

MESSAGE FROM ERIC

- March -

THE LIFE OF AN ARTIST

Many people think the life of an artist is full of fun and exotic adventures. Sometimes that is true but other times not at all. Let me tell you a story.

Years ago when I was just starting out doing workshops, I went to teach in Florida in December. I was looking forward to a nice break from winter in the PNW. On the first leg of my journey, I caught the puddle jumper flight from Astoria to Portland. It was such a small plane the copilot gave me the safety instructions. I was the only passenger on the flight.

Trouble started as I broke the arm off my glasses in Portland. I stuck them in my backpack to fix when I arrived in Florida. I woke up at 3:45 to catch my plane. Our original plane was stuck on the east coast due to weather, so they gave us a smaller plane. I considered myself lucky to get a seat—one of the last assigned, in the very back of the plane by the toilets. I sat next to a pilot hitching a ride home. I learned about his fascination with the screen that displays the aircraft's speed, the temperature outside, and so on. I think watching Laverne and Shirley would have been more exciting.

Somehow my luggage ended up in Monroe, AL. I guess the airlines thought Monroe is a lot like Melbourne, Florida: they both have gators. So with my crooked glasses on, I talked to the ticket agent about getting my luggage back. Luckily I had brought my carry-on art supplies and my portfolio made it.

The sweet desk clerk at my hotel offered me toiletry items after I told her my situation. I gratefully accepted them and then she handed me a comb. I was a little afraid to look in the mirror, thinking there must have been a reason for the offer. The deodorant concerned me too, but she assured me it was not lilac scented.

You can imagine my surprise when I stepped outside, and instead of the sun drenched escape I had anticipated, there was snow on the palm trees! Apparently, they set all kinds of records during my time there.

My 80 students did very well, although a few seemed distracted. I could see it in their eyes: "How long has this guy been wearing those clothes, and why does he have his glasses strapped to his head with masking tape?"

Fortunately I was reunited with my luggage the next day. The workshop and students were wonderful. When I arrived home in Washington, it was warmer than Florida!

Keep your brush wet!

Eric



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