

# ARTS REVIEW

Wilmette Arts Guild... to inform, stimulate, inspire

Spring 2021



Elijah Pierce - Woodcarver (Story on p. 24-25)

*The Place of My Birth*



# Waiting for Scribo

by Everett Campbell



Ginsberg-Kerouac-Curso

Back in the 1960s a bunch of us at the University of New Mexico would get together and talk about books. We all had favorites but were quite aware of the whole canon of modern writers. Names like Faulkner, Hemmingway, Joyce, etc. Somehow, we all sort of identified with them, like we too were writers, not exactly published and recognized but somehow members of the tribe. We were well aware of how many different writers were out there. The big names were those who had a distinctive style, had a recognizable voice. By now most of the main twentieth century novelists were well known. We kept wondering who would emerge as the next big shot in the writing



Kerouac holds court

world. Somehow nothing looked too impressive so we would talk about the next hot shot writer as "Scribo". A takeoff on the Becket play *Waiting for Godot*; like where is this new literary star? The pen name Scribo was a way of keeping the slot open, just waiting for some new voice to fill it in. Now there were lots of new books out every year but no one author had a particularly original style, a voice, a way to distinguish that writing from whatever else was out there. We waited. It was just a matter of time before we could all

take notice of some new star, someone to emulate. The last real candidate was Lawrence Durrell. His four volume *Alexandria Quartet* was making waves. The *Atlantic Monthly* gave a rave review of the work. We all talked about it, thought maybe he would be the next Scribo. Somehow, he didn't hold up over time. Durrell kept writing but never achieved that all role of godfather to the next generation of writers.

There were other potential candidates such as Samuel Becket who was famous for the 1954 play *"Waiting for Godot"*. He wrote several novels such as *"Molloy"* and *"Malone Dies"* but it was mainly in the voice of a depressed man who had been through the mill and finally given up. Total alienation and despair don't make for the kind of voice a new generation wants to emulate. In 1969 he was awarded the Nobel prize for literature but that said more about the prize committee than his importance as a new voice.

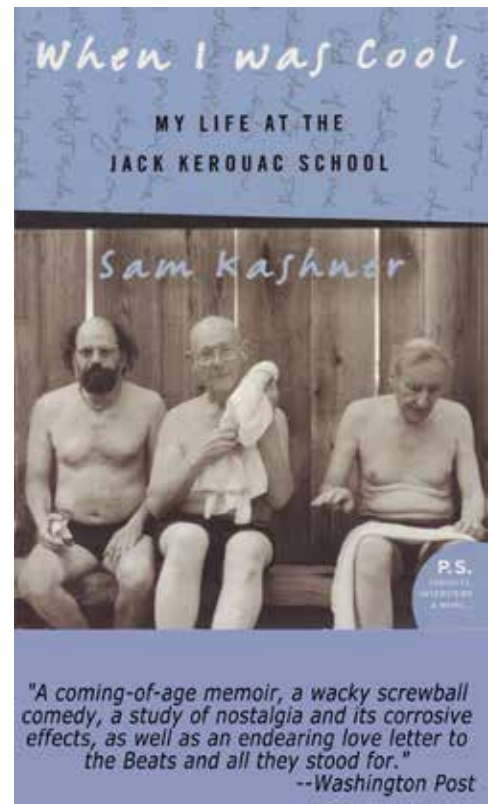
There were indeed lots of writers coming along but none had a

distinctive voice. Yes, voice. Like when you read a paragraph it would jump out at you, this is "Hemingway" or whoever. One tip about knowing that a voice is original is that people can parody it-----imitate your writing in an exaggerated way. But to do that there has to be something to exaggerate. When all you do is tell some contrived story with the usual combination of plot, description and endings-well it may sell but it doesn't make young wannabes try to write like you do. So how to describe that all important feature, the voice. It is usually not something easy to explain but you know it when you hear it. In a way that is like a pop singer who bursts onto the horizon as a new star. Take Elvis, he was a true original in the early fifties at the beginning of the rock and roll era. Soon everyone knew who it was as he sang. Others imitated him but that only enhanced his status. Later, and with a very different voice Bob Dylan created a new style, no one else sounded like Dylan. Ironically, he was awarded a Nobel prize for literature at the end of his career. So, to be an important new singer you had to have a voice that was original and to which people responded.

We wannabes back in the early '60s were looking for that new voice coming down the pike so that we could be appropriate fans and learn from it. The only difference between our waiting and those sad losers in Becket's play was the fact that in the play



Poetry Reading



# Waiting for Scribo

by Everett Campbell



**Folk Music in Greenwich Village's Washington Square Park**

there was a messenger telling the characters that "Godot isn't coming today". No one told us that Scribo wasn't coming-----we just kept reading new novels and wondering "is this Scribo?"

Well all that waiting and wondering did lead to some insights about what makes a voice and what makes it original. Looking back with hindsight one finds an interesting parallel between two fifty year periods: 1920-1970 and 1970-2020. The first period gave us some great writers like Faulkner, Sinclair Lewis, John Steinbeck, Hemmingway, JD Salinger etc. The list goes on. Very different writing styles but distinctive voices. The second period is filled with writers who seem to copy others but never develop that voice that makes the next generation want to be like them. It is often by such influence that a young writer develops a voice of his own. So what made the difference? One answer is the emergence of MFAs programs which purport to teach folks "How to Write". Now that is a worthy goal but what happens is that young writers all turn into copies of their teacher and reflect whatever influences the fellow students have on them. What that does is turn out a minimum industry standard of fiction, poetry, whatever!

It all seems to be part of whatever the program encourages. It is almost like creating by committee. These new writers usually want to get a job writing or perhaps teaching others how to write.

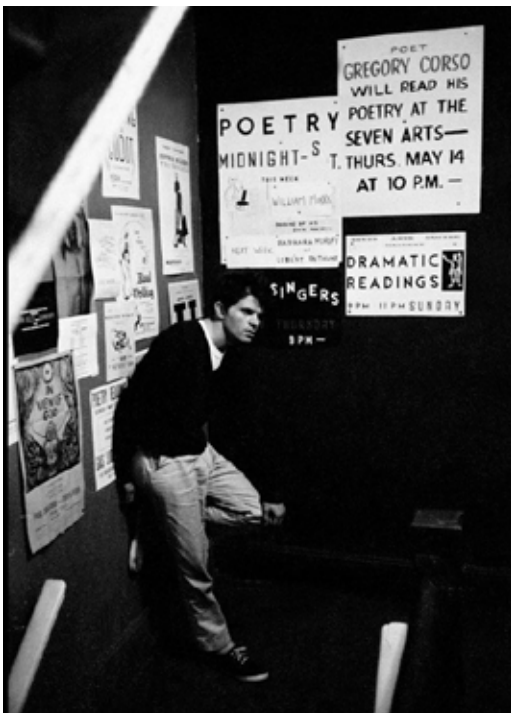
That is all very well but it makes for rather insular points of view. It is the exact opposite of the earlier generation of folks who were not trained to become writers; instead, these were folks who had day jobs: Hemingway was a journalist, Faulkner worked in a post office, Wallace Stevens was an insurance executive, William Carlos Williams was a doctor, T.S. Eliot

was a banker. Now after achieving fame many of the successful writers took temporary jobs as 'Writer in Residence' etc. but not because of any academic

certificate. In fact several of the writers from that early period had little or no college. That may explain why they had such different voices as writers. They were responding to everyday life in the world, not some local pedant teaching theory

Two cultural trends that were related to writing but important more for the images and fantasy they produced were the Star Wars movies of the 1980s and the Harry Potter books of the '90s. Each had a distinctive voice as image and message rather than verbal style. All were about the struggle between good and evil but told more by plot and character development than a writing style. Each created a legend that influenced the public.

So why haven't writers



**Gregory Corso Poetry Reading**

been successful in developing a voice that would be that kind of influence on the next generation of writers? A good question -----maybe the public is less interested in the written word; not nearly so many magazines and journals publishing new works or for that matter, any work at all. So, what should we expect, that a new Scribo will appear, full of original ways of writing, talking becoming a voice? It would seem likely to happen sooner or later but will there be a public there to greet the new Scribo? Will the business of writing become like ballroom dancing, a part of cultural history admired but left to small groups of specialists. Time will tell.



**The Beat Generation**



**Cafe Rienzi, MacDougal St. Greenwich Village**



# Waiting for Scribo

by Everett Campbell



**The Beat Generation in San Francisco**

Kashner wrote a very funny biographical account of being a student there called When I Was Cool. This institution is still going for anyone seeking formal credentials as a poet. Ginsburg did some memorable work in the 1950s then degenerated into babbling diarrhea for the next thirty years.

