

Trumpetvine Travels



Volume One

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Trumpetvine Travels


Volume One

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Special thanks to artists Barbara Stecher,
Dee Frank, and Dan Price for generous
permission to include their work, and to
Adam♥ for encouragement, support,
and cappuccinos!

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<i>What is Trumpetvine Travels?</i>	2
<i>A Sketching Kit for the Minimalist</i>	4
<i>Sketchbooking</i>	8
<i>How to Survive a Boring Business Trip</i>	12
<i>Moonlight Chronicles</i>	14
<i>Gallery</i>	20
<i>Dee's Delights</i>	22
<i>A Highly Opinionated Guide to Magazines</i>	24
<i>Sketching Rules at the Met</i>	29
<i>Italia per Artisi</i>	30
<i>Drawing Practice Book</i>	35
<i>Resources</i>	38
<i>Ordering</i>	40



What is *Trumpetvine Travels*?

I have long been intrigued by personal sketching used to enhance travel journals, daily diaries, art journals, nature journals, letters, postcards and other documents. A hand-drawn sketch, even in the most simple form, adds a unique charm and personal touch that can't be achieved any other way. As my own interest in sketching has developed, I have become very curious about how others create sketches and the uses they have found for their work.

In researching this topic I have discovered many resources, from the well-known to the obscure. There is a distinct absence however, of attempts to pull this kind of information together. Discussion of personal sketching is scattered widely, typically embedded in resources on other topics. With *Trumpetvine Travels* I hope to fill this void



S. Margherita

by creating a forum and resource specifically on personal sketching.

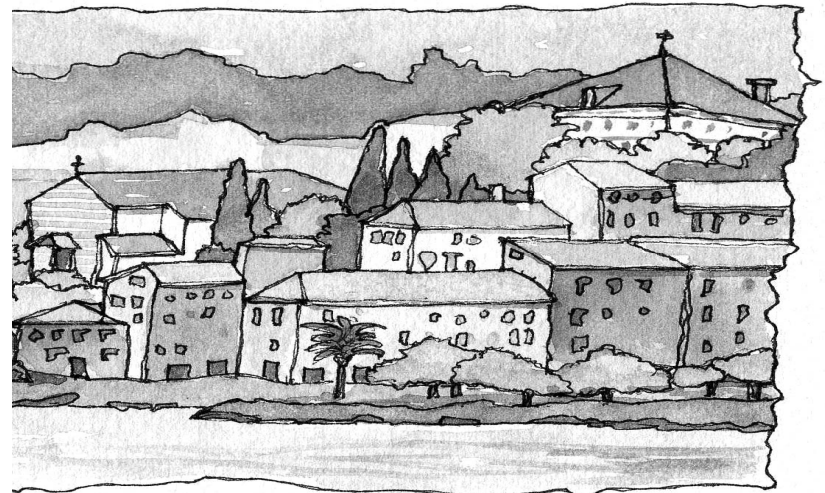
I would like to use this publication as a means to share what I've learned so far, and as a way to investigate further. *Trumpetvine Travels* is thus the illustrated journal of that journey of discovery. In this and future volumes, topics will include book reviews, sketchbook excerpts, workshop reports, tips and techniques, supplies, resources, and of course, lots of sketches. Going forward I will add in-depth profiles of sketching artists to examine their methods, experiences, sketchbooks, stories and tips.

I hope you enjoy this first volume of *Trumpetvine Travels*. Any and all feedback is very welcome. If you have ideas for articles or would like to share your sketches, please let me know!

For information on ordering this and future volumes see the last page. Also, note that all resources referred to in the articles are gathered in one handy place at the end of this publication in the **Resources** section. ✍

Enjoy!

Martha



A Sketching Kit for the Minimalist

Part of the fun of artistic endeavor is perfecting your gear. I find that my kit is constantly changing and will probably never settle down completely. Currently, I am in a minimalist period and seek to carry as few tools as possible. Here is what is currently in my sketching kit:

Paint Box

I really like the small (5"x 2½"x ¾") white plastic Cotman Sketcher's watercolor box from Winsor & Newton (\$17.00). I prefer artist's quality paints so I pop out the Cotman cakes and fill the pans with my favorite tube



colors. It is also handy to have some fresh clean pans (10 for \$3.00). Once filled let the box sit initially overnight before closing and you'll have no trouble with the paint running. To refresh a pan, add more

paint and let the box sit for ten minutes or so before closing. Although the paint stays put in this box, the pans don't. They tend to stick to the lid or fall out when the box is tipped, so I solved this problem by gluing them in with white glue. I was also able to split a couple of the pans into smaller sections by gluing in a small barrier cut from a scrap of soft plastic. These little spaces are great for trying out new colors.



Brush

Although I own a variety of wonderful travel brushes, I currently just carry a Niji Waterbrush (\$7.00 - \$11.00). This relatively new product consists of a nylon brush fed with its own water supply in the handle. This brush is more than adequate for adding washes to sketches on the



go, and eliminates the need to carry a supply of water. It also allows the flexibility to paint in more situations since there is no open water source to support or balance.

Amazingly, the amount of water stored in the handle goes a very long way; I rarely need to refill it, even if sketching for several hours.

Waterbrush Tips: The waterbrush comes in four styles.



There are “small”, “medium”, and “large” brush heads on a regular length handle (7” total), and one called “mini” which is actually a medium brush head on a shorter length handle (6” total). The heads and handles are interchangeable. I like the large brush head which is fine enough for detail but

can also cover a large area when needed, and the short handle for it’s compactness, so I bought a “large” and a “mini” and put them together.

To clean a paint color off of the waterbrush, stroke it on a paper towel a few times until the color clears (squeeze the handle a bit to accelerate the process). It works quickly and easily. To fill the brush, unscrew the head and squeeze

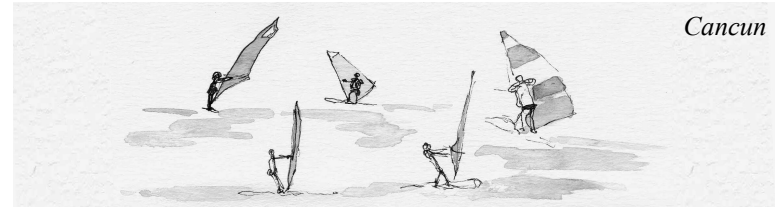
some of the air out of the handle. Immerse open side down in a sink, cup, or puddle of water, and unsqueeze to draw the water in. Repeat a couple of times and you’re done.

Other Stuff

I carry a folded paper towel for changing the color on the waterbrush, and for dabbing as necessary. The *Bounty in a*



Chef at the C.I.A. (Culinary Institute of America) in Napa




Box brand of paper towels are pre-folded, dispense easily, and are wonderfully absorbent.

