

The background of the slide is a large, detailed painting of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, a wooden structure, possibly a bridge or a fence, is made of weathered planks and is partially visible. To the left, a river flows over rocks, surrounded by green grass and shrubs. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a blue sky with soft clouds. The overall style is that of a classic landscape painting.

# The Vanishing West

Wisdom of the American  
West with the Artworks  
of Gregory Peters and  
Johanna Lerwick



## *The Vanishing West*

With an open mind, loving heart and  
clear intention, you can live the dream of  
becoming one with nature.

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## Foreword

I've had a love affair with the American West for years. From the rugged snow-capped mountains stretching like tortured spines North and South, to the sparkling cold waters of the Pacific Ocean, this land has it all.

The western United states is alternately very lush and bone dry. Huge swaths of land lie arid and empty for the lack of water. Water, our most precious resource is the glue that binds the diverse climates in the Western lands together.

*"Men may fight over gold," it is said, "but they'll kill for water."*

Truth. As water travels, so too do the living things that depend upon it. The beaver seeks to dam a river to enhance its territory. Man builds dams to harness the water for power and irrigation. Just as mountain storms shed rain which runs to the sea, this book follows the same paths through the terrain supporting life along its journey.

As modern civilization expanded into the West, man did not adapt to this raw, wild environment. No, we adapted the land to suit our desires. We leveled lush forests and dammed the rivers. Rather than follow the contours of the land as we built our roads, we punched through the winding hills and ripped up the rich soil as though the earth was a mere inconvenience.

Those whose homes were displaced have struggled to survive. As our towns grew, animals quite literally headed for the hills. Breathtaking views and sweeping vistas may soothe the eye but a bit of character has been removed from the landscape. We've taken away the inconvenient birds, plants, insects and animals in favor of a predictably bland diet of tract homes, television and meaningless pastimes to keep us happy and satisfied in our consumer-focused pre-packaged cities and suburbs.

A zoo provides a pale experience compared to witnessing nature in the raw. The structures and monuments we have created in our relentless need to enhance our environment sit upon the former homes of creatures we cared little for. The wild things watch from the hidden places now as their territories become ever smaller. Nothing lasts forever.

We choose to dominate, not partner with the elements of nature which can provide us with all that is truly rich and meaningful. We may be losing the opportunity to enrich our very souls.

The Vanishing West speaks volumes about not only wildlife that has gone into hiding, but the lessons and wisdom lost by not paying attention to what is worthy and fulfilling.

*You cannot take without giving back.*

I don't often paint pictures of animals and yet, animals are a large part of what makes the West so special.



When I asked Johanna to help me with this effort, I knew she felt as strongly about wildlife as I did about the countryside. Her artworks practically leap from the canvas with their energy depicted in glowing oil paints. The wildlife is magnificent and her images capture the magic of these unique creatures. Some may soon only be seen in the works of artists like us.

