

# **Animal Sightings**

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## ANIMAL SIGHTINGS

IN THE 1990'S, THE CONSTANT SIX HOUR DRIVES I HAD TO MAKE BETWEEN VERMONT AND NEW YORK, AS WELL AS TRIPS TO OTHER CITIES AND BACK BEGAN TO BORE ME. I MADE UP A GAME TO AMUSE MYSELF. THESE WERE THE RULES: I WOULD WRITE DOWN EVERY FERAL ANIMAL I SAW ON EACH TRIP, EXCLUDING ROAD KILL AND THE BIRDS OR ANIMALS WITH WHICH WE ARE MOST FAMILIAR, LIKE CROWS, SPARROWS OR SQUIRRELS. I DECIDED TO MAKE A SERIES OF DRAWINGS THAT SYMBOLIZED THESE SIGHTINGS. THE FORMAT DEPENDED ON WHAT I'D SEEN ON A SPECIFIC DAY. IF THERE HAD BEEN ELEVEN HAWKS, THERE WOULD BE ELEVEN COLORED STROKES ON A PAGE; TWO DEER AND A WILD TURKEY, TWO STROKES FOR THE DEER AND ONE FOR THE TURKEY. THE COLORS ARE NOT ALWAYS LITERAL, BUT CLOSE ENOUGH TO REMIND ME OF HOW THE BIRD OR ANIMAL LOOKED AS I PASSED IT.

THESE SIGHTINGS CONTINUED FOR SEVERAL YEARS. I'VE NEVER STOPPED SEARCHING BUT THE RECORD KEEPING CEASED. MY GOAL WAS TO CREATE A KIND OF ABSTRACT "PAT THE BUNNY" BOOK\* FOR ADULT NATURE LOVERS. EACH STROKE IS FLOCKED AND SOFT, EVOKING THE WONDER OF CATCHING SIGHT, ALBEIT BRIEFLY, OF THE MARVELOUS CREATURES THAT APPPEAR AT THE EDGES OF OUR ROADS AND HIGHWAYS, THERE TO GREET US IN OUR PERIPHERAL VISION.

\* DOROTHY KUNHARDT'S BOOK IS NOW ENJOYING A RESURGENCE IN POPULARITY AMONG THE VERY YOUNG.



3.20.96



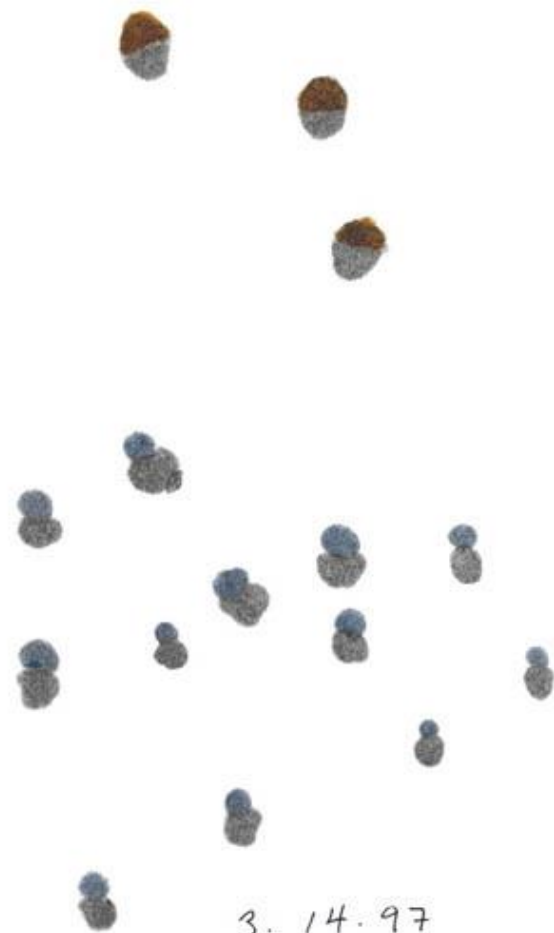
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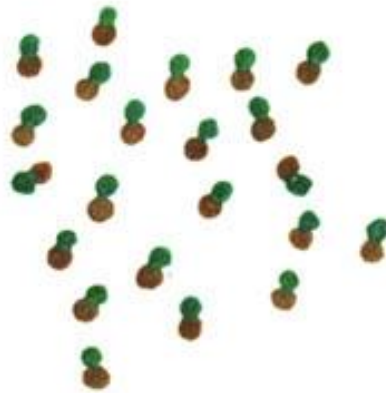