There was the "Black Mountain School" named for the now defunct college in North Carolina. That was mainly Charles Olson and his epigones, Creeley, Duncan and Dorn. Those particular poets were at least able to get college teaching jobs and have a following in academia. Basically, once folks realized that "anybody can do it" then everyone began doing it.

4 What better way to do it than to sign up for courses with recognized (read "published") poets? All of that led to the development of the MFAs programs in writing. Soon there were scads of official writing programs, and new magazines to show the world what poetry can be. Groupies of all sorts congregated around any one thought to be a real poet. When you go to San Francisco's North Beach you can visit the shrine of the Beat poets, City Lights bookstore and have a drink next door at Vesuvio's Bar—well known watering hole for Kerouac and his gang.

Another group is the New York School, headed most famously by John Ashbery. These are poets writing in and around New York. Specifically Ashbery, Koch, Schuyler and O'Hara. One major critic, John Simon, reviewing their combined output put it succinctly saying that their combined efforts have not produced a single poem of importance. That is perhaps why none of them ever developed a voice that inspired new writers.



**San Francisco in the 1950's Beatnik Era**

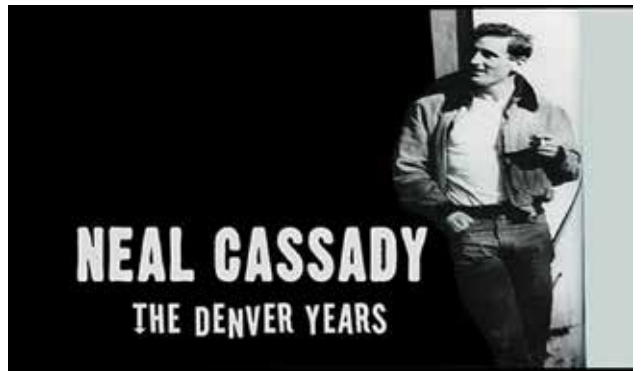
So, all that is a view of prose, including essays and short fiction as well as the novel. Yes, there were mega sales of books, especially thrillers of Ian Fleming. But that is a case in point; when your work becomes identified with the action of a main character like James Bond, it is not about writing style, it is about adventure and thrills. So lots of bestselling books have appeared but without development of that magical quality, a new voice.

What about poetry?

That is a great place for a new voice to emerge. From 1920 on we found Wallace Stevens, T.S. Eliot and William Carlos Williams. No work so impressive from the latter part of the twentieth century. Rather than new voices we have exponents of various schools of poetry such as the Beats led by Allen Ginsberg who even founded a college of poetry in Boulder, "The Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics". Sam



**Beat Generation artists in front of City Lights Bookstore San Francisco, CA**



So, what we find

is a variety of "schools" or at least coterries of self-absorbed yearners to be recognized but never producing the next voice. Not that they haven't tried. There are loads of little magazines delivering the output of new work. More poems in print than ever before. All that due to the proliferation of MFAs programs with in house magazines for the teachers to trade around with each other --like "you accept one from my students and I'll take one of yours"—but these publications don't reach a wide market. Still with all that activity no one has appeared with the new voice that influences the up and coming generation of writers. At best, it is minimum industry standard.

So where is Scribo? We're still waiting.

# The Amazing Egg Carving Masterpieces of Wen Fuliang

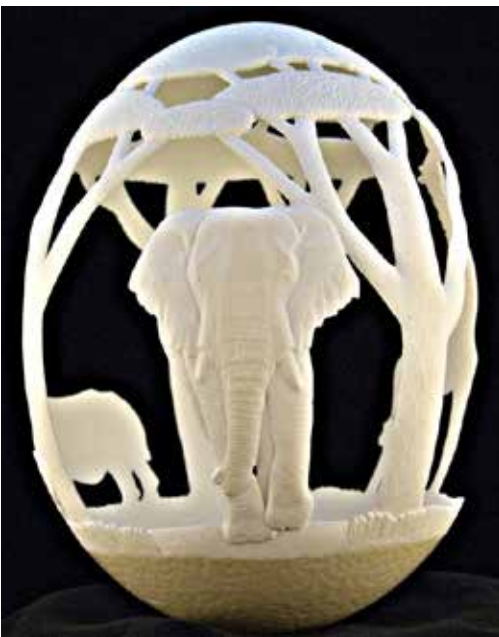


These aren't the standard Easter eggs from your childhood. These eggs are delicate works of art that are painstakingly carved by Chinese artist Wen Fuliang. For ten years now, Wen Fuliang has been using a fine diamond bit on a rotary tool to carve hollow chicken and goose eggs with stunningly intricate detail.



First, Fuliang carefully drains the yolk through a syringe, then sketches his design with a pencil. Saying that this is when things get tricky would be an understatement. Fuliang must gently hold the egg with one hand while using the rotary tool to slowly carve out the egg shell design.

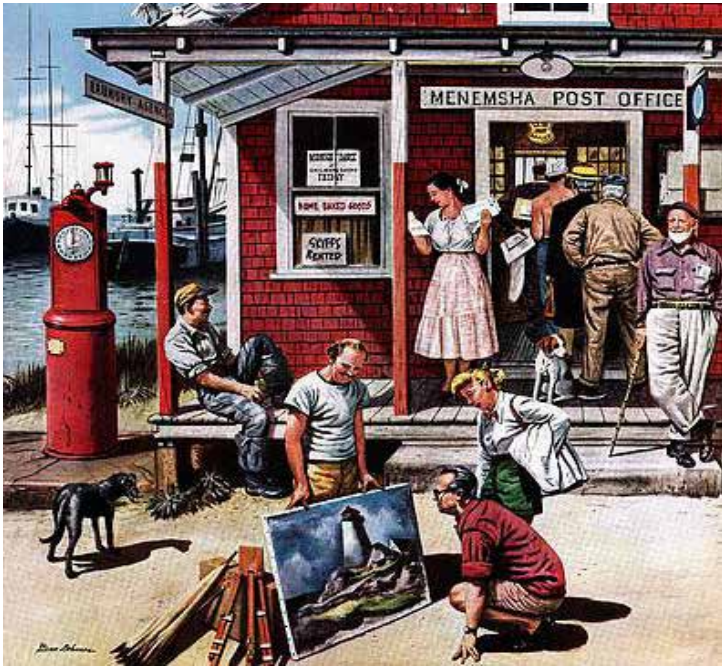
As you can imagine, it's a slow and time consuming process, but great art often takes time and Fuliang's eggs are nothing short of incredible.





# ART, the Ultimate Balm: Post Office Art for 20<sup>th</sup> Century Internet and Zoom for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

by Julie Ressler



Our eyes lead us on pathways to joy or depression, health or illness. Recovery is a change of point of view, not necessarily a change in actuality. How do you see it? What's your point of view? Loneliness and despair often come from not seeing a different way or realizing that a true and more universal context of what you are seeing may be quite different than you expected. We have hopefully passed through one of those great historic times and can see the other side.

- 6 In the 1930s and 1940s the nation was passing through and recovering from the Great Depression. Individually there were experiences that would mold lives forever... Father's desperation at not providing for his family. My mother when she was nine lost her savings account of 11 cents. She never trusted banks again and forever kept a stash of cash here and there. Everyone's parents or grandparents have these vivid recollections of this terribly difficult time. To provide perspective, you should write them down. The New Deal's way of helping people's recovery into optimism was through a series of visually exciting, inspiring, historical murals in the United States Post Offices of the nation. Every town had a Post Office. This is where people went for the "news" from each other or far away. The Post Office was a place where you talked to your neighbors and exchanged "views" on the state of your world. The Post Office was the bulwark against isolation and despair.

In the recent pandemic, artists and writers did very well creatively. We don't talk about this because of those that we lost and



our friends' losses. However, many say quietly, they came to treasure their extended solitude with their creative unconscious. Many say that they will continue to "Eliminate the noise." that used to be in their lives. I was able to grow into other media that I had never had the time to try. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the greatest comfort for this "aloneness" (not necessarily loneliness) was the internet and its connections to the entire world. Sitting at our computers in Vermont or Chicago, Boise or Houston, we could reach out to our soon to be friends all over the world. We could see and talk to everyone! At Christmas, listening to Andrea Bocelli sing "Amazing Grace" all alone, a capella, in Milan Cathedral was so moving! Through Zoom, I joined friends from California and together we met friends in Jerusalem for the start of 2021! The sights and

architecture of this oldest of old cities was such a psychological boost to living through anything.

