

Catalog

Paintings 1999 - 2017

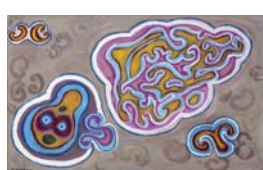
Rudy Rucker

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Paintings listed from newest to oldest. Keep on scrolling all the down to see them all.

See Rucker's [paintings page](#) for prices and larger images.

140. Origin of Life



Acrylic on canvas. 30" by 20". March, 2017

This painting is based on an image of cellular automata. This computation is characterized by having double scrolls

known as Zhabotinsky patterns. These patterns occur naturally in certain chemical mixtures, and they could have played a role in the origin of life within the primordial soup.

139. Antarctica



Acrylic on canvas. 24" by 20". March, 2017

I got back into playing with Capow a continuous valued cellular automata program I wrote with my students back at San Jose State in the late 1990s.

I captured a series of really nice-looking gnarly images. When I printed them out, it struck me that it would be nice to base a series of abstract paintings on the images. When doing an abstraction, there's always the worry that you might be choosing a very banal design. But if you have an external abstract input, the image is more likely to take on a life of it's own. As it happens, this image also dovetailed with my ongoing obsession with that Lovecraft story about the lost ancient city in Antarctica. I think of this as an aerial view of the ruined city. Curious, or synchronistically, the Capow pattern happened to have a shape like the head of a penguin. So much the better!

138. In the Lost City of Leng



Acrylic on canvas. 40" by 30". March, 2017

I've always been fascinated by H. P. Lovecraft's novella, "At the Mountains of Madness." The characters explore a lost ancient city buried beneath the ice

of Antarctica, and they find a passageway with cryptic designs that represent the history of the lost alien civilization.

Apparently the aliens looked like sea cucumbers, and they were destroyed by giant slugs. Whoops! One of those slug-things is waiting just around the bend! I did this painting while the writer Paul Di Filippo and I were working a sequel story to Lovecraft's tale—with the title, the "In the Lost City of Leng"

137. The Elephant Bush



Acrylic on canvas. 24" by 20". January, 2017

My son and I were at a garden supply place with my grandson along. My son bought a plant called an elephant bush, and I had the notion of a little boy

finding tiny flying elephants in a plant in his yard. So I made the painting and hung it in my grandson's room. I think he likes it.

136. Red Scribble



Acrylic on canvas. 16" by 20". December, 2016

We were visiting my son and his family in San Francisco, and I found a child's drawing on the floor. A triangle with some circles and a red scribble. I decided to copy—and, inevitably, to mutate—the

image for an abstract painting. I see it as a family of the circles working their way up a triangle and escaping. When my picture was done, one of my fourth-grade granddaughters loftily told me that my source-drawing was by a first-grade acquaintance of theirs, and that it was supposed to be swiss cheese with holes in it. I still prefer to see it as an abstraction—with a circle making its way to freedom.

135. Californians Request Secession



Acrylic on masonite. 30" by 20". November 9, 2016

I painted this the day after the 2016 presidential election. Its short title is "Californians Request Secession," and its long title is "November 9, 2016:

Californians Request Secession from the Trumpic States of America." The little saucer guys with cubical heads are Californians, you understand. I made their heads be cubes because cubes are easy to paint, and because I felt like I had my head inside a media box of bad news. I painted this on a big rectangle of masonite from a local history museum. They had a historic photo laminated onto the masonite, and it was a scene of a work crew building a road up Mount Hamilton. I thinned down my paints, and painted right over the photo, letting the lights and darks show through.

134. Tourists From Atlantis



Acrylic on canvas. 30" by 24". October, 2016

I visited my writer friend Marc Laidlaw in Kauai, and we talked about collaborating on an SF story involving beings from Atlantis beneath the sea.

We called it "@lantis" for a joke. I wanted a character whose

head looked like a Hawaiian humuhumunukunukuapua'a fish. I did some watercolors of those fish in Kauai and when I got home I did this painting. The two big ones look a little like a father and mother with three children—thus the title.