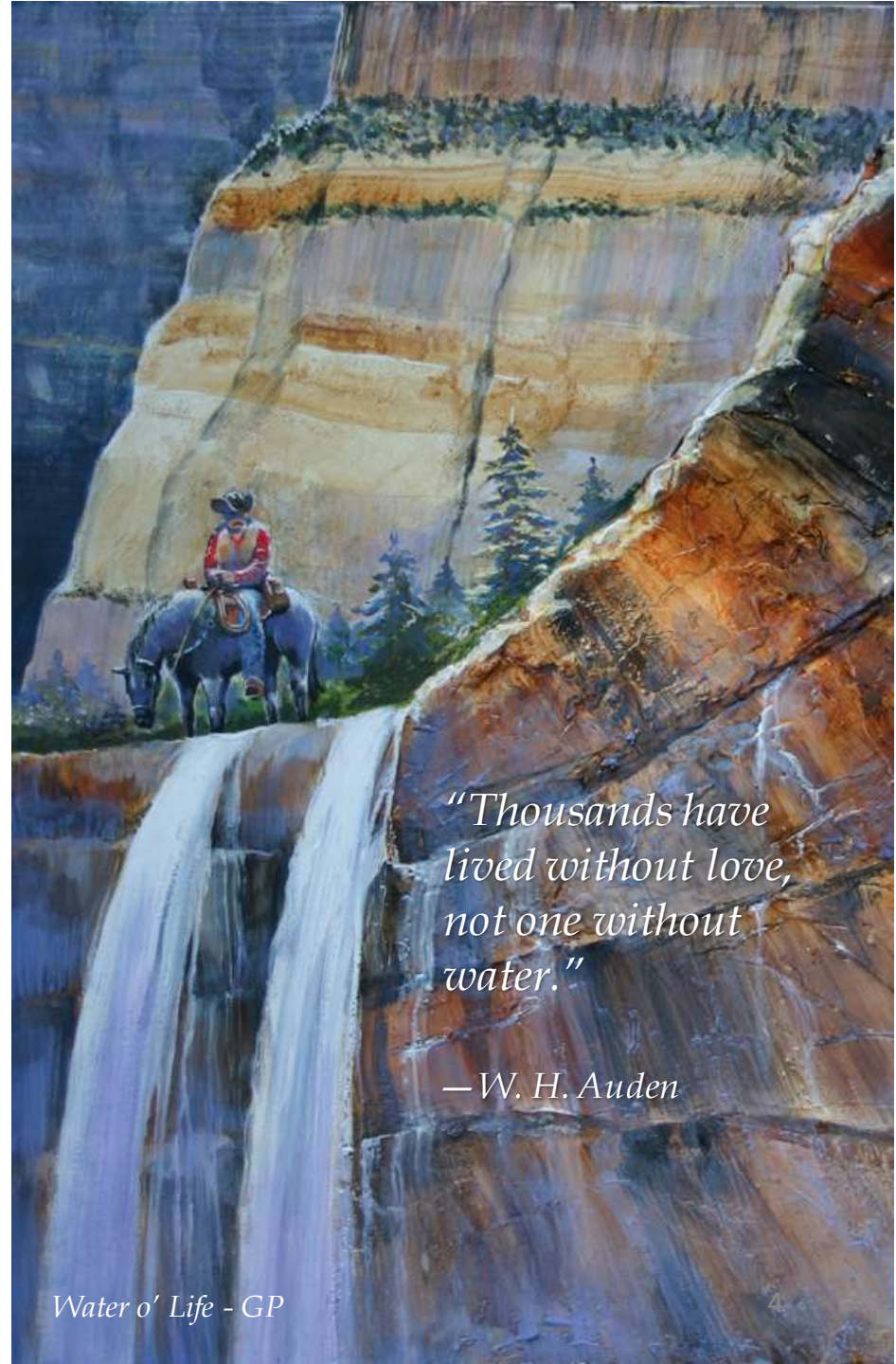


*Silent Approach/Wolf -JL*

How can you talk about a magnificent predator like a wolf to a child when there are no more to be seen? Will you talk in hushed tones about the towering redwood trees that once touched Heaven itself or merely run your hands over the lumber cut from the flesh of these living spirits?

These wonderful paintings in this book can convey only some of the magic of places and creatures mystical in their ability to feed the soul and make one's life complete by merely standing in their presence. With an open mind, loving heart and pure intent, you will experience just a taste of the American West. So, what are you waiting for? Come.

