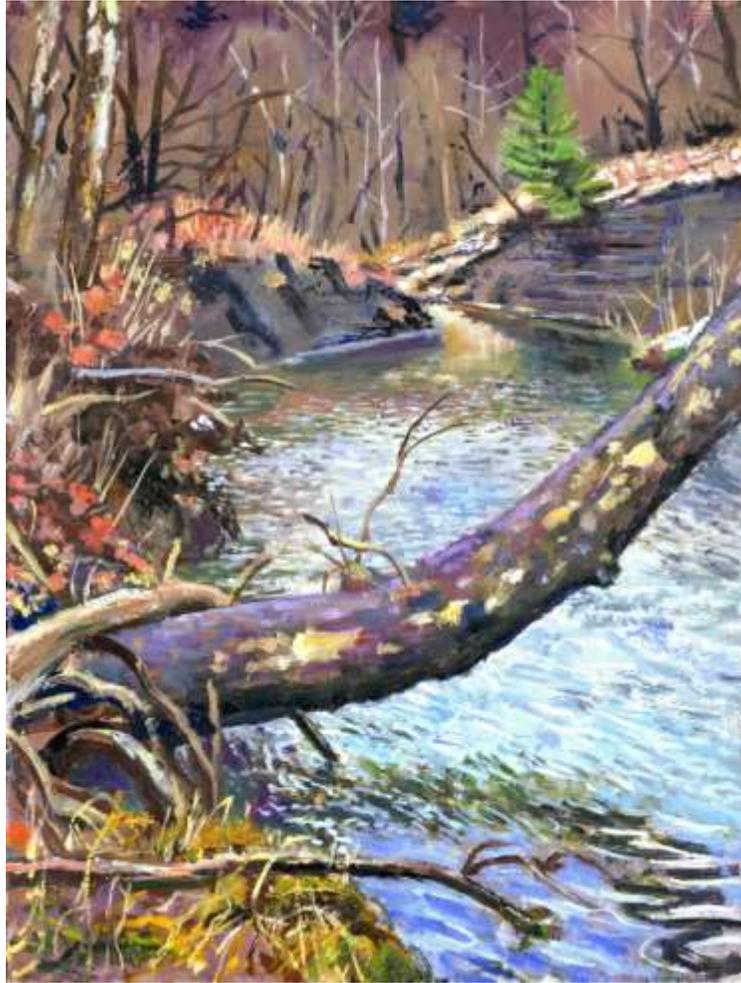
Deer-Lick Falls

This painting was criticized by a local artist who said, “I have seen that before”. I have seen waterfalls before myself, but I was not serving his need of the “new”. I was interested in the massiveness of these rocks and how the water made light of them, moved them even. I was interested in what happened below, how the water made the rocks below glisten with wetness, how it made foam in the water below it. I am not serving the artificial need of the unseen and new. If you already have thought about how powerful water is, or know how water glistens, well, this may not be the painting you need to see. Of the portrait on my son called “Nearly Done with Diapers”, he said “I have never seen that before”, approvingly, as if that is what I was after. He was wrong in both cases. This made it hard to trust anything that came out of his mouth.



Winter Creek(Columbia Run).

I was not consciously trying to paint something that resembles an abstraction here. I realized after I did it that that might be the effect of it, for certain people. Some people are trained to see in terms realism verses abstraction. I tend not to think that way. I have tried abstraction and am one who has abandoned it and do not believe in it. I was interested in the flow of water, and the change of state from snow to ice to water. I was interested in how the clarity of the rocks that are not underwater makes the ones that are an inch or so underwater, look a little blurry, as you can see in the lower right of the stream. I was interested in how the snowy patches in the stream stood out against the flowing water.



