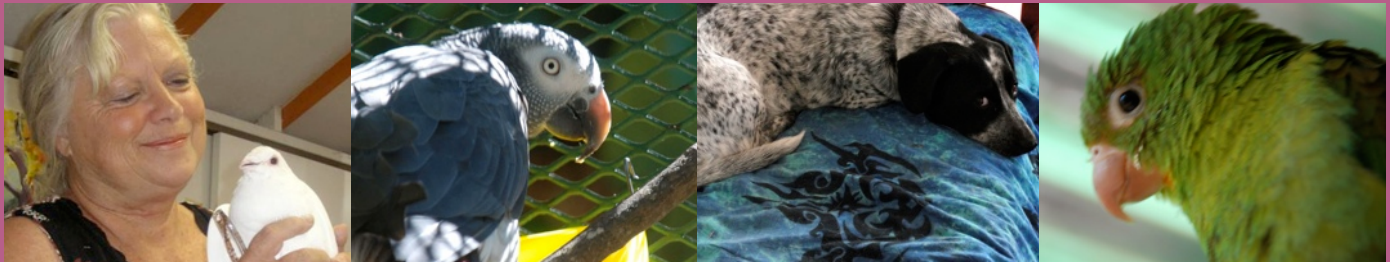


# Hart News



Volume 10, Issue 1 June, 2010

## Welcome to HartNews!

HartNews is my attempt to write about life and watercolor from where I see it. As a teacher, I enjoy passing on some of the things I think about or do in watercolor. As a fellow human, I wish to pass on some of the things that inspire me - or make me laugh!. I've included you in this issue - you who are painters, friends, former guests and/or family - some of you without your expressed permission. So...please reply and ask to be removed from this mailing list if you'd rather not get HartNews editions - or just delete me! Originally, I intended to make HartNews a monthly event. Now, more realistically, I see it as a quarterly or biannual publication. If you have something you'd like add or say, just email me! And please feel free to pass this on to your friends... If you'd like to see the back issues - just check the Archives under HartNews on my website, [janhart.com](http://janhart.com) - more demos, etc. - and don't forget to Bookmark this issue!



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I dedicate this issue to my sweet dog, Livvie - who was laid to rest in early May. She was my best friend and though she trembled in disabling fear of rain and thunder, she never flinched in her steadfast protection of me. I miss her. Seurat misses her.

*"We who choose to surround ourselves with lives even more temporary than our own, live within a fragile circle; easily and often breached.*

*Unable to accept its awful gaps, we would still live no other way.*

*We cherish memory as the only certain immortality, never fully understanding the necessary plan."*



Hi, Everyone!



First of all – apologies for not writing for sooo sooo long! My life contained no spaces that were longer than 4 days from mid December to the present and

though I longed to write I found myself scribbling a few notes on the backs of envelopes and starting a Table of Contents but nothing more. What was going on? I had 6, 6 day intensives at my place, two week long workshops and began a relationship – all in the first 5 months of 2010!

Over the next months and years I will be writing about my changes and the lessons I am learning along with the questions they are bringing. Often I wonder how I'll write about them when sometimes I am so immersed that I find it difficult to comprehend. Yes, there are changes. The easiest to talk about are the ones I see. More difficult are changes in my sensitivity or feelings or thoughts. Sometimes it takes a pointed vigilance to recognize

the subtle shifts and if I'm very lucky I can talk about them with a trusted friend and nudge a word into a sentence or two...Often I don't have answers. But I do have questions. So, I'll be writing about those - the questions that come up, and maybe a few personal answers.

I'm anticipating that what I write will become a book, eventually. Perhaps an Ebook. I already have an Ebook about my first year in Costa Rica and will be offering it on my website for anyone to obtain. It contains the events of my first year in Costa Rica in 28 chapters and in more detail than those letters I sent out over 2009. The 2010 chapters will also contain more detail than what I send out as emails in an effort to not overwhelm your Inbox.

Some of the things I'm thinking/writing about – and I'm adding them as they come up...