*The West is waiting.*



*"Thousands have  
lived without love,  
not one without  
water."*

*—W. H. Auden*





*After the Rain/Purple Finch*  
JL



*Autumn Highlights/  
Great Horned Owl* - JL

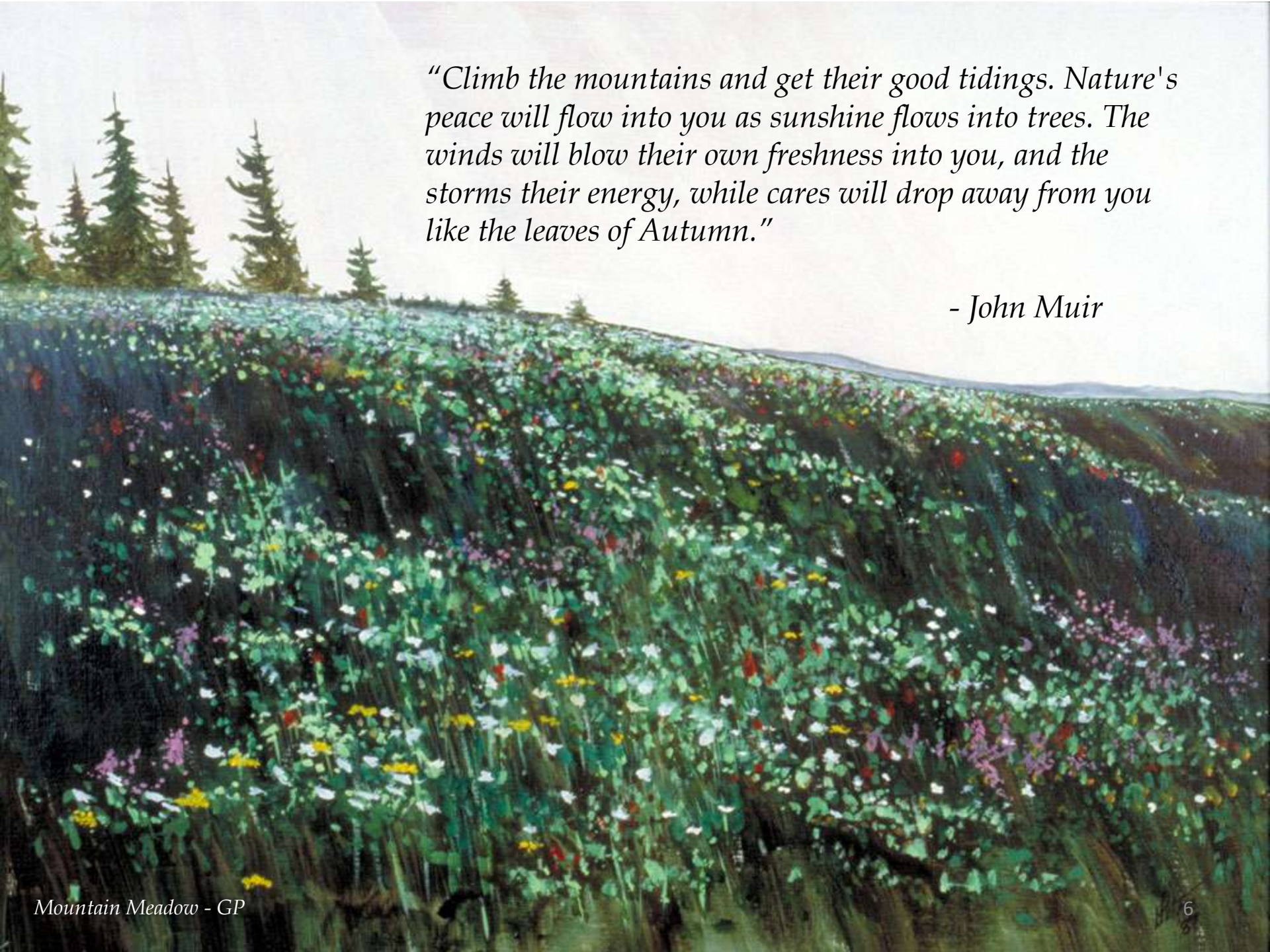


*Woodsy Playground/Red Squirrel* - JL

*“Everything on the earth has a purpose, every disease an herb to cure it, and every person a mission.”*

*- Mourning Dove, Salish*





*"Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop away from you like the leaves of Autumn."*