I YELL OUT A GREETING FROM INSIDE THE CAR ALMOST EVERY TIME I SEE ANY OF THE ANIMALS. OF COURSE THEY CAN'T HEAR ME, AND EVEN IF THEY COULD THEY WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND. IT'S REFLEXIVE. THE EUPHORIA I FEEL IS LIKE THE EXCITEMENT I FELT WHEN I WAS YOUNG, AND SAW THE WORK OF MONET AND MATISSE FOR THE FIRST TIME. NOW INSTEAD THESE LIVING CREATURES HAVE WON MY AFFECTION.

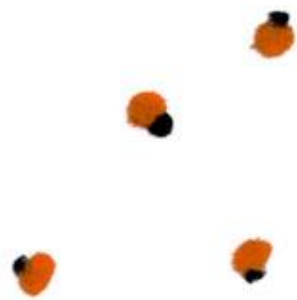
PERHAPS I FIND IT GRATIFYING BECAUSE I CAN NEVER GET ENOUGH, NEVER REALLY SEE ANY OF THEM FOR MORE THAN A FEW SECONDS. I'M ALWAYS STRAINING TO UNDERSTAND HOW THEY LOOK, HOW BIG OR SMALL THEY ARE, AND HOW THEY MOVE OR REST. CONVERSELY, THE ART THAT SHAPED AND INFLUENCED ME IN MY YOUTH STANDS STILL AND I CAN FULLY GRASP IT. NATURE THOUGH, IS SURPRISING AND OUT OF OUR CONTROL.



4. 18. 97



4.22.97



9. 19. 97



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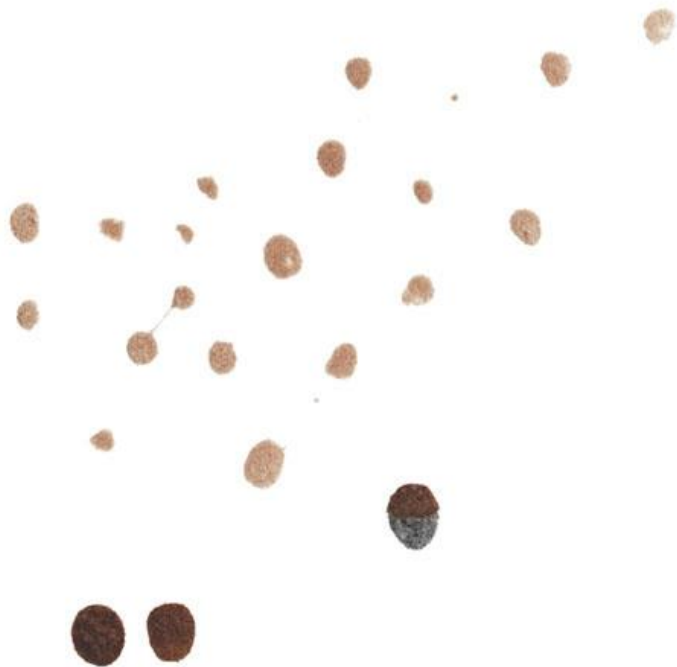


5. 16. 98



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8. 21. 98



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10-23-98



2.16.99



GROUNDHOG



DUCK



DEER



WOUNDED  
DEER



RABBIT



GOOSE



WOUNDED  
TURTLE



HAWK



SWAN  
OR  
EGRET



MONARCH  
BUTTERFLY



PHEASANT



WILD  
TURKEY



FOX



BLUE  
HERON



YELLOW  
WARBLER



SWALLOW