My favorite drawing implements are fountain pens, especially those of the vintage variety (more on that in TT Volume Two!). I carry one of these and a couple of Pigma Microns in various sizes. I also take along a mechanical pencil with 2B lead (no sharpening!), and a white vinyl eraser stick.

Case

At the local shoe repair store I happened upon a small (cheap!) cell phone case in wonderfully soft leather that perfectly holds all the above gear. The paint box fits in the cell phone pocket and everything else slips in an attached zippered compartment. I can grab the case, a sketchbook, and I’m ready to go!

See the **Resources** page for information on finding items mentioned here. 

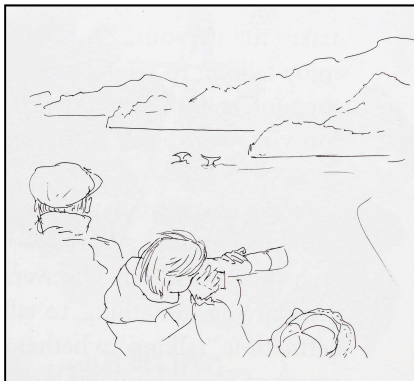


Open Opera Rehearsal

SKETCHBOOKING

When one sets out to sketch, it is often to document a special journey. However, it can be difficult to know where to begin and many a travel sketchbook comes back empty.

Barbara Stecher is a Massachusetts artist who travels extensively and enjoys documenting her adventures in a sketch journal. Her intriguing technique, which she calls *sketchbooking*, emphasizes the process of keeping a sketch journal over the quality of any one entry, resulting in a charming record of journeys past.

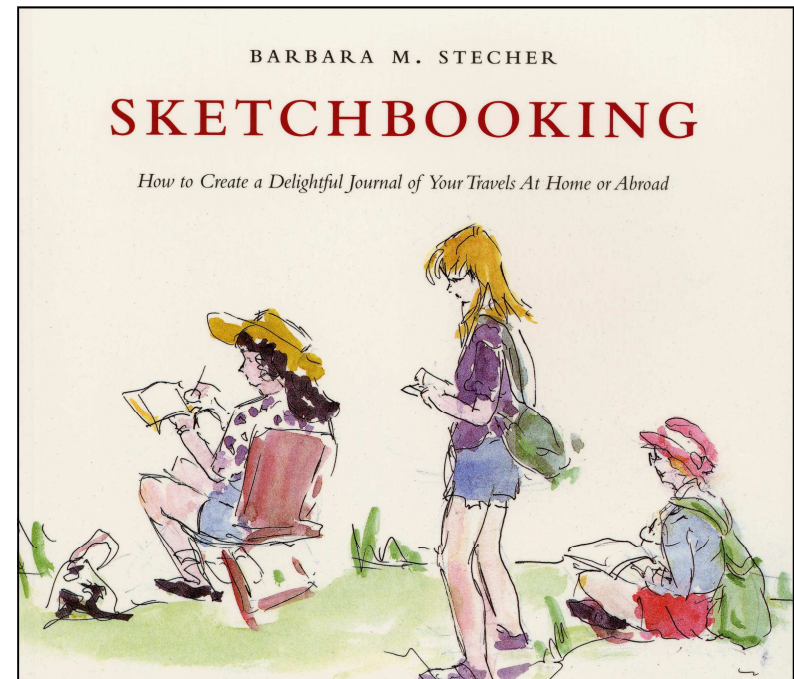


Barbara Stecher

Barbara has taught her unique approach since 1988 to hundreds of students, and now has written a marvelous book describing her technique. Sketchbooking, subtitled “How to Create a Delightful Journal of Your Travels At Home or Abroad”, is published by the DeCordova Museum

and Sculpture Park where Barbara is an art instructor and research assistant. The book outlines the process of creating journals that document, through text and drawing, the unique moments that make our journeys personal.

These journals are created in bound books, each with chapters, an introduction, and a table of contents. The idea behind using such a formal structure for an otherwise casual endeavor is that as the book begins to fill, it gains its own momentum and becomes easier to maintain. In addition, being fully self-contained the volume becomes a permanent record of the journey for future reference. Although writing is an important part of the process, it is usually the sketching that is intimidating. Most of the book covers the practice of casual sketching to record both vast subjects and small details. With many examples and much encouragement, the process of sketching for the delight of capturing a moment, rather than for an



anticipated specific result, is revealed. Emphasizing quick sketching ensures that the journaling does not overshadow the experience being documented. The simple approach, involving line drawings in ink with perhaps a bit of watercolor, is accessible to all skill levels and carefully described.

Suitably inspired, I decided to give it a try. Normally, I find bound sketchbooks a bit intimidating and prefer spiral books for the very reason Barbara does not recommend them; you can rip bad drawings out! In addition, spiral books can be opened flat which I like. However, I wanted to do it right, and had been wanting to try out a Rag & Bone journal for some time, so I choose a small one (4"x 6"x1") and got started. I have found that working in chapters does indeed give the journal its own identity, and I enjoy adding entries often. Not having an imminent trip planned, I decided to create a chapter for each month and document the journey that is my life. The Rag & Bone works well for the pen and light watercolor *sketchbooking* technique and is beautifully made. It feels solid in the hand and opens flat as well. Working in a journal in this new way has been very satisfying. I can see that it would be a wonderful way to document a trip and will employ



Barbara Stecher

Barbara Stecher



this technique on my next adventure.

Barbara believes that anyone who wants to be a *sketchbooker* can, and her confidence is contagious. This charming invitation to jump right in and join the fun is highly recommended.

See the **Resources** page for information on where to find Sketchbooking and Rag & Bone journals. ✍



My Journal


HOW TO SURVIVE A BORING BUSINESS TRIP

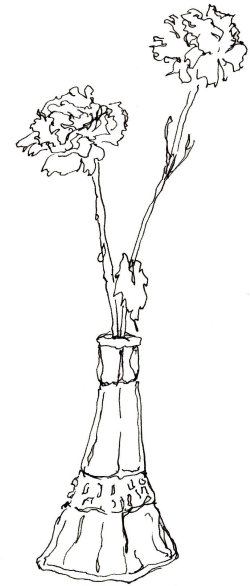


Long lines, delayed flights, traffic jams, business hotels, fluorescent lighting, bad food, boring speeches and endless meetings. Pure torture? No, sketching opportunity!

