

JENNIFER W. REEVES  
ON FACEBOOK

*insightful on a blank page scratch by scratch*

Foreword by JOHN POST LEE

Introduction by JOHN YAU

# FOREWORD

John Post Lee

Art dealers are not asked to write about their artists for publication too often—and that’s probably a very good thing. It’s an honor to write this foreword about Jennifer Reeves and to have been her friend, her agent and compatriot. It is said a good gallerist should be like the corpse at a wake—show up, look natural, but keep his remarks short. Alas, the short part is not my strength but I’ll do my best . . .

## **Jennifer’s work is beautiful.**

She was a true believer in pleasure, in the intrinsic, sensual, emotive nature of skillfully applied paint to convey meaning, emotion and story. I witnessed savvy art-worlders bowled over by her work, in some cases literally gasping—and then I’ve watched them recompose themselves as if it was an embarrassment and perhaps a weakness of character to possess such deep feelings. She never took the art world’s bait by making her work less compelling or less beautiful than she knew how. In an art world rife with mock-solemnity and slackerism, Jennifer was unabashedly joyful and sincere and personal, and an unrepentant master of paint handling, color, form, composition, and surface.

## **Jennifer lived out loud.**

Through her intensely personal Facebook posts that juxtaposed her work with diaristic observations about her personal life and art,

Jennifer hit a chord with a wide range of readers—from within the art world and way outside I didn't realize the extent of her reach until after she passed away and our exhibition at BravinLee became a sort of shrine. Daily we receive visitors coming directly from planes, trains, and automobiles, with their rolling suitcases, paying homage to Jennifer's life and work, often having never visited an art gallery—asking if there was an admission fee. Many ended up breaking down and crying in the middle of the gallery. It was unlike any exhibition we had ever had and was a difficult but amazing experience—a much needed post-middle-age re-charge reminder that art, and writing, were potentially more than decorative capitalism or theory but could be powerful and important and essential to understanding life and death.

#### **Jennifer loved her “guys.”**

With a shared interest in abstract painting, Jennifer's path and my own were intertwined. The way the elements in her paintings behaved like figures on a stage was always my cup of tea. Her skillful wizardry in applying acrylic mediums, making them appear as translucent layers of oil painting, or like dry fresco, or like runny gouache and watercolor, or like cake-frosting, or like the cracking paint on an old barn wall—there was really nothing she couldn't achieve, with a medium that is often considered to be the stepchild of proper painting. Her surfaces are an entire separate category. Alongside artists like Jonathan Lasker and Thomas Nozkowski (to name two that we both intensely admired), Jennifer forged into the seam between abstraction and representation, between painting and picture making, between the facture and sensuality of pure painting for its own sake and its potential to conjure meanings and fictions. When Jennifer and I would talk about her work

we would refer to the motifs and images in her work as “guys,” this little red guy or this big blobby guy...

*“When you slip on a banana peel, people laugh at you. But when you tell people you slipped on a banana peel, it's your laugh. So you become a hero rather than the victim of the joke.”*

—Nora Ephron

#### **Jennifer rallied.**

Over the course of her career and life she had successes and setbacks, but seemed to speak of them with a sense of someone at peace with the rollercoaster of highs and lows in work, romance, and health, *Everything is copy* as Nora Ephron said. God forbid I should say something stupid that would end up as a voice balloon of the “lame-ass art dealer” motif in her painting! Near the end—I invited her to make a solo show for an art fair and I knew that it was a race with the time she had left. The show was a spiritual revelation. The night of the opening she arrived and ended up going to the hospital. I have guilt about the whole thing, but I know making work for shows is precisely how Jennifer lived and she would have wanted to spend her final days living and creating beauty and truth rather than idly waiting for the end.

# INTRODUCTION

John Yau

Prepare to be completely disarmed by Jennifer Wynne Reeves's honesty, tenderness, humor, and intensity, her sexual focus, her thoughts about art and artists, and her unembarrassed chronicle of her fatal illness. Dashing from precise outward observations to inward reflections and flights of the imagination without ever pausing to catch her breath, Reeves's writing dissolves all kinds of boundaries, particularly those separating private life from public presence. She is a writer and artist who transports us to a world brimming with wonder.

Reeves's writing is compressed and graceful, stripped down, always chugging along. This is how her entry for "May 13, 2010" begins:

*He died first. She died second. He was an early riser.  
She was a night owl. He'd slather mile high slabs of butter on  
his toast, would bring her breakfast in bed, called her "honey".  
He wore a bag on his gut. She was infertile and wickedly  
sarcastic. She put lemon zest in raisin pie. He had a horse  
named Dan. She had four poodles. Ahab, Anthony, Anita,  
Allegra. She wore her glasses around her neck.*

This is only about half the entry. Once you begin, you don't want to stop. Everything in this passage is necessary and tight: all the sentences miraculously fit together without ever becoming predictable. We never learn why every poodle's name begins with "A" nor does the

author comment on her deadpan observation that “She was infertile and wickedly sarcastic.” The writing is particular and rhythmic. I was not surprised to learn that Reeves took “ballet, piano, singing, violin, swimming, golf and tennis lessons”<sup>1</sup> when she was a child and started out as a “music major”<sup>2</sup> in college. No matter how harrowing or personal the material might be, Reeves never seems to falter or lose her balance.

A figure skater in prose, Reeves makes impossible leaps and sudden switches feel inevitable. She speaks to her readers in an intimate, personable tone about all kinds of subjects. And yet, even after you’ve become familiar with her voice, she will surprise you and make the hair on your arms stand up. This is what Reeves has accomplished: she creates a palpable world and brings you, the reader, completely into it. Her writings leave you with an indefinable taste, touch, smell, and much, much more. She is one of those rare writers whose work you cannot get enough of, which makes the publication of *Jennifer W. Reeves on Facebook* a reason for joy, as it is likely that new readers will discover the work of someone they had not known before.

Like her art, which resists categorization, this book will occupy a singular place on your shelf and—dare I say it—in your heart. To be a fan of Reeves is to wish that fate had given her more time. In 2008, Reeves became a dynamic presence on Facebook, where she paired her sharply compressed observations with images that ranged from her artwork to family photographs to objects from her life. Her juxtapositions of text and image quickly gained a large and loyal following, as well as generated an outpouring of comments and reflections.

Reeves’s postings struck a chord. She was unafraid of exploring every corner of her life and her art, which she believed were inseparable. Readers were moved by her candor, vulnerability, and tact: she had no axe to grind, no agenda to put forth. She was not

interested in gaining followers, but in the revelations unearthed in the process of creation. She wanted to be astonished and she wanted to chronicle her amazement at being alive. This, more than anything else, is what she wanted to share with others: an enduring joy of life no matter what cards fate deals you. For Reeves, as her readers learned in real time, those cards included an abusive marriage, bulimia, an ovariectomy when she was forty-seven, a schizophrenic mother, a murdered father, who was shot in the head, leaving her to be raised by her grandmother, and her diagnosis of terminal brain cancer. At no point did she bemoan her fate, even with death galloping toward her. Her gentleness, humor, and grace are present in everything she did.

*Jennifer W. Reeves on Facebook* brings together a generous selection of her postings, dating from March 31, 2010, to May 9, 2014, six weeks before she died at the age of fifty-one. She wrote movingly and beautifully about art and artists, from Charles Burchfield, Anselm Kiefer, and Jonathan Lasker to Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse. The passages she writes about artists, art, and art-making are as deep and smart and heartfelt as anything I have read, and that is a lot. She imagines Clyfford Still and Arthur Dove talking in heaven. She brings you into the domain of her erotic life and imagination without embarrassment. She writes about the difficulties of her childhood without a trace of rancor. She steps back and comments on her own writing. “Grace to be born and live as variously as possible,” wrote Frank O’Hara. That grace is in everything that Reeves wrote and lived. We are lucky to have had her with us as long as we did. Read this book and celebrate her memory. Take a walk with her the only way you can.

1 “Interview with Jennifer Wynne Reeves”, The interview was conducted by Julia Schwartz on March 1, 2013 and posted on the website FIGURE/GROUND. <http://figureground.org/interview-with-wynne-reeves/>

2 *ibid.*

# INTRODUCTION

Lisa Beck

Like many others, I came to know Jennifer Wynne Reeves on Facebook. Around 2010, (senior art critic for *New York Magazine*) Jerry Saltz's page functioned as a Cedar Bar of sorts, where various art topics were brought up and vigorously debated. The trenchant, witty, and often hilarious comments that Jennifer contributed to those conversations led me to contact her and become her Facebook "friend." Later, I had the great pleasure and privilege of becoming her friend in real life (or IRL as online parlance would have it).

Jennifer used her Facebook page as a combination of diary, soapbox, and philosophical arena. I looked forward to seeing what she posted and checked often for her latest missive. By turns soulful, bawdy, and always searingly honest, all her posts were set to public, so anyone could read them. She had a large following online, and her writing and images have been a source of inspiration to many, most of whom never had the good fortune to meet her in person.

A prolific and gifted writer, Jennifer often shared stories that were paired with images of her work. Some were based on her life experiences. Others chronicled the adventures of the figures in some of her paintings, who were composed of hardened blobs of paint, and who traversed a wide variety of landscapes, in both paintings and photographs. Sometimes she mused on her belief in the power of art as a source of revelation, wonder, and provocation. This book contains a sampling of her posts.

On her Facebook page, Jennifer practiced radical vulnerability. Nothing was kept back. As she danced with joy on video before setting off to the studio, spoke of her deep spiritual beliefs, or in later years, disclosed the indignities of her illness, her lust for life and her sense of the preciousness of it was evident. Jennifer's vibrant, generous spirit is something I am grateful to have known and will never forget.



March 31, 2010

They were cantankerous on purpose in the face of nowhere. It was a matter of principle to rebel. So, they decided to skip breakfast. Berries and melons were not an option. It was a holiday to reject them in the name of laughter, in the name of who they knew they were. Their identity crisis gave them strength. Of that, they were self-aware and wedded to a rare certainty. They were brides and grooms. Lovers and haters Dangerous liaisons. I rang them to say I didn't want to play today. I put strawberries in my yogurt, made a home for myself. Goodnight, sweet prince. I'm finished with torture.

April 6, 2010

My partner in *The Fantasticks* kissed me sweetly. I knew he liked me. Harold in *The Music Man* kissed me like a downspout. Marian the Librarian couldn't exactly wipe her mouth on her sleeve so I just bucked up hoping the spotlights didn't shine on the drool. After I was divorced, a guitarist spun me around on 21st Street and used a weird lizard tongue move. I pulled back all subtle. I mean, I didn't want to offend but he didn't seem to notice. It was a first kiss nightmare. After that, I was, um, busy. The one I loved smelled like an ashtray and needed to wash his beard but I could care less. Now, I'm forty-seven with no ovaries. Kissing? Don't be silly. I'd rather have a lisp and move to Gary, Indiana.





April 16, 2010

It was one of those nights when I kept pulling on the wrong corner of the sheet until I woke up freezing and wondering why everything was on the floor. Besides that, yesterday, Fairway didn't have my favorite dark chocolate covered banana balls. My life is ruined. Note to self: Make a sculpture with a hole on top. Have two torturing-sculptures holding open the hole while another sculpture, with a protrusion-head, sticks it in. Don't ask why. Just say yes.



April 24, 2010

My teenage uncle found my mom in a schizophrenic unreality. I was in the kitchen trying to make something to eat. Things weren't cool to say the least. So, he put me on the handlebars of his bicycle and we took off to my grandmother's. That's what he told me last December. It's amazing the things we find buried in the memories of loved ones. And here I thought my meal-making anxieties had to do with inexperience in the kitchen. I didn't know I was dealing with a three year old, standing on a chair, hungry and without a clue as to what to do. So, setting her up at the table with a napkin on her lap, let's get out that bread, that brush, that paint, that camera, that anything, and make a grown-up sandwich. You can't finesse with head and heart alone. You've gotta have guts and you do. You really do.