The great and nearly great offered many webinars and courses. Many of them free. No one wanted to be accused of taking advantage of this frightening time. There was a wonderful attitude of "We are all in this together...How can I help you?"

To name just a few of the best programs, The Frick Museum, The Morgan Library, The Barnes Foundation, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, The Louvre, Musee D'Orsay, The Prado and so many others provided outstanding programs, lectures and concerts of the very highest quality. Many local organizations held regular ZOOM meetings. In the Pandemic 2020, isolated and in quarantine, we were not alone!



# ART, the Ultimate Balm: Post Office Art for 20<sup>th</sup> Century Internet and Zoom for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

by Julie Ressler





## Howard Frank Printing Photos on Aluminum



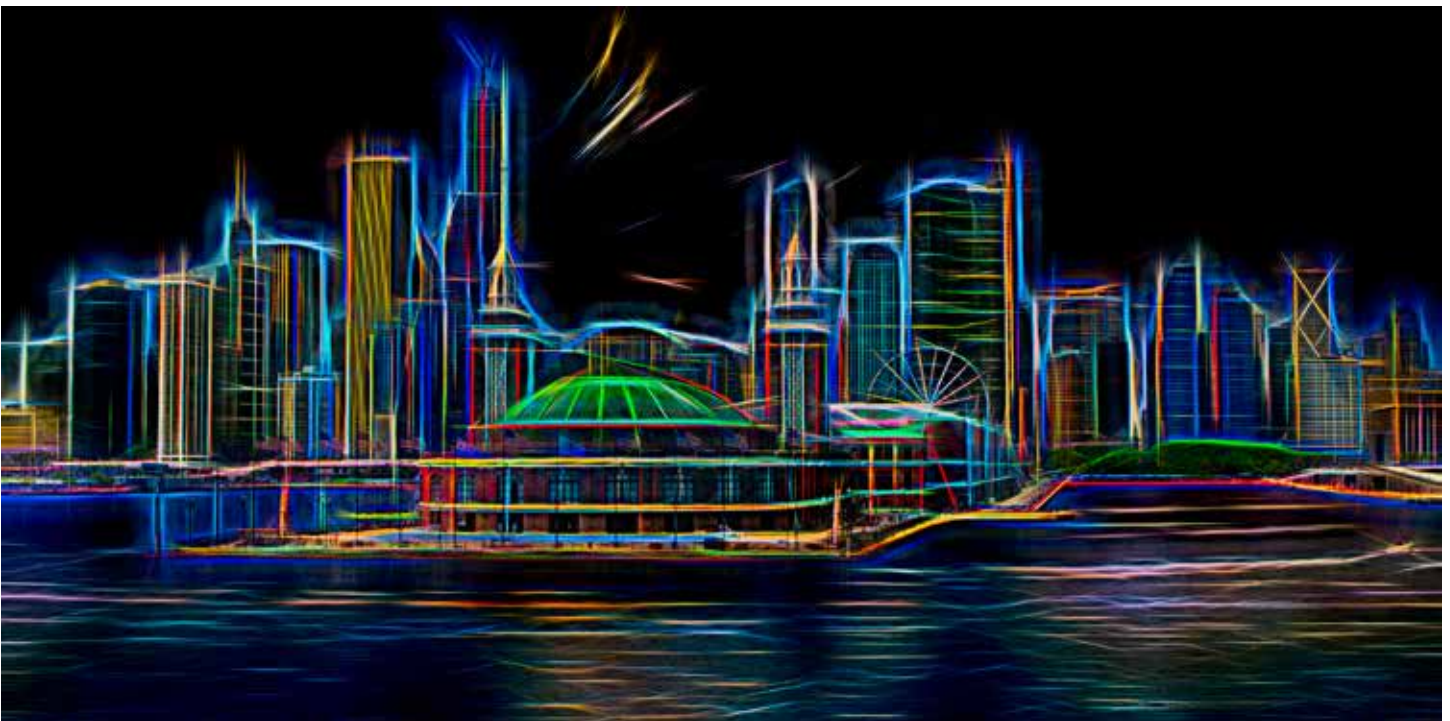
WAG's Howard Frank is an award winning photographer from Chicago who is active with several camera clubs and teaches photography at Northwestern University's Adult Continuing Education Program.

Photographs taken around Chicagoland and processed with a filter from Topaz Studio 2. They are then printed on aluminum.

Chicago View is created by combining 6 images taken hand held off a moving boat in Lake Michigan to create a sweeping view of downtown Chicago. The size of this image is 20" x 60".

The bean is an HDR image, combining 3 different exposures into one. It is 20" x 30"

Navy Pier is also an HDR image and is 20" x 40"





# Paco Posadas Zamitiz

by Julie Ressler



Putti with Apples

Early in the morning of September 19, 1966 this fine man was born. The seventh child of Alberto Posadas Díaz and Irene Zamitiz Posadas. Covid 19 took him at the end of February, 2021.

Paco was completely devoted to his art. He knew even as a small boy that he only wanted to paint, draw and work with his hands. This is where he "LIVED." This was a fabulous frustration to his father who thought that being a lawyer would provide him with a better, more secure life.. Following the time-old-ever-repeating artist's pattern, Paco followed his nature rather than conventional wisdom.

He found work in churches that needed refurbishing. He found careful teachers in the workmen and artists. He learned carving. He learned masonry from Rafael Bonilla Cortéz. He learned how to paint and draw from Natalia Segura de Manzano who gave him his first lessons. Now his work is everywhere: restaurants, galleries, murals and museums.

Paco left us marvelous work that few others had the skill or patience to accomplish. We are so glad he followed his dream.



Paco preparing a new section in the Callejón



Paco and Maria del Carmen Olvera Trejo  
in front of a completed section of the Callejón in Zacatlán, Mexico.



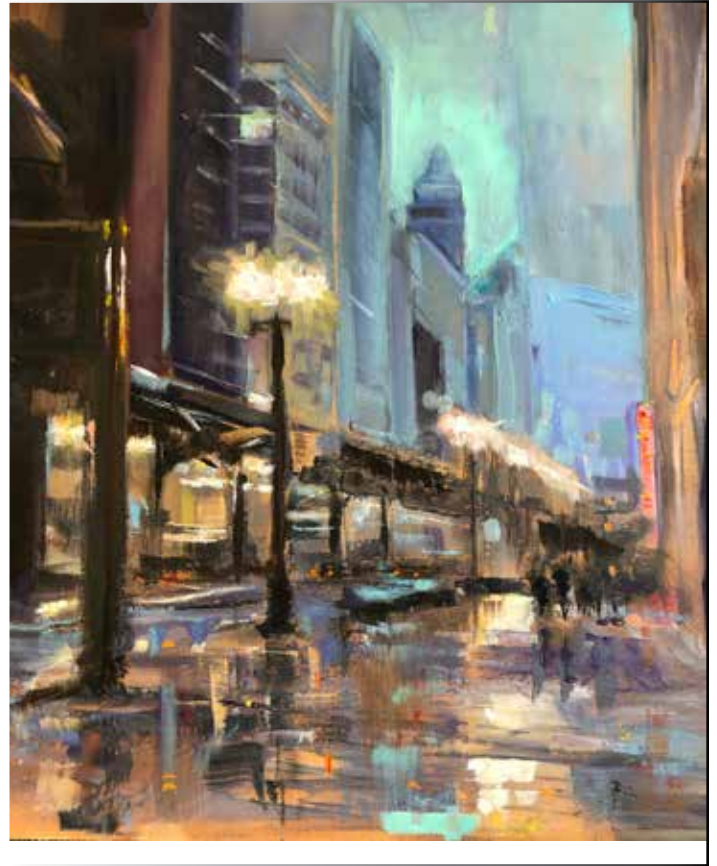
Paco refurbishing the Cathedral



Photos by Julie Ressler, Mary Carmen Olvera Trejo and George Olney



## Joseph Taylor Compleat Artist



Joseph Taylor is a painter, printmaker, and freelance illustrator specializing in digital vector art. He has had a studio in Evanston, Illinois for over 25 years. Clients include United Airlines, McDonalds, Mattel, Hasbro, Snapple, Welch's, Kraft, and others.





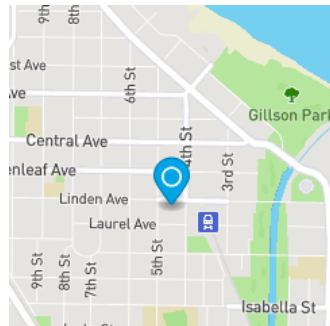
## Joseph Taylor Images of Chicago

"To keep fresh, you have to change, experiment and try lots of different things, fearlessly." I rediscovered the energy of our city, Chicago, when I began teaching at the Old Town Triangle Association. Suddenly what I thought had been the mundane, same old, same old became new to me! My brush had vitality! I hope you will agree these oils on panels have a life of their own."