133. "I Like Purple"



Acrylic on canvas. 40" by 30".
September, 2016

My friend Susie wanted to buy one of my paintings for her living-room, and she insisted the painting should have purple. "I like purple," she said. So I went with that. I've always been intrigued about how hard it is to mix a really nice purple from a red and a blue. So I went and bought three tubes of offbeat purples and violets and mixed up a lot of shades. Those eyes in the lower right—that's the person who likes purple.

132. Attack of the Giant Saucers



Acrylic with Oilstick on canvas. 40" by 30". June, 2016

I've always wanted to paint a scene with a couple of giant saucers attacking, and with a crowd fleeing. Kind of a 1950s SF-flick scenario. The two people in front remind me of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, though I only noticed that after the painting was done. And that's me on the right, the laughing skater punk, enjoying the scene. Like Bruegel in the corner of his *Ascent to Calvary*.

131. Saucer Bagpipe



Acrylic on canvas. 30" by 24". June, 2016

Approaching the end of my novel *Million Mile Road Trip*, I came up with an idea for a "boss" enemy named Groom. He's a mountainous bagpipe that spews flying saucers, and who forces the saucers to act as leeches. But you don't need to know that. As I've said before, I like to regard many of my paintings as being illustrations of unknown parables or proverbs. Like medieval illos of tales gone missing in the flow of time. Just from the image, we have no way of knowing of the horn is sucking or blowing. We also have to wonder about the outer, wider horn, what is it for? And why does that top saucer look more alert and disturbed than the others? And who are the three tiny people watching? No answers are really needed. The bagpipe and the flock of little saucers are enough.

130. The Flat Cow



Acrylic on canvas. 24" by 20". May, 2016

Here I'm still rocking along on my *Million Mile Road Trip* novel. The "flat cow" is something that just popped into my head for no real reason, but I thought it was funny, so I ran with it. A flying saucer that's shaped like a flattened out cow with no legs. Villy is riding on the flat cow's back—and by the way, I don't worry about making Villy look exactly the same from painting. His hair color, in particular, varies to match the compositions' needs. I liked making the other saucers look completely different and, wait, isn't that the royal pupa in there with them? It's all about eyeball kicks, and painting "flying saucers" gives me a lot of latitude. The flat cow's name is Yulia, by the way, and she's a general in the Saucer Liberation Front. She and our heroes are seeking to liberate the race of saucers from an evil bagpipe creature named Groom.

129. Sky Skirmish



Acrylic on canvas. 30" by 24". April, 2016.

This one relates to *Million Mile Road Trip* as well. I used four or five different shades of blue in the sky, and I like how troubled it looks. I like the purple/mauve shadings on the cuttlefish too. Here's my character Villy, along with a friendly giant flying cuttlefish who is zapping lightning bolts at two enemy saucers. The cuttle's name is Stolo. Unfortunately, Villy and Stolo haven't yet noticed the third flying saucer that's creeping up on them from behind. Look out, guys!

128. Defending the Royal Pupa



Acrylic on canvas. 24" by 20". March, 2016.

All through early 2016, I had problems with my hip (See Painting #24). I couldn't get out much. I focused on my novel *Million Mile Road Trip* and wrote a lot. In the spring when it warmed up outside, I starting doing paintings relating to the novel, first doing some sketches in watercolor, and then working in acrylic to speed up the process. It was like I came alive again just in time for my 70th birthday on March 22, 2016. What you see here is, well, it's kind of complicated. That pupa-like thing in the lower left is the so-called Lady Filippa, who's helping my characters (top to bottom on the right) Villy, Scud, and Zoe. Scud has obtained a magic wand from the Lady. Villy and Zoe have magical guitars with great power. An evil creature is about to attack the royal pupa. The kids fight him with magic and music. I like the colors in this one a lot.

127. Diego's Hunhunahpu



Acrylic on canvas. 36" by 36".
November, 2015.