*- John Muir*

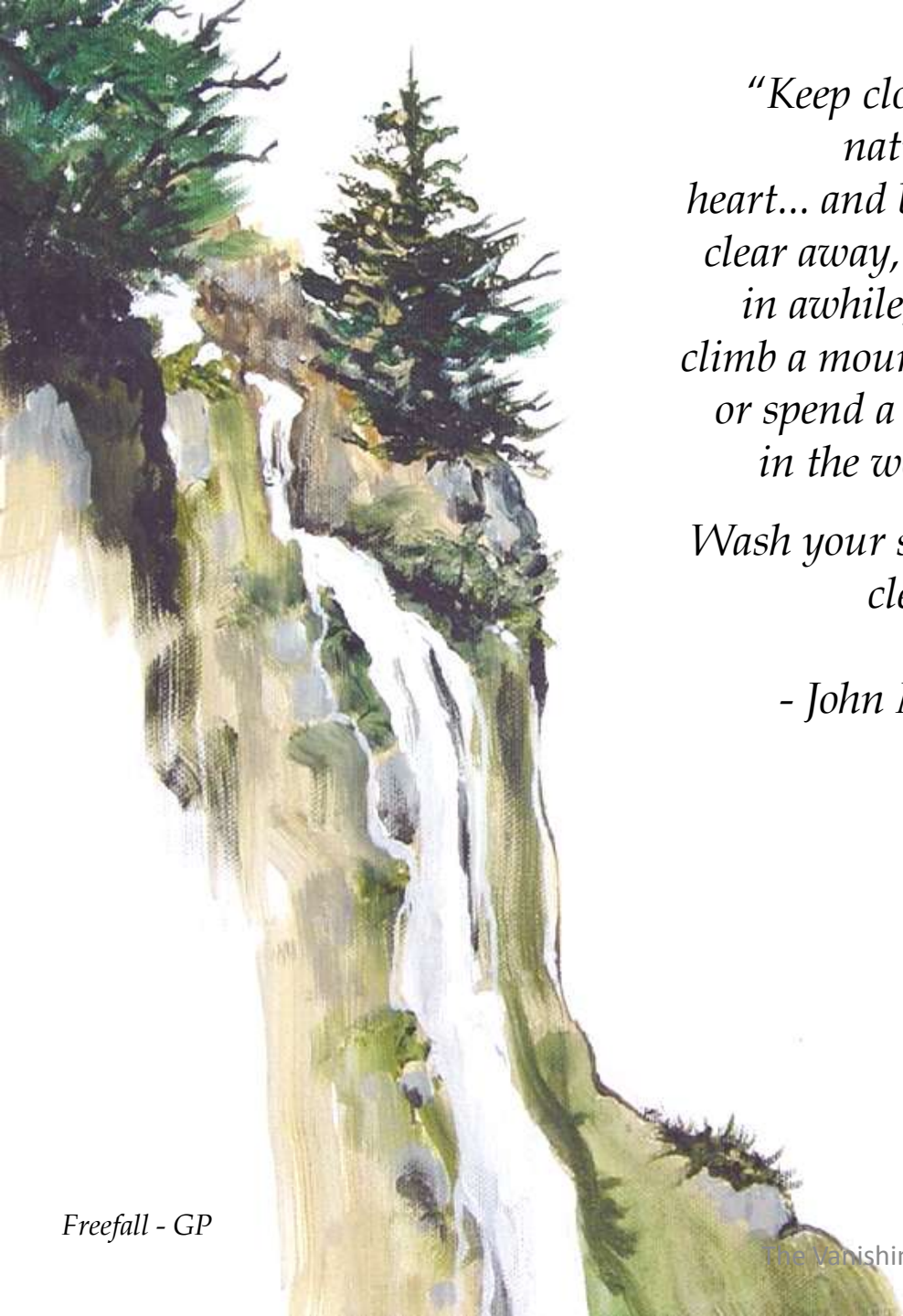




Watching for Mom/  
Coyote Pups - JL

*"In the beginning of all things, wisdom and knowledge were with the animals, for Tirawa, the One Above, did not speak directly to Man. He sent certain animals to tell men that he showed himself through the beasts, and that from them and from the stars and the sun and the moon should man learn...all things tell of Tirawa."*