- Joseph Taylor

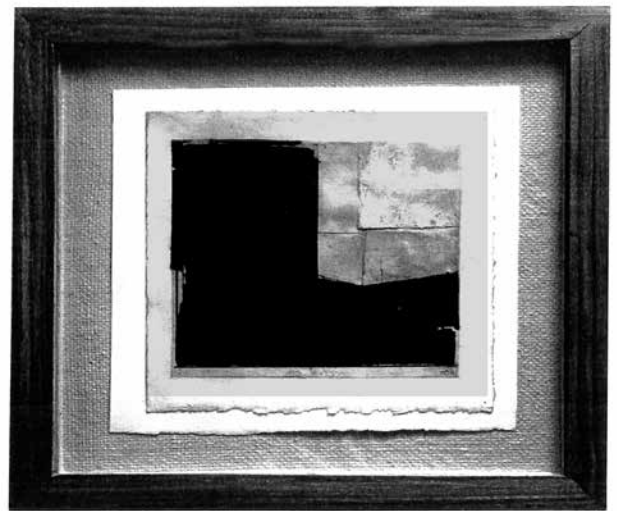






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**Julie Ressler · Boruch Lev · Barbara Roseman**



## LOOKING FOR ARTWORK BY **Terry Conway**

Conway taught at UNM in the 60's and then was an independent artist in Albuquerque in the 70's and 80's. His work was published in Artspace magazine and he was represented by the Hoshour Gallery in Albuquerque.

Contact New Mexico Art Search at  
[duplessis4@aol.com](mailto:duplessis4@aol.com)

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Mallinckrodt Community Center  
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(847) 256-9623

**Charlotte Kaplan**  
at  
**Mallinckrodt Center**

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Wilmette, IL

(847) 256-9623



Computers for Mountainair, New Mexico  
How can I help???

Mountainair is a town in the Albuquerque, NM area founded in 1902. Its 2010 population was 928. Mountainair Library needs computers. Can you help?



Contact WAG's Linda Carroll: [lm53carroll@gmail.com](mailto:lm53carroll@gmail.com)

## **The Wilmette Arts Guild's Arts Review**

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Detail of a mural from an Eastern Han tomb (25 – 220 AD) at Zhucun, Luoyang, Henan province.  
The painting utilizes Han purple and Han blue pigment

## **Han Purple: a 2,800-year-old artificial pigment That quantum physicists are trying to understand.**

by April Holloway for [www.ancient-origins.net](http://www.ancient-origins.net) (\*Highly Recommended\*)

Han purple is an artificial pigment created by the Chinese over 2,500 years ago, which was used in wall paintings and to decorate the famous terracotta warriors, as well as ceramics, metal ware, and jewelry. The pigment is a technological wonder, made through a complex process of grinding up raw materials in precise proportions and heating to incredible temperatures. So intricate was the process, that it was not reconstructed again until 1992, when chemists were finally able to identify its composition. But this was just the beginning. According to a news report on [io9.com](http://io9.com), research since then has discovered amazing properties of Han purple, including the ability to emit powerful rays of light in the near-infrared range, as well as being able to collapse three dimensions down to two under the right conditions.

The production of Han purple, otherwise known as Chinese purple, dates back as far as 800 BC, however it appears that it was not used in art until the Qin and Han dynasties (221 BC – 220 AD), when it was applied to the world famous terracotta warriors, as well as ceramics and other items.

“Prior to the nineteenth century, when modern production methods made synthetic pigments common, there were only hugely expensive purple dyes, a couple of uncommon purplish minerals, and mixtures of red and blue, but no true purple pigment – except during a few hundred years in ancient China,” writes Samir S. Patel in ‘Purple Reign: How ancient Chinese chemists added color to the Emperor’s army’.

For an unknown reason, Han purple disappeared entirely from use after 220 AD, and was never seen again until its rediscovery by modern chemists in the 1990s.



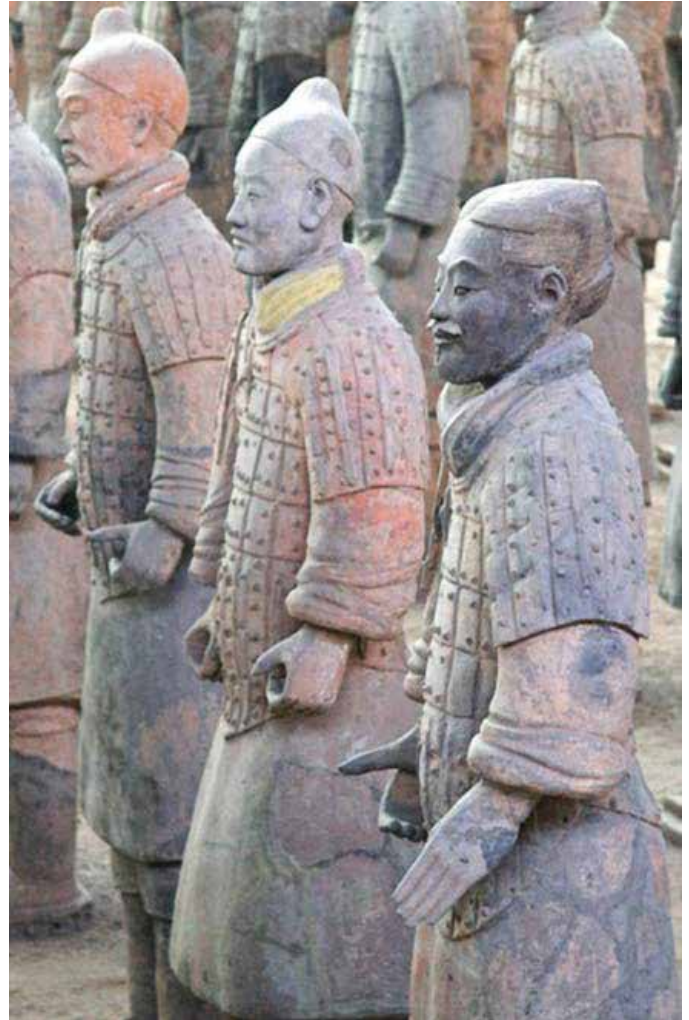
# Han Purple

## The Synthesis of Han Purple

Unlike natural dyes, such as Tyrian purple (from c. 1500 BC), which are organic compounds and typically made from plants or animals, like the murex snail, Han purple was a synthetic pigment made from inorganic materials.

Only two other man-made blue or purple pigments are known to have existed in the ancient world – Maya blue (from c. 800 AD), made from a heated mixture of indigo and white clay, and Egyptian blue, which was used throughout the Mediterranean and the Near and Middle East from 3,600 BC to the end of the Roman Empire. [Read similar: Egyptian Blue – The Oldest Known Artificial Pigment ].

Scientist Elisabeth FitzHugh, a conservator at the Smithsonian, was the first to identify the complex synthetic compound that makes up Han purple – barium copper silicate, a compound that differs from Egyptian blue only through its use of barium instead of calcium. The similarities between Han purple and Egyptian blue led some early researchers to conclude that the Chinese may have learned to make the pigment from the Egyptians. However, this theory has been largely discounted as Egyptian blue was not found further East than Persia.



Traces of han purple can still be seen on many of the terracotta warriors.

“There is no clear reason why the Chinese, if they had learned the Egyptian formula, would have replaced calcium with barium, which necessitates increasing the firing temperature by 100 degrees or more,” writes Patel.

So how exactly did the Chinese stumble upon the intricate formula to make Han purple, which involved combining silica (sand) with copper and barium in precise proportions and heating to about 850-1000 °C? A team of Stanford physicists published a paper in the Journal of Archaeological Science ( summary here ), which proposes that Han purple was a by-product of the glass-making process, as both glass and the purple pigment contain silica and barium. Io9.com writes that barium makes glass shinier and cloudier, which means this pigment could be the work of early alchemists trying to synthesize white jade.



Traces of han purple can still be seen on many of the terracotta warriors.



# Han Purple

## Fluorescent properties

Since its composition was first discovered, scientists have continued to investigate this unique pigment. Researchers at the British Museum discovered that, when exposed to a simple LED flashlight, Han purple emits powerful rays of light in the near-infrared range. According to their study, published in the journal *Analytical and Bioanalytical Chemistry*, the Han purple pigments show up with startling clarity under the right conditions, meaning that even faint traces of the color, which are invisible to the naked eye, can be seen with infrared sensors.