- Adjustments, Readjustments and Nature
- Fear of the Unknown
- Trusting
- Letting Go of Stuff
- Health
- Prosperity
- Living in the Moment
- Empathy
- Sustainability

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## Featured Writings

### Adjustments and Readjustments

It was my first trip back to the states in nearly 8 months and after

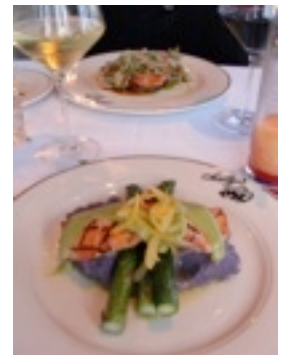


having wedged my roots deep into

the red soil of Costa Rica over the past 18 months. Arriving in Seattle felt familiar to my bones after having lived in the area for 8 years prior to my 1993 move to New Mexico. This Northwestern trip was eventful – three workshops, the last one co-teaching with son, Jonathan. I believe that he is now fully launched into his teaching career. What a pleasure to watch myself backing away while he steps forward! The air, the light, the smells were familiar and familial. I was there for 3 weeks and during that time I touched and spent time with a variety of favorite people from my past. It feels like I participated in intimate one act plays, each separate and unique, kind of like lights on a Christmas

tree – connected sequentially but each very privately special and singular. Also kind of like time

travel as some friends were from the 80's while others were from just 6 months ago! Intimate lunches with dear friends over Cobb salads and lemon wedged water or dinners of grilled salmon over asparagus spears upon purple mashed potatoes and green avocado sauce with pinot noir. Beautiful events and memories.





Jay, Alethea, Shelby, Tim, Mike (left to right)

And the most exhilarating feeling was being there to watch my sons and daughters in law laugh and tease each other in the wooded back deck of Tim and Shelby's home. Lovely snapshots of life and family and friends in the US. Part of me felt completely 'at home' and the other part felt completely foreign. And then, to my complete surprise, I returned to Costa Rica to another familiarity and felt another shock of readjustment. How to explain the schism?

### *Seattle Adjustment and Readjustment.*

It felt like a normal trip except that it wasn't. I'd not left Costa Rica with such difficulty before. I now had a dear friend and lover, Frank – and that made it somehow even more difficult to leave my tropical home. Frank spent the night at my place before I left – and we enjoyed the lazy joy of waking together, having coffee, walking out to my new deck partially surrounding the new and still in process studio, looking out over San Isidro with cups of coffee in our hands. While Frank fixed breakfast, I busied myself with last minute packing and the requisite checking off of lists. I felt sad for Seurat who would be facing this absence completely alone, without his favorite pal, Livvie. She had died 3 weeks before..... and I was still mourning the death of my beloved animal friend.

Late morning found me stopping for gas, checking oil and tires before heading up the long winding drive over the Cerro Muerte mountains. I left in sun and was soon enveloped in heavy clouds and then rain. Stopping at the top of the mountain at my favorite cafeteria, I met Jane who was returning some people to the states. We waved goodbye as they rushed off to make airline connections in San Jose. I drove leisurely down and stopped yet again at Pricemart to return yet again another ice maker that wasn't working... Then I continued on to Melrost B&B in pouring rain. It is the rainy season here which usually means morning sun and afternoon showers. I was delighted that Jane was there – and we enjoyed a girls night! Friday morning found me headed off on jumbo jets to the north, to Seattle.

My first jolt of schism came as I glanced out the window about an hour before landing. I saw the beauty of the northern snow capped mountain forests for as far as I could see. But what were the rounded pink forms just below? My artist eyes took in the jigsaw shapes and I instinctively reached for my camera to capture a possible



painting image just seconds before I my mind registered that they were huge barren swaths of clear cut forest. Mother Nature's skin laid bare. Beauty and horror both to a mind such as mine that appreciates the graceful shapes while recoiling in shock at the lost habitats and ruined ecology. I wonder just how

much of the beautiful forest lands we see lining our traveled highways is really there? Could it be possible that many of our majestic forests are reduced to 30 foot highway edgings? Are we fooling ourselves into thinking that Nature is still there?

And then there was Seattle shining directly ahead in the evening light of the northern



hemisphere.

I was elated to feel the cool air with the familiar translucent light – and the first of many reunions with loved ones.

