

Creativity

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A while back I posted a photo of the painting my daughter gave me for my March 20th birthday, a painting of a San Francisco street (she lives in SF) and now here is a picture of her actually working on the painting.

And thinking about that made me remember another painting of hers...this one done when she was in fourth grade many years ago. It won a prize in a city-wide children's art show, and it has been hanging in my guest bedroom now for a long time.



It was a painting of her cat, whose name was Betsy, with a litter of kittens. If you click to enlarge it you can appreciate the very self-satisfied look on the mother cat, and the pink paw pads.

Fun to have creative children, and all of my children are, or were. Grandchildren, as well, come to think of it.

On Saturday I head to Detroit, and from there to Flint, Michigan, where I will spend all day Sunday. So today and tomorrow I am at my desk, plugging away on a book manuscript. Someone asked me recently if it was difficult coming and going and being interrupted mid-writing so much. Actually, it serves me well, I think, because breaking off doesn't mean the ideas disappear or dissipate. It gives them a chance to be worked on at a sub-conscious level. I might write steadily for a couple of days...then head off, as I am this weekend...but my brain is still working on that plot and those characters. When I get back to it, and to them, as I will on Tuesday, they will be enhanced, re-worked. That's what usually happens, at least. Not always, of course; but more often than not.

Back to the cat painting: I remember my daughter confiding in me (she was eight) that the painting started out to be a whale. The gray curve of the cat's back was supposed to be the body of the whale. But suddenly, she said, it began to look like her cat.

The same thing happens, actually, in writing. You think a plot is going to turn left...and then suddenly, it seems as if it has turned right, or wants to. And usually it is a good thing to follow along where it wants to go. It is not a good idea to force a cat to become a whale when what it really wants to be is a cat.

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