May 7, 2010

We don't have anyone but each other so I said yes. We grew up in different households but that doesn't make blood less thick. We WANT to be closer, my brother and me. So when he called to ask if I would help him pack, I said yes. I resisted the can't-take-time-away-from-my-work-confusion I usually encounter as an artist. Drove the 11 hours from New York to Michigan. He was standing in the driveway waiting for me as we spoke to each other on the cells. He said, "I see you." I said, "I see YOU!" He grilled us some steaks with artichokes. I took down the paintings and filled in the holes. We mulched and weeded the front garden. He mowed the lawn. I held the ladder while he stretched to reach a broken bulb. He told me he had wanted to be an architect, that he loves bridges. He likes the ones with a central pillar and cables. On the drive home I saw one in Detroit and another in Toledo, never noticing them before. Yard work, loneliness, and a single yes—it'll reseed the lost past.

May 11, 2010

One day, I said we were “middle class.” She lifted an eyebrow and said, “UPPER middle-class.” Acerbic was the word an in-law used to describe my grandmother and she was proud of it. Her sister thought our home decor was cold and uninviting. I think she was on the planet of permanently-vexed-by-one’s-sibling. My grandmother, as a matter of policy, made her bed every day. Her sister slept until noon and had a no-making-the-bed policy as a matter of principle. She was acerbic, too. She’d say to me, “Get away. I don’t like kids!” I’d laugh and snuggle closer. Following their snarkiness, I will or will not make the bed depending upon my whim, as a matter of principle. That way morning routine is always a form of rebellion and in honor of lemony ladies.



May 13, 2010

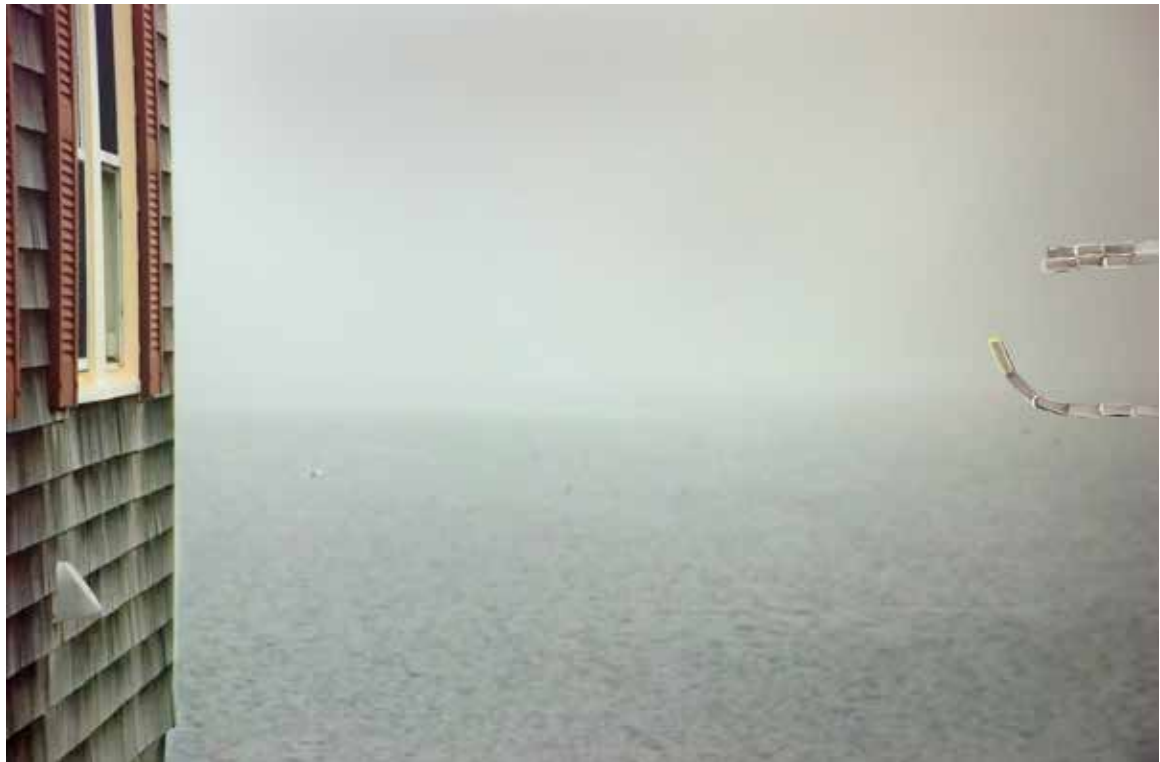
He died first. She died second. He was an early riser. She was a night owl. He'd slather mile high slabs of butter on his toast, would bring her breakfast in bed, called her "honey". He wore a bag on his gut. She was infertile and wickedly sarcastic. She put lemon zest in raisin pie. He had a horse named Dan. She had four poodles. Ahab, Anthony, Anita, Allegra. She wore her glasses around her neck. She told me to watch out for those religious people even though she knew I was religious. She got pissed at me when I said someone passed away. She said, "They DIED." She called her paintings her "uglies". One day he fell in the tub and couldn't get up. She pulled him out, all 90 lbs of her opposing all 200 lbs of him. She didn't like my husband. When she died she willed to me her antique mirror that my uncle wanted. I look into it today. Divorced. Semi-religious. Holding a lemon.



May 17, 2010

Gouache and Grisham got me through the lonely nights. The only rule was I had to resolve the compositional conundrums in new ways. I couldn't use the same tricks twice. He said, "Are you fucking ever going to learn?" Good point. My own voice sounded brittle to me, my "I'm fine" seemed fake. I determined I'd rather be alone than managed to death by a control freak. A different imagery unfolded, no more slugs but slugs transformed. I bought new eyeliner, went on a date, wore a black dress with long beads. I hadn't lost anything by leaving them, that relationship, that old imagery, by saying goodbye, by finally fucking learning a new style. It didn't happen simultaneously. I left the slugs way before I left the man but one preceded the other as it always seems to do. Poetry first. Life following.





May 19, 2010

It's a strange thing to come home after piano lessons when you're twelve. It's too dark to tell the spots on the pavement are blood. It's too late to call back your ride because they've already gone and now you have to be tall when you're not. Your Dad put his fist through the windowpane and now he's coming to open the door, holding a dishtowel around his wrist, dripping blood on the gold carpeting. You're told to wipe up the dark spots but you don't know, until now, to use cold water instead of hot. There are many sorts of stains in this world - coffee stains, spatters of red, splashes of oil, seepages of pee, but the ones that have the greatest effect are the ones that ooze and squeeze the heart. No tracings can be made of these. No amount of theorizing can make them just data and they always manage to live beyond the page because it's too late to call them back.

June 28, 2010

I suspect a failure of sight in the idolizing of Warhol. He was just a guy and a great designer who also had a flair for experimentation. His works were taken straight from existing advertisements, existing art, existing film. He didn't create his own. Instead, he created a scene, a cult following, and, in the end, felt emptier for it. In an effort to fill the hole, he attempted to go deeper and he did but only via the intellect. For example, using religious iconography in and of itself does not an artwork make and neither does car crash imagery, piss, the grid, or black and white. Yes, he would set up an interesting concept for a work but didn't allow himself to deviate from the plan by letting emotion fuck it up. He yearned, he had an artist in him, but he didn't let that wild cat out because, I suspect, he didn't feel worthy. He could have been great but lived in a society of secret shames and it killed what he could have been. Still, it was a valiant failure and I'm fine with that.



August 20, 2010

I think it is going too far to think of the WoA experiment as being evil, a scrooge position. The show isn't evil. It's just a sad commentary on the legacy of Warhol (as Rosenberg states in the *NYTimes*). Fifteen minutes of fame only makes fame—for fifteen minutes. Fame doesn't make art nor can it be a critique of society. Still, art can always be made from the mistakes of bad parents by inadvertently producing wiser children. It is possible that a potential Dadaist could benefit from winning some cash on a game show while managing to not look ridiculous. So, DON'T BE COWARDLY ART WORLD. YOU SUPPORTED WARHOL. BRING ON THE MONSTER GAME SHOW AND MAKE IT WORK.



October 4, 2010

I woke up this morning thinking about Jerry's failure thread. One of the things that people battle is despondency. Artists, in particular, battle inertia in a specific way because the very act of making art is an act of defiance against despair. I think most art is about this battle—how to win it, what it looks like when you don't, and what it looks like if you do.

October 29, 2010

Buried in these few paragraphs about the writer and performer Karl Kraus is the primary reason for art—not to educate the illiterate masses, not for the amusement of kings, not for the empowerment of popes but for what we've known all along but sometimes appear to forget. Culture builders may joke but that doesn't mean they don't know that death festers behind a mistaken brushstroke.

October 30, 2010

I don't think of beauty in relation to happiness but, rather, joy. When I'm struck by beauty, I don't feel impelled forward as much as I feel steadied in the now and regardless of depressing circumstances. Not that I am disinterested in changes but become disinterested in outlining them. Something else, something beautiful, is in charge of that. I sense I can trust it, whatever it is, and let go of verdicts. Beauty's presence is open-ended, just like art, in the future, in the past and right now.

November 1, 2010

I think a problem arises in the art world because not everyone has the same goal in mind. Some are interested in visually and/or philosophically innovative art and think THAT is paramount, the next Jackson Pollock or Picasso, etc. Some just want to see something with soul, even if it's closely related to a previous style, and think THAT is the gauge to judge by. And some are looking for whatever suits their own personal taste and think THAT is the way to make judgements. Without a known consensus for criticism we find ourselves engaged in endlessly inane and circular arguments. Personally, I think all three angles for judgement are applicable but it's helpful to state which one you're coming from when taking a critical stance. Then the debate can ensue without the problem of defining what's innovative, philosophical, soulful and/or in 'good' taste....

November 13, 2010

Dear Art Students, Show me what your eyeballs love. Talk to me about the philosophy in that. You are the creators. The theorists follow YOU not you them.

Comment

**Jennifer Wynne Reeves:** one reason why pop culture can be so much more interesting and vibrant than cultured culture might be because the art theorists aren't controlling it. But that doesn't mean pop-style is any better, especially, when you consider that pop culture has its control monsters, too—corporate control monsters where the intent is to level and homogenize but at least they get the appeal of a sensual desire.

**Jennifer Wynne Reeves:** . . . theorists can also be really great thinkers . . . let's, as artists, just not let them lead us by the nose!

November 15, 2010

Legal departments making art and controlling criticism is like the Pope-culture telling Michelangelo to make dicks tiny . . . and he did. Maybe that's why David's hands are so big—something had to give. But he was a great artist. In lesser hands, the dicks would be small and the hands would remain, well, lesser. I guess I'd like to see someone participate in some stupid show like WoA and, against all odds, kick its mediocre ass. I'm doubtful it'll happen but I like dreaming impossible dreams—just in case they lead somewhere.



November 17, 2010

I gotta get back to work . . . things are moving along. There's dildo-angels, brides wearing dildos, and dildo saviors. They're all putting their arms through holes. But today, someone is going to get nailed to a cross—a dildo crucifixion just before thanksgiving. Don't worry, there will be a dildo resurrection. There always is. They can't be kept down. The life of the mind is in perpetual squirm, getting clean in the mud, finding shine in the gloom, fingering ideas at the tip of the tongue.

November 21, 2010

Because Kiefer uses symbols of the Kaballah in his art, it doesn't mean he thinks we're all supposed to become Jewish Mystics. His work doesn't, as one critic suggests, ask us to suspend our suspicions of faith and religion (we should be suspicious), it asks us to remain open to their most valuable impulses—transformative life and the nurturing of wisdom. There is a correlation between Jewish mysticism's practice of alchemy and the practice of art. Alchemy is, briefly put, the turning of ash into gold and this can be seen as a metaphor for turning tragedy into understanding and that's exactly what Kiefer is attempting to do, to turn his mediums into revelations, revelations with the potential for transformation. And art, like some religious texts, is one of the ways to accomplish the task by revealing the workings of intuitive knowledge, through symbol, metaphor and poetry. Art is not religion and religion is not art but they sometimes share a common interest—to reveal the evidence of things not seen. Kiefer harnesses ancient symbols because it's useful to his work today. Both practices explore the timeless profound. Born yesterday, today or tomorrow it's a desire that never dies and concerns everyone regardless of faith or belief. The mystery of spirituality doesn't belong to the fanatics. Don't let them take it away from us. Don't let them force us to remove it from art.