Sycamore over Chippewa Creek



Muskrat Lodge and Pond



This is a study done from the painting itself which hangs in the Cleveland museum. I discuss this and other things in this museum in the blog entry called “Doing Drawings at the Cleveland Museum of Art”. Here:

<https://wordpress.com/post/markkoslowspaintingsthoughtandnature.wordpress.com/3639>



White Pelican



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Oriole at Heroes Wetland

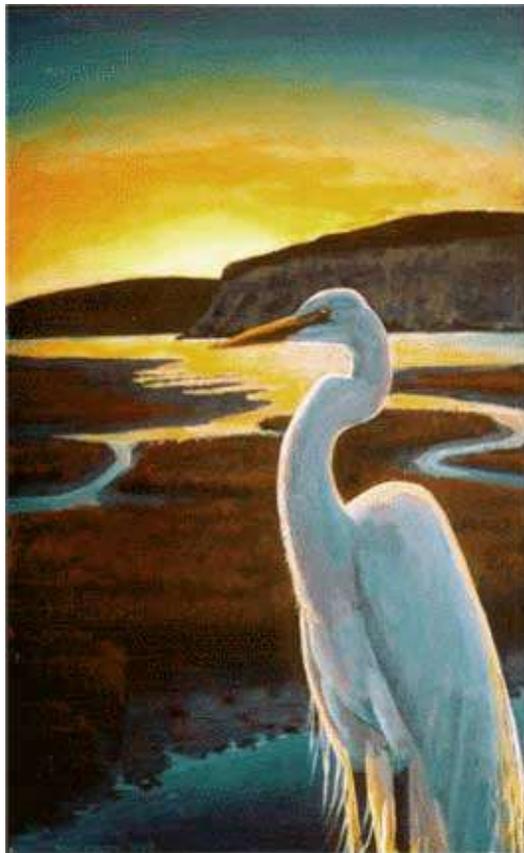
This one is adapted from one I did in the late nineties. It is completely changed in the last year or so. I changed the Oriole and added all sorts of birds, animals and insects. I added a fly, some ducks, an arachnid, a hornet and its nest and others. I studied this wetland for two years and this is the most complete version of many. There are many large and small paintings about Heroes Wetland.

I particularly like the composition of this one: the way the eye follows out the tail of the Oriole and this angles to the musrats swimming the then the Blue Heron flying and the deer looking at the Heron, undelines this, as so one follows the line of the insects flying up and then down to the Heron sning on the stump and then out with the Wooducks swimming and along the fallen log to the Scarlet Tananger and down to the bottom quadrant of the work where there is the Frog, Spider and the Snappng Turtle, and so back to the Oriole.



Bald Faced Hornet and nest.

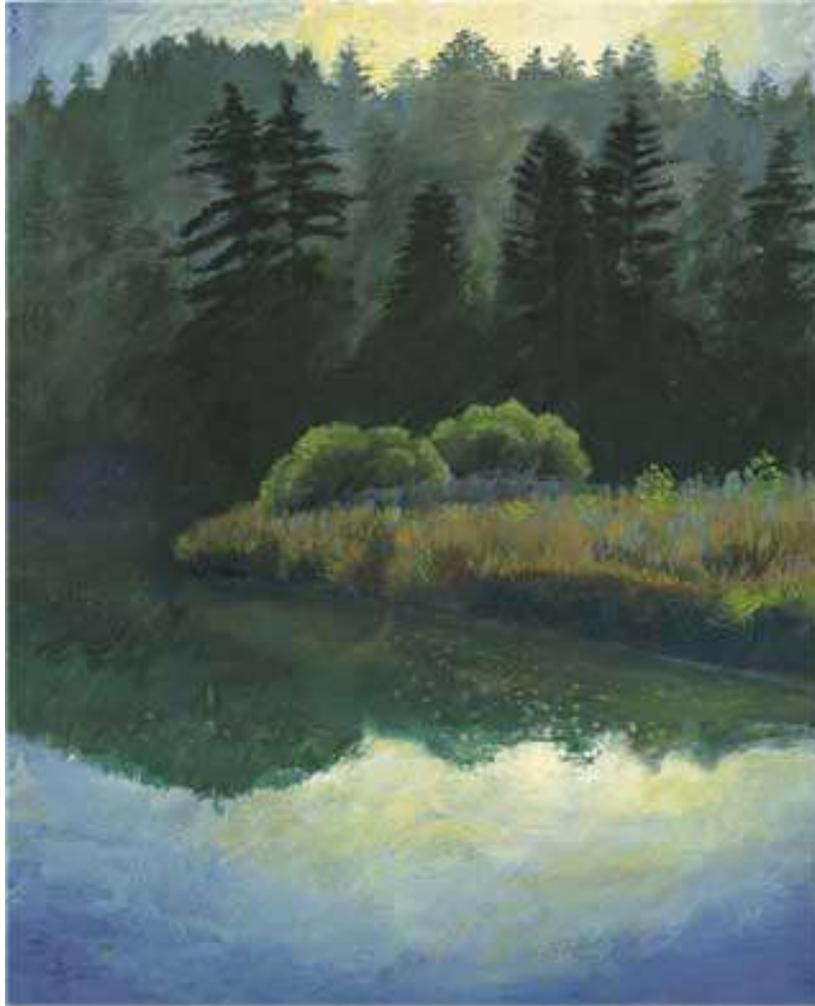
I moved the hornet so it was closer to the nest.