*- Eagle Chief, Pawnee*



*"Keep close to  
nature's  
heart... and break  
clear away, once  
in awhile, and  
climb a mountain  
or spend a week  
in the woods.*

*Wash your spirit  
clean."*

*- John Muir*



*Baldy - GP*



*Coming to Shore - JL*

*Freefall - GP*





*Silent Hunter/Bobcat - JL*



*Winter's Magical Moment/Whitetail Buck - JL*



*"The mountains are calling and I  
must go."*

*— John Muir*





## Go West Young Man

*Enchanted Forest - GP*

*"We must protect the forests for our children, grandchildren and children yet to be born. We must protect the forests for those who can't speak for themselves such as the birds, animals, fish and trees."*

*- Qwatsinas (Hereditary Chief Edward Moody),  
Nuxalk Nation*

The romance of the West grew out of the notion that there really was a place where one could start fresh. A wild land aching to be tamed by those with the heart and spirit and drive to forge their future as they saw fit. No laws, no rules, nothing but open land, fresh air and sheer adventure awaited.

Not a bad concept for the dreamers. Life though, was never easy in the early West. Challenges came in all varieties. Wild animals, unpredictable weather, disease, injury and run-ins with bad people, were just a few of the

difficulties to be faced. And these were just to get to the Western territories.

Many arrived utterly unprepared and paid the price, but the lure of gold for instance, was very strong. And free land to be had. Then there was silver, copper and oil opportunities to be had. Lumber resources were next and last but not least was farming and cattle ranching. Notwithstanding the many natural challenges, the West was already populated at the time of westward expansion by many different Native American tribes. It wasn't always the easiest of relationships between the locals and the new arrivals. It is hard to deal with invaders who believe in eminent domain and have guns to enforce their beliefs.

By the 1900's almost all of the millions of buffalo and American Indians had been completely eradicated. (cont.)



*Firehole River Crossing/  
Bison - JL*

Countless generations of Indians were gone, and with them went the wisdom of those who knew the land like the backs of their hands. I believe they knew that a new era was upon them. Before the first Western movie was ever released the West was pretty much only a romantic

*"To live in the hearts we leave behind  
is not to die."*

*- Thomas Campbell*



*Plains Drifter/Bison - JL*

concept. As a matter of fact, the West, despite being exploited for many generations is only now being truly appreciated for the many riches American Indians knew of and lived with. (Cont. on page 22)



*Blue Jay and Blue Spruce*

*- JL*

*"The American Indian is of the soil, whether it be the region of forests, plains pueblos or mesas. He fits into the landscape, for the hand that fashioned the continent also fashioned the man for his surroundings. He once grew as naturally as the wild sunflowers; he belongs just as the buffalo belonged."*

*- Luther Standing Bear, Oglala Sioux Chief*



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*Stunning Artwork of Wildlife in  
their native elements!*

***"The Old West is not a certain  
place in a certain time,  
it's a state of mind.***

***It's whatever you want it to be."***

***- Tom Mix***



*Morning Light/Moose- JL*



*Along for the Ride - JL*



*A Song in the Marsh/  
Marsh Wren- JL*



## Timeless Cowboy Wisdom from the West

- *The easiest way to eat crow is while it's still warm. The colder it gets, the harder it is to swallow.*
- *If it don't seem like it's worth the effort, it probably ain't.*
- *It don't take a genius to spot a goat in a flock of sheep.*
- *Never ask a barber if you need a haircut.*
- *Don't worry about bitin' off more'n you can chew; your mouth is probably a whole lot bigger'n you think.*
- *Generally, you ain't learnin' nothing when your mouth's a-jawin'.*
- *Tellin' a man to git lost and makin' him do it are two entirely different propositions.*
- *When you're throwin' your weight around, be ready to have it thrown around by somebody else.*
- *Always take a good look at what you're about to eat. It's not so important to know what it is, but it's sure crucial to know what it was.*
- *The quickest way to double your money is to fold it over and put it back into your pocket.*
- *Never miss a good chance to shut up.*
- *There never was a horse that couldn't be rode; Never was a cowboy who couldn't be thrown.*
- *Keep skunks and bankers at a distance.*
- *A bumble bee is considerably faster than a John Deere tractor.*
- *Words that soak into your ears are whispered... not yelled.*
- *Meanness don't jes' happen overnight.*
- *Do not corner something that you know is meaner than you.*