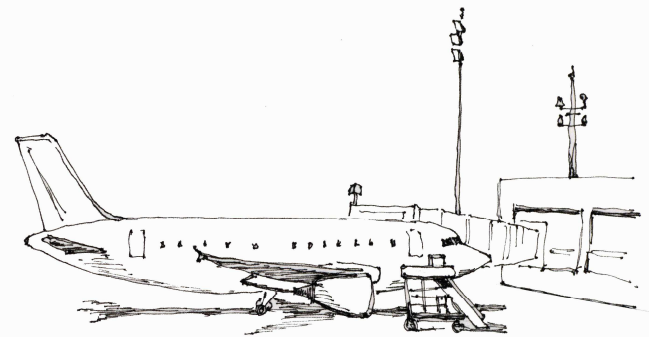
If you are able to avoid this type of modern torment, consider yourself lucky. If not, make the most of the situation by taking advantage of the many chances to do a bit of sketching.

Airports are great for sketching. People usually stay put and strike interesting poses with luggage, books, jackets etc. Planes usually hold position too, although the one below flew off just before I finished my sketch.

Doodling is a time honored tradition in meetings, so a bit of incognito sketching is usually achievable there as well. And don't forget the vast artistic potential of your hotel room. Have fun! 



Dee Frank



Moonlight Chronicles

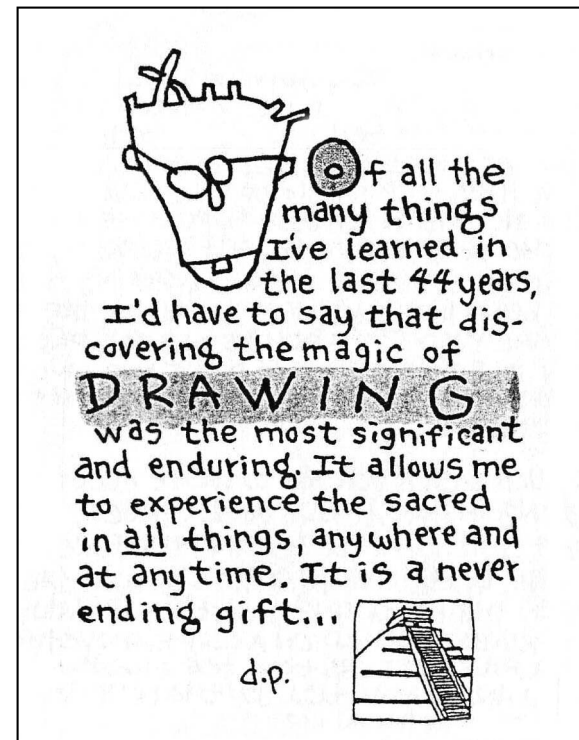


Dan Price

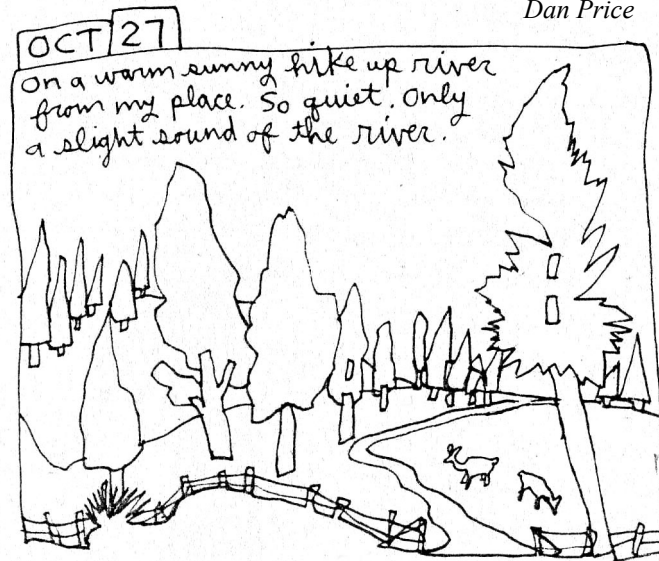
Ten years ago Dan Price started his Moonlight Chronicles zine. Twenty-eight issues and two books later he has created a unique phenomenon, and continues his playful investigations on life and the joys of drawing.

Dan records his thoughts and the events of his life in journal entries dominated by lively line drawings. Each Moonlight Chronicles issue is loaded with these marvelous drawings that capture subject matter with humor and sensitivity. The sketches have a clear, bold look that is deceptively simple; Dan makes it look a lot easier than it is! A masterful hand and eye are required to capture the world as effectively as he does.

The creation of these drawings is intricately linked to his ongoing observations and musings on life, which make up most of the handwritten text. Quotes, photos and drawings



Dan Price



Dan Price

from other artists round it out. Wonderfully motivating for anyone interested in lighthearted sketching, the Chronicles are a great resource for frequent infusions of inspiration. I find that I enjoy looking through them often, and continue to get new ideas from them each time.



Moleskine notebooks (cover embellished)

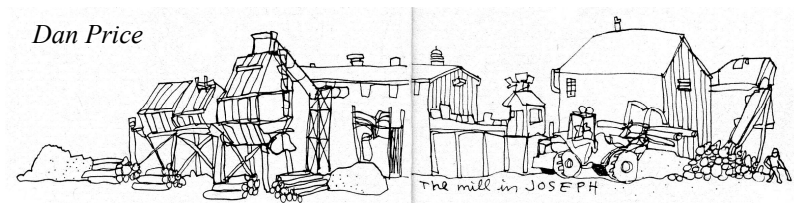


Dan Price

Many of the topics in the Moonlight Chronicles center around various trips Dan takes by car, train, bike or foot. His vagabond lifestyle yields plenty of interesting subject matter. Self described as a hobo artist, he regularly sets out in search of adventure and experience, all recorded in his journals.

How to Do It

In addition to the Chronicles zines, Dan has written two books. Moonlight Chronicles is a published journal much like his zines but with the addition of color. The other is a book on his journaling methods, entitled How to Make a Journal of Your Life. In it he enthusiastically advocates for the creation of illustrated journals. Tips and advise are presented on writing, sketching, photography and collage, and how to combine them to create a satisfyingly personalized book. This quirky little volume is one of my favorite books on journaling. Less serious and self-important than many journaling books, this one focuses on making the whole process fun and upbeat. This book is highly recommended, especially for those who want to add more sketching to their journals or are seeking to add some





levity to their journaling process.

As far as materials go, Dan keeps it simple: Pigma Micron pens for line work (the manufacturer, Sakura, sponsors him with free pens) and an unlined Moleskine notebook. The Moleskine is a neat little book (5½”x3¾”x 3/8”) from Italy. These books are very well made, open flat, have a durable black cover, a built in pocket in the back for

ephemera, an elastic band to hold it closed, and an attached ribbon bookmark. The thick creamy paper takes pen work very well, although it is unfortunately resistive to water-based inks (like fountain pen ink) and watercolor.

