



Van Gogh's, *Roses* (May 1890)

Hello:

I hope this finds you well.

Thank you to Margaret C. for recommending, “The Seed Keeper,” by Diane Wilson. This is a nice blend of history and nature. If you are reading a good book and would like to share it, let me know, and I’ll post it on Facebook and mention it in my next newsletter.

Fugitive Pigments:

As I’ve been researching clues for my current novel-in-progress: “Stealing Van Gogh,” I’ve learned that Van Gogh embraced technology and experimented with some of the first commercially available synthetic pigments. Geranium lake was one of the first synthetic dyes and allowed Van Gogh to achieve the vibrant colors he had been looking for—temporarily. The roses, pictured above, were once bright pink. “Roses” was one of the paintings that Van Gogh left behind at the asylum because the thick brushstrokes he used to achieve the bright pink effect needed time to dry.

“Field with Irises Near Arles,” pictured below, is another of the estimated 25 to 30 canvases he left behind when he departed from the asylum near *Saint-Paul-de-Mausole*. The colors have faded; the light blue irises at the bottom of the painting were once a much deeper shade of purple. The photo is a computer-generated “before-and-after” view of the painting.



Van Gogh's, Field with Irises Near Arles (May 1890) showing fading.



Detail of Van Gogh's, Field with Irises Near Arles (May 1890)

The thick brushstrokes, the impasto technique, are highlighted in the following pictures. Although the vivid colors didn't last, the experimental brush strokes he used to achieve the desired colorful effects moved the art world into post impressionism.



(Raking light is light from the side.)

If you know of anyone who is looking for a speaker, the Kentucky Humanities Speakers Bureau is great about helping to subsidize appearances. I'm available as a speaker to talk about "[Stealing Renoir](#)," and how World War II was the largest art theft in history.

Or, if Kentucky history is appropriate for audiences, the Speakers Bureau will subsidize my appearance to discuss the findings from my research grant that inspired "[A Promise Moon](#)" and how it relates to the Underground Railroad in Kentucky. I'm also available to talk about gardening with native plants and "[Let The Earth Breathe](#)." If you or anyone you know would like to schedule a talk, here's the [link](#).

Meanwhile, I'll be busy in April with the following book talks. All of these presentations are free!

Saturday, April 8, 2023, 1pm

I'll be talking about "Let The Earth Breathe" and giving a plant walk at the Jeffersontown Library

10635 Watterson Trail

Louisville, KY 40299

Thursday, April 20th, 6:30pm

I'll be talking about "Let The Earth Breathe" and giving a plant walk at the

Boone County Public Library - Main Library

1786 Burlington Pike, Burlington, KY 41005

Friday, April 21st, 3:30pm

I'll be talking about, "Let The Earth Breathe," and giving a plant walk at the Hardin County Library

100 Jim Owen Drive

Elizabethtown, KY 42701

Saturday, April 22, 3:00 pm

Anne and I will be celebrating Earth Day, Saturday, April 22 with a presentation of "Let The Earth Breathe."

Middletown Library, 12556 Shelbyville Road,

Louisville, KY 40243

If you can't make it to a presentation in person, here is the link to my recent videos. They are short, 5-6 minutes. [Video link](#).

If you haven't already, please take a moment to leave a review on Amazon. It is really helpful with sales. [Here is the link](#). Thank you.

Happy reading.

Stephen Allten Brown

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