- *It don't take a very big person to carry a grudge*
- *Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin' it back in.*
- *If you get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence, try orderin' somebody else's dog around.*
- *Don't pick a fight with an old man. If he is too old to fight, he'll just kill you.*
- *Never approach a bull from the front, a horse from the rear, or a fool from any direction.*
- *Don't squat with your spurs on.*
- *When you lose, don't lose the lesson.*
- *Talk slowly, think quickly.*
- *Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.*
- *It's better to be a has-been than a never-was.*
- *Every path has a few puddles.*
- *When you wallow with pigs, expect to get dirty*
- *The best sermons are lived, not preached.*
- *Most of the stuff people worry about ain't never gonna happen anyway.*
- *Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.*
- *Don't interfere with somethin' that ain't bothering you none.*
- *If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop diggin'.*
- *The biggest troublemaker you'll probably ever have to deal with, watches you from the mirror every mornin'.*
- *Always drink upstream from the herd.*
- *Good judgment comes from experience, and a lotta that comes from bad judgment.*
- *You cannot unsay a cruel word.*



*Do not go where the  
path may lead, go  
instead where there  
is no path and leave  
a trail.*



*Faded Glory - GP*



*Saddle Up - GP*



*Rush Hour - GP*



*Field of Dreams - GP*

*The Vanishing West*





*“The wild west came and went so fast, we scarcely remembered it until western movies reminded us of that tumultuous past and the colorful characters that filled its wide open spaces.”*

*- Gregory*



*Do not regret growing older. It  
is a privilege denied to many.*



*After the Rain - GP*



*"If you're ridin' ahead of the herd,  
take a look back every now and then  
to make sure it's still there."*

*- Will Rogers*



*Hot Air - GP*



*El Cabellero - GP*

*Suup? - GP*



*The Vanishing West*



*'You can't fight the desert... you  
have to ride with it.'*

*- Louis L'Amour*





*"If you go to a desert, you will hear this mysterious voice:  
Be wise, protect your forests!"*

*— Mehmet Murat Ildan*



*Sagebrush Sentinels/Desert Bighorn Sheep - JL*



*Little Bunny - JL*



*Waggon- GP*

*End of the Road - GP*

*The Vanishing West*





*The Gate - GP*

Hardy ranchers and seasoned farmers persisted and violent gunslingers, government stupidity and arrogance. It really wasn't until after World War II that things began to dramatically change in the West. Cities grew and pushed ever deeper into the former frontier lands. Wild animals really never had much

of a chance against weapons, machines and determined people. We called it 'progress'. Much though, had been learned from the hardy pioneers who first migrated to the West. Lessons about value, honesty, hard work, trust and truth were passed down to each successive generation. One look at the way older homes and tools were built attests to the values inherent in their purpose. Things were made to last.

*You can make a small fortune in farming-  
provided you start with a large one.*

Relationships were forged to act as guideposts to avoid the many foolhardy things we do as humans. People and what they created was what mattered.

One industry to spring from its connection to the past is the business of wine. Wine Country is a direct descendent of farming. Raising grapes is fundamentally rooted in the principles of farming.



*Molten Sky - GP*

Fortunately, the West has a number of areas ideally suited to this crop. Hot days, cool nights and just enough moisture in the air to make the grapes work harder, and become sweeter over time. (cont.)



*A View to the West - GP*

*"When tillage begins, other arts follow. The  
farmers, therefore, are the founders of  
human civilization."*

*- Daniel Webster*



*"In one drop of water are found all the secrets of all the oceans."*

*- Khalil Gibran*



*On the River Bank/River Otter - JL*



Western farming blended seamlessly with Mediterranean culture and Wine Country now thrives throughout the West. You'll still see the old West sprinkled throughout the sprawling estates rambling over the rolling hills.