## Han Purple and the collapsing of dimensions

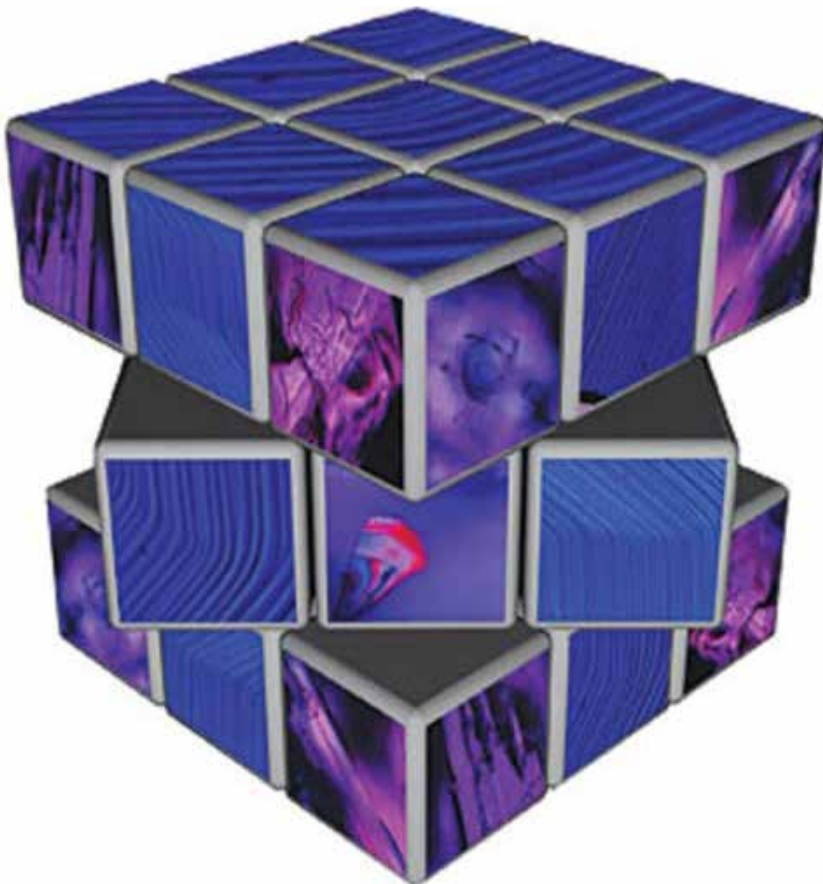
The fluorescent properties of Han purple were not the only surprise. Quantum physicists from Stanford, Los Alamos National Laboratory and the Institute for Solid State Physics (University of Tokyo) reported that when Han purple is exposed to extreme cold and a high magnetic field, the chemical structure of the pigment enters a new state called the quantum critical point, in which three-dimensional material 'loses' a dimension.

"We have shown, for the first time, that the collective behavior in a bulk three-dimensional material can actually occur in just two dimensions," Ian Fisher, an assistant professor of applied physics at Stanford said in the Stanford Report. "Low dimensionality is a key ingredient in many exotic theories that purport to account for various poorly understood phenomena, including high-temperature superconductivity, but until now there were no clear examples of 'dimensional reduction' in real materials."

The scientists have proposed that this effect is due to the fact that the components of barium copper silicate are arranged like layers of tiles, so they don't stack up neatly. Each layers' tiles are slightly out of sync with the layer below them. This may frustrate the wave and force it to go two dimensional.

The researchers have said the discovery may help understand the required properties of new materials, including more exotic superconductors.

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Fisher said, "Han Purple was first synthesized over 2500 years ago, but we have only recently discovered how exotic its magnetic behavior is. It makes you wonder what other materials are out there that we haven't yet even begun to explore."

Featured image: Detail of a mural from an Eastern Han tomb (25 – 220 AD) at Zhucun, Luoyang, Henan province. The painting utilizes Han purple and Han blue pigment ( Wikipedia).

By April Holloway

**The strange collapsing of dimensions may be due to the mismatched layers of its components. (John D. Griffin, Michael W. Davidson, Sara Vetteth and Suchitra E. Sebastian**



# Paintings Inspired by Willa Cather's Art and Life

by Karen H. Vierendeel



Young Willa Cather



Willa Cather by Karen H. Vierendeel



Willa Cather by Leon Bakst



1981 American Arts Medal

In the 1970s, I began work on a Ph.D. in English literature at the University of Chicago. As I searched for a dissertation topic, James E. Miller, one of my English professors, suggested I read Willa Cather. I was unfamiliar with her work. But once I began to read her, I was hooked. The more I immersed myself in her novels and short stories and read about her life, the more fascinated I became with her strong women characters, portrayal of women artists, and her abiding love of women.

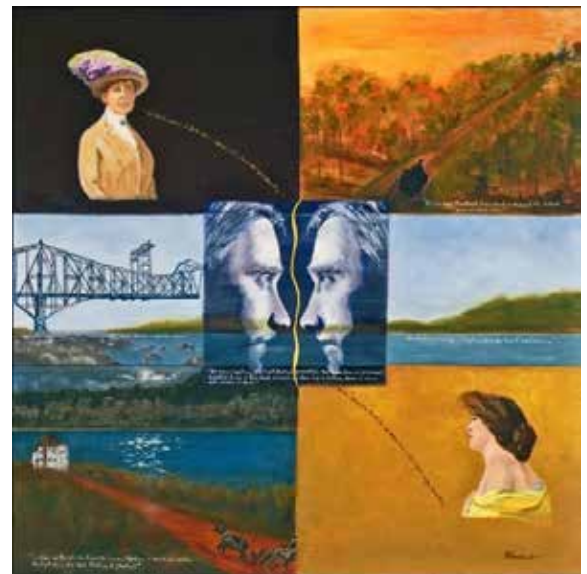
16 More than four and half decades later in September 2017, I read Alex Ross's "A Walk in Willa Cather's Prairie" in The New Yorker, and my earlier musings about painting the more evocative images in Cather's fiction began to percolate. evocative and mused about painting some of them when I reread her novels. Ross's article was the impetus for this series of paintings inspired by her work.

I reread all Cather's novels in the order of their publication and starting painting. After I had five paintings done, I wrote The National Willa Cather Center (NWCC), proposing a show to share my work with others who value Cather's art. I am grateful to Ashley Olson, NWCC's Executive Director, who grasped my idea's significance and offered me a solo show. The 17 paintings I created represent my impressions of eleven of Cather's novels and short stories; they will be exhibited at the Center in Red Cloud, Nebraska, May 1 through June 30, 2021, coinciding with NWCC's 66th Annual Spring Conference June 3-5th.

The first eponymous painting in my Willa Cather series depicts the catastrophic collapse of Bartley Alexander's bridge. The second, "Fault Line," is intended to show Alexander's divided self with scenes from the novel showing the forces tugging at him.



Alexander's Bridge



Fault Line



# Paintings Inspired by Willa Cather's Art and Life

by Karen H. Vierneisel



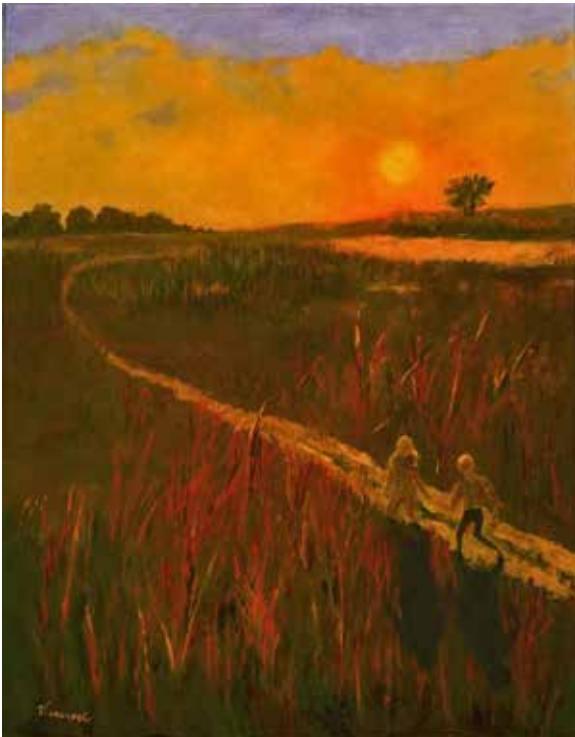
**The White Mullberry Tree**

"The White Mulberry Tree" is inspired by the chapter in O Pioneers! after which it is named. The small figures of young lovers, Maria and Eric, clutching each other in death under the tree are set against the vast beauty of the American prairie which is larger, more permanent than their passion and loss. This elegiac tone in Cather's work appeals to my own sensibility.