Kiefer's main theme of Germanness and its discontents is another metaphor, is more than a narrow view of past events. It doesn't stop there. It foretells of coming devastation, perhaps nuclear, perhaps environmental but in either case caused by things we'd rather not think about—the destructiveness in our own selves. His work serves as a dire omen not to forget the past even while exploring solutions

for the now. He turns sunflowers upside down rooting them, not in the earth, but in the stars, where considerations of infinity and the nature of existence are. It's as if he's saying we might right ourselves and reseed the cracked earth, by thinking upon things larger than us and in a new-old way by turning everything upside down and starting over. Kiefer's art is hopeful in the midst of hopeless fact. But, he proves a will to live by transfiguring ash into flying palettes, by building a launching pad for hope—a mental structure in which he, and we, may know the impossibility of living if thought proceeds to take an exclusive view of the world and who we are in it.

Tackling heavy subjects in art is a grand enterprise with a grand objective. And though quieter gestures may be just as effective, dramatic style is Kiefer's way and matches the size of his imagery, the skies, the mountain ranges, the nature of the nature of things. His works are big. They're crusty. They may indicate the overblown ego of an artist, which could, in the end, dull the shine of his capability or it may be that our sensibilities are not accustomed to the sight of a contemporary mammoth pulling himself out of the tar. The immense materiality it takes for him to make the point can appear distasteful while kings of greed toast to themselves and the earth crumbles under their weight. These are thoughts worth mulling over and part of the process Kiefer's work encourages, no, demands, of those who care to look, who care to puzzle over meanings, who fearlessly give in to the metaphors, even if they're not their own. Transformation of thought can happen anywhere. You don't have to be an ancient mystic to turn ash into gold or wonder at the magnificence of it all.

December 22, 2010

I wish there was another primary color besides red, yellow and blue or that there was another breakfast food besides eggs, pancakes or yogurt but I know not to trust a raw-nerve state. So I start over and work again to get whipped up about eggs, about art, about love. And damn if that light bulb doesn't go on surprising the hell out of me—even when I didn't pay the electric. It's a solar happening and just in time.





March 5, 2011

I'm a beautiful, smart artist if I want to be your girlfriend. I'm a cock-teasing, calculating, horrible artist if I don't want to be your girlfriend. Either way, my friendship is, at most, peripheral. You want to know why I won't reconsider going out with you? Wait a minute while I go put my bitch costume on so that I might fulfill your rejection fantasy. Where's the photograph of your mother? Not that I NEED to tape it to my face.



April 1, 2011

I'm not sure what to say. Well, I worked on one painting up until an hour before the gallery unlocked the doors (two trips back and forth by cab to Utrecht on 23rd). I wore my boob-flattening bra to the opening and still got boob notice. One person said, "I liked almost all the work in the show." Another said, "Why didn't you put more photos in?" Another said, "I don't know why the painting in the third room wasn't in the first room." Another said, "You've got your humor back." And someone stole the flowers that my aunt and uncle sent. What amazes me is how flat my hair stayed in the rainy weather. That new hair gel really works. Maybe I should use it on my boobs?

April 15, 2011

When the mark-making of painting is inspired, it's more than analytical aesthetics, more than language play. It's poetry, it's conception. And if there's such a thing as the Christ, the Buddha, the whatever, then that's it. Don't let religion or misunderstanding take the spiritual out of art. The spiritual belongs to everyone. It's the grand point. So stick your arm in the hole and claim your immaculate conception. Today.

**Comment:**

**Jennifer Wynne Reeves:** I'm talking about inspiration not about art as painting versus photography, or the various sects of art, all of which have their interesting parts and services. Art may or may not be inspired and the same goes for life and people or films. I like the inspired sort. And, by inspired, I don't mean emotionalism, overwrought displays or empty posturing. I'm interested in inspiration and how to live an inspired life. Within the practice of making and looking at art, I think there are answers to those questions.



April 19, 2011

Dear Free Thinkers, Thank you for your unprejudiced minds, your sense of context, your disregard for literalism, your ability to consider the meaning of a word as it is intended without attaching your personal usage because you know "black" can be black like a spider, black like a dark closet, black like all the colors in the universe, or black like the anxiety of waking up at 3am. Thank you for knowing the difference.

April 27, 2011

Picasso didn't paint his lovers. He painted his perception of his lovers, no, not quite. He painted love itself. He painted different types of love. Sex-love, Mother-love, Sad-love, Tortured-love, Peace-love, Aging-love, Penis-love, but not divine Love. That was Matisse's area and maybe why he was so drawn to him and vice versa. Still, I think there's something divine about his line, anyway. Okay, I take that back. He did paint divine Love. It's in the guitars, the love of art.

I know he was a self-professed atheist. He refused to go to Matisse's chapel but years after Matisse died he did go. The receptionist gave him an envelope. It was a letter from Matisse. It said something like, 'I knew you believed.' Those two men, those two artists, had a rapport. It didn't matter what side they were on, what name they used for love, God or not. It didn't matter. That's what art can do. That's why I put my love there and I suspect I'm not the only one.



April 29, 2011

For many artists questions of existence are woven between questions of composition. A line isn't just a line and a color isn't just a color. They're tributary to something larger than themselves, they flow into another bigger river called composition, a chosen road taken to an unknown end. But, just like love, just like life, just like death, sometimes you get pushed down a road you don't want to go.



May 17, 2011

Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* is like three tulips, side views, of two light ones and one dark. The eye is led upward, skyward, in each, only to sweep back down and repeat. The composition serves like a circle or hole in which something comes out of one end and goes into another. As sunny as this scene appears from a distance, upon closer inspection the narratives tell another story, recycling the viewer from one loop into another, formally and informally. It's a horrible delight, a spiral venus fly trap luring you in with promises of Eden only to leave you stunned and considering the implications of a guy shitting coins. Be careful what you wish for. Delightful compositions can be less than delightful loops. There are learning loops, too, full of warnings and, unlike the Matissean snail, full of pricks.

June 19, 2011

Pollock's conundrum was to figure out how to make the resistant matter of paint flow like thought. In the earlier works you can see how the paint moved more slowly than his mind thus frustrating his efforts. When he was able to drip the paint, the fluidity enabled his painting to move as quickly as his thinking. He could make decisions and implement them immediately without getting stuck in the politics of a compositional hornet's nest. His all-over imagery was finally able to emerge without his having to neutralize areas with grey.

**Comment:**

**Jennifer Wynne Reeves:** or without his having to block out areas with black or provide a focus point with an obvious red.

July 5, 2011

Last I saw, Lasker had many many rolls of paper towels in his neat and tidy studio. He joked to me about his paintings being warm and cuddly. When I said something to our former dealer, Sperone, about emotion or metaphor in art, he said Lasker would hate what I was saying. Of course, I knew I was rebelling against the father by including what he despised in my own work. Sorry, art-dad, I just don't think abstraction has to be without identity. And I DON'T use paper towels to clean off my brushes. I buy boxes of rag fragments from Home Depot. So there.





July 24, 2011

Freud aspired to find pleasure and joy in paint like Soutine, but the pleasure was elusive. Still, he persisted, toiled, labored to find it. And there are moments of attainment in the details here and there. His paintings, like the people and objects in them, are evidences of dashed hopes. Is it justified to claim he or they should have given up their course and followed another road, a slicker road? No. Freud wasn't an idiot. He knew there were other colors and surfaces out there, happier ones, and he decided against them. Pop wasn't his thing and, he's correct, pop is not the only radical road that leads to Rome, just one of them. He could have taken the Currin route by mixing porn imagery with traditional, or taken Hockney's street by mixing advertising beauty with fine art ugly, but he didn't, chose not to. I think he wanted to find what Van Gogh loved in Millet's painting of the Gleaners, the 'real' people only less romanticized. He might say, "Life sucks but here we are anyway, all pasty and gross, and there's nothing more to it than that. The end." The thing is, the mere act of painting, or making any art, implies otherwise. One might conclude Freud was in denial of the DeKooning who lived inside him, the guy mortified by the She-Bitch-God he worships and the divine Father-Mother he misunderstands.

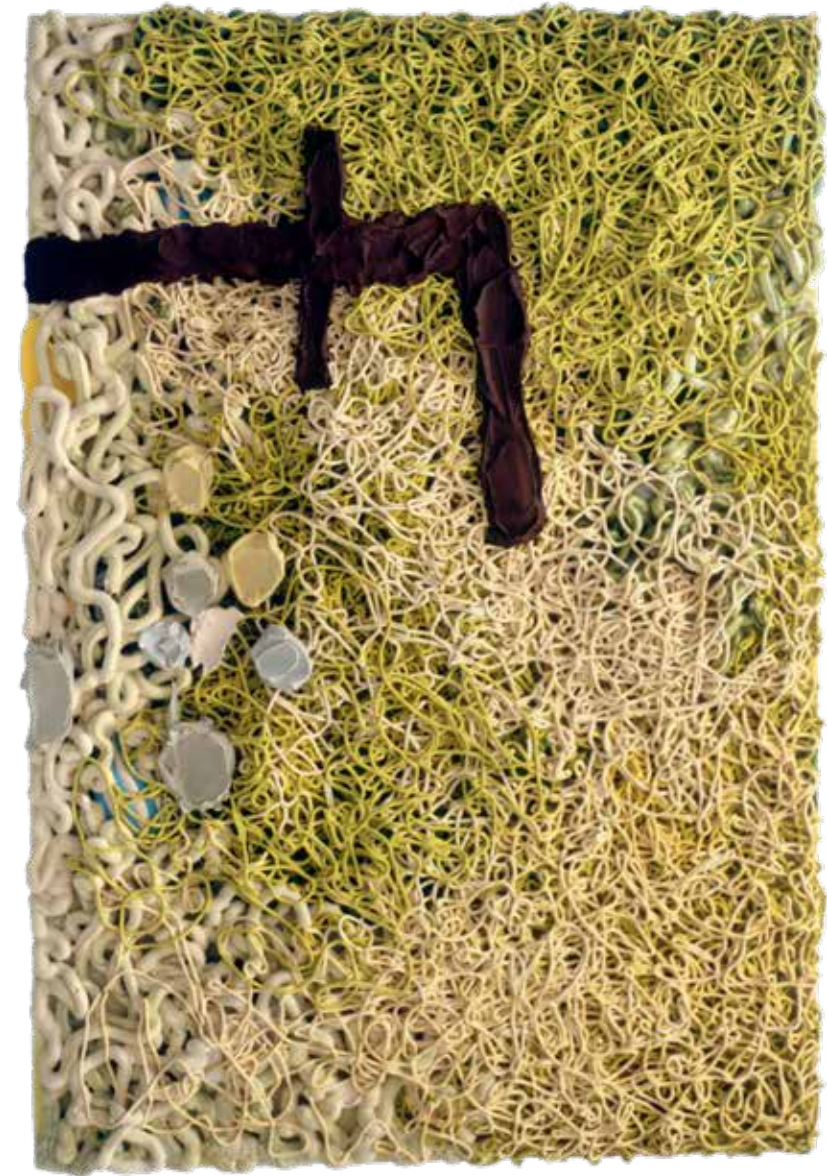
August 6, 2011

The hummingbird whizzing around my garden like a flying Fiat. His purring motor, his ruby throat, his fluorescent green. His soft white underbelly just like mine, just like yours. No, I won't see you when you return from California. It's already over, fast, like a Fiat, like an elusive bird. Age is a wondrous thing, unfettered by crows.



August 26, 2011

I fired my doctor at Sloan Kettering this Tuesday. It was scary to stand up to that arrogant prick, his legs crossed, leaning back so I could see his expensive shoes, socks, and slacks under his white lab coat. Me, sitting in a hospital gown feeling super vulnerable and weary of his lawyer-talk, his unwillingness to acknowledge my point, his attempt to disparage my character instead. No, it's not that I'm relentlessly unhappy, it's that I don't trust you, not anymore. No, it's not that I don't like Asians, it's that I don't like the way you manipulated my decisions for your own benefit and to the detriment of my own. You've been caught. Honor up.



