



Tip #134

Using Your Imagination

It's wonderful to celebrate what we see, and to try to capture it – or the mood, or our response to it. But it's also a delight to let your imagination out to play, like a kid!

You can do this in all sorts of ways, of course ... you can “push” the colors you actually see, making the shadows more blue or lavender, seeing more of the warmth in fallen leaves than you may actually be able to observe on a cloudy winter day like the ones we've had lately.

You can paint the world in *completely* different colors ... who says grass has to be green? Why can't your house be purple and the trees orange? Explore different color schemes, like analogous (next to each other on the color wheel) or complementary (across from each other.)

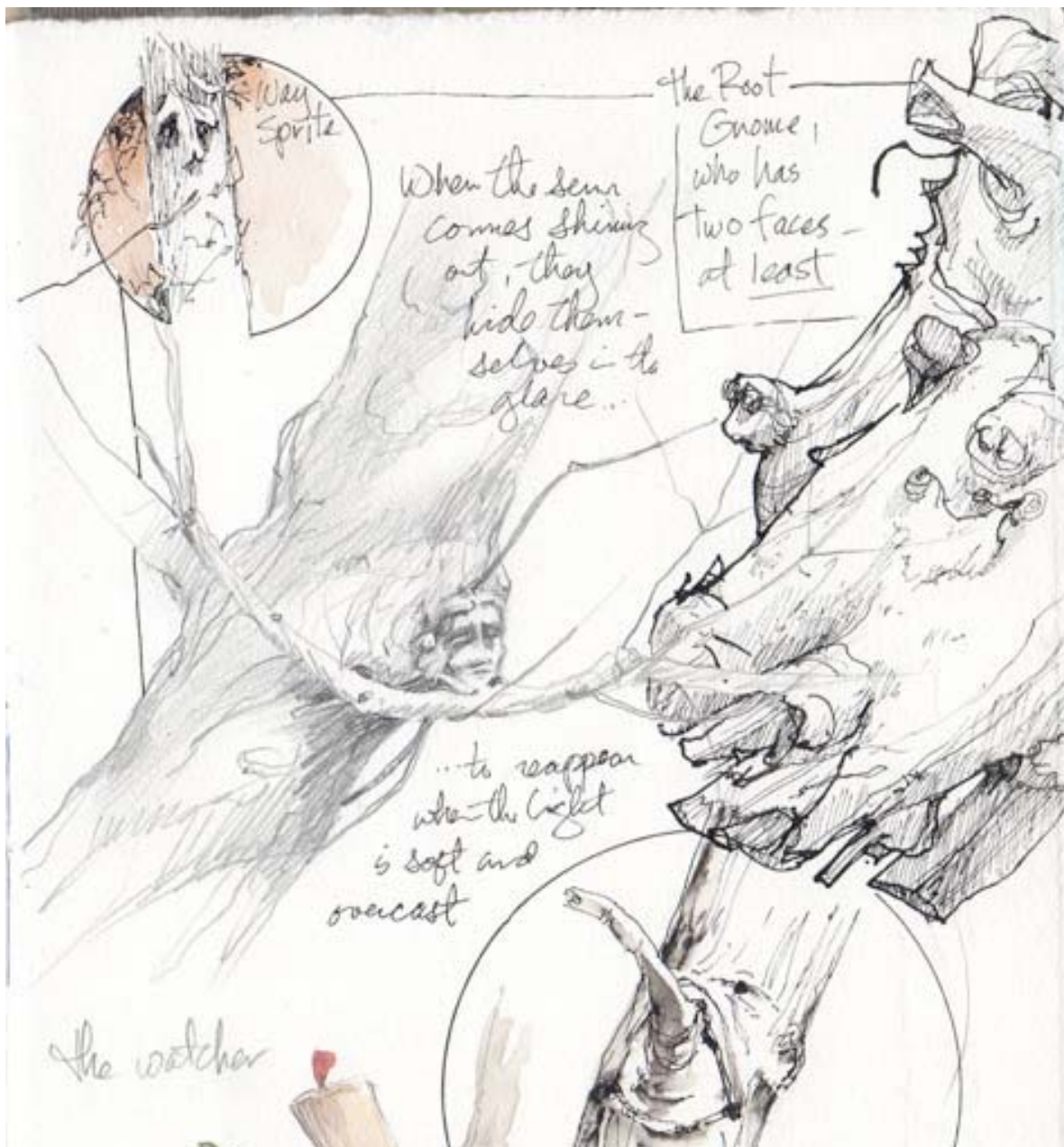
Why not paint everything in a monochromatic scheme, with different shades and tints of red? It's a great exercise, besides.



You can draw an image “out of the whole cloth,” as they used to say. Nothing to look at, just taking off from a magical place in your own head. Maybe you imagine creatures never before seen on this earth – look at some of the wonderful images James Gurney comes up with! Maybe you see dragons, or imagine a castle on a rise in Scotland. Maybe a dance among the stars is more your style. What’s to stop you?

Use yourself as a jumping-off place and draw what you’d LIKE to see, as we covered in Tip #23, the “Why of Self Portraits,” or draw yourself as a knight, a Ninja, or a princess, as we discussed in tip #49, “Fantasy and Myth.” See inside a friend’s face or demeanor to an elf playing a wooden whistle as I did with my friend Kevin!

Check out a favorite photo of your pet or child, then take off from there -- I once turned a beagle into a figure made of sticks and moss for one of my books!





Or take a look at some of the odd burls or roots you may find in the woods. Isn't that a fantastic creature looking back at you? Draw it and see! You may push it a bit, emphasize a "nose" or eyes or other shape, but you'll find you don't need to make it up entirely, if you're looking for it with fresh eyes – AND your imagination. The world is quite full of magic.

We may be grown up, but imagination lets us explore, discover and play ... we're never too old for that.

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