

Jean Lea

Title: *Presence*

Artist's Statement

The isolation Augustine experienced in the cold arctic tundra and Sullivan experienced as a young child and then in space were haunting. The image of the polar bear's constant watch over Augustine and vision of the girl in the green hat were pervasive in my thoughts as I read. Those images and the distance to the space shuttle where Sullivan and the crew struggled with their own thoughts and mental images formed the basis for my painting.

The mystery of the young girl in the green hat seemed to be an illusion based on Augustine's regrets of distancing himself from his daughter and his deteriorating condition. When I read this passage "As the days progressed Augustine began to walk farther, always keeping the emerald green of Iris's pompom hat in his sights. She seemed different since his fever, as there was more of her—more energy, more ...", I immediately thought of the northern lights emitting a multicolor glow, including green, which I tied to part of Iris's existence in Augustine's mind. When Augustine then sees the outline of the polar bear against the "changeable northern sky", my ideas for the painting continued to form. The final formulation for the painting was showing the convergence of presence depicted by my visualization of a scene towards the end of the book where Augustine attempted contact in the radio control shed by the water to Sullivan's ship shooting through space, and the presence of the polar bear watching over Augustine.

I made several sketches of my vision for the painting and then used a mix of watermedia for the painting. The night sky was primarily painted with watercolor and fluid acrylic; while touches of gouache were added to the landscape to portray the soft glow on the landscape and polar bear.

Bio

I live with my husband on land bordering a wetland reserve we own and manage. The wetland is a constant source of inspiration for my artwork. I attended Oregon College of Education majoring in art and minoring in psychology. Although I left formal art college education early, I continued to attend art classes from various college professors and instructors, and well-known artists. I have been an active member of the Watercolor Society of Oregon since 1993 and a member of the Salem Art Association, and International Society of Acrylic Painters. I have exhibited in many shows and have a piece of artwork in the Art in Agriculture permanent collection at Oregon State University.

jlea@jeanlea.com