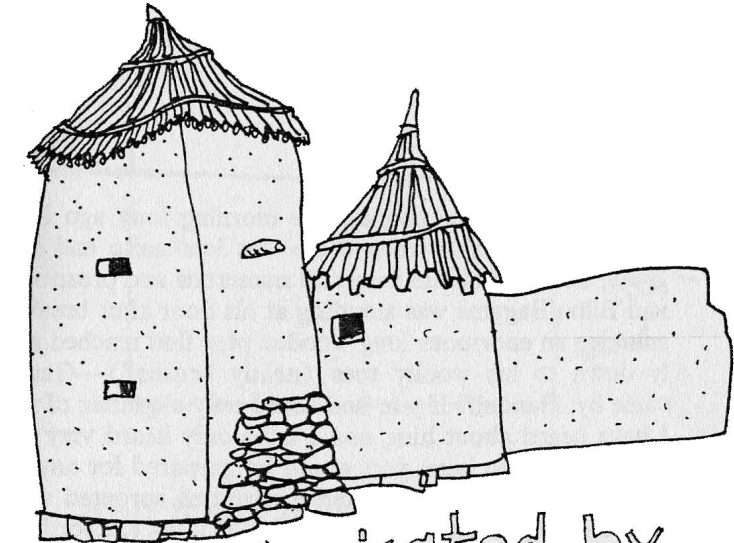
How to Get It

See the **Resources** page for information on how to obtain Dan's books, zines, and supplies. ✍

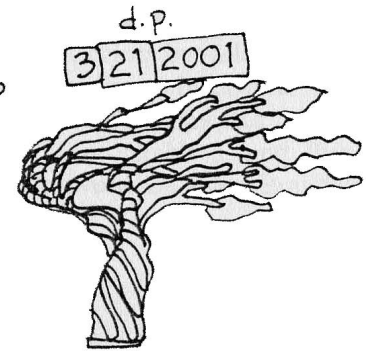
Dan Price



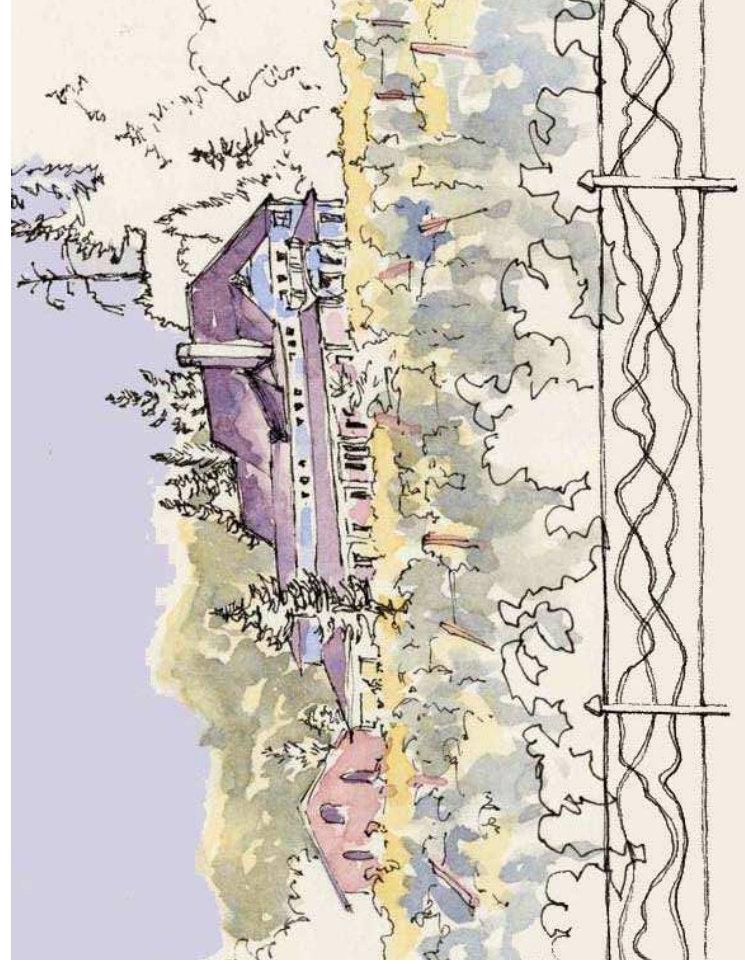
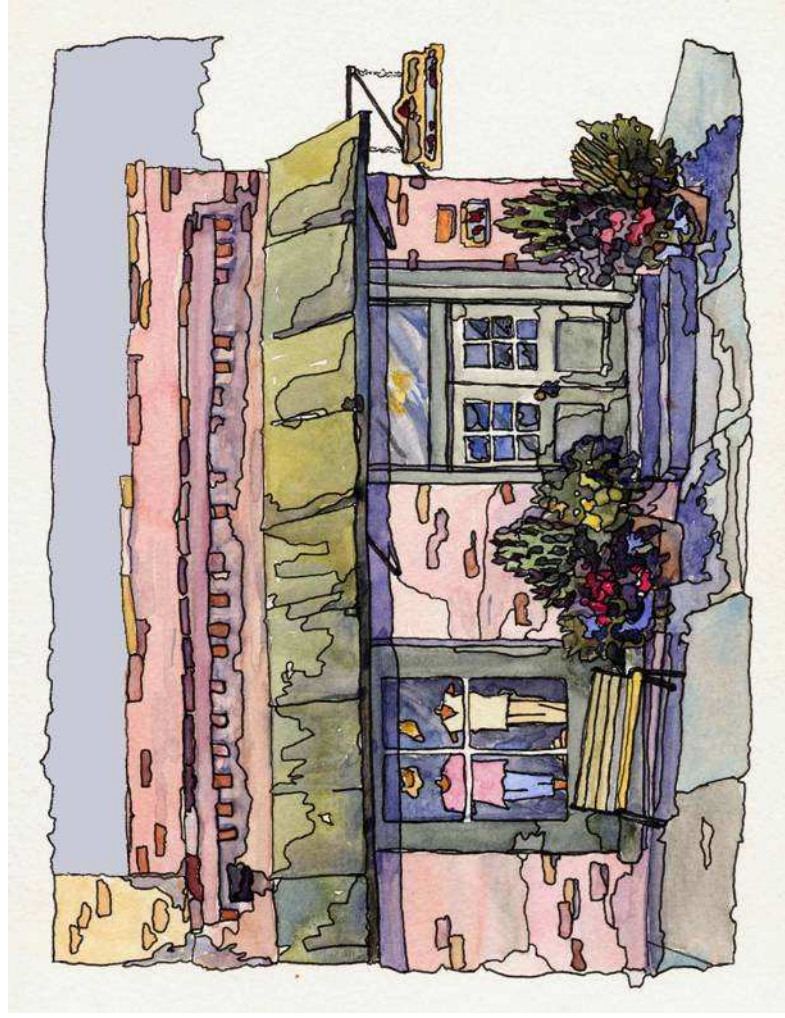
Dan Price



I'm intoxicated by the shapes of things.