A few days later I noticed that my body felt different. I noticed aches though I knew I wasn't sick. Perhaps the coolness of the weather? I felt some weakness and was having more trouble than usual just going up and down stairs. An unfamiliar weakness. I woke in the night with a sore back or arm. I felt achy and heavy and old. What was going on? I understood that my body was not used to the climate of the northern hemisphere and I entertained a moment of fantasy imagining myself as a fully metamorphosed butterfly trying to climb back into a fondly remembered cocoon and finding that even the brief time away made it difficult to adjust to the different fit. I felt vulnerable, on the edge, tearful. Everything was moving too fast and I seemed hypersensitive to the faster pace with more things to remember to do and watch for and to be careful



found myself driving onto the West Seattle Bridge freeway and heard honking. I glanced in my rear view mirror to see a woman driving behind me expressing her anger with a raised fist. A raised arm seemed out of context and my mind flashed back to Costa Rica where more

of.....I wrote about it in my journal and then, before I could think much more about it – I fell into distraction. And the distracting perks were everywhere! Instant internet access! Drive in fast food places, banks and pharmacies all around! Huge, airy supermarkets with more choices than I could even focus on with food from places probably thousands of miles away! Paved and beautifully marked highways with abundant signage! Restaurants galore offering every kind of food, all beautifully presented! Movies, Blu-ray, entertainment centers, ipods and internet on your cell phone! And more new things, too. A certain sense of military presence that I hadn't remembered. I saw more soldiers than I recalled before and a huge American flag adorning an entire side of a building as well as little signs on business windows that advertised special discounts to military personnel. And I'd forgotten about the Hallmark style drug advertisements on television promising longer lives with our loved ones if only we'd start using..... I sure wasn't in Kansas anymore! One afternoon I found myself in a discount clothing store looking for some clothes I needed, and buying many more things than I actually needed. What? And one of my biggest shocks came when I

likely than not a raised arm was directing you ahead or gesturing an apology. Back to the present I understood that my 45 mph wasn't fast enough getting on the freeway. In disbelief I glanced up again to recognize a road raged finger gesture and felt my responding anger rise instantly to the surface as I blared my horn in response. Whew! That was certainly the first time I'd felt that in a long long time! Taking a deep breath I watched her as she swerved around

Slowly I got back into the US rhythm and began to feel myself adjusting – teaching, writing, meeting with friends and shopping for the things I cannot find/get in Costa Rica – cortisone cream, antibiotic ointment, clothes, printer ink, low LED rope lights, electronics.... And it all began to feel normal again. Just about when it was time to go home...

My overnight flight brought me back to San Jose at 10:30 a.m. with Frank waiting for me as I emerged from the airport. The next day we drove back over the Cerro del Muerte mountains and I stepped back into my Tico house on the top of the hill overlooking San Isidro. The soft air, excited parrots and exuberant Seurat felt comfortable and welcoming but I was again facing a noticeable readjustment. Once again my butterfly wings were free and open but oddly timid. It again took me more than a week to relax back to my slower paced, more self reliant life. What was it? A couple of weeks went by as I pondered the to and fro transitions



me. She was clearly angry and in a big hurry. And I had seen myself respond in kind. I didn't like the feeling. *Tranquila, Jan*

and came to this.

**It is my connection to Nature.**

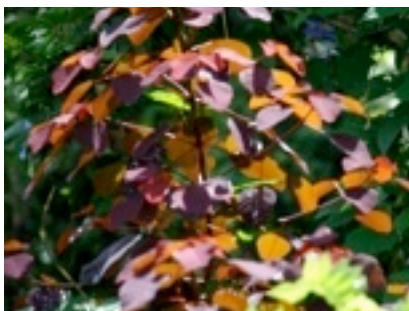
# On Connection to Nature

I think I've developed some kind of weird sensitivity to imbalance or separation from Nature that can crop up anywhere, anytime – here in Costa Rica or in the US. It is kind of like an early warning system. Being in a crowded store can begin making me feel uncomfortable, nervous. I start feeling like I have to get out and into fresh air, away from things and products and people who seem not to see me. I don't think it can be simply dismissed as a case of claustrophobia or chemical sensitivity, though it possibly contains many factors in addition to those. It can even happen when I'm alone in my house or car but can be eased by a simple smile from another person, chance sighting of

a passing animal or the brilliant colors in a sunset. My mind flashes back to a time when I was hospitalized with a staph infection in my spine, prevented from moving more than 15 degrees from a supine position for 6 weeks. All I could do is turn my head to a nearby window. My first comfort was a pigeon that perched on the window sill. That pigeon was a natural salve and I remember crying when they moved me from that room. When asked if



I was in pain I said “No – I just don't want to leave the pigeon.” I caught the quick look between the two technicians and wondered if they thought about wheeling me to the Psych ward instead. In the next room I occupied was my second comfort - watching Animal Planet on television. Connection with Nature was a prominent part of my healing then – as it is now.