September 16, 2011

There are two boxes sitting on the table next to my desk. I stare at their labels. One says, 'Letters to the Editor' and the other, 'Obituaries.' Metaphors scratch at my boredom. I smell spiritual smoke. One is life in action, the other, well, not. I'll reach inside the obituary box, feel around, slapping my hand at the bottom of the cardboard, nothing there, but, woops, there's something, lumpy, kinda clammy. I stand. I look. The discovery is better than finding Elvis alive. It's an ear, Van Gogh's ear. I pick it up and kiss that green hole, sew it to the side of my temple. I need a third ear to face this world. Two isn't enough, not if you want to write a letter to the editor, one that goes to print, one that turns three into four, four-in-one and out of the box. Dear Editor, Do your job. Wipe my slate clean.



September 23, 2011

De Kooning's smeary paintings remind me of glimpses, the views of moving flesh in the throes of passion, eyelids opening and closing in rhythm with back-and-forth motions, faster and faster, increasingly becoming abstract, blurred, but, curiously, less and less physical. The orgasm comes when the mind finally lets go of its grip on the body, its imprisonment in matter, its resistance to art, until the painting is complete but open-ended. A spiritward cum is delivered. I walk away from the picture on the wall with my heart seeded.

November 27, 2011

Fear, shame and greed evict the Occupiers at night. There's a plan. Cameras are too dangerous. One sympathetic shot taken in the light of day could endanger the agenda — the consultation fees promised to future retired congressmen and presidents. President Obama's been bought. That's why he stands by and says nothing, keeping the power of his eloquent talent under wraps. President Bush didn't miss the opportunity to give a speech at ground zero after 9/11. Who has given a speech at OWS? President Obama? No. Where's our Martin Luther King, our JFK, our Lincoln, our Roosevelt, now? There are no great politicians and if there are, they're waiting to see who will win before taking sides, which forfeits their greatness. Screw 'em. You can't kill an idea but you can kill a stupid policy. Big money is fine, but stupid big money isn't. It's just stupid, just greedy.



February 21, 2012

The sentencing hit us hard. Not guilty your Honor, not guilty! As if I have the option to claim my innocence. Not in this courtroom. Not when you've been sentenced to death by a fast growing brain tumor. The prosecutors don't play fair. They don't care if you're guilty or not. They just want to win the next election, be right. We sat in the waiting room of the neurosurgeon waiting to get the news, the pathology report. My uncle squeezed my hand so hard I thought my small bones might crack. Walking out to the car he said, what stage are we supposed to be in now, the angry stage, denial stage? It's the ZOMBIE stage. We stopped by an Olive Garden for something to eat. I found it a comfort, steak salad with Blue Cheese dressing. Guilty of suburbia delight and fine with it.



March 3, 2012

POST ROAD MAGAZINE with one of my images on the cover!!!  
Great to have some good news these days. Hope you don't mind  
my sharing some. You ALL should be on the front cover of *Art Forum*  
although being on the cover of a literary magazine is even better . . .  
and more like us ; )



March 14, 2012

There are no tragedies because what are they but the extreme routine of everyday? A brain tumor here, a car crash there, yet another diagnosis of death or chronic pain, all typical to the human experience. Even if you'd rather it wasn't 'normal'. I don't know. I don't know what I'm talking about. Just a thought. Trying not to be scared every second of the day. I sure am grateful for humor, and the normalcy of art.



July 1, 2012

I was Vulpes, with a vulpes penis, wiggling my finger between my friend's legs. Her corduroys blocked entry; no matter. She was my vixen, my ticket to exploratory copulation. We were in mindland, crouched in the bushes in a suburban backyard. I suspected my grandmother was watching from the window. Who cares? I'm a fox, not a girl. I'm a fox-girl true to her vision. Foxes fuck; it's the honest thing to do if you're pretending to be an animal, to really, really be an animal, to be a real girl with a real curiosity, a real cunt and a cunt's new wonder.



July 13, 2012

I wished I could see your face and not just the side of my nose. We were on the phone. You asked, "Why are you so formal?" A feather scooted across the floor. "Because I feel anything but casual about you." I heard a sharp intake of breath; my answer pleased you. It's funny how a white wall can look blue. Do you remember the day in the bookstore? You were looking at a photo where Dante first saw Beatrice. You wondered if it was really the place. I leaned over to your ear, "Perhaps not, but likely." One of my nipples accidentally grazed your arm. You felt it. I stood still. You dropped the book and caught it again; I glimpsed the side of my nose, your hands, the falling book. I was moved by moving you. You made me forget familiar streets. When you admired my shoes at the opening, all I could do was blush and say, "Don't." Paralyzed by joy.



July 16, 2012

I'm looking for one-liners for the back cover of *Soul Bolt* . . . Cupid was a myth, dull as a drugstore, until I met you. It filled me with confetti to see you buy a pack of cigarettes, to linger with you looking at Pentagon paperweights. Outside the design shop, we spied two lovers kissing across the street. Tiny torpedoes stung my arms to be sitting next to you, watching them, those two, doing what I wished to do with you. I said, "Whoa!" You misunderstood. You thought I disliked their public display, but the WalMart on my tongue kept me from explaining. I hadn't told you I was leaving him. The decision was mine to make, my private getaway van, mine to drive, to crash, to answer for. I hoped you would understand and meet me halfway, or not, either way my life its own. I'd laugh out loud. I'd splash you with smiles. I'd dunk my cookie in your cowboy coffee and watch the arrows sink me.

Comments:

**Jennifer Wynne Reeves:** if she tells the object of her desire that she wants to be with him and get a divorce then she makes him and herself complicit in a plan to break up a marriage, a promise. to be truly free, she has to extract herself in a less willful way. she has to let go of trying to manipulate the outcome of her situation. that means she can't tell the person she has fallen in love with that she is free until she really is free. she has made a promise to honesty, not just to a man or a tradition.

July 23, 2012

If everything is mental and there is no matter then why am I an artist, why do I slop goop? Because I sense that the goo of paint is physical, not material at all. Its color and texture thrill me to a life incarnate, a life lived, a picture painted. I seek to revel in its substance, the hard rock of being, where sensing becomes seeing, where abstraction gets real and spirituality sticks around.



July 25, 2012

He wooed her. He said all the right things, all the proper things, the manicured things. He showed her the depth of his decency, his perfectly organized refrigerator, easy to do since it only contained ten things. He loved his spotless apartment. He hated his rollicking ape hair. But she loved his buffalo hide the most. She loved when he bent the rules, when he wrapped her in his gorilla blanket, ignoring the embarrassment of back hair, dismissing the hygiene of contemporary thought. She wanted him sweaty, with eyeliner creeping into his crow's feet; he wanted her intensely polished, shaved barren in the beastie parts.



July 29, 2012

Abstraction talks her head off. She has a lot to say. I tune out or listen, rattled by her noisy silence. I read her lips, learn her sign language. Pthalo Blue ponders her hue; I go along to see what happens. The worms in the walls of Mondrian's house whisper sweet nothings to my idea-machine. I step into his tidy studio, everything a rectangle except for one blight, the wood stove. Oops: a little imperfection to stay warm. Jazz needs heat; jazz has jaws. They crack a future flummox to my now. I trip forward, reach backwards, backlit on a representational journey. Abstraction catches my hand in hers; I can feel she's there, hot with ideas, a spool of suggestions, the answer for a painting, the perfectly unexpected Boogie Woogie.

Comments:

Check out this bit of writing by Szentkuthy . . . “ . . . the objects and the minuscule cultivars of soul shards: that is reality, that is what one lives for: these are not Proustian delicacies, it is nonsense to speak here of nervous sensibility or nuances, these are breads and wines, big birds and rains, wild and Cyclops-style natura naturans: the musician is alone on the stage, Orpheus in the opera is crazy about himself, we do not live for art, not ever, but for these powder traces of ideas which have remained on our necktie.” —Szentkuthy, *Marginalia on Casanova*

“the minuscule cultivars of soul shards” whoa. “we do not live for art, not ever, but for these powder traces of ideas which have remained on our necktie.” OMG!!!

July 30, 2012

During the summer of 2012, the hot subject of prayer erupted into the art scene like a pent-up volcano of lava, and thanks to our own burning ring of fire the spirited Jerry Saltz. It's almost a 1500 long comments thread. I guess the origin of existence IS on the minds of artists and like a caboose at the end of the train follows them into the tunnel, their art.

**Jerry Saltz:** I'm not religious. Or "spiritual." I don't believe in God. At all. When I die, I'm dead. No afterlife. No "higher power." No nothing. I'm perfectly happy this way. No problem. — Along these lines I've never prayed. I've hoped. Wished. Longed. But I don't know if that's praying. Is doing this a built-in unconscious thing that everyone's doing anyway & that some people formalize into religion, calling it prayer. — What do people mean when they say they "pray." (I DO NOT want US to talk about God, supreme beings, or ANY of! Nada. None. Really.) — What is prayer? As a means of address, a form of language, etc. Can I get an amen my brothers & sisters?





August 1, 2012

Regardless of where Greenberg stood, there was a loss of faith in pretty much anything and everything after the war, so his faith in theory filled a void until it became too doctrinaire to see innovation. Still, the painters took the theory, the flat theory, and ran with it to our great advantage. Truth WAS in the flatness of the picture plane from their perspective. And not just because the canvas is flat, and abstract shapes can be flat, but because a world without faith is flat. The thing is, is they hadn't lost faith. They believed in truth, a truth in the self that is honest about where a color should go, or could go, and how it relates to others around it on a flat plane. It was a simple faith to have, satisfying to fulfill over and over. Like a science, they could prove it existed and they did.



August 26, 2012

Sitting around in art heaven taking a studio break, Clyfford Still says to Arthur Dove, "Remember that painting you did with the jagged red and brown shapes?" Dove says, "You mean *Swing Music*?" Still says, "Yeah, that one....I just wanted to say thanks for the edgy ride." Dove, "No prob, bro."

August 29, 2012

Religious zealots think artists are sinners because artists find pleasure in matter—in life. Artists think zealots too rigid to accept love and purity in pleasure, in life. Nietzsche says sin is foolishness. Artists know there is nothing foolish in paint except their own inability to make music with it, to feel it, to love it and to smarten its texture. Failing to live and live well is the sin. No one knows what matter is or even if it is really there but the hand that pours rich color on a blank surface, is the same hand that rests on the shoulder of a downcast friend. And that's not matter, that's inspiration, that's grace. But what of the hand that grasps at the throat of a foe? That's not matter, either, it's pain, it's cruelty, and it believes in stubborn willpower, in a force other than life. A dogmatic hand seeks literal pleasure in the death wish. He succumbs to the trappings of dogma so contrary to pleasure that he betrays the ideal he loves most and fails to see the sinner he has become. He mistakes the courage of poets, thinking their bravery a danger to his way of life. Meanwhile, still pouring color, poets compose thought models to live for. They whisper, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do."



August 31, 2012

Follow the straight and narrow way. I hated that admonition. One day in 1987, my brush loaded with wet fluid color, I swished it along the page from top to bottom. OH! That's the straight and narrow! Not restriction but flow, not accusation or ridicule but rescue. Follow the straight and narrow, go your way like fluid flow, practice your relaxed muscle walk. Understanding gained through a loaded brush, understanding gone solid. Boom. Humility bombs me. I turn through the bullshit like a greased gear.

**Comment:**

**Jennifer Wynne Reeves:** darn, i meant to write "i torque through the bullshit like a greased gear." poet license with "torque" revitalized as a verb. pooh.

**Jennifer Wynne Reeves:** the image comes from a mythology i created, or that evolved, from drawing animals and studying the Bible. eventually, the animals transformed into creatures i called "slugs". they were like slugs, or seals, without eyes or legs. they had a hand for a nose, like star-nosed moles. i put them in stark landscapes, laying around on sofas or interacting with each other. one might hold another one over a hole. sometimes a boulder would threaten to smash an unaware slug. always there was a pillar of fire way off in the background on the horizon line. in this painting the slug is transformed into a tornado whirl. the pillar of fire is no longer on the horizon, separate. the fire comes from within him, it replaces the hand his nose used to be.

