

Mentor's Introduction

Marilyn Zurmuehlen

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Mentor's Introduction

MARILYN ZURMUEHLEN
The University of Iowa

"We live by messages," Eiseley (1969) claimed, "—all true scientists, all lovers of the arts" (p. 146). The message metaphor holds the ideas of meaning and relationship, a confluence of paramount importance for all people, but especially so for students and teachers, and, perhaps particularly, for those learning and teaching art. As Burton (1978) explained: "The more the art student and the art educator interact, the more each will come to understand the point-of-view of the other. Eventually, they realize they not only share a meaning, but that they are a meaning in each others' lives" (p. 44).

Priscilla Fenton and Steve McGuire share meanings with their mentor and simultaneously share meanings with their own students in The University of Iowa Summer High School Art Workshop, and in communities throughout Iowa in the Artists in the Schools program. The message relationship is a reciprocal one. Long before I became a graduate student I was an avid reader of Loren Eiseley and I introduce my students to his writings. However, even though I was an early participant in Ray Johnson's New York Correspondence School, Priscilla's affinity for the stamp art of Donald Evans called his work to my attention in a special way. Her account of the postcard from Paris demonstrates the multi-directional travel of such messages among artists, students, and teachers.

Steve's narrative art provided a grounding for his written stories in graduate seminars: accounts of his bike trips, recollections of his explorations in play, messages to friends while on his journeys -- all are sources for the stories he tells in his art, and the stories of his art reveal the story of his life. John Fowles wrote that what attracted him to all narrative art is its "motion from a seen present to a hidden future" (1979, n.p.). Steve's stories moved him into a year of Iowa traveling to elementary schools and secondary classes, to isolated farming communities and densely populated areas, telling the stories of his art and inviting the students to reciprocate by telling him the stories of their art.

Winquist's message to us is that "We tell a story in order to find a story" (1978, p. 114). Here are the stories Priscilla and Steve have found.

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