In the mountain town of Guanajuato, Mexico, I visited the early home of Diego Rivera. They had several gray and red ink wash paintings that Rivera had made for a never-published edition

of *Popol Vuh*, a book of Mayan legends. I was struck by Diego's image of the god Hunhuna'p'u, who's magically impregnating a calabash bush with fetal forms for other gods and for human beings. So I made a copy of the painting, using an intense color palette inspired by the walls of the houses in lovely Guanajuato.

126. Vlad and Monika



Oil on canvas. 30" by 24". October, 2015.

This was meant to be an image of a spacy and intimidating alien world, a part of my novel *Million Mile Road Trip*. At first I was going to call the painting "Bubbleman," and have the viewer imagine that the two eyes belonged to a single alien creature, but then I decided there were in fact two of them. And I decided to call them Vlad and Monika, and let them speak in Polish accents. Technically speaking, this was one of the more difficult paintings I've done. It was tricky to give the bubbles the effect of being colored, translucent spheres.

125. Saucerpeople



Oil on canvas. 24" by 18". September, 2015.

When I painted this, I was still working on my novel *Million Mile Road Trip*, which features some flying saucers that are meaty flying things. And—*eeeeek*—it's in principle for a female saucer to fertilize her seeds with human DNA obtained by kissing a human male. When a saucer gets pregnant from a man, she lays some fertilized eggs, hatches them...and you get hybrid saucerpeople, as shown in my painting! They have human bodies, but with saucer-like rims around their waists, and they can fly. I like how cute and cheerful the saucerpeople are in this painting. I was in a happy mood when I painted them.

124. X-Ray of Failed Hip Implant



Oil on canvas. 18" by 24". August, 2015.

This is a painting in a mode that Frida Kahlo sometimes got into: worrying about a medical problem you're having. As is evident, I was having a problem with a hip implant. The cup, or round part, of the implant had failed to bond with my pelvic bone—and I was having steady pain. And facing the unpleasant prospect of having the hip replaced yet again. I based this image on a diagnostic X-ray, filling it in with color and with a symbol of the pain. It always feels better to paint an image of what's bugging you. Kind of a magical process. Even if the painting doesn't actually change anything.

123. Cells



Oil and acrylic on canvas. 24" by 24". May, 2015.

I was gearing up for a show of my art at the Borderlands Café & Bookstore in San Francisco. And I wanted to have one more painting for my show. So I dove into *Cells*. I had no real idea what I'd paint when I started. First I did an underpainting in acrylic with a heavy gel medium to get some texture and to have some extra color glowing through. Like a fancy gesso. But I don't like how flat acrylic looks, so I layered an oil painting on top of that. I outlined some blobs in my original painting, and then filled them in to look like living cells. I used a fan brush for the halo effect, and I flicked the bristles of the fan brush to add some life with splattered dots. It was a rush job, and in August, 2015, I did a touch-up job, adding more paint and enhancing the colors.

122. The Sage and the Messenger



Oil on canvas. 28" by 22". May, 2015.

I did this painting while I was working on a short story with Bruce Sterling. One of the characters is sage or hermit who lives inside in a hollowed out spot high up in the trunk of a sequoia tree. And an artificial biotweaked organism comes to bring a message to him. It's a thing like biological drone, or like a flying jellyfish. I like the interplay of the expressions among the sage, the jellyfish and the squirrel.

121. Dangerous Passage



Oil on canvas. 40" by 30". April, 2015.

I painted *Dangerous Passage* to help previsualize a scene in my novel *Million Mile Road Trip*. My three characters are on an endless world, and they're migrating from one Earth-sized basin to the next. They have two flying mascots, one is a UFO named Nunu, the other is one of those blobby creature who appears in my previous painting, *Tree of Life*. The red guy in the rear is noticing the stones in this mountain pass are...alive. The composition and vibe of this painting were inspired by Peter Bruegel's *Conversion of St. Paul*.

120. Saucer Hall



Acrylic on canvas. 30" by 24". February, 2015.

This is another painting for my novel *Million Mile Road Trip*. I started this more or less at random, playing with the paint, using acrylic for a change. The triangle made me think of the Supreme Court building, which suggested a "Saucer Hall" where UFOs gather. And then I went ahead and put a Saucer Hall into my novel.