**Jennifer Wynne Reeves:** oh, in the old testament there's the story of moose and the israelites wandering in the wilderness. they are led by "a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night."



September 3, 2012

I like to mine seemingly orthodox sources in an unorthodox way. In Genesis One there was light. God created man in his own image, male and female. A rush of inspiration floors me. I see that the body is one sex, a whole world of light. BUT . . . In Genesis Two, no bliss but a mist. Adam is created from dust. Eve from a rib. There's a serpent spinning lies from the branches of the knowledge of good and evil (as opposed to the wisdom of correct and incorrect). The body is split up into pieces or sexes, man, woman, tree, snake, mist and vengeful God. It is a story of spiritual division with its consequent banishment and shame. In my work, I re-imagine the phallic symbol of Genesis Two as redeemed. He's abstract, neither penis nor vagina, but both in nature. Male and female are one. They ball rainbows and blow away mists, or myths. I am the man in my life and you are the woman in your life. There's no such thing as talking serpents but there are such things as stripes. They speak from the light with a noiseless soul-walk, they whisper prayers from squares like trees singing. Lines rise in the strength of true manhood and womanhood. They are the original truth-tellers spraying the garden with doves.



September 5, 2012

A scrabble game greets customers as they enter my shop. I tell them they have to buy something or add a word to the board. A lady who bought all my horses played two games with me. We didn't keep score. She said she usually plays with a dictionary. I said, "That's cheating!" She said, "No it's not—it's learning." She also said that she likes to play solitaire. She wonders how many combinations of winning games there are. She told me she peeks at her cards to see if she's got a winning game. I said, "That's cheating!" She said, "No, it's scientific." She never cracked a smile, total deadpan. Whenever it was my turn she talked a blue streak. She bought a painted cabinet. We carried it to her car. She makes clocks. I tried to bargain with her. "I'll give you two of my vowels for your Z." She wouldn't. I said, "What! Why not?" She said, "Because that would be cheating." The pleasure was all in the laughter.



September 11, 2012

I might doubt things will work out but I rarely doubt if I can finish a painting. My remedy for doubt is to understand that the human mind cannot fathom infinity except in glimpses, in art. Once there was a woman visiting my studio who was horrified by my drawings of slugs. She actually made a little scream and walked out of the room. I was surprised at her strong reaction. She thought the ugliness of the slugs was evidence of my mental atmosphere—bad to be around. I was so surprised I was struck dumb. I couldn't clearly defend myself or my work. Our new friendship petered out. If I could speak to her again, I would say that I look at strife with a purpose in mind—to blast it, to blast it with Guernicas by understanding the difference between infinity and holocaust, even the holocaust of a freudian death wish with its nose dipped in a tar pit. I cannot fathom infinity but I have faith something insightful can happen on a blank page, scratch by scratch.

**Comments:**

**Jennifer Wynne Reeves:** once i told an art dealer i thought the slugs were apathy. the dealer thought they were depression. but, isn't apathy a form of depression? i prefer depression, tho, because it's not as judgmental. to say someone is apathetic is to say that they are morally corrupt but i think there is no real moral corruption because moral corruption is only an outcome of a person learning to give up at a young age or being born without moral chips—it's not their fault. which means we cannot accuse them for being who anyone would be under the very same circumstances—stuck in tar like a hairy mammoth and destined for extinction.

**Jennifer Wynne Reeves:** note, in this drawing there is a pillar of fire on the horizon line. i guess i needed some hope. anyway, i remember during this period that i would sit in my chair looking at the painting on the wall, knowing exactly what i wanted to do next but being unable to get myself out of the chair to do it. i had everything i needed, the paint, the studio, the brushes, the ideas, the skill, the passion, the time, but not the three steps to the wall. i WAS the slug. and it wasn't fun. i would be cemented to that chair for hours in a mental torture. it was a miracle if i made one mark by the end of the day.

**Jennifer Wynne Reeves:** i loved that biblical story of the children of israel wandering in the wilderness for forty years (40?). nothing to eat but boring manna bread but, still, a pillar of fire to lead them by night and a pillar of cloud by day. i knew what that wilderness was like. i was living it, even painting it.

**Jennifer Wynne Reeves:** i thought if i could make my apathy the subject of my work then maybe something would happen, healing by scratching.

September 25, 2012

As for major and minor works, they exist but I think perfection underlies reality. I see perfection as democratic. It is a naturally divine law and to the extent that we avail ourselves of this law, we can be the great ones we are, all of us. Minor works, at least, point to the hope of greatness. Major works reflect greatness, greatness being fullness. And to foster an art community, we must allow lots of room for patience and encouragement in between. To say that Kokoschka was too minor to criticize Mondrian misses the point of major and minor. Even a crappy painter can be alive with critical insight. But, Kokoschka was not a crappy painter, he was a terrific painter on his way to fullness. When critiquing Mondrian, he used Mondrian's Achilles heel to bring attention to the necessity of representational values so that a puritanical abstractionism might not wipe out the humanity of representation. He wasn't critiquing Mondrian, he was critiquing indifference. He had a point to which I concur.





October 25, 2012

I loved Kiefer's art. I hated Lasker's. One was heart. One was head. I trusted feeling but not intellect. One day, I was reading from Job or the Psalms. I read something about letting the water run down the stream. A vision of my hands held under a running faucet came to mind. I didn't worry about the wastewater, where it went down the faucet. I just washed my hands. I realized I could do the same thing thinking about the past. I could let the pain go down the faucet with the wastewater. That night, my father, who had been murdered, came to me in a dream. He was aged, had glasses on, and a trim but scruffy beard. He held me. He told me everything was going to be okay. The next morning the room glowed, literally, glowed. I decided to make a painting a day for a month. I decided to make each work differently from the next, to reason them through. I watched dancers on television. They turned into lines, literally, lines. I saw through their material bodies. It frightened me a little. I was like Giacometti watching people disappear in the distance. I was like Pollock catapulted by the nature of his own nature. Everything looked differently. I loved Lasker's. I still loved Kiefer's. Head and heart merged. They were not killers, they were complimentary, they were two hands washing each other.



November 14, 2012

Halos are made of Blake-bling. They can be erased circles, gold plated saucers, radiating lines, a simple dot. They have lived in the imaginations of artists for centuries and I suspect before that. They were abstract before "abstraction." They were drawn by the first wiener that sunk a circle in the snow, glow, snow, glow of a Ryder moon. I see holiness in a Judd geometric, in a Siena system and think to myself we're still trying to imagine a damn halo! We're still trying to reveal the "stuff" of life, the building blocks that even the blind can see.





November 18, 2012

Grandma Hallie heard my high school boyfriend climb through the window into my bedroom. He woke her up trying to wake me up. I was ignoring him. She said, “John, isn’t it customary to knock on the front door? You two go downstairs to talk.” I thought, that’s it? Next, John and I are discussing who knows what in the living room and first thing I know, she’s flowing down the stairs in her long silk night-gown with little blue and pink flowers embroidered around the collar, a silk ribbon dangling at her throat, holding a twenty-two shot gun. “John, what if I thought you were an intruder? I just might blow your head off.” Not another word. Dead pan. She turns. She goes up the stairs. My grandmother, Hallie Holt Reeves, the one who raised me, the one who saved me from my dad, her own son, she, who blew into my ear when it ached, who gave me soda crackers to settle my stomach when I threw up all night from eating a purple hotdog in Hawaii. She liked mourning doves. She listened to the Ink Spots. She hated Frank Sinatra. She watched *Laugh In* and *Columbo*. Blue was her favorite color—sarcasm her choice of humor.

December 15, 2012

My last post was the painting called "Jonah and the Big Fish". I sacrificed the whale's big teeth for the sake of the power of abstraction in the picture. But I don't mean to imply that personal evolution ought to be a limp submissive thing, or toothless. Quite the contrary. Refinement requires the growl of the holy bear to bloom full-blooded. I don't just want to live. I want to THRIVE. Control the guns but let my bear be.



December 23, 2012

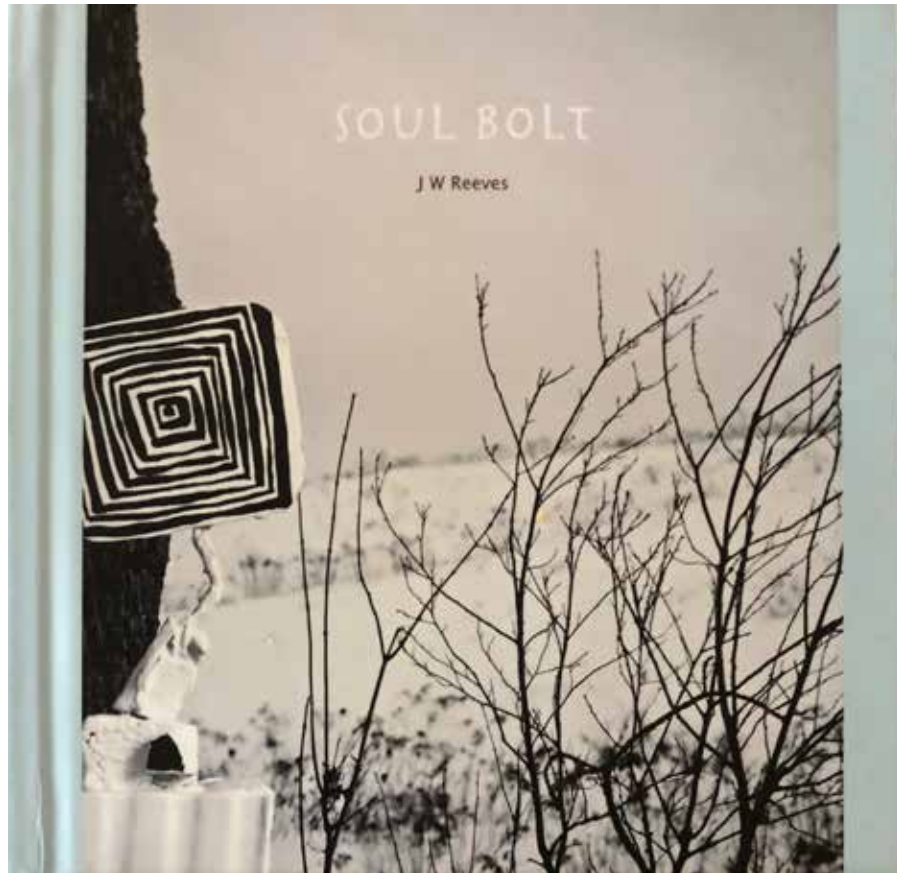
He hooked me with a puzzle of puddles. I jumped in with velvet shoes. The bottom of his trench coat flipped up like a hand waving hello when he sprang to catch a cab, his spring was more athletic than his pale intellectual veneer seemed to suggest. Were you the one who took the Chagall from the Jewish Museum? Did you write the ransom letter petitioning for peace between the Israelis and Palestinians? I had a hunch it was. The paper reported the letter was polite saying the note included an apology to the museum for their trouble. My dealer's assistant had described you as polite, too. I drew the connections, just hunches but intuition can be dead-on. We make our living from it, me the artist, you the poet/critic. I emailed you with my suspicions that you were the culprit, that you were the "International Committee for Art and Peace." A week later, the radio announced the painting was returned, inexplicably popping up in a Kansas post office mailed to a non-address. It can't have been a coincidence. You liked "The Thomas Crown Affair." In one scene, a psychiatrist asks Crown: "If society's interests run contrary to your own, can society trust you?" Crown just smiles saying nothing. I wished I was your match, Rene Russo, the untrusting insurance investigator—but I'm just a girl looking into a puddle, her velvet shoes ruined.





