

## H. ROGUERAIDERS

### **DARTH VADER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW, COVID YEAR**

*Acrylic/watercolour/pen & ink on offset print \$235.00 20.5 x 17 inches*



Celebration and Responsibility go hand in hand. So, we celebrate being alive. In the vernacular, 'still being this side of the grass.'

Today I ask myself, why not celebrate Winnipeg Beach, which has been my home town for two decades and then some. It wasn't my idea. It was Alex's, chef and proprietor of CASA BIANCA RESTAURANT. He had just opened this restaurant a year before me and Mr. Watson, Jim, moved into the Interlake, 1996, when Alex invited me to put my artwork on his restaurant wall. Two decades later. Just after Thanksgiving, I take down the artwork to store in my place. At this time Alex points out to me the some 30 feet tall wood sculpture right opposite his dining room. It is the edge of the Winnipeg Beach Provincial Park. A carving of native red cedar by Peter Toth, a bust in 'art speak', of the 'Whispering Giant'. It was carved in 1991. 'Why not paint this 'Giant' he is a popular tourist spot. Everybody is taking selfies. This ueber size portrait is as famous as the Viking statue in Gimli! So, I sat under one of the lovely Ash trees on soft moss and grass. The Ash trees are prominent in the Park by the shore of Lake Winnipeg.

Many trees are truly old, perhaps 90 years of age. Ash, willows and poplars, spruce and in particular the Mountain Ash's bright red berries shine in early fall. Amur Maples add a riot of reds, gold and deep purple to the vibrant forest.

If that isn't a reason to celebrate! And that's not all, add to the multi-coloured leaves the slate gray of the lake's water. A lake whose colour changes several times throughout the day but mostly mirroring the blue skies over a prairie landscape. This lake is named Mistahay Sakahagan by aboriginals who have made their summer camps for eons along the shores of Lake Winnipeg.

My backyard's landscape is the Interlake, the region between Lakes Manitoba and Winnipeg, which again colours everything differently. It is the remnant of ancient Lake Agassiz, once a glacier in the last ice age. Isn't that a reason to celebrate landscape and peoples?

However, there is no getting away from this the Year of the Covid pandemic. Our world has been turned upside down. This society has had its freedom curtailed by decree. How can we celebrate—can we still find things to celebrate? We must. We are still celebrating birthdays. I will yet celebrate the birthday of my grandson who is 17 years of age in a week from writing this. We already celebrated his kid brother's 13 years.

Celebrate. Celebrate to acknowledge we are of this world.

Epilogue: Celebrate our home country, our local governments and our federal government, who are so trying to do the right thing in the knowledge, 'what the heck do we know'. Celebrate our Prime Minister, who is so young. I don't think he ever thought he would be thrown the curve ball called Covid-19 while he is at the helm.

I am so glad Chef Alex suggested to look at the 'Whispering Giant' standing upright, greeting people. And kudos to me! My studio walls already display several drawn images of this spirited carving.