"The Song of the Lark," bearing the name of her novel, depicts the moment Thea Kronborg, Cather's protagonist, first sees Jules Breton's painting with the same title. Thea stands in the gallery at the Art Institute of Chicago and is awakened to her yearning, artist self. My painting is a realistic representation of the gallery as it appeared in the 1890s. I worked with Bart Ryckbosch, the Museum's Institutional Archivist, to determine the appearance of the gallery when Cather first saw the Breton painting.



**The Song of the Lark**



**Copper Grasses**

Here the narrator recalls his boyhood past running in the prairie with Antonia as the setting sun turns the grasses a copper color and casts long, dark shadows behind them. Cather describes the transcendent moment: "As far as we could see, the miles of copper-red grass were drenched in sunlight that was stronger and fiercer than at any other time of day. . . . The whole prairie was like the bush that burned with fire and was not consumed."

The next painting is based on "Coming Aphrodite!" from Youth and the Bright Medusa; it depicts the scene that Don Hedger sees as he peers through the knothole in the wain-scotting of his closet: "in a pool of sunlight, stood his new neighbour, wholly unclad, doing exercises of some sort before a long gilt mirror. . . . [he] crouch[ed] on his knees, staring at the gold shower which poured in through the west windows, at the lake of gold sleeping on the faded Turkish carpet. The spot was enchanted."



**Golden Goddess**



# Paintings Inspired by Willa Cather's Art and Life

by Karen H. Vierneisel



**Claude's Reverie**

Based on One of Ours, "Claude's Reverie" shows Claude Wheeler's reverie in the church of St. Ouen in Rouen, France. As he walks quietly into the church, empty but for a few women in quiet prayer, he turns to see the rose window at the very moment the church bell begins to peal. He grabs a straw chair and sits down to reflect on life for a brief time before being killed in the First World War.

The Professor's House is the story of Godfrey St. Peter, a middle-aged scholar struggling with unhappiness. In this painting, "Attic Sanctuary," the professor is staring out the window of his study at "... a long, blue, hazy smear--Lake Michigan, the island sea of his childhood." The window is an opening to



**Attic Sanctuary**



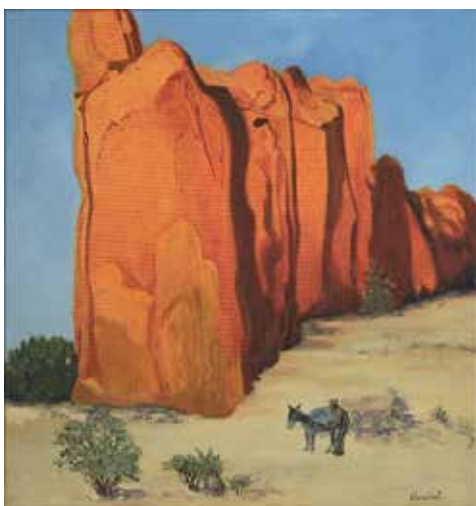
**The Island Sea of Childhood**

The second painting is "The Island Sea of Childhood" which reveals the professor's loving memory of a sandy dune at Lake Michigan.

The third painting, "Ink Black Rock," is inspired by the inset story in Cather's novel entitled "Tom Outland's Story." The tall slim canvas emphasizes the height of the mesa.



**Ink Black Rock**



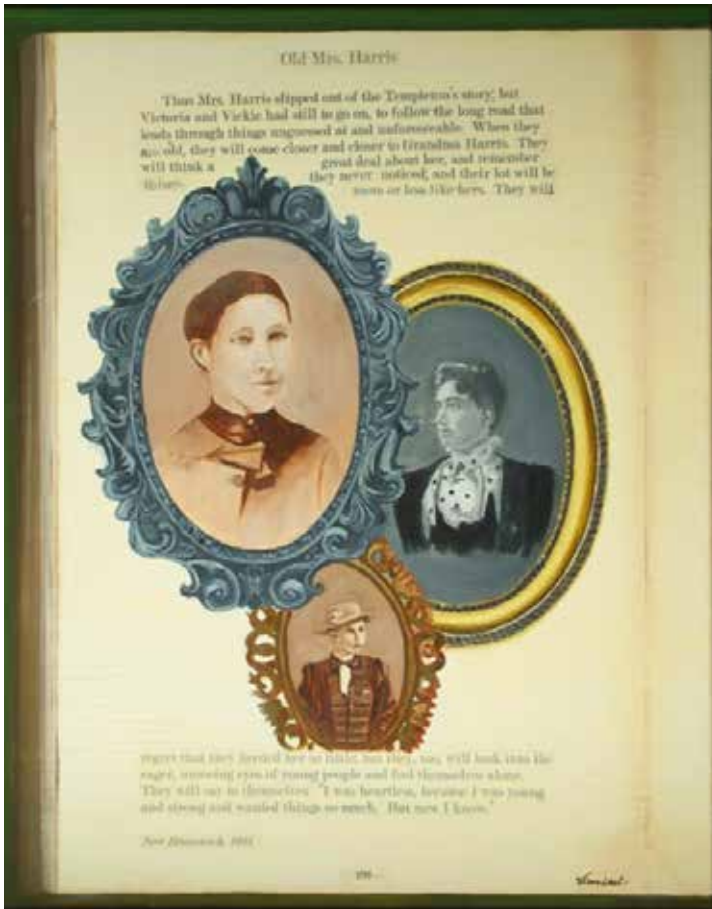
**Magnificent Mesa**

"Magnificent Mesa" depicts Father Jean Marie Latour's trip across the vast expanse of New Mexico's desert and its colossal rock mesas baked in the sun. The image itself was inspired by one of the wood etchings created by Harold Von Schmidt for the 1927 Knopf edition of Cather's Death Comes for the Archbishop.



# Paintings Inspired by Willa Cather's Art and Life

by Karen H. Vierneisel



**Old Mrs. Harris**

Published in Obscure Destinies in 1932, "Old Mrs. Harris" is one of my favorite Cather works; it is also one of her most autobiographical written from the perspective of advancing age and overpowering losses: her first love Isabelle McClung, her father and mother. Written at her refuge on Grand Manan Island, New Brunswick, this novella explores her belief that "... human relationships are the tragic necessity of human life; they can never be wholly satisfactory, that every ego is half the time greedily seeking them, and half the time pulling away from them." She wrote it after the long agonizing death of her mother.



**The Red Scarf**

The Story "Lucy Gayheart" inspired "The Red Scarf" which captures the winter tragedy of the young girl's drowning. The cold gray sky, the willow bushes, the snow-covered land, and the ice-covered river reveal the somber mood of the scene; the shoes and boots and red scarf are all that remains of the vibrant, young woman whose dreams were lost in watery graves. Another Cather novel about an aspiring artist, this story is darker reflecting a thwarted artist and Cather's own deepening disillusion with life.



**The Old Mill**

"The Old Mill" is inspired by Cather's final novel, "Sapphira and the Slave Girl." It had been teasing her imagination for years--a story of an event she had witnessed as a five-year-old girl: the reunion of a mother who was a slave for a white Virginia family and her daughter who had escaped to freedom in Canada. This painting captures her memories of her Back Creek, Virginia home.



# Paintings Inspired by Willa Cather's Art and Life

by Karen H. Vierneisel



**Two Friends**

"Two Friends," is based on a scrapbook photo of Cather and Dorothy Canfield Fisher at Dieppe, France, 1902.

This painting captures my impressions of the tallgrass prairie and big sky. I had hoped to get to Red Cloud to paint the prairie en plein air but the COVID plague precluded travel in 2020.

The portrait of Willa Cather on the first page of this article is based on her 1920 passport photograph. According to her niece Helen Southwick, it was Cather's favorite photograph of herself.



**Tall Grasses**

My life has come full circle, and with the years, my understanding of Cather's gift has deepened. In re-reading Willa Cather on Writing, I was struck by the words of Stephen Tennant. In his preface to the work, he observed:

"... what attaches us to a writer we admire is a profound sense of affinity, of resemblance to ourselves also a sharing of our dilemmas and predicaments. The great writer assuages and palliates some unanalyzable loneliness that lies deep within each human soul." I believe this explains my appreciation of her work.