December 26, 2012

When my little brother discovered Grandma Hallie's hotel bell the cats disappeared. I was 12 when he was born, an only child, not accustomed to noise. I loved the silence, the sound of the old clock ticking, watching dust particles float in stray rays shining through the curtain, playing horses in made-up countries INSIDE my head. This little creature who wanted to play monopoly and watch *Starsky and Hutch* every second of the day was a new phenomenon. He brought out the worst and the best of me. I spanked him. I yelled at him. I discovered I had a soft low motherly voice, one I didn't know was there until a little whirlwind swept into my life. This Christmas I sent my 37 year old brother a special gift in the mail. He called me yesterday. The silence between us is so full of love it breaks my heart.



January 31, 2013

*Soul Bolt* unravels a tangle of personal vignettes. The author knits a tale inspired by true events, of an artistic mind encountering sadistic love, a dangerous liaison between an artist and an art critic. But the artist recognizes innocence in her sexual desire. She merges them in order to free herself from the mysterious writer that abuses her trust. He could be a spy, a Dorian Gray, an art thief or an impotent man with Asperger's syndrome—no one will ever know. The puzzle of him and the clues he leaves behind is like a cement block unyielding to rational thought. The only way out is for her to embrace the dissatisfaction of limbo. Turning away from his torture, she leans on the self-fulfillment of creating. She builds sculptures out of paint, phallic but spiritually abstract. Grounded in a representational landscape, she photographs her figures in blizzards and deserts. They become the ever-present irrational inspirations that emancipate her from a puzzling obsessive loop. Diagnosed with a brain tumor and waking from surgery, she realizes she does not cry out for her abuser. The riddle unravels because an answer from him no longer matters.



February 12, 2013

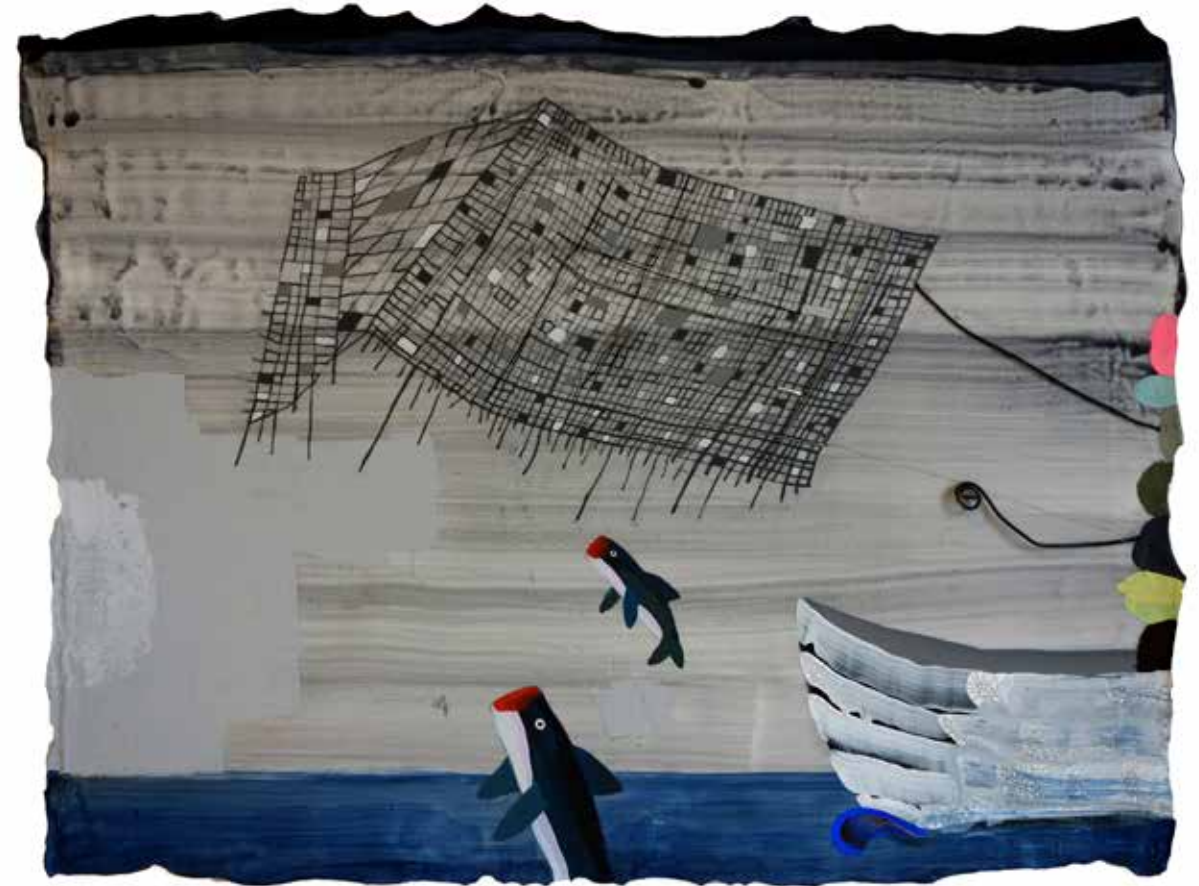
FRIDAY NIGHT AT BRAVINLEE PROGRAMS . . .

He wooed her. He said all the right things, all the proper things, manicured things. He showed her the depth of his decency, his perfectly organized refrigerator. It only contained ten things. He loved a minimal design but the aesthetics of life was at odds with his taste. He was hairy. But she liked his buffalo hide the most. She loved to bend the rules. She celebrated ape remnants. She dismissed the hygiene of contemporary thought. She wanted him to wrap her up in his buffalo hide. She liked him sweaty, with eyeliner creeping into his crow's feet; he liked her intensely polished, shaved barren in the beastie parts.



February 15, 2013

It seems to me modernism verifies inspirational matters by demonstrating or denying their existence, that artists claim spirituality either by negating divinity (protesting too much), or by confirming identity (knowing the difference between acting and being). I propose that post-modernism will not be revealed until we all end up in the Hereafter Museum, verifying that, yes, life does indeed go on...or, else, extinction. I cast my grid for the former—but, for today, the day of my opening, I'll remove fingerprints from the glass in my framed works. Cleaning calms me.



February 21, 2013

Intuition orchestrates. I realized only now, five days after the opening, that because the paintings that combine abstraction and representation are hung with the abstract paintings in pairs, another combination of abstraction and representation is created so that the unions in the installation mirrors the unions in the paintings. Together, the repetitions are a double mint, double mint meaning in one. I could not have foreseen this poetic mathematical layering. I didn't plan it. Where does intuition come from? I don't know. But, my faith in my faith in the Great Rhythmic Beat called Soul has just multiplied by two. And this is why I devote my life to the arts—to witness the beautiful surprise of mathematics.

Comment:

Jennifer Wynne Reeves: darn, i should have written the last line—the beautiful supply of mathematics.



February 26, 2013

When I was eight, Disney picked up my pencil to draw foxes and guns.  
When I was a teenager, Lennon and McCartney filled up my lungs.  
I learned to “take a sad song and make it better.” When I was in college, Shakespeare made me a man. I put on a jock strap and tamed a shrew. Improvisation exercises showed me the difference between acting and being. Theatre taught me to be a line, not just see a line. When I went to New York, Van Gogh’s drawings taught me to know the difference. Modern dance moved me to paint the sound of gesture. When I was 40, writing rendered shapes, painting typed an alphabet, and photography illustrated them both. When I was 49, I picked up my pencil. I was a fox, a gun, a sail, a telephone pole, a bridge, a power line. The arts are more than culture—painting, writing, music, theater, photography, dance, writing—are one, they join hands, they seek segues, they open wormholes. There’s no way to ripen without them.



March 7, 2013

He picked up the pieces his brother left behind, pieces of me. When I ran away to my grandmother's, he blocked his brother's path to protect me. He picked up the slack when his brother died, shot in the head. His dad was gone, too. We rolled in the dandelions, we went to a Donovan concert, we ate skinny burgers and fries at the Hunter House. He wore an earring. We watched cars zoom by on Woodward Avenue. He made me a barn for my horses with real hay in the stalls. He let me bother him and his friends when they wanted to be alone. I kept showing them my tutus. A reprimand from him was the worst horror of my life. I saved a clipping of his toenail. When I thought about giving up painting, he's the only one who said don't. When I was sick, he dropped everything to come be with me, leaving his car stranded in an airport parking lot, not bothering to go home to get a coat. He likes the songs that make a bad man cry. One day I caught a look on his face when he didn't know I was home. I knew that look, a tortured look. He's not perfect but he's my not perfect. He knows how to love. And now I do, too.



There is no need for you to leave the house. Stay at your table and listen. Don't even listen, just wait. Don't even wait, be completely quiet and alone. The world will offer itself to you to be unmasked, it can't do otherwise, in raptures it will writhe before you.

FRANZ KAFKA  
(Reflections on Sin, Suffering,  
Hope and the True Way)

March 12, 2013

I pick out the word that salts my skin. "Writhe". Right there, in that word, is where Kafka's peppery poetic sense thrusts. But what if miracles like these are not miracles? What if they are supremely natural? I look for what is supremely natural in the every day, the way it writhes before me, the way one plus One equals . . . oneness.

March 20, 2013

Tell me about the real stuff and not just the procedure. In my process I'm not as interested in discussing how the paint goes down as I am in puzzling over the shifts that take place in my consciousness, why they happen and how they show up in the art afterwards. THAT'S where the action really takes place, where the art is made first—in thought. But, I don't believe in stopping there. I want to be able to make experience real on the page. Artistic process has two necessary branches; one that bends materials and one that mines the big art supply store inside. Sontag said, "What is life and how shall we live it?" Attempting to untangle those knots, I say, "What is life and how shall we paint it?" Process unfolds. It's not procedural it's progress, it's a cognitive revelation realized in a composition. I talked to a line and a line talked back. I didn't know she had anything to say until I was ready to hear her. I didn't know I was the line. I thought I was a slug.



April 30, 2013

You made my brain a focused orgy. Self-play was better for feeling vandalized without you. I did secret things to pretend you were there. I would grab a carrot from the fridge. Wrap it in Saran Wrap. Butter it with lube and sink it into my starburst. Put my finger in my jay-jay, all holes full. Make myself cum by thinking, no, not thinking, yes, thinking, no. Squeeze and grip, release slowly, find the spot, the perfect spot before it escapes. Find God's perfect spot until no spot remains because everything is a spot: all of it, all of it all at once. Ah. It's over and I miss you. (From *Soul Bolt*)

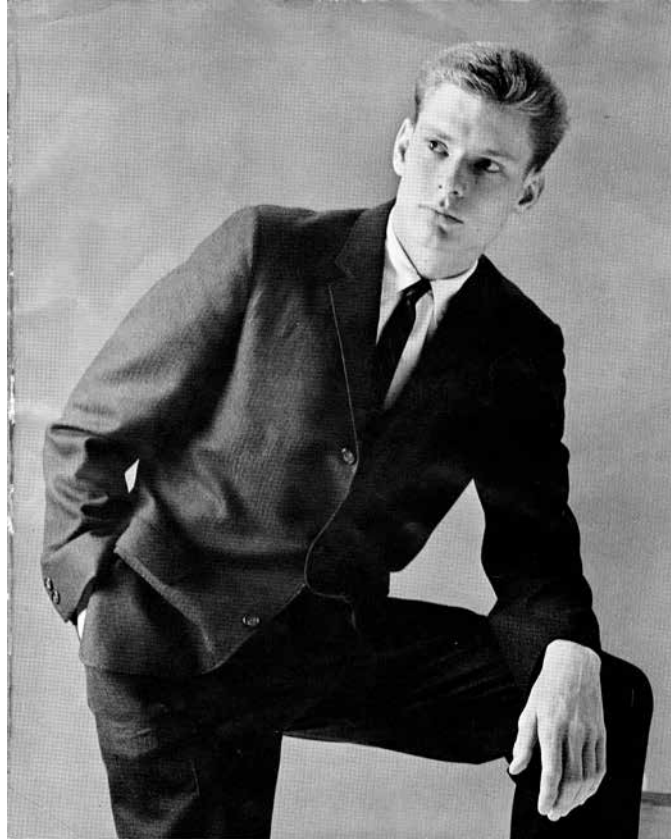


May 19, 2013

A python, called human life, suffocates me slow with a dry-eyed weep. I watch countless episodes of *Rescue Me* on a Sunday morning, noon, into the afternoon. Sickened by the pull of downward spirals, I decide to get dressed at 3:00 p.m. A neighbor stops by to tell me he's been calling. My phone was charged but off. I call a friend but she's busy. I don't tell her I need her. I call another friend but she's not home. I leave a message telling her I've got to get out of here, not quite enough emphasis to be a cry for help. Walking across the bridge over the Delaware, I see a swallow in flight at eye level right by my shoulder. She throws back her head and drops a white pearl into the river. I have never seen such joy in my life. If only I could make a pearl like that, a grace of shit.