Egret at Limantour

This one I made up, out of works presented at the beginning of this page.





I made this originally one site with a patch of grass on the lower left corner but in later years that became smaller and smaller ,until I look it out all together. It is better without it. This is where Lagunitas Creek turns and goes to Tomales Bay where, some miles down, it disappears or becomes a part of the Pacific Ocean. When I did this I was doing a study of the bank of earth and vegetation in the sunlight that came through the Pines and Firs on the hill above it. But it is not just that, though that is quite a lot. I see it as a portrait of what I love in light and water.

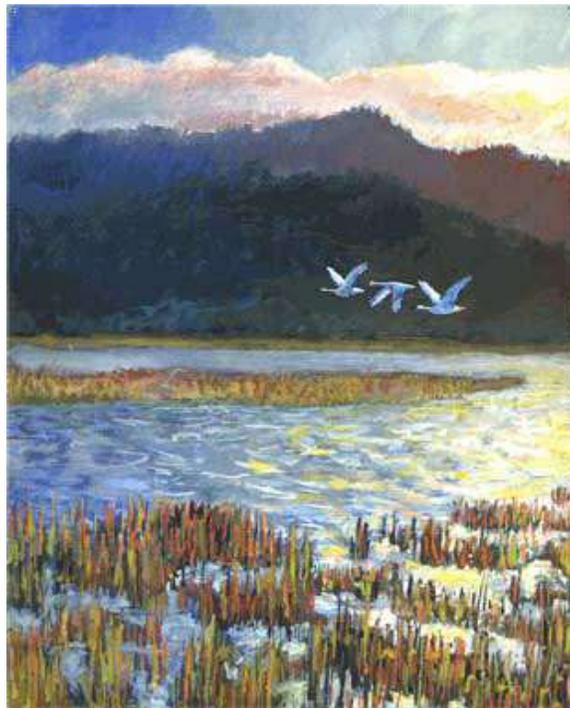
What do I love in light and water? It is partly the clarity of both of them, though there is some obscuring mist in this one. It is partly the immersion experience of water itself, as well as, more thinly, the air. Jumping into water is certainly one of the most amazing experiences in life. It is not merely the separation one feels from the world around one as one jumps in, but the sudden change, the awareness one has of one's own body being suddenly surrounded by water. It is partly the healthiness of that, but more than that,

the immersion in the way the water holds light and light spreads around one in a sort of nimbus or aura of liquidity. Yes, it is partly this.

But this is not what the painting is directly about. I saw a sea lion swimming here. I saw the bioluminescent fish here. These are implied for me in the painting though probably not implied for others, as others have not seen this.

I did a painting of sea lions at the top of this page.

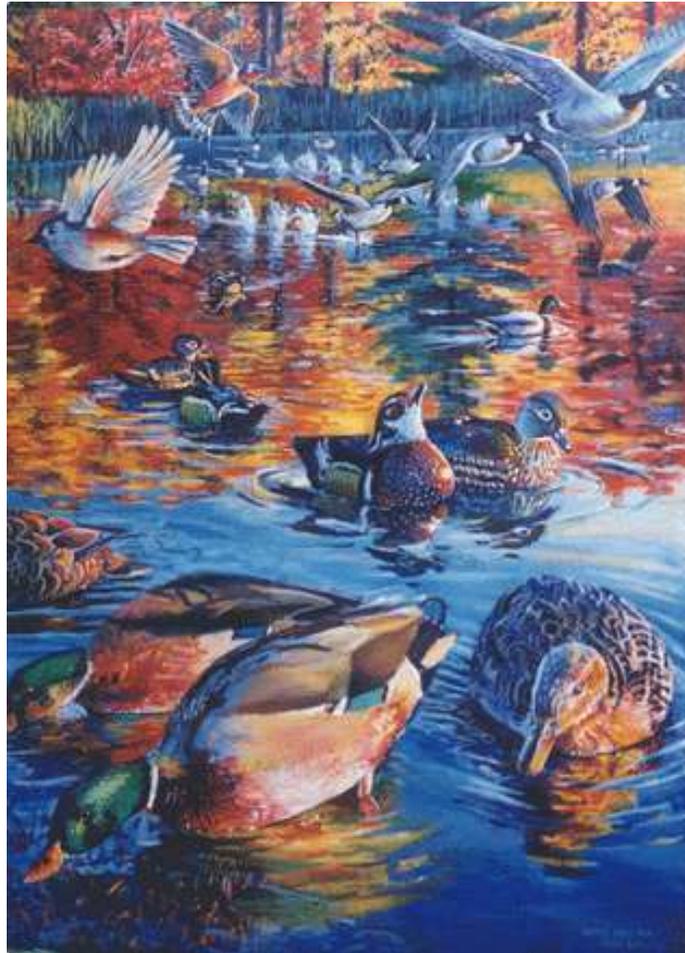
I did that because their form, in itself, implies the existence of water, as the form of a duck implies the existence of air. Any kind of duck, or goose, or swan.



