

Susan Hartson

Title: *Alone, Together*

Artist's Statement

Even when we are robbed of everything beautiful and meaningful around us, there is still solace, comfort, beauty and awe in looking upward. I was inspired to portray the majestic expanse of the sky and aurora borealis as a backdrop to the stark landscape of the arctic, as well as tying the two story lines together.

Loneliness and regret are a major theme in *Good Morning, Midnight*. When all communication with earth is taken away – for Sully returning to Earth from Jupiter, and Augustine, alone at the North Pole - the reason for the silence is agonizingly unexplained.

Each of the characters in the book is left alone, even in company. They begin to reflect on their life choices that have left them lonely and missing the one person they abandoned. They realize too late, that they discarded with apathy their precious child, in their quest for their own aspirations.

The polar bear here represents Augustine, who has lived a strong, adventurous, yet selfish life, and is now alone by his own choice, his aging body failing, reduced to eating and sleeping. Iris, elusive, fading in and out of Augustine's awareness, is hidden in the painting, just as her existence is hidden in the story.

Sully with her companions in the doomed spacecraft, and Augustine with Iris are all *Alone, Together*.

Bio

Surrounded by capable artists in my birth family as well as the family I married into, it was easy to allow insecurity about my own artistic ability to intensify. I directed my creative instincts toward sewing and crafts, which had specific instructions. Now, in my sixth decade, I am emerging from those mental barriers, discovering that I CAN paint.

Parenting six children, three of our own, and three fosters, led to a need for a time out. I took a night class from Marciano Martinez - my first experience with watercolor - and I was hooked! I learned the basics, in addition to being challenged to paint creatively, rather than simply copying what I saw, an ongoing struggle.

With retirement, I now have more opportunity to develop a personal style in watercolor, by taking workshops and viewing other artist's work. I enjoy trying to discern how a painting effect has been done.

The transparency of watercolor, the ability to layer colors and still see what's underneath, pulls me in. To watch a painting develop, almost by itself at times, is magical. The paint, liquid and moldable, flowing and blending in unexpected ways, creating it's own textures and patterns, reflects what God's Spirit continues to do in my own heart and life.

sehartson@gmail.com