June 3, 2013

It was the final swim meet and the coach said I should eat carbohydrates. You volunteered to make spaghetti. You treated it like an opportunity to make amends and be a normal dad. It made me happy to see you happy. I wanted to savor your spaghetti. I wanted you to see me savor it. But the phone rang. It was my coach. The meet had already started. We skipped dinner, jumped in the car and drove away from our last chance for remedy because a bad man shot you the next week. You were not the best dad and maybe you were a bad man, too. I don't know if you could have reformed and it doesn't really matter. I only wanted to show you how much I liked your spaghetti. It's a small thing, I know, and I probably shouldn't bring it up. But that's what tragedy does to the circuits of those left behind; they belatedly make ballads out of missed dinners.

June 9, 2013

Stiff fingers were the topic of conversation. Old age prattle already? I don't feel any different inside when I look out from my eye sockets at the slumping face in the mirror. I mean I am different, more experienced, but the core of me feels the same as day one, complete. A feather tickles THAT self. It prompts me to recall my hull. What if I am not in my body but my body is inside of me? What if we only seem to be inside bodies the way train tracks seem to meet on the horizon and ships seem to fall off the edge of the earth? What if the Christ isn't flat like creeds but round like expanding conceptions of our best selves? Leonardo freed birds. I think he saw a crack in the birdcage.



August 14, 2013

In college, I liked the dreamers, the sensitives, the intuitive/sensuals, the kind that Jung said make the best artists, and the kind my grandmother said I shouldn't marry. Maybe I should not have listened to my grandmother. They aren't the best providers, they hope in goodness too much and ambition too little but without them, their aspirations and insights, the possibilities of jazz and abstraction would never reveal the future perspectives of flight or pioneer the nether net-moons online. Maybe confusing realities isn't so bad. Maybe hope in the after-life is better. Maybe I should have married one of them and not the art dealer or, not. It's just that the light in their eyes drew a line straight to mine. And when I started to fall it was one of them that caught me.

August 22, 2013

The Detroit Institute of Arts (1972) was the first museum I set foot in. I was nine years old. Mostly I wandered around looking for pictures of horses but I bought Rothko and Lichtenstein postcards to hang in my room. I saw a Ron Gorchov painting not knowing that he would be my teacher one day at the Vermont Studio Center. When I returned to Detroit for a visit and saw the Gorchov again, I understood the museum was a place for living artists, artists that I knew and a possible goal for my work. It hadn't occurred to me before that this was something I could aspire to. I decided to keep on keeping on. Why would a city want to sell off such a legacy for temporary relief? In 2012, my work was in a group show with Gorchov's in NYC. Museums are an essential link in the chain of culture. They are wombs not tombs, wayposts where bright-eyed youngsters look for horses while subconsciously connecting dots.

September 15, 2013

Yes, I'm in the hospital. It's serious but I'll be okay. I'll let you know privately if I want 4,500 visitors. I don't. I want to be able to be angry about the semi-permanent needle stuck in my arm without a million doves trying to squelch my annoyance with impossible fixes. Let me be annoyed. Let me be cranky. I don't want sad faces. I want to talk about substance one moment and the frivolous ridiculous the next. My art dealer, John Lee came to visit with a sketchbook and croissants. He bought coffee for my roommate and I. It made her day. She was crying before he came. He was standing on one side of my bed and a nurse on the other with me between in my white nightgown and robe with the light pink ribbon running round the collar. The nurse asked, "When was your last unconstructed bowel movement?" I usually have no problem announcing a well dumped pooh but suddenly was hit with a jolt of shyness between the hospital world and Chelsea. John laughed and said something like, "This is what art dealers really do! I'll tell you when I had mine if you tell me when you had yours!" Dear John, thanks for the prunes. Mission accomplished, in fact, over accomplished. Fucking yay! A review in the *NYTimes*! As one friend put it, I got slapped and then kissed.





September 24, 2013

Light wakes up the overcast, my favorites, all the greys, midtones, blacks, and browns in between, snuggled up together tonight, shoulder to shoulder from my hospital bed. Collectively, we form a fourth primary color. Leading to dimensions yet unseen but ready for us, waiting colors, mixed, depending on what's next to what, even for those who know not what they do. Red, Yellow and Blue may be the first but not the last. I sink into the air mattress of this new day. Watch it rise. Inspiration watches with me, for landscapes, urban or rural either way as long as neutral subtleness verifies saturated swoons and passé resistance revisits the old contemporary, evergreener greens next to stormy skies, Times Square orange hots blinking on purple night, spires for the flying blind. Rise up but watch out for pickpocket poets imagined from sick beds. The Empire State lights shut down at two but my engines ignite by insight this night. All is not lost. Rothko decides to live another day. And another. I marry you, morning dawn, snoring canvas pulling out of the parking garage, night shift over, turning left to the GWBridge and right on the Palisades Parkway on my way home where the swallow flies by the Callicoon Bridge and I bead benedictions out of that which has not yet been named. Dear Blue, you may be the last but you are not the last one. I see a new heaven and a new earth because the first heaven and the first earth are passed away and there is no more sea. I lean up next to aspirations, shoulder to shoulder, gray to lighter gray, a modulated life, rich slate walkways unseen but known, unnamed familiars, the ones we will name soon. I can't be bothered by the sheets slipping off this plastic mattress. Too much blending to do.

September 27, 2013

I thought it would be a good book to die to so I bought it. Three short Christmas stories by Truman Capote. The first paragraph caught me tight, the way he described his elderly cousin. They were friends. He was seven. She was sixty-something. They were like me and my grandmother. She had a marvelous face, not unlike "Lincoln's," craggy like that. They took care of each other in an old house. The other inhabitants in the house are there to make them cry. It is fruit baking weather. They saved up the whole year to buy whisky and condiments. They poured out the money on her quilt to count. Capote writes, "Dollar bills, tightly rolled and green as May buds. Somber fifty-cent pieces, heavy enough to weight a dead man's eyes. Lovely dimes, the liveliest coin, the one that really jingles. Nickels and quarters, worn smooth as creek pebbles. But mostly a hateful heap of bitter-odored pennies. Last summer others in the house contracted to pay us a penny for every twenty-five flies we killed. Oh the carnage of August." I could die and go to heaven for a paragraph like that. But today, is not that day. You get to the point where you make a choice to die or not. It's in little subtle decisions like when to take a bath or deciding you'll pee on yourself but refuse to abide sitting in a pile of your own crap. I've made a choice. Today is not that day. My grandmother's voice from the past says, Jennifer, pick up your feet . . . as I list left.





November 13, 2013

You have no husband? No. You have no children? No. You have no boyfriend? No. You have no partner? No. Don't you feel alone? No, but sometimes, especially when I sponge up questions like these, I wake at 3 in the morning and start thinking I am alone. I feel awful for no reason and I have to remind myself that the same presence that is with me when I paint is with me at the dead of night. What a comfort the creative spirit yields. I'm so grateful for the sparrows chirping near my windowsill before sunrise. They send one-note songs out into the dark universe, on the shadow side of the earth, from a small town in a fracked state, where the streetlights are off and a night-light spots the top of a wobbly table next to my bed. Every time the freight train passes my whole building shakes, my cacti wobble despite the ribbons I tied around them for support. I'm fortunate to be snuggled under my feather comforter, a small landscape in itself. Yet I'm aware of the vast navy blue above the rooftop spattered with big bangs too numerous to count. A truck pulls up to Peck's market, already ready for morning deliveries. The table lamp shines on a glass of juice and books on my bedside table. I stick out a bare arm to take a drink and read the crowded silence. Will I still like the painting I started yesterday? Regardless, painting has taken the place of my walker. I needed one temporarily. I need the other for keeps.

December 12, 2013

I think I might not be alive to go to my opening next September. I think I should rush to finish things. I wonder why my body is doing this or that. I think Christmas will be long. I think I won't be able to save enough money for old age with all these bills, and that an imminent death would be preferable. I wouldn't have to look for ever more powerful galleries. I think it's too cold to go out and shovel the walk or clear the snow from my car. Oh, that's right. The car is in the shop. I think the car won't be fixed in time for me to pick up my friend at the bus station. I think I won't get enough exercise if I can't clear the snow from my car. I think no to every opportunity and yes to every condemnation. Today is a drip-dry depression. Slow. I think who is this "I"? I toss a rebellious "Fuck!" into the air.





December 31, 2013

I knew my sloth in the studio was Freud's idea of the death wish. I didn't lack for inspiration but my chair was glued to my ass. The eight-step walk to the canvas on the wall felt like an uphill drag. Emerson said worthy endeavors encounter resistance. Krasner watched Pollock procrastinate all day while she toiled in her studio. He'd get up early to throw logs in the wood stove. Then he'd sit in the kitchen all day waiting for the studio to warm up. He'd wait until sunset, before, in a flurry of energy probably brought on by guilt, he'd accomplish more than Krasner in a week's time. Afterwards, he'd go to the bars for a treat of alcohol and burliness. You can't enjoy the treat if the work isn't done. Many people struggle with the death wish. Not to be is to die and to be is to live yet when the time is right immobilization freezes the freedom to act. But the death wish, that devil, cannot freeze inspiration. There is no real thing, a devil, stopping me from walking eight easy steps. The drag is a myth not a cause, just because I occasionally submit to it doesn't mean it has any power of its own. Besides, death is merely a movement from one state to another, ironically, the opposite of stasis and, in this sense, the same as life. The thing I resist is the wish for death, the wish to give up trying. This wish is a trick pretending to be a hope, to be what I want and just a passing feeling. I don't wait for the drab to go away. I tolerate the blasted feeling. Eventually uphill becomes downhill. I get up and allow inspiration to make my visions come true. Death wish, what death wish? You lie. My happiness makes me make more. I feel like a feather. I guess I hope for life after all. I was starting to wonder.



January 17, 2014

GEARS. SHE LOVED HER DADDY, MY GRANDDAD RALPH, a gear maker. Her little brother, my dad, called her sissy because he couldn't say sister. The name stuck. I called her Aunt Sissy. She was one of the four pillars of my pyramid of strong women who influenced my girlhood. She told me I could have dreams and that I could accomplish them. Along with her mother, my grandmother, she put herself through college graduating with highest honors. She became the first woman engineer hired by GM. She passed away a month ago buried in Michigan near her dad. My Aunt Lee Reeves, another pillar. She put herself through college, too. When I came downstairs to catch the bus for school there'd be piles of college kids sleeping on the floor after a late night cram session for a class presentation. They'd all had dinner at our house the night before. I'd never seen my grandmother so happy and alive before that time. Lee studied anthropology, in particular, the drawings of Chinese horses. She asked me for my observations . . . as if my thoughts had weight. Tina, pillar four, my brother's mom, saved me from my grandmother's prudery, bought me a sexy skirt and shoes. Showed me how to apply makeup, how to flirt, told me I looked like the girl I admired in Seventeen Magazine. I was bulimic. I thought I was fat but I wasn't. I wanted to stop but I couldn't for many years. Still, I managed to pull through and quit thanks to a quote from an

opera class, I think, from a libretto from Wagner and the proximity of thinking women. His line jumped out at me . . . BAM! My imaginary preacher lifted his hand and said, "HEALED AH!!!!!" WAGNER WROTE, "Vanquish Thy Horrible Fascination, Life is so beautiful." So I'd stick my head in the toilet and think Life was beautiful, right then and there. Months later I was healed. I told the fascination to get thee behind me, I was born free, strong and tall. That's what pyramids do for girls. Big difference in the writing about women working then and now. Freaky stuff. A little rotund black girl in a pigtail and glasses stares at me across the hospital room. She's visiting her uncle or father. His paws are wrapped up like a dog so he won't scratch himself. He talks a lot but his voice is nice. It matches the background bustle. Three women attend the little girl. They look like headstones, monoliths, pedestals, tough. I can see the same in her already as she stands there staring, staring at me. Something defiant about that stare. It's tempting to look away but I don't. I hold steady like her. We're Young women staring across generations gluing moments like these together from painting to painting, play to play and experience to experience, teaching the men, teaching ourselves, learning to fly. Cherishing our wings. I live for these treasures.