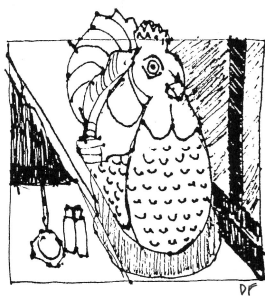
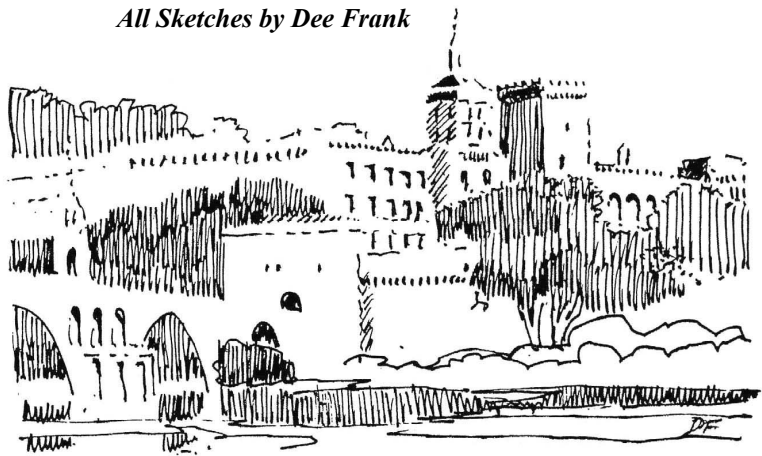
A couple of years ago I took a weekend class in Oregon with artist Judy Morris, at which she taught her technique of combining ink line with vibrant watercolor. We went sketching on site around the Ashland/Medford area. This scene is in the historic town of Jacksonville.



Last July I was in Mendocino taking a class. Normally one of my favorite places, this time it was foggy and freezing for days on end. So, I called up a B & B in Napa valley two hours away and made my getaway. Napa was warm, dry, and wonderfully grape-y smelling! This winery was just up the road.

Dee's Delights

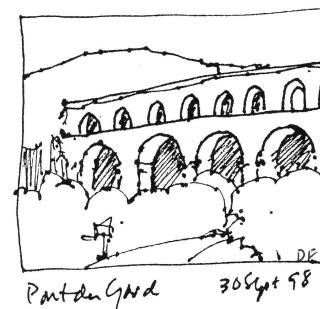
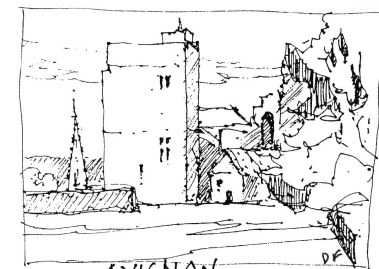
All Sketches by Dee Frank



Chicken at
Leu Mistrau
in
Avignon

Oregon artist Dee Frank has been leading tours to Europe for artists for 18 years via her travel company, Aquarelle Tours. She is an avid traveler to Europe and other even more exotic locales, and documents her journeys in trip journals. These consist of quick sketches, short commentary, and assorted ephemera collected and pasted in along the way. As a trip leader, she does not necessarily have time for extended drawing and painting sessions. Dee's sketches are bold and

quick. She favors a fine point Sharpie pen, and executes her small sketches as the muse strikes with a minimum of fuss. She is able to quickly capture memorable vignettes by focusing on basic shapes and values. At the end of each year, Dee prepares a single sheet collection of notable sketches, which she photocopies and mails out as a visual newsletter highlighting her travels that year. It's a simple and fun way to mark and share the year.

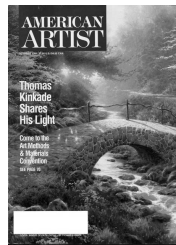


A Highly Opinionated Guide to Magazines

The major artists' magazines in the U.S. are weak on subject matter which addresses the pursuit of sketching. However, there are some other noteworthy sources that are more relevant. What follows is a highly opinionated roundup of commercial publications available, with a strong bias in favor of sketch-related content.

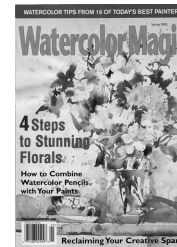
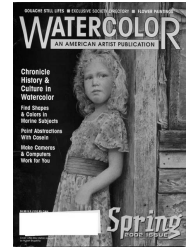
American Mainstays

We'll start with the big American publications, *American Artist* and *The Artist's Magazine*. Both of these I find disappointing. The former deals mostly with oil painting and other labor-intensive techniques, and favors formal portraiture, photo-realistic and sentimental styles. The recent addition of a column by Thomas Kincade illustrates their focus. *The Artist's Magazine* tends to be a bit more lighthearted, and occasionally features an article on travel sketching. However, the issues are short and the articles are lightweight: typically thinly veiled advertisements for books the publisher (F&W Publications, a.k.a. North Light Books) is pushing. Both magazines also include product "reviews" which are simply reprints



of manufacturers' press releases.

The two major American watercolor magazines are *Watercolor* and *Watercolor Magic*. The publishers of *American Artist* and *The Artist's Magazine* produce them, respectively. Focused on watercolor, they are more likely to contain articles of interest to sketchers, although their styles closely follow that of their sister publications and the same general comments apply.



Of these choices I get the most out of *Watercolor*, but I find that I digest issues of all these publications in a disappointingly few minutes.

British Magazines

The British have a long standing tradition of venturing out with sketchbook in hand. This passion dates back to the Victorian era when a proper education included an extended travel tour of Europe documented with one's personal writing and sketches. The study of nature is also popular, and many British naturalists keep sketch journals documenting their studies.

British magazines reflect this reverence for sketching, and are thus much more relevant for sketchers. *The Artist* and *Leisure Painter* are two fine options. Produced by the same publisher, *The Artist* is in theory for the professional artist, and *Leisure Painter* is for the amateur. In fact, each is general enough to address both audiences, and both are likely to contain articles on travel sketching, plein air painting, portable equipment, sketchbook journaling, and other relevant topics. Even the articles on more formal painting typically include some of the working sketches used in the

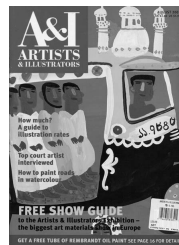




creative process. The painting styles featured are more loose, interpretive and painterly than in the American magazines. The product and book reviews are done by well-known authors and contain actual critical commentary.

