

Poetry, Prose and a Few Paintings
from the WGOT Interactive Writing and Art Workshop
The Creative Center, Greensboro, NC
August 16 and 23, 2014

Resisting The Inevitable: A Painting By Jack Stone

What gale of God or man rips you apart,
blocking your way and flaying you alive?
It's all you can do to stand. Fate's cuisinart
had shredded every plan, stalled every drive

before you took one step, and would not stay
its deadly hurricane of envious lies
and faithless friends who promise, then betray
hopes watered down by fear and compromise.

Your outstretched hand and sad, averted face,
pulled by some gravity out of the past,
stretched out of shape by some recalled disgrace
or yearned-for happiness that did not last,

cannot hold back the muddy torrent of
earth's limitations, which batter and stain
your royal purple of unanchored love
with disenchantments of our dirt and pain.

Stephen G. Wessells

Standing in Courage

Dangerous, wanted
Endangered, hunted
Majestic
Beauty protected
Enraged
You, young
Black man
Stand in courage
In love
In honor
Resurrected
In glory
Forget put upon shame
Young man stand
In beauty
In strength
In dignity
Stripped and threatened
Generations down
Hands down
Young black man
Brother, father, husband, son
Stand in your weariness
Stand in your strength
In your courage
In your truth
In your faith
Stand knee high in the depths of your passion
Take your crown, young black man
Wear your crown
Young black man



“Standing in Courage”
Painting by Alice
Bachman, Greensboro,
NC

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The Painting Titled *We Met at the Corner* (Jack Stone, artist)

by Angela Aguigui-Walton

I take each word in the title
and gaze around the bends and edges of the letters
to the colors and lines of the painting it defines.
I examine the intentions.
Words determine perception.

We

There is an intimacy in first-person perspective,
yet the artist has placed me in the ether of his cityscape,
observing this empty corner cast in cool, purple shadow.
The warmth of promised sunlight summons
from the distance where manicured bushes glow.
The windows of the buildings are solid with absence.
It is only me -- imagining and remembering.

We Met

It is a tale of nostalgia.
This is the first line of a flashback to explain a change.
It was an unplanned meeting -- presumably --
since flashbacks create comfort in tales of inevitability.

We Met at the Corner

This vertex is almost a crossroads,
but with a pervasive push in a direction of veiled visibility.
This painting -- full of angles intersecting --
void of people meeting --
is a web in retrospect.

It's the geometry of fate,
the calculus in coincidence,
the art of probability.

Petroglyphs (based on the painting, *Desert Heat*, by Alice Bachman)

The desert holds eternal
the soul, the owning
of this ever-changing canvas
the tones of sun, the marks of man,
and all the depth that lies beyond
this scored and weather-painted flesh of rocks,
the secrets of far older times,
now sunk beneath the scourge of desert skin.

Bluest skies burn high sun's heat,
imprint a wild-child's circles played
against a wind-carved palette,
makes me glad we sometimes cheat
our health and for art's sake
dare look such dry sun in the eye,
and hope those circled marks
may stay some time.

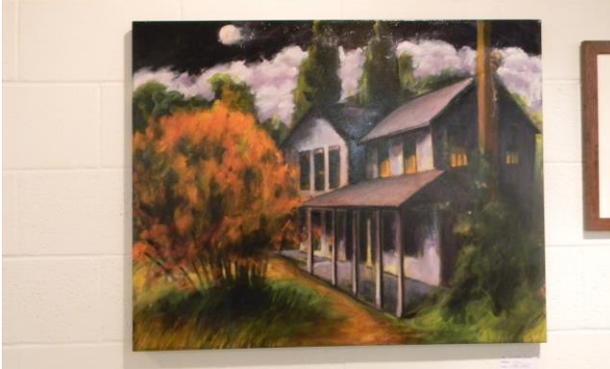
But each mark is more
than a short-lived play of peek-a-boo sun;
pre-history lies here too,
carved, painted, cured to eons,
the mark of desert nomads,
nomads preparing, recording,
celebrating tribal victories
and journeys full of life and death.