I could perhaps explain my fascination with water as part of being a swimmer early on. But since I willingly and even happily gave it up after I won second place in New Jersey when I was 12, this is an unlikely hypothesis. I saw a Praying Mantis in my shoe and knew at last my swimming career was over. I had wanted to lose and remember looking at the boy who won and deciding I wished to lose. So swimming is not what my fascination with water is about. I was not obsessed with winning. I could have cared less about it. There was someone I knew who was obsessed with it, and he, consumed with a desire to win against me in particular, threw a padlock at me from across the street and

hit me on the forehead. I still have the bump from it. Winning is not a smart way to live.

My fascination with water is about life, I think, water as the origin of life. I have always loved the rain and the sea. I remember running and exulting in a heavy rain when I was a kid. I remember how happy I was to finally be at sea on the Great Lakes. Water is part of me, it is part of my life and the lives of those I love. This is not to say that there are not other things that are equal to water in my mind. There are. I love stars, clouds, wildflowers, sunlight, moonlight, birds, animals, and many other things. This is almost a description of the categories that are presented in this blog, or on this site,



This is the largest work that I have done, probably. I am happy with the bottom half of it, the top has virtues but has a lot of faults too. I mean it is good up to and even above the Tufted Titmouse. The Canada Geese taking off is OK and the individual birds are good but the line of the Cattails is wrong and the White Pine does not quite work. Can this be fixed? Perhaps. Not now, but maybe down the way I will work on it some more.

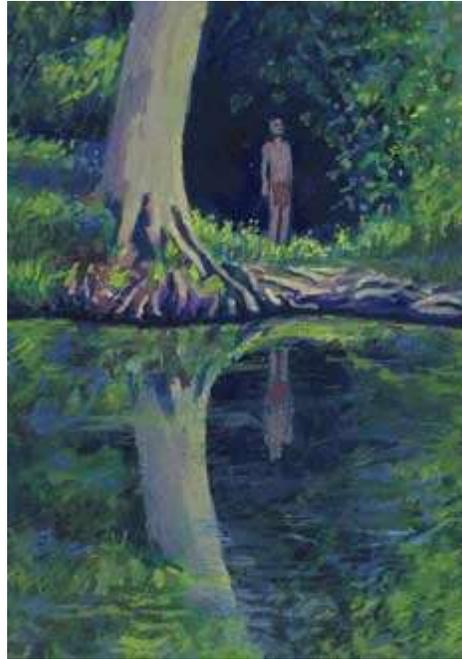


These two paintings are about a bird or birds at the place where the waves stop and the beach becomes less water and more land. The top one is far more strongly drawn. The bottom one is far softer. The top one is a seagull and the bottom one are four Sandpipers,





Heart's Desire Beach



This is a fantasy work, done in Point Reyes, in 1989, probably, of a young Miwok boy singing by a creek side to a young woman he loves, who, of course, is not present. It is a romantic image. The water plays a mirror role, helping to both double and isolate the young man's emotion in one place.



I've never put his one online before. It shows a sort of panorama of Lake Erie. This was a park but then was sold off in an act of government corruption to some wealthy house builders. In the early 1980s, when this was done, I lived near there. It was a great place. Now it is largely gone.