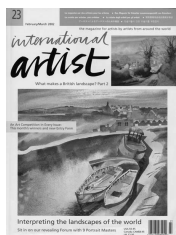
Leisure Painter also has an additional fun component. Each month a specific painting project is proposed that focuses on a learning topic (value, composition, etc.). Reference photos are provided, a medium is suggested, and possible approaches are outlined. The following month the author presents his/her own results, and discusses the challenges presented. It's an intriguing concept and quite instructive.

I enjoy both of these magazines immensely. Virtually all the articles are absorbing and substantial enough to capture and hold my attention, and often lead to new ideas and approaches.



Another available publication from England is *A&I Artists and Illustrators*. This magazine is focused primarily on professional illustration. Some issues contain content related to sketching, although not all. *A&I* is consistently available at my local bookstore, so I look each issue over and end up buying about a third of them, and don't maintain a subscription.

Australian Magazines



International Artist is published in Australia specifically for an international audience, and is distributed in numerous countries. The production values are high: an issue's heft is substantial, the artwork is beautifully reproduced, and the layout is

stylish. Some articles are instructionally oriented, but most profile various artists from around the world. Although a wide variety of styles are presented, there has recently been a trend toward the tendencies of the American magazines to favor the sentimental. In addition, promotion of their own books and other products is now completely over the top. So, a cautious recommendation is offered for this magazine.



Australian Artist is the long-time mainstay publication in Australia. It is the original product from the publishers of *International Artist*, and is still produced monthly. It is very similar in style to its sister publication, although the issues are shorter. It also includes news from the art world in Australia: competitions, shows, and museum events. Many would be bored with this no doubt, but I find it all charming.

Other Offerings

Somerset Studio is a publication that focuses on paper arts (collage, rubber stamping, calligraphy, bookmaking, etc.) The "cutesy" look common in rubber-stamping and craft magazines is completely avoided here. Very high production values are utilized to create sumptuous reproductions of tons of artwork; it's a visual feast. For a time, the magazine was focused primarily on work with the Griffin and Sabine look, but recently more varied styles are being included to good effect. This publication is a great source of ideas for creating journals in which sketching can be incorporated, and for other techniques to utilize sketching in even more novel ways. Highly inspirational and recommended.





Artist's Sketchbook is a new magazine from the publishers of *The Artist's Magazine* and *Watercolor Magic*. Although not yet published on a regular basis, there have been four issues to date. The focus of *Sketchbook* is sketching (yeah!) and creativity. As with its sister publications, some of the articles are frustratingly short. However, there have been some wonderful full articles on journal sketching and other topics. This one has potential!

See the **Resources** page for information on how to obtain all of these magazines, including web sites, prices and subscription options. ✍

New Orleans street musicians



Handout from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City:



Sketching Rules

Sketching is permitted in all the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Sketching is also permitted in most Special Exhibitions. Please inquire at the Information Desk in the Great Hall regarding current Special Exhibitions in which sketching is permitted.

Sketching is permitted in pencil, felt tip, ballpoint, crayon, pastel and charcoal.

The use of ink, fountain pens or watercolor is not permitted at any time.

While sketching, please do not hinder the normal traffic flow in the galleries.



Georges Seurat:
Portrait of Edmond-François
Aman-Jean.
1882. Conté crayon.



The Metropolitan Museum of Art



ITALIA PER ARTISTI

THE ITALIAN RIVIERA

When traveling to sketch or paint, it is ideal to visit as many visually appealing sites as possible with a minimum of passage and schlepping in between. One successful approach is to set up at a single location surrounded by wonderful destinations.

In late September 2001, my husband and I joined a group of artists for a two week trip to Liguria, the region on the Northwest coast of Italy also known as the Italian Riviera. Despite some apprehension caused by traveling internationally so soon after 9/11, we had a great trip and discovered a wonderful area for artists.

The trip was organized by artist Dee Frank with instruction by Judy Morris. We stayed in the town of Santa Margherita Ligure just South of Genoa. S. Margherita is a charming town with great opportunities for exploring and sketching, and is also well located for day trips to other destinations. Being less known than some of the more famous nearby locales, S. Margherita is more affordable and just as nice. Twenty minutes or less in a boat or train gets you to Camogli, Rapallo or Portofino, and the Cinque Terre is just over an hour away by train. There are also phenomenal hiking opportunities in the region.

Santa Margherita Ligure

Not to be overlooked are the charms of S. Margherita itself. Although this small seaside town has a small fishing fleet and lively harbor, the main business here is rest and relaxation. The seaside promenade is wonderful for an evening stroll, and the outdoor cafes are great for feasting or just watching the world go by. The town is quite

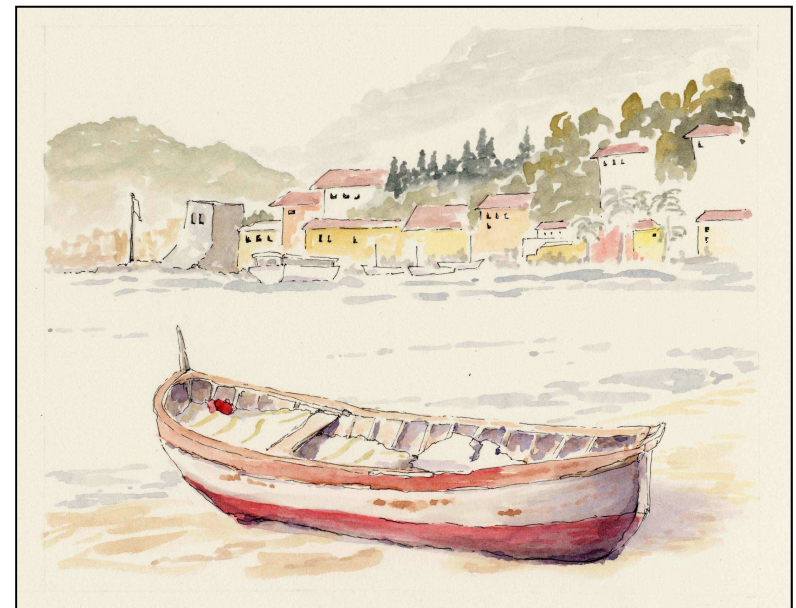
picturesque, especially the old central section, and worthy sketching subjects abound.

Camogli

One train stop from S. Margherita is the village of Camogli, dominated by its fishing fleet. This town has a strikingly distinctive look; the buildings share a creamy glow and appear golden as the sun sets over the water. A large rustic castle sits at the edge of the sea overlooking the harbor. Camogli (pronounced like “canolli” with an “m” instead of an “n”) graced the cover of the February 2002 issue of Condé Nast Traveler in which it was featured as one of “seven superb seaside villages”.

Portofino

What do you get when you cross a rustic little village with the Champs-Élysées? Portofino! It’s such an odd combination it’s almost surreal. That is not to say that it should be avoided. Portofino is truly picturesque and well



S. Margherita

worth a visit. If you are in the area, do spend a day and bring your sketchbook. Prices are high, but a gelato or cappuccino is within almost any budget. You can also pick up any designer wear that you might be needing!

Cinque Terre

The Cinque Terre are five adorable villages strung out along the Mediterranean sea. They are connected by short train or boat rides and by hiking trails. This section of the



Portofino

coast is lined with spectacular plunging cliffs and the villages are nestled in steep crevices that reach down to the sea. The ocean views are dramatic, and the villages make for stunning sights as they terrace up the hillsides. This unique setting precludes automobile traffic within the villages, which enhances their old world charm. One could spend years painting here, and some do!



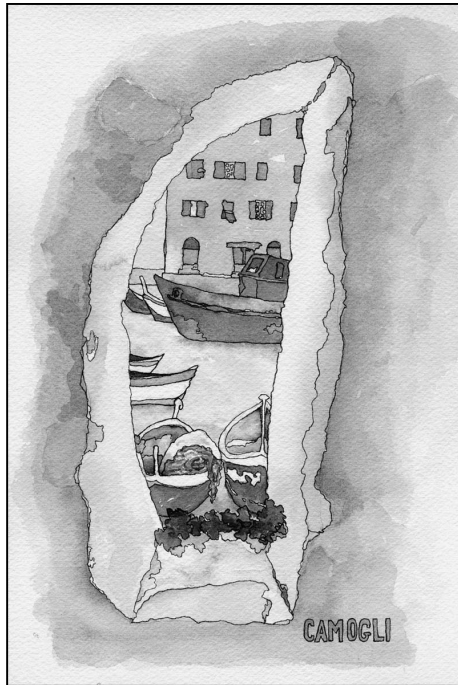
Food

Eating is an art form in Italy, and any artistic journey must include some concentrated study of this topic! Local specialties include pesto, tomato pizzas, seafood and shellfish. The good wine flows, vegetables are fresh and plentiful and there is enough garlic for everyone! High-end restaurants are not required; fine food can be had at the many open cafes, outdoor markets, and little takeout stores. So, put together a fine picnic and have a grand feast. And don't forget the gelato for dessert: it's fabulous.

Hiking

We like to hike and there are great hiking options here. The Cinque Terre villages are connected by trails, which run along the coast and range from very easy to fairly challenging. These trails are all easy to find: just follow the people. Although quite populated (for trails), the views are spectacular and not to be missed. Hike from village to

Drawing Practice Book




village until you get tired, have a meal, then hop a train back. There is also wonderful hiking in the S. Margherita area, including a trail that runs along the coast connecting Camogli to Portofino to S. Margherita. The views are stunning, and provide a taste of rural life not visible from the main towns. It is those scenes of crumbling stone barns, little churches,

netted olive groves, small vineyards, vegetable gardens, goats and chickens that I think back to most often. These trails are less traveled, and the guidance of a book recommended. We did very well with Lonely Planet's [Walking in Italy](#).

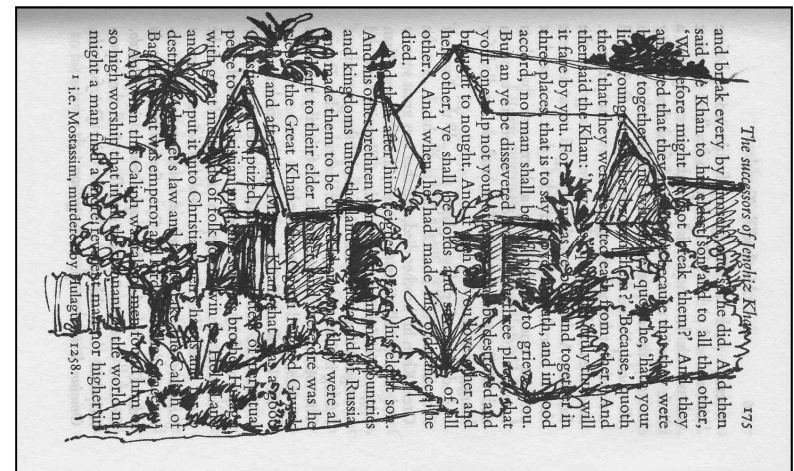
Making Art

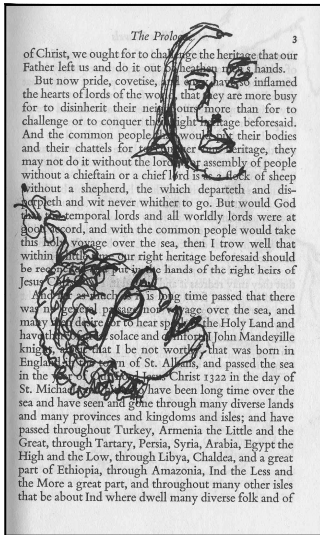
As with most far-flung destinations typical art supplies are not available, so bring what you need including extras of anything critical. I also brought along a small stool, but found that I did not use it; there are enough cafes, benches, and stoops to sit on. Our group did not do as much painting as planned, due probably to the anxiety of the times. However, I created a sketchbook journal which can be viewed online.

See the **Resources** page for information on the sketchbook, trip photos, the walking book, and Dee's upcoming artists' trips. And, see page 22 for Dee's travel sketches. 

Although most of us would love to improve our drawing skills, that goal can seem daunting if not unattainable. However, conventional wisdom holds that we can all significantly enhance these skills simply by practicing regularly. "Develop the sketchbook habit" is the constant admonishment of drawing instructors everywhere. Okay, we get it! But how to get started when thwarted by the blank page or discouraged with initial results? I recently discovered a fun solution to this quandary.

While prowling through a favorite used bookstore looking for altered-book victims, I picked up a small hardbound book that felt great in my hands. Thinking 'I'd love a sketchbook like this', I wondered if the innards could be replaced. Not wanting to wait, and already having way too many unfinished projects in my queue, I hit upon the idea of using the book 'as is', drawing right on the existing pages. My "Drawing Practice Book" has greatly increased the amount of drawing I do. Since the drawings are on

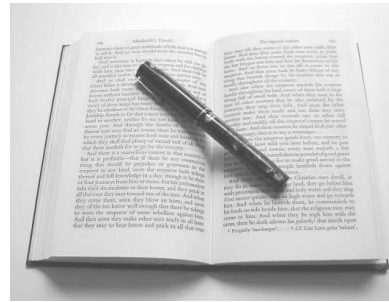




such odd paper, there is no hesitation to get started and no expectations for the outcome. And, if someone looks over my shoulder when I'm sketching out and about, I can simply turn the page and pretend to read!

To get started, find an old hardbound book that is not too big to carry with you, feels good in the hand, and opens fairly flat. Underneath old yellowed dust jackets are often beautifully bound volumes in near new condition,

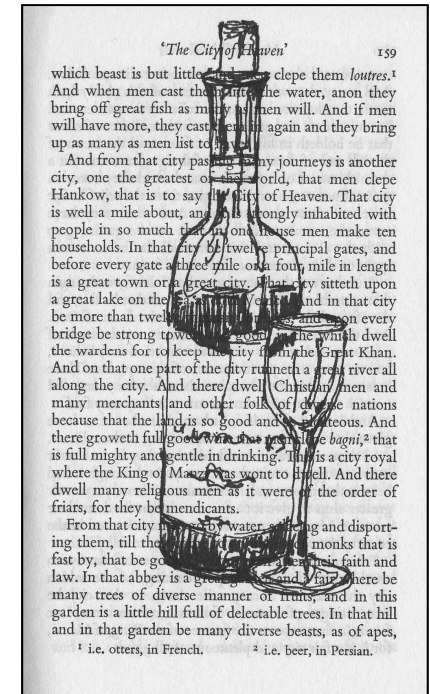
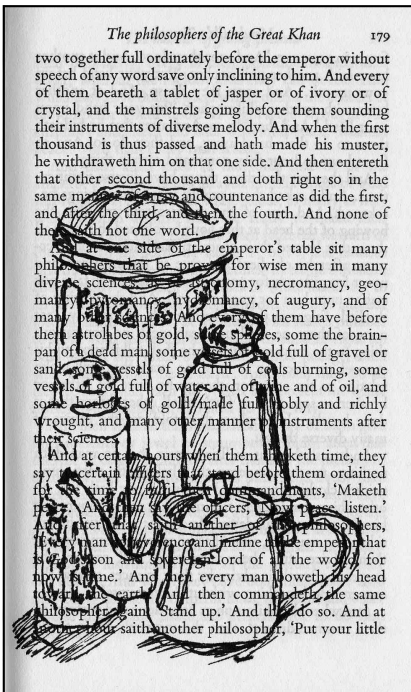
ranging from simple and elegant to lavishly ornate. Find one that speaks to you. Next, get yourself a pen with a strong dark line (Pigma Micron, fountain pen, etc.) and start drawing in that book. Draw whatever is at hand: lampposts, birds, cars, cityscapes, food, people, and anything else you see. Draw while you are waiting in line, on a walk, and any time you are not otherwise occupied. The Drawing Practice Book is also a great place to experiment with types of drawing you might not typically attempt. Draw slowly and quickly, draw when you feel like it, and when you don't, and try vast landscapes and small details. Enjoy the experience of drawing without anxiety. There is



no blank page to contend with and you are not attempting a masterpiece, so draw for the sake of the experience alone. The Drawing Practice Book is also a great way to warm up your hand and eye before tackling larger projects. I find that a bit of warm-up can make a huge difference in the quality and ease of my drawing.

For those of you who know you should draw more often but find that you don't, I challenge you to get a Drawing Practice Book and fill it. To those who are convinced they can't draw you are doubly challenged to fill a Practice Book and then reconsider your assessment. Let me know how it goes!

My Drawing Practice Book is 6"x3 3/4"x3/4" and contains travelogue text originally written in the 1300's.



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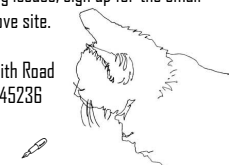
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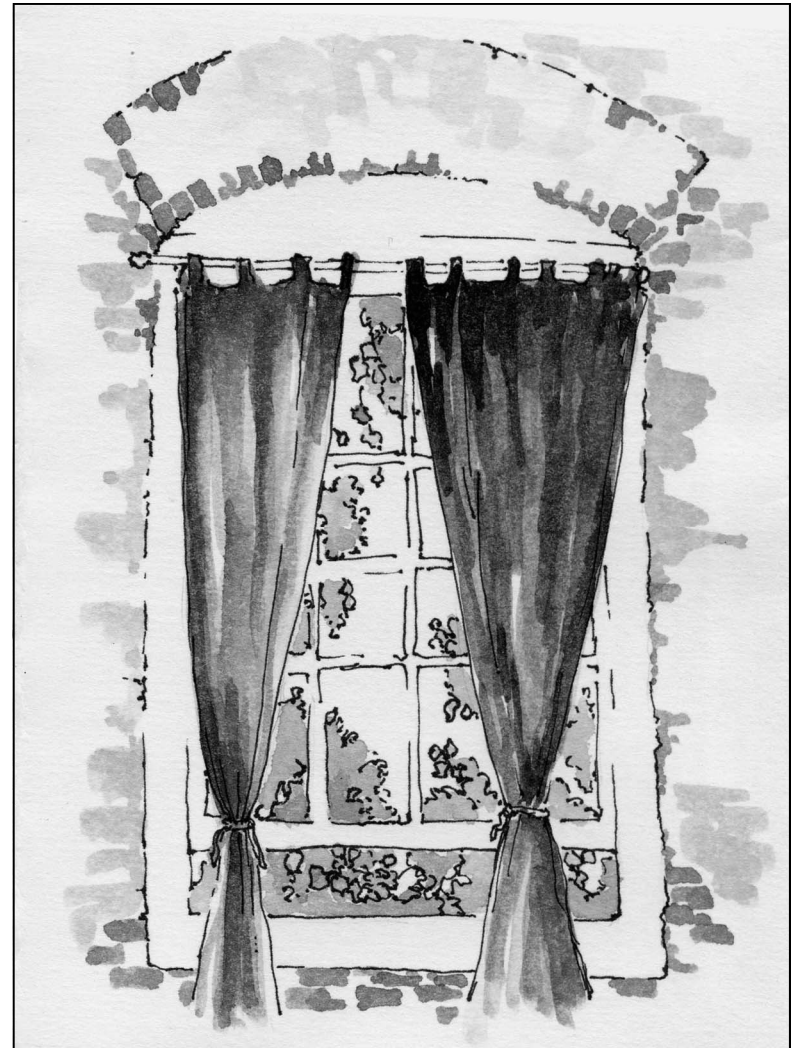
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