Here in the southern region of Costa Rica I am fortunate to live close to nature. All around me Mother Nature remains mostly sheathed in tropical plant life that feeds and shelters an

abundant animal life – just one being human. We are only one of over 200 species of mammals here. It is as if I am tied to Nature through a direct umbilical cord.



Even though I want and need it, I am not always comfortable being this close. Often unwanted bugs fly in at night. I have a sudden encounter with a snake or large lizard (which I mostly love). Sometimes it rains very hard, electricity suddenly fails, the phone lines go dead and I feel lost. Quite often in the rainy season the clouds roll in below and I lose sight of San Isidro and feel isolated. When my road threatens to wash out I feel trapped knowing it would be very difficult for me to walk down the steep road to Anita's house. And when I find myself stranded by the side of a road with no cell phone transmission, I feel apprehensive. Okay – some of this is because I am a senior and am cognizant of my limitations. It isn't like I'm 45 years old - fit and able to see myself climbing, running or physically forcing my way out of a threatening situation. So sometimes I feel quite vulnerable here.

But the umbilical cord also provides comfort and connection. Electricity is restored, the rain usually pounds hard for only an hour, people and neighbors work together to solve the road problems and always there is another friendly, helpful and self reliant human nearby, often Tico. And Mother Nature also provides sustenance through a comfortable climate, plenty of water and available fruit and vegetables. I know I am fortunate.

And then there are the real perks that lift my spirits and stir my soul.

It only takes one nature encounter to lift my willing spirit. A few days ago I stopped to pick up 5 little girls on their way to school and just as I rounded one of the turns on the road I looked ahead and there was a young sloth in a tree. I stopped the car and pointed - “Perizoso!” All of us were excited to see it! Such a kind and gentle animal just looking at us with its oddly smiling face. We all laughed! The rest of my day was wonderful.

Nature provides my food. Though I don't yet grow very much here, I get it just 10 minutes away. The



weekly feria or market operates two days a week, every week of the year so that all my food comes from within 75 miles of where I live. There I get my avocados, tomatoes, honey, lettuce, beets, potatoes, eggs, pineapples, mangos, papayas, melons, mandarins, broccoli, beans, onions and carrots – as well as some fresh tuna, snapper or bass. All I need from the grocery store are some unsalted nuts and fresh juice – and maybe a little cheese, although that is becoming available now at the feria, too. The only processed food I use is canned tuna. And now I have the beginning of my own garden - just a small one, but I am now growing lettuce, cilantro, chard and bok choy! And Frank brings me his organic coffee and wonderful bananas!

An often sighting of the Morpho butterfly, just one of 35,000 species of insects here, always lifts my spirits and remind me again of why I came.

My studio is nearing completion! It'll be a bit of a wait until I can add the kitchen, railings and really finish it – but oh what a beautiful structure and deck! Now I can walk out to my deck, sit and just enjoy a view as far as I can see – of Nature. Two toucans recently flew into the closest trees – and parrots played just above the deck.

And so I wonder.....

*Are we humans in physical and emotional danger when we separate ourselves from Nature? And what does Separation mean?*

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I have continued writing from these questions.

If you would like to read more, please email me and I'll be happy to send you the rest.

# Workshops



## **New Mexico in the Fall**

*Española, Abiquin and Las Cruces, New Mexico.*  
September/October, 2010

for details please click on my website link  
<http://www.janhart.com/Classes%20and%20Workshops2/workshops06.html>



## **Costa Rica, 2011**

*Painting the Exceptional Colors of Costa Rica*

San Isidro de El General at Jan's place  
February 13 - 20, 2011 - A perfect Valentine!



## **Costa Rica, 2011**

*Painting Monkeys and Macaws on the Osa*

Osa Peninsula, Costa Rica  
January 15 - 23, 2011



## **Costa Rica Timeshares**

*5-Day Timeshare with Jan at her place - to paint  
and/ or adventure*

Planned according to your schedule and Jan's  
See details on Jan's website

All workshop and Adventure details can be found on Jan's Website at [janhart.com](http://www.janhart.com)  
<http://www.janhart.com/Classes%20and%20Workshops2/workshops06.html>

# What is going on here?



The studio is finished but not complete. Next - the kitchen area with lights and plumbing. But it is very beautiful and Seurat and I love it!



The skylight is the best - along with the deck! Below is view from front gate.

