

Hello:

I hope this finds you well. 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. I'm reading, "Museum of the Missing," by Simon Houpt. It is a history of art theft and fascinating. I'm collecting clues for my next book, "Stealing Van Gogh."

I'm just about done with the final editing of, "Stealing Picasso." I'm still on target for a fall release. There is a picture of the cover on my blog. Here is the [link](#).

I'm back on the Kentucky Humanities Speakers Bureau now that Covid fears are subsiding. I'll be speaking about "[Stealing Renoir](#)," and how World War II was the greatest art theft in history. I'll be at the Hopkins County Genealogy Society in Madisonville in October. If you know of anyone who is looking for a speaker, the bureau is great about helping to subsidize appearances. I'm also giving talks about "[A Promise Moon](#)" and how it relates to the Underground Railroad in Kentucky, as well as 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](#).

FREE: I have a couple of bookfairs coming up. There is a calendar of upcoming presentations on my website. Here's the [link](#).

A large part of the fun in writing a book is following the research to unexpected places. "[Absinthe Drinker](#)," painted by Picasso in 1901, is one of the featured paintings in "Stealing Picasso." I did a little digging and learned that this canvas is in the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, Russia, and one of 74 disputed paintings the Russian Trophy Brigades took from Germany during the end of World War II. Further research led to some interesting connections from Picasso's Blue Period to my new book that is taking shape: "Stealing Van Gogh."

The Russian Trophy Brigades will be one of the major plot points in "Stealing Van Gogh;" as will absinth, which was one of Van Gogh's favorite drinks. Absinthe is made from wormwood, anise, fennel, and lemon balm. Thujone is the chemical in absinth that excites the central nervous system and triggers the euphoric buzz, the chemical that also causes seizures and other adverse effects that mimic mental illness! Another contributing factor that caused Van Gogh to cut off his ear may have been auditory hallucinations.

Here are a few pictures of what's currently blooming in our gardens. (They are also available on my website. Here's the [link](#).) Iron Weed (*Vernonia gigantea*) is just starting to bloom. I'm not sure what this caterpillar is. Shoot me an email if you know. Great Blue Lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*) is a hummingbird magnet. This grows well in shade, but can handle a lot of sun. The bumblebees love it. (For more information, see page 13 in "[Let The Earth Breathe](#).") The hummingbirds are having a feast with the Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*.)







Reviews on Amazon are a big deal and really help me out. If you haven't already, please take a minute or two and review one—or all of my books. The links to each book are below. You will have to scroll down the page to reach the review section.

[Stealing Renoir](#)

[Mystery Island](#)

[Let The Earth Breathe](#)

[A Promise Moon](#)

[Shadows of Chaco Canyon](#)

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.](#)

Thank you! Happy reading.

Stephen Allten Brown

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