Animals are still part of the countryside, the weather is unpredictable as always and so are the neighbors. Another thing that has never changed are issues concerning water. It can't be more strongly emphasized how important water is to the West. It is the very blood of the earth that allows living creatures to stay here. Animals as well as farmers depend upon it as much as we need air to breathe.

The Wild West of Buffalo Bill Cody (mostly theater, not truth), has become somewhat tame. We have gained some things, but have lost the ability to hear the essential message inherent in this land. Native Americans and wildlife understood this message clearly.

*If you take, you must  
give back in kind.*

The earth can be self sustaining, but only through a harmonized stewardship with reverence for all things, can life grow and prosper to benefit all. Nature out of balance helps no one.

The lumber industry caused the loss of much of the vast forests that blanketed the West. The fishing industry stripped the seas of many of the species we took for

granted. Mineral interests gouged out the soil and displaced it to feed burgeoning industries. Hunters systematically annihilated animals for sport to the point of extinction...and beyond. It is not worth mentioning what was done to the air we breathe and the water we drink. That tale is self-evident. We have generations of taking much and giving little in return. The Vanishing West is the legacy of our inability to live as one with nature.



*Enchanted Vineyard - GP*

The land is still beautiful though. Even in death, the rusting metal and weathered wood of the past starkly portrays the end of one era and perhaps the beginning of another. Never has there been more interest in the wild animals and places they live as they dwindle in





*Stormy Clouds - JL*

name and number. The rustic look and feel of the old West is very popular these days. Decorators call it 'shabby-chic', and fashion furniture from old weathered wood.

There is still time to foster a love story of your own and visit this great land of our history. Only then will awareness increase to create a rise in consciousness that appreciates the beauty and resources offered so freely. Take only what is needed, use it wisely and return what you can. Better yet, return more! You are the answer. If not you, who?



*Golden Treasures - JL*

## *Drink the Water, Feel the Water, Be the Water*

I've spoken a lot about water, but you can't say enough about how important it is in the West. Water eventually reaches the sea, but before it does, it rests in the wetlands. Wetlands are the bridge to the shore. Water fills the nooks and crannies of the coastal lowlands as it rests, before slowly crawling to the ocean. Not suited for supporting the structures of man, it wraps the shoreline in an array of muddy sanctuary for the birds and creatures of the sea.

The wetlands are naturally protected from most predators and serve as nesting grounds for many varieties of creatures. It is water's last stop before mixing with the briny seas. The pools and channels are calm there and at rest as they provide much needed sustenance for fin, feather and fur alike. (cont.)



*Sea Oats Silhouette at Sunset - JL*

*"All the waters run to the sea and yet the sea is not full, and from the place where they began, thither they return again."*

*- Ecclesiastes*



*Magic Wings - GP*





*Bait -GP*



*Sandy Beach - GP*

The shoreline greets the wetlands with the insurmountable power of the sea. Wind and salt spray claim everything in proximity to the ocean. There is a myriad of creatures in motion upon the shore. Pay attention to the miniscule movements and you will be immersed in a frenzy of activity within the sand and upon rocks,. Along the tide-lines and into the shallows are all the elements of life spread out before you. Silky sand and untold number of stones break the restless waves and are cast repeatedly into the salty waters.

The beach is where we greet our friends from the sea. We frolic in the sun and revel in the water, surrounded by the peace and solace of the wind and waves. Clean air fills our lungs and the salt spray scours our souls to remind us that all things have their moment in time, and this is yours. (cont.)