Cather painted with words. I have taken some of her images and translated them into light and shadow because they continue to give me delight. I hope that these paintings give the viewer delight as well.

For those who are interested in Karen's sketches and the challenges posed by many of these paintings, see her 50-page monograph, Memories in Light and Shadow: Paintings Inspired by Willa Cather's Art and Life. It is available from the artist for \$45.00 plus shipping and handling. Contact Karen Vierneisel at [karens-fineart@att.net](mailto:karens-fineart@att.net) to purchase.

© Karen H. Vierneisel April 2021

***W.A.G. hopes each of you will find an author or a poet you love so much that you will perform a similar labor of love and share it with us.***

***Sorry, William Blake is taken!***



**Willa Cather keeping on...**





Susan Nitto Bennett

## Susan Nitto Bennett

W.A.G.'s "Growth as an Artist Award" Winner 2020



Emerging from the Depths



Wander



Thinking Spring



Emerging from the Depths



Shy Pink Makes an Appearance



Bright Sun on a Gray Day



Shadow Overhead



Timeless Wonder



Earth Day



Bamboo



Bright Colors on a Bright Cold Day



## Kahlil Gibran (1883-1931)

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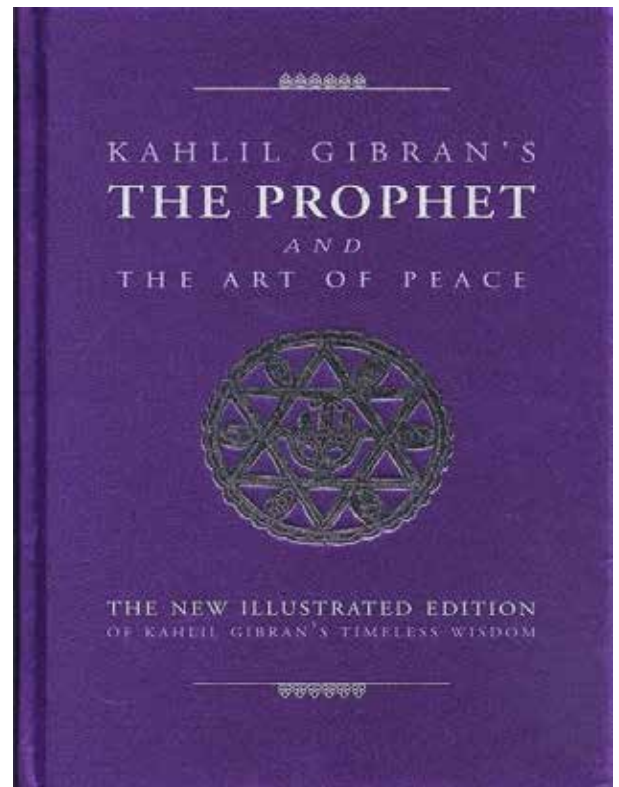
Lebanese-American Author, Philosopher, Painter, Sculptor



Kahlil Gibran self-portrait

### *On Children*

Your children are not your children.  
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.  
They come through you but not from you,  
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.  
You may give them your love but not your thoughts,  
For they have their own thoughts.  
You may house their bodies but not their souls,  
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.  
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you. For life goes not backward  
nor tarries with yesterday.  
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.  
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that  
His arrows may go swift and far.  
Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness;  
For even as he loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable.





# Quotes from Kahlil Gibran

So visual, the mind flashes.

**The deeper sorrow  
carves into your being  
the more joy  
you can contain.**



**To be able to look back  
upon ones life in  
satisfaction, is to live  
twice.**



**Forget not that the earth  
delights to feel your  
bare feet and the winds  
long to play with your  
hair.**

**Your daily life is your  
temple and your  
religion. When you  
enter into it take with  
you your all.**

**If Your Heart  
is a Volcano  
How Shall  
you expect  
Flowers to  
Bloom.**



**Keep me away from  
the wisdom which  
does not cry,  
the philosophy  
which does not  
laugh and  
the greatness  
which does not bow  
before children**



*I slept and I dreamed that  
life is all joy.  
I woke and I saw that  
life is all service.  
I served and I saw that  
Service is joy.*

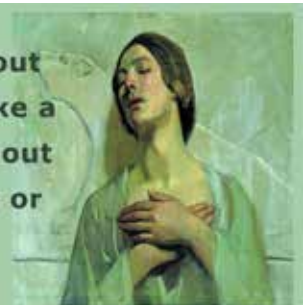


**You give but little when  
you give of your  
possessions. It is when  
you give of yourself that  
you truly give.**



**Khalil Gibran**  
Lebanese-American poet  
(1893-1931)

**Life without  
Love is like a  
Tree without  
Blossoms or  
Fruit.**



*They deem  
me mad  
because I  
will  
not sell my  
days for gold;  
and I deem  
them mad  
because  
they think  
my days have  
a price.*



**"You may forget  
with whom you laughed,  
but you will never forget  
with whom you wept.**



**It's difficult to make  
yourself speak. It's  
more difficult to  
keep silence. It's  
much more difficult  
to make yourself  
think. But the  
most difficult thing  
is to make  
yourself feel.**



**FOR TRUE WORK IS  
LOVE MADE VISIBLE.**



# Elijah Pierce (1892-1994)

Vintage Woodcarver

Elijah Pierce was born the youngest son of a former slave on a Mississippi farm on March 5, 1892. He began carving at an early age when his father gave him his first pocketknife. By age seven, Elijah Pierce began carving little wooden farm animals. Throughout his life, he continued carving animals in earnest and many were sold or given away to people who admired his work or to people he felt could benefit from it. For Pierce, these individual animal carvings each had their own story. They represented the beasts of Genesis or creatures from the folktales of Pierce's youth.

As time passed, Pierce found work as a barber and began to carve wood seriously. He eventually had his own barbershop on Long Street in Columbus, Ohio. The barbershop on Long Street was a hospitable gathering place. Customers would come not only for haircuts, but to discuss the news of the day. Pierce was quite engaged in the life of the local community and of the nation. His secular carvings show his love of baseball, boxing, comics and the movies. They also reflect his interest in national politics and his appreciation for American heroes who fought for justice and liberty. Through his carvings Pierce told his own life story and chronicled the African-American experience. He also carved stories with universal themes. He seldom distinguished the race of his figures - he thought of them as everyman.

*This Elijah Pierce article was suggested by Dick W. Davis from a program at the Barnes Foundation in 2020. All accompanying photos from the book Elijah Pierce, Woodcarver Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio, 1992.*



**Don't miss the video!**

**"Elijah Pierce in his own voice"**

<https://www.folkstreams.net/film-detail.php?id=275>



**Elijah Pierce Statue in Columbus, Ohio**



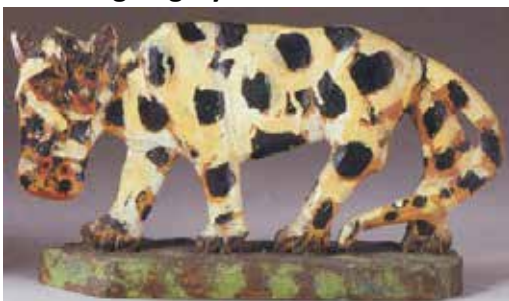
**Laughing Hyena**



**Alligator**



**Tiger**



**Small Cow Sculpture**



**Jockey Rides Ostrich**



**Spotted Dog**

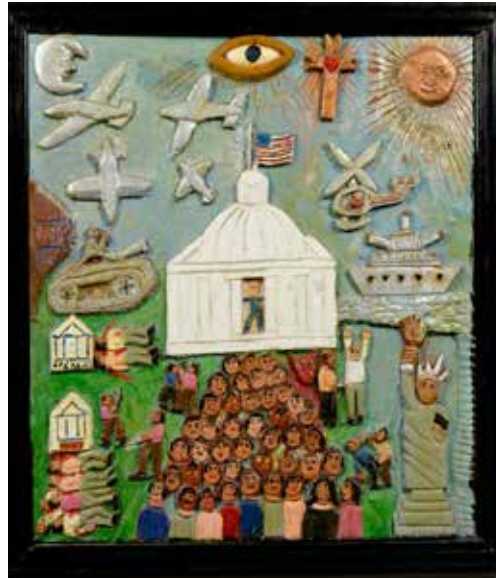


# Elijah Pierce

## Woodcarver (1892-1994)



**Crucifixion**



**An American Journey**

*My Sayings* is the largest and most complex of Pierce's message signs, or word carvings. It is autobiographical and introspective.



