

Claire Ewart

I'll never forget when my kindergarten teacher thumb-tacked my crayon drawing of a robin up on the classroom bulletin board. I'm sure I scuffed my penny loafers on the linoleum floor. I know that my cheeks burned with pride as she held my drawing in front of the class! No wonder that all these years later I am still drawing! Since first holding a crayon, my natural instinct has been to tell a story.

Whatever the reason for my inclination, throughout elementary school, I made drawings, dioramas, and 2-dimensional puppet theaters which fed on narrative. I wrote, sang, drew, and as I went on to jr. high and high school, I painted and kept writing.

My father's job required that we move a number of times, but my mother always made sure that wherever that took us, we lived on a lake. In each new place, my father lost no time in marching my two younger sisters and me out to explore. We swam in clear water, hiked along up-turned creek beds, squished and sprang through peat bogs. As we did, we learned that each feather, fossil and footprint we found was part of a story. What a way to appreciate the gifts of nature, to learn ingenuity and resourcefulness! Because my parents led by example, those early explorations began my creative journey.

When I wasn't exploring, I drew and painted and wrote, and kept doing so as we moved and I was transferred from one school to the next. As I grew, I found that my instinct to tell a story was becoming stronger. By the time I became a college student at the Rhode Island School of Design I was no longer satisfied with the static nature of the 2-dimensional medium of painting. When I applied oil to canvas, along came the nagging feeling, that there must be "more to the story."