

Jacqie Wallen, photographer, watercolorist, poet

“At the deepest level, the creative process and the healing process arise from a single source. When you are an artist, you are a healer; a wordless trust of the same mystery is the foundation of your work and its integrity.” Rachel Naomi Remen, MD

The above quote expresses so well how artistic expression and my practice of psychotherapy intertwine and promote growth and healing for myself and others. Both psychotherapy and art involve a courageous venture into an unformed and mysterious interiority and result in the creation of coherence and shared meaning.

I like to take risks as an artist and to try new ideas and media. Here are some things that excite me right now:

Sky photographs: I live on the tenth floor and am in awe of the ever-changing cloud formations, sunrises, thunderstorms, and other natural compositions that I see from my east-facing window. I enjoy documenting them in photographs.

Zen photographs: I like to practice something I call “zen photography” because it involves taking photographs of things as they are, without trying to express a particular idea or tell a particular story.

Abstract painting and collage: On the other hand, it’s such fun to combine different elements or media in unexpected or unusual ways to tell a story or express an idea.

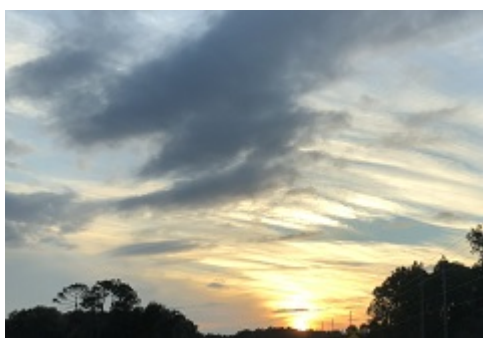
Poetry and painting: I sometimes write poetry and enjoy combining one of my poems with a painting I have made or a photo I have taken in order to create a richer experience.

Memory books: I am preparing for memory loss as I age by creating digital scrapbooks that include photographs, paintings, music, and narrative so that I can review my life even when I no longer have all my memory.

Here are some examples of Jacqie's work



Clouds and Plants



Skies, Clouds, with Trees



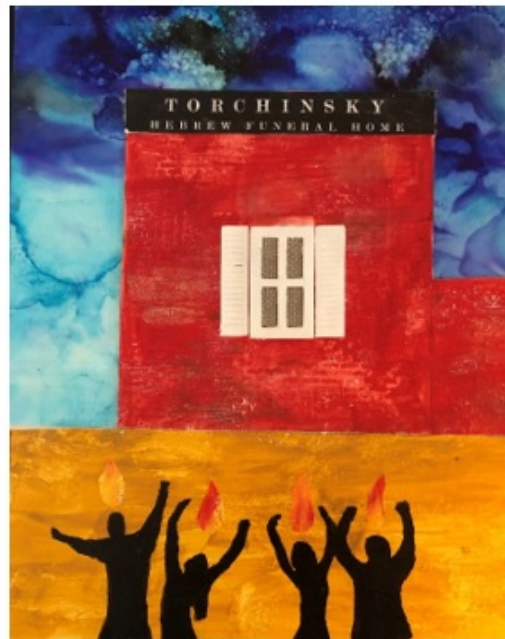
2020 November 9 Sky



Moon During Corona Virus



152 Skies



That holy room

A poem for Pentacost
Jacqueline Wallen

I'll always remember the day
God's spirit fell as tongues of flame
that rested on our heads but didn't burn.
A powerful unity swept through the room,
God was in us. We wanted to tell the world.
We danced, even our arms
danced high and waving here and there.
I heard strange languages (and spoke one myself)
but I understood each one.
In every language we were praising God.
Some of us talked, some sang, others shouted
People in the street outside shouted too:
"Shut up you drunks!"
But we were too drunk on God to stop.
It didn't last, of course, we sobered up,
but part of me is still in that holy room,
beside ourselves crazy with joy.



Crossing on dry land

*There was no turning back.
We crossed the sea on dry land,
thanks to the Holy One and to Moses with his mighty staff.
Spectacular as it was, it was only the smallest part
of that terrible journey out of Egypt.
We traveled almost a month after the killing of the lambs
before we even got to the Red Sea and then yet another month
to Mount Sinai to receive the law.
But that was nothing compared to what came next.
Forty years of heat and thirst and hunger
as we wandered in the desert, miserable and afraid.
Where were we? And where were we going?
The Promised Land, yes, but what was that?
And who would we be when we got there?*



Aging is Like Canoeing in the Boundary Waters

Jacqueline Wallen

The map fails you.
Paddling alone in the silver dappled water,
You're spooked by a crazy loon laugh.
It's getting late and you've a ways to go before night.
On the horizon you see
an unbroken line of old-growth trees.
Boreal forest, they call it, for Boreas,
the Greek god of the North Wind and Winter.
A single mass of land
where you need to find a channel
But as you draw closer,
the waterline becomes jagged
Closer still, and the trees become distinct.
Pine, spruce, tamarack, birch.
The islands separate and you see the way.



The Illuminated Sea

Jacqueline Wallen

I had expected a hot sun in a blue cloud-puffed sky,
colors tumbling all over themselves.
But it was rainy season and grey mist so clouded
the sea, the sky, even the beach,
that the three together appeared as one.

Frigate birds (dark pterodactyls) glided
then swooped down to snag fish entrails
cast off by a lone fisherman who seemed ready
to ferry any traveler over to the other side.
Another prehistoric touch -- a dead fish lay on the beach,
long and serpentine, its mouth crammed with sharp teeth.
After dark, swimming naked outside my door,
I saw drowned crabs in the bottom of the pool.

That night I dreamed that I could swim without breath
and ventured, fearless, into the ocean's depths.
I could see unmapped ranges of mountains and craters,
geysers of hot water, and schools of bioluminescent fish,
chests of gold and jewels amid the shattered bones of sunken ships.

By morning, a golden sun had broken through the grey,
separating water from sky and land from water.
Suddenly there were bright birds, palm, and flowers.
But the swooping birds and the fisherman were there as signs
of the rich treasures of the illuminated sea.



Naaman Hits Bottom

By Jacqueline Wallen

It starts as a stock dysfunction myth
A diseased hero looking for a royal cure
a king, helpless because his power doesn't extend to healing,
And a household full of codependent women, all with good advice.
Everyone trying hard but getting nowhere.

Then an outsider suggests a prophet healer.
But (and isn't this the way it always goes—
you finally get them some help and they're too good for it!)
Naaman identifies out --
the healer lacks class, and so does the cure
and, besides, where's the fawning welcome his stature merits?
Doesn't that prophet know how special Naaman is?

The healer (through his servant)
bids Naaman bathe in the unworthy Jordan.
But no, Naaman wants a much more glamorous cure.
Then a slave girl dares to ask what's lost by trying and he steps in.
Letting go of his pride, that's the real miracle,
For Naaman and for all of us who wish to heal.