*Azure Seas - GP*



*Free Bird - GP*



*Rock Quarry- GP*

*Tideline Treasures - GP*



*Orca Pod - GP*



*It Must Be Love - GP*



*Sea Dog - GP*



*Jump - GP*

*"And it is an interesting biological fact that all of us have, in our veins the exact same percentage of salt in our blood that exists in the ocean, and, therefore, we have salt in our blood, in our sweat, in our tears. We are tied to the ocean."*

*—John F. Kennedy*





The West is best represented mostly by what it isn't. It is not glitzy like a Las Vegas showgirl, and yet it can dazzle abundant flowers in every color of the rainbow. The sky can swirl from brilliant blue to storm tossed yellows and purples when it chooses to show its colors. You won't see anything like these in a video game.

Riches abound here and yet I don't speak of gold or silver despite their abundance. The Western lands are filled with delight for all your senses. The Old West of our ancestors may be vanishing, but the rugged mountains, tumbling rivers and wild animals that make this land ever new will send your heart soaring and breathe life into your aching soul. You have but to leap from your chair, find a meadow and fill your lungs with crisp, clean air. Your legacy is waiting.

*"We do not inherit the earth  
from our ancestors; we  
borrow it from our children*

*- Chief Seattle*



## Gregory Peters | Artist

If there was one word to characterize my artwork it would be *diverse*. I've painted what I enjoyed since I was a little boy. To this day I create my works of art out of interest in things others may not notice. My artwork themes range from the mountains to the sea and points in between. I relate to an older era of life and much of my work reflects this.

Rustic images from the "heartland" such as old barns and rusty tractors as well as farm scenes speak to a slower, simpler way of life. You'll find nothing high tech about my art; just images that you're probably going to recognize.

I like art that is very tactile. Nature's components reveal themselves in ways you must experience personally to appreciate. I spent my entire childhood moving around the world as an Embassy brat. When I returned to my beloved Pacific northwest as a teenager, I was able to finally appreciate being in nature instead of experiencing it from the standpoint of an outsider. I absorbed it like a sponge.

The result was a steadily expanding collection of experiential images in different media. Nature and its components are what shape who we are, not the other way around. To that end, I try and bring a bit of nature into the living environment with the subtlety of nature's colors and use of common items.

Many of my paintings have a "dimensional" element in them by the addition of sculptural elements. This visual enrichment is very effective in tricking the visual senses to stimulate, delight and create surprise amongst viewers. Dimensional images change as well with the passage of time and light conditions throughout the day. There is a bit of magic in the process, just as there is magic in being out in and part of nature.







## Johanna Lerwick | The Animal Inside

With a deep love and passion for wildlife, painter Johanna Lerwick infuses the spirit of animals and nature into her art. Her early fondness and connection with all living creatures provided Lerwick with a unique perspective, allowing her to see the world differently than others. Her desire to capture and share her love of animal subjects drew her to art and elevated her creative energy. After years of developing technique and vision, Lerwick employs a high level of realism with mastered elements of light and shadow to depict her subjects. Every peaceful, yet engaging painting calls to the animal spirit within us all. Growing up on a small dairy farm in Coventry, New York, which is a small town upstate, Lerwick cultivated a deep connection to animals and wildlife. "Nature has always been part of my life," she says. "I didn't know at first how my love for nature and animals would impact my love for art." Lerwick went on safari in Africa, took a 700 mile raft trip down the Amazon, and traveled to Guam, Tahiti, Mexico and throughout the United States.

"My inspiration comes at any given time or place. It could be something I see or even hear," she explains. "All I need to do is go for a walk through the meadows or the woods, sit by a stream or pond, watch a sunrise or sunset and see flowers, leaves and grass dancing in the wind. I may venture to animal parks and zoos spending hours observing and photographing the animals. With animals as her preferred subject matter, she has established techniques for bringing out emotion and mood through their eyes and expressions. She then strives to place each of her subjects in a corresponding background that fits the feeling. Sometimes the background is more abstract and not as detailed depending how Lerwick imagines the scene or where she wants the viewers focus. Lerwick continues to enjoy the grand mysticism of nature and would like nothing more than to enjoy the rest of her life surrounded by the wildlife and animals that have graced her many masterpieces. She currently lives in upstate New York where she is active in pursuing a life and career in art, surrounding herself with what makes her happiest.

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