Such circles always mark a spot where
tomes of archaeologists
written now and in far past
can only stab their guess
by pick and trowel.

In the West some say the wisest spirits
swoop from nature's heaven
they ride upon the eagles' backs,
they hover, dive, and fan hot flames
against such desert walls
to ward off those they deem unworthy.

David Williams

October Moon



Inspired by Jack Stone's painting with the same title

Late October moon, fat with glow, drops a few pounds of light onto the slanting roof. House shingles radiate moonshine, deliver day into each blade of grass. The yard is Broadway!, moon's love object.

Jack Stone's painting can not be of Halloween--for what frightening vampire can stand such glare, what ghostly goblin worth his salt has a fighting chance on this stage? The headless horseman gallops down the road, hell-bent to escape this moon-murder. Edith Ann Poe, horror fiction writer, draws back in disbelief, begins to do the *anti horror-faint* until she spies the dark vacant rooms in the painting, smiles wide, and begins to compose:

With apprehension, Roderick approached the set of houses. Why were the shades raised in one if no one was present, the rooms empty caverns of night? Perhaps the fellow telegraphed the wrong address? He rubbed his eyes and pulled the note from his waistcoat pocket, read the address again: 666 Elixir Way. Next door the windows reflected firelight and he heard hearty laughter. Glancing in, he saw a family sitting before a fireplace. No address was posted, but Roderick knew that merry domicile could not be the house the helpful stranger had directed him to, since the gentleman Rod sought was known to live alone.

Right hand shaking, he knocked on the front door of the dark, deathly-quiet house next door. The sound created a terrifying echo, and Rod shivered, imagining hidden chambers where prisoners lay shackled, mouths bound. He waited for a small eternity; then the door creaked open and a skeletal hand passed him a silver flask. "Drink this!" the raspy voice ordered.

Diana Engel

Based on the painting Comfy, by Julie Dameron

This allure of light says settle in,
settle down.
Down into the center cushion.

In the center, I am comforted.
I can breathe freely here.
Your effortless good looks, both airy and substantial,
give the invitation to settle in and settle down.
This center cushion takes me in
and I am consoled.

Upstairs, the air was dense;
my lungs labored with the spice of tedium.

Upstairs the silence was crushing.
There was conversation
and no conversation,
pressure to speak,
a stifling void.

So I left the dense freighted silences
and came down into the light.

This genial light cuddles me.
Every fiber in this rug says don't struggle,
don't believe things are deadly serious.
The yoke I carry is worn smooth.
Words are easy here.

I like the clear water in the vase, the creaking floors,
the smell in this air, the smell of everything old.

I absorb your pastel arrangement
cushy
snug
serene.

I repose in simple truth.

Claude P. Ragan

Self-Portrait, Drawing by Emily Myrick

Though they appear comically oversize
from my intensity of vision, do
not laugh at such protuberance of eyes.
They must be huge to be the lenses through
which I perceive the language shaping things,
restating and translating it anew.
Without our vision, birds may lift on wings
forever without knowing how they flew.
And though my gift cannot be overpriced
which teases hidden meaning into view,
my portrait shows what I have sacrificed
to image forth in semblance that rings true
the canvas where God limned in light and shade
this harmony of all that he has made.

Stephen G. Wessells

Day by Day

Painter– Chip Bristol

It was at dusk when I doubted that the world
Would make sense, that the pieces would perfectly
Fit in my human size hands or dreams
That I would get from there to here
That there is a God or something
Greater, more creative, more loving
Than I or you or anything we knew

I woke
The sea bellowing inside me
And within it – in the center of its depth
Was peace – a certain stillness, silence, beauty
A sense of belonging
I was safe inside of myself
Inside of life
Inside of breath
Inside of Your love

It was at daybreak – when the sun welcomed itself
To this side of earth
I knew the truth
I took off my worn and dusty shoes
Walked barefoot on the water of my desires
And was not consumed
You know my heart
Your birthed my desires the day You birthed me
Now I see clearly
Day by day, Your mercies
Brand new



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