119. Tree of Life



Oil on canvas. 40" by 30". February, 2015.

I started out by putting a lot of paint and gel medium in the top half of the canvas and finger painting with it. I decided this would be the foliage a

tree, and that I'd put cool aliens under it—I needed mental images of aliens for my novel *Million Mile Road Trip*. I used variations on a Picasso-style face that Jasper Johns included in his 1990 painting called, unhelpfully, *Untitled*. And then I put a little one of these guys in the tree with an umbilical cord. I think of this painting as showing parents awaiting the birth of their baby.

118. Deep Space Saucers



Oil on canvas. 24" by 18". January, 2015.

This is, in a way, an abstract painting. An exercise in composition and hue. I was thinking of the painter Larry

Poons, who flourished in the '60s with compositions of ovals scattered across a large canvas. Of course I'd rather draw 3D saucers than 2D ovals. So I started out with the saucers, then found a nice background color that makes me think of deep space, very far from any nearby stars. Over several days layering hues onto the saucers, I slowly homed in on the colors for them. I was thinking of the colors of Populuxe '50s cars. As in my painting *I Once Was Blind*, I'm see those ovals on the undersides of the saucers as being eyes.

117. I Once Was Blind



Oil on canvas. 18" by 24". January, 2015.

This painting was inspired the work of Keith Haring—I'd just been to a big show of his at the DeYoung Museum in San Francisco. My painting's title is taken from a line in the gospel hymn "Amazing Grace," that is, "I once was blind, but now I see."

The saucers are enlightening the benighted humans below. These days I tend to think of UFOs as organic living beings—and not as spaceships with aliens inside them. The saucers themselves are the aliens—like rubbery flying jellyfish.

116. Flying Cone Shells



Oil on canvas. 40" by 30". November, 2014.

I started out with those four fat lines that weave over and under each other. And then I wanted to decorate the sectors of the canvas that the lines

made. I thought I'd go for something like an aerial view of crop fields as in Wayne Thiebaud's paintings of the California Delta region. For awhile my colors looked unfinished, harsh, dissonant—but I kept at it, layering on the tints and shades, blending, toning, and glazing. Finally the painting seemed warm and harmonious to me. But it needed something more. I thought of my novel *Mathematicians in Love* when my characters are driving along the coast of Big Sur, and a giant flying alien cone shell is following them—I think her name is Rowena. So I added Rowena and one of her smaller friends to the painting, also a tiny image of my characters' car, and I used this on the cover of a new edition of *Mathematicians in Love*

115. Endless Road Trip



Oil on canvas. 30" by 24". September, 2014.

I painted this to help me imagine a scene for a novel I was starting to write. We see two aliens on a very long road trip, and they're looking at

some animals, a capybara with squirrel monkeys. I didn't feel like struggling with the human form which is why I went for expressionist zigzag aliens. I like how the guy on the left looks, he's like a cartoon-character tough guy with a whiskey jaw, and the round thing on top of his head might be a derby. And lady alien, she looks like she's screeching, "Aww, aren't they *cute!*"

114. Beak Totem



Oil on canvas. 16" by 20". August, 2014.

The background is drawn from a sunset I saw over Lac Desert in Canada, and the model for my totem pole is in a historical museum in Ottawa. I like the bird's beak, and the little man peering out of the totem pole.

113. Dog UFO Gub



Oil and acrylic on canvas. 30" by 40". July, 2014.

I made a squiggly abstract underpainting with acrylic paint, covered that with a white haze/glaze of acrylic paint, and then layered on

some free-form drawings with thick oil paint. You might say the background is an underlying subdimensional reality. In the oily world on top we see my dog Arf, a UFO, a spotted alien "gub" from my novel *The Big Aha*—and an infinity sign.

112. Sea Monsters



Acrylic on canvas. 18" by 24". June, 2014.

I made this painting after studying a picture book about the monsters that appear in the blank spaces of medieval and Renaissance maps. It amused me to learn the "sea pig" was often included. To amp up the picture I added a questing youth and a maiden in a tower. I like her expression. For her,

maybe that guy in the boat is just another