January 28, 2014

Burchfield was aware of the likes of Mondrian and incorporated geometric strategies into his work. Knowledge doesn't ruin his Thoreau-ian ideal for me. Who says you can't love buildings and nature? There's squares in both. Captivated by sound, he recorded the music in a forest, in suburbs and railroad tracks with a brush—different types of silences between trains, between isms, between primitivism and modernism. Burchfield created marks for sound like Eskimos (Inuits) created words for snow. His isolation preserved his singularity without tainting his originality. Awareness of icebreakers cleared the way. Can a nobody from the midwest be a Parisian icebreaker? Oh yes. Does it take away from his accomplishments that he knew the work of his contemporaries? Only if he didn't integrate their discoveries into his own.

February 24, 2014

I believe in greatness, achieving greatness and aiming to make great work but shy away from labeling people as greater than other people. We're all in this together. Let's encourage everyone's greatness to come out and to be the great ones they are. And don't give me any grief about the contextual subjectivity of greatness as if a person can't make a judgement and then change their mind. Great buildings survive earthquakes if their foundations sit on shock absorbers. Honing one's ace-detector demands a flexible idea of what's great. Our world needs its splendors. Let's say they're great . . . at least, until they're not.



February 24, 2014

I love it when the studio is full of work in varying states. When one stumps me, when I need to decide upon a color, when my eyes have looked too long to see, I can focus my attention on another without stopping the flow.

**March 31, 2014**

Yesterday, I asked a hospital psychologist how to break the bad news of death best, in his professional opinion (if that's possible). He looked at me like a deer in the headlights and said he'd talk to me later. A friend, recommended a website. Today I walked into the rehab gym with a nurse. The radio was playing Garfunkel's *Cecilia*. I almost collapsed on the floor at the words, "Cecilia, you're breaking my heart." I'm begging you please to come home, to come home." Replace the word "death" with Cecilia. I thought if the nurse saw my emotion at this that she might take my pleas to go home more seriously, spread the news AND ACTUALLY MAKE IT HAPPEN. NOT SO FAR.

April 8, 2014

Oddly, sex was on my mind but sickness is violent so maybe not so odd. Packing to go to the hospital for the third brain surgery, I almost took my vibrator but no. I didn't want to disturb any potential roommates. I regretted the decision later wanting some. Feeling like shit for two days after the surgery sexy feelings were impossible but desperate lonely feelings piled up like too many suitcases on the tarmac. Even sickness needs some sexy but I couldn't bring myself over the edge. I was too weak. Only pitiful moans of slight air escaped from between my lips, my foot waved on the edge of the plastic air mattress. I needed some AAA batteries. I'll get some today. I figure sickness needs some sexy like seedlings need a day of sun. It's tempting to deprive oneself of basic body needs in times like this but better to cock the cucumber and set lust free. Yell the yelps. Oh! Oh! Oh! In rehab the nurses station lights shined into my room. I knew they could see my naked knee and thigh from the hallway so I kept my desire hidden under the sheet, muffled the noise and fought off the lust for later. Today I took advantage of alone time at home. My friend came over right at the end of the session. I jumped when I heard her enter the apartment, hid the vibrator under the blanket, told her I was embarrassed when she lifted the blanket to fold it over the sofa and the vibrator dropped out. She wanted to know where to put it. I said, just throw it on the bed. She did. Then we went for a walk. I got tired so she had to help me sit down on the road where I pissed in my pants waiting for her to return with her car. Close friends do these things. I was able to get up and meet her in the road using my walker. She looked like Audrey Hepbern when she drove up. I loved her. It felt good to be so close and comfortable about the secret violent things.



**May 9, 2014**

Pissed on myself twice today. My jeans made it plain to see in the McDonalds Parking Lot as my Uncle and I clutched onto the plastic garbage can so I wouldn't fall. Incontinence is preceded by seizures (muscle failure on one side of my body so I know it's coming but I don't know how badly). Two menopausal black women walked toward us. I could tell they knew what was happening. Younger people don't. They're impatient. Inert. Gawking. The smiles of the older women were a great comfort. I kept thinking of the green triangle I wanted to paint on the latest painting I had pinned on my wall. I carried a blue bag of wet wipes. They looked at them and knew what they were. When I got home I pissed in my pants again, wetting the the toilet the cleaning lady had just cleaned. So what. I took off my clean jeans, socks and underpants and threw them in the shower. Easy fix.



JENNIFER WYNNE REEVES 6-10-63 - 6-22-14

A life well lived.



## IMAGE CHECKLIST

Please note that every attempt was made to get complete information on the works.

- |  |  |   |  |  |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| 12 <b>Hellion Rebellion_2, 3, 4, 5</b><br>Archival Ink jet print on paper                                    | 47 <b>02-218 monotype</b> , 2005   | 83 <b>Mondrian guy in dark forest</b> ,<br>Archival inkjet print on paper.  | 119 <b>Growl of the Holy Bear</b> , 2012<br>Gouache, pencil, and wire on paper,<br>14 x 24 in.                         | 151 <b>Untitled Hess Rd 2</b> , 2007, Archival<br>inkjet print on paper, 13 x 19 in.           |
| 15 <b>Place 2-20</b> , 1996, Acrylic and<br>pencil on wood, 31½ x 21 in.                                     | 49 <b>Look Into My Eyes</b> , 2010<br>Archival inkjet print on paper   | 85 <b>Dark Dance</b> , 2010<br>Archival inkjet print on paper   | 121 <b>Black Swan Sequence</b> , 2012,<br>Gouache, pencil, wire, hair,<br>and molding paste on paper,<br>12¼ x 15¼ in. | 155 <b>Jacob Pins the Angel</b>  |
| 17 <b>Place (4-56)</b> , 1998, Oil, acrylic and<br>oil stick on panel, 23 x 15 in.                           | 53 <b>Immaculate Conception</b> , 2004<br>Archival inkjet print on paper,<br>38¾ x 49½ in.                       | 89 <b>Place 4-47</b> , 2004<br>Oil stick on panel, 23½ x 37½ in.  | 126 <b>Fire Fall Flight</b> , 2012<br>Gouache, pencil, wire, and molding<br>paste on paper, 12¼ x 15¼ in.              | 159 <b>Expressionista to the Rescue!</b><br>Archival inkjet print on paper                     |
| 18 <b>Place 5-2</b> , 1998   | 57 <b>Mondrian Guy and Expressionist<br/>Guy Take a Walk</b> , 2003, Gouache<br>and pencil on paper, 11 x 14 in. | 91 <b>Wedding guy</b> ,<br>Archival inkjet print on paper   | 129 <b>Cast Your Grid</b> , 2012<br>Gouache, pencil, wire, molding<br>paste on paper, 12 x 15¼ in.                     | 161 <b>Mondrian Travels in Spring 2</b> ,<br>2004, Gouache on monoprint<br>paper, 19½ x 26 in. |
| 20 <b>Place 4-20</b> , 1997, Acrylic and pencil<br>on panel, 19 x 29¾ in.                                    | 59 <b>Place (2-11)</b> , 1996, Oil, acrylic, and<br>pencil on panel, 23½ x 37½ in.                               | 95 <b>Guy at Grand Canyon</b><br>Archival inkjet print on paper   | 131 <b>Bird Healer</b> , 2012<br>Gouache, pencil, wire, molding<br>paste on paper, 12 x 15 in.                         | 171 <b>Place 4-16</b> , 1998<br>Acrylic on panel, 31½ x 21½ in.                                |
| 23 <b>Initial Impulse—the lines are<br/>everywhere</b> , 2000, Acrylic and<br>pencil on panel, 23½ x 47½ in. | 63 <b>Place (2-16)</b> , 1996, Acrylic and<br>pencil on panel, 23½ x 37½ in.                                     | 97 <b>Place 4-48</b> , 1997<br>Oil on panel, 14 x 22 in.  | 133 <b>Wolf Howling</b>  |  |
| 25 <b>Place 5-3</b> , 1998, Acrylic, sand, and<br>pencil on panel, 27½ x 16½ in.                             | 67 <b>Untitled, bedroom</b> , 2007<br>Gouache on paper, 11 x 14 in.  | 101 <b>Branches</b> , 2010  | 135 <b>Cottage</b> , 2013, Acrylic, wood, and<br>wire on panel, 15 x 15 in.  |  |
| 27 <b>Place 5-25</b> , 1998, Acrylic and<br>pencil on panel, 37 x 60 in.                                     | 69 <b>It has an 'F' for fuck in it</b> , 1999,<br>Acrylic on board, 29 x 18 in.                                  | 103 <b>Straight and Narrow Way 1</b> , 1987<br>Gouache on paper, 8 x 10 in.   | 137 <b>Place 5-20</b> , 1998<br>Acrylic on panel 18½ x 30 in.  |  |
| 28 <b>Voice of translator</b> , 2008,<br>Gouache and archival ink on paper,<br>20¾ x 30 in.                  | 71 <b>Initial Impulse"brown angeles<br/>threw everything off"</b> , 1999<br>Acrylic on board, 29 x 18 in.        | 111 <b>Vestibule</b> , 2003, Acrylic on panel,<br>shadowbox, 32 x 48 x 6½ in.   | 141 <b>4-8</b> , 2004, Acrylic, buttons, pencil,<br>and watercolor on paper,<br>15 x 22½ in.                           |  |
| 33 <b>They had a problematic courtship</b> ,<br>2010, Archival inkjet print and<br>gouache on archival paper | 75 <b>Didn't work out</b><br>Archival inkjet print on paper  | 113 <b>Initial Impulse Two AB Exer's<br/>Loving the Mystery</b> , 2000, Acrylic<br>and pencil on panel, 63¼ x 120 in. | 143 <b>Bitter Sweet</b> , 2005<br>Gouache on paper, 11 x 14 in.  |  |
| 42 <b>Head Crave</b> , 2010, Archival inkjet<br>print on paper, 23 x 34¾ in.                                 | 81 <b>Promising ideas 3</b> , 2010, Archival<br>inkjet print on paper, 13 x 10 in.                               | 115 <b>Gratitude Geysler</b> , 2012<br>Gouache, pencil, and wire beads on<br>paper, 11½ x 15¼ in.                     | 147 <b>Angel Search</b> , 2004<br>Archival inkjet print on paper   |  |



**Jennifer Wynne Reeves** spent much of her childhood curled up on her grandmother's sofa drawing pictures. Her love of making art led to a life of making paintings. Jennifer's work, a combination of abstraction and realism, was shown consistently since 1998 in New York and abroad. Her solo exhibitions include: Art & Public in Geneva, Gian Enzo Sperone in Rome; Max Protetch, Ramis Barquet and BravinLee programs, NYC. She received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2012.

Reeves enjoyed a considerable fan-base as a result of her astonishing Facebook presence where her provocative discourses about art and philosophy ignited fierce discussion. Reeves was also celebrated for her writing. She produced a graphic novel, *The Anyway Ember* and *Soul Bolt*, a book of images and prose.

She was open and generous with aspiring artists, pushing them to guard their integrity in a world where imitation is often rewarded over innovation.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all who volunteered their hours and expertise into making this book possible. Without their passion and respect for Jennifer and her work it never would have happened.

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Lisa Beck

Megan Theoret-Talking Stick Designs

The five thousand art enthusiasts who helped make Jennifer's Facebook page a virtual salon where radical ideas found free expression and unflinching honesty.

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