**Angel**



**Couple Dancing**



**Enter the World of Elijah Pierce**



**The Little White Church**



**My Sayings**



**Slavery Time-N° 4**



**Slavery Time-N° 5**



Since before Adam and Eve, the garden is a place of magic and nourishment fraught with the “dangers” of ineluctable beauty - Humans and the garden are inseparable!



The Garden of Earthly Delights (1503) - Hieronymus Bosch

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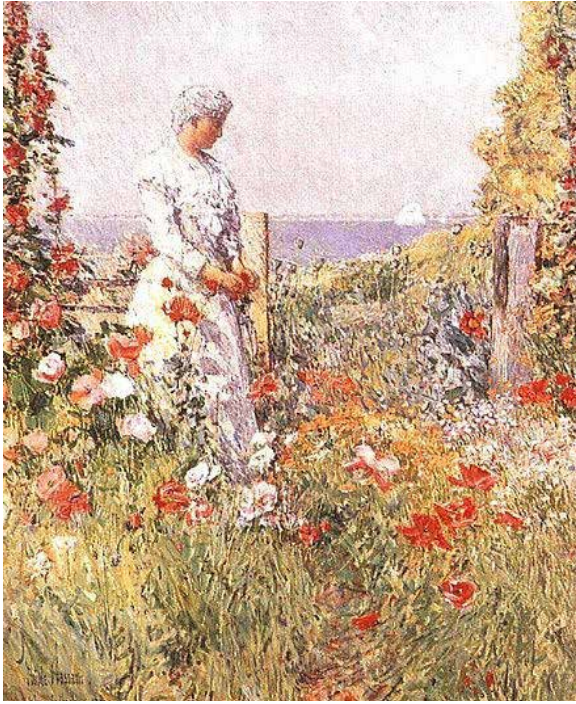


The Garden of Eden (1610-1612)- Jan Brueghel , the Elder



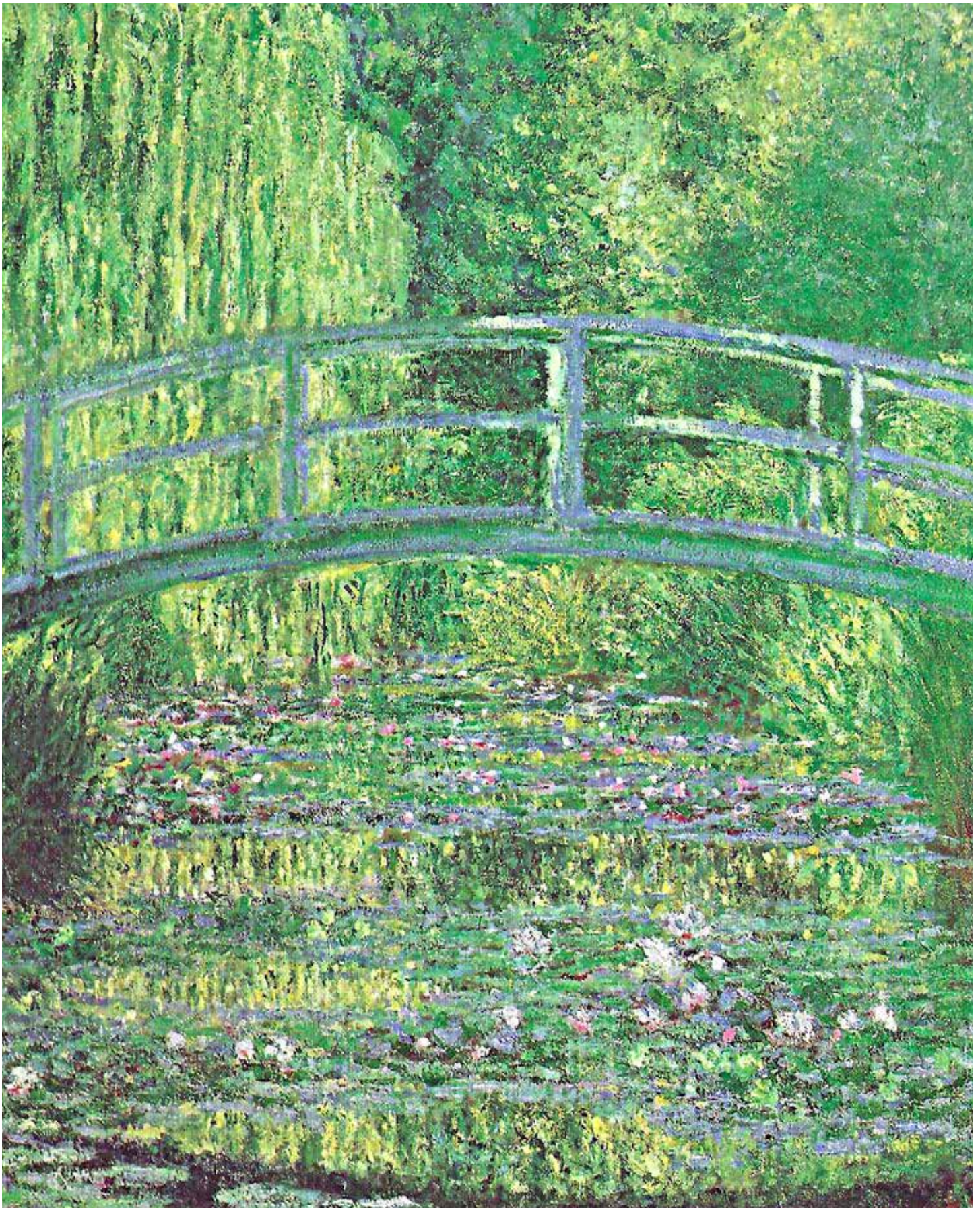
# An Island Garden by Celia Thaxter

Paintings by Childe Hassam (1894)





Claude Monet Le Bassin aux nymphéas  
Water Lilies and Japanese Bridge 1899



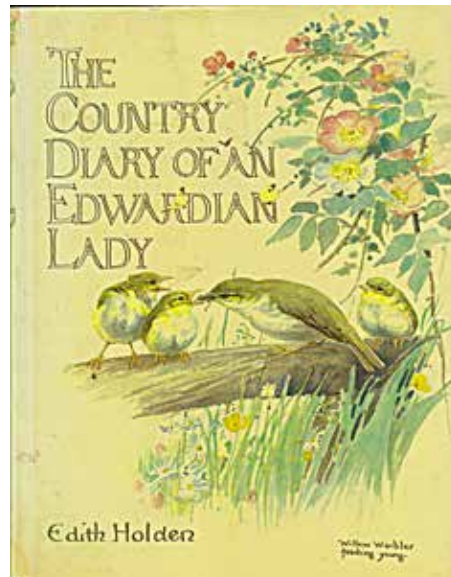


## Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady - 1906



**Edith Holden**

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Although Edith Holden born in 1871 began this lovely book of personal observations, poems and small paintings on January 1, 1906, it was not published until 1977. It lay on a shelf in a country house unnoticed. It is a treasure!

She wrote and illustrated the diary in the small village of Olton, Warwickshire where she lived with her family. She was one of seven children. Her father was a paint manufacturer.

Edith went to art school and worked as an illustrator. In 1911 she married Ernest Smith, a sculptor. They had no children. On March 16, 1920 she died of drowning in the Thames while gathering buds from chestnut trees. She was only forty-nine.

The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady entered the Sunday Times publishing best sellers list where it stayed for a record breaking 63 weeks, earning it a place in the Guinness Book of World Records





# The Gardens of the Merking's Palace

by J.R.R. Tolkien



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A tale invented by Tolkien for his children about a little toy dog named Rover who became a mer-dog, Roverandom and taught everyone how to swim in the garden of the Mer-king. Everyone was astounded to find that water is not blue but "There was only a pale green light to cast a lovely tint onto all the other colors."

## Tolkien -Maker of Middle Earth

by Catherine McIlwaine  
Bodleian Library, University of Oxford



# Learning to See

by J.T.R. Ressler and C.S. Ressler

Last summer I sent my seven year old grand-daughter into her backyard with an old cell phone camera: "Corie, find something interesting to look at that you can photograph and that we can later pastel paint!"

There were flowers, grasses, rocks...the usual, usual ...so we kept looking... not that day but the next, Corie came careening around the corner through the door "...LOOK! Grammy, LOOK!" On the camera was a tree knot configuration! Well, I had to run outside with her to the knot in the tree and then the next tree's knot was pretty great too.

We printed them on good Canson paper and worked in the Sennelier pastels and Craypas. I love them! Corie has started all the grandchildren looking for paintings now! "Be as little children." So much fun to see!







The Storyteller - Linda Marie Carroll