

Eileen Keller

Landscape and Still Life

My peripatetic early life with my family included two tours in Germany as part of the Occupation Army following WWII. For a child, growing up on Army bases was an incredible introduction to the complexities of the world and of human nature. Additionally, my mother's fondness for art from many different cultures gave me a broad view of differences in ways of viewing the world. While my Virginia college experience was academic with a major in psychology, my love of nature and appreciation of landscape was consolidated by many camping trips in the Blue Ridge Mountains and hikes along the Shenandoah Trail.

I moved to California for my graduate education and was fortunate to land in the Bay area, perhaps one of the most beautiful places I had ever been. Living here involved more exploration of the gorgeous Sierras and camping along the coast at Big Sur. Though my schedule was taxing, there was time for weekends camping or hiking locally along the Bay Ridge Trail or on Mt. Tam. There were visual feasts everywhere, including driving out to California across the Southwest and through the desert. It would be many years before I began to turn those visual memories and experiences into painting as I was busy building my career as a psychoanalyst, practicing and teaching.

Having achieved many of my professional goals, I began to turn my eyes again to landscape. I bought a house in Taos, New Mexico twenty years ago and spend vacation time there twice a

year. My drives out through the most incredible country, including Utah canyons, the Navajo reservation, the high plateau across Colorado, the high Sierras and Yosemite, began to fuel a desire in me to record what I so loved gazing on as I drove East to begin a vacation and then West to come home to California. Oh, the places I've gone! I bought some watercolors and began painting images from memory. While I loved doing these little paintings, they were few and far between as I worked, taught and concentrated on my career. It was only five short years ago that my husband spotted the workshop Patience Heyl was offering while we were on vacation in Taos and I signed up. I was off and running and have been devoting more time to art as I cut down my work schedule. I made a studio in my basement at home, sharing (carefully:) with the laundry room and have kept my easel set up to be ready for those short sprints of hours on the weekend when I have the time and the mental space to paint. Each workshop and new instructor has taken me further on my journey to find ways to express the deep emotions that come with closeness to the incredible beauties of nature.

Now I work half time and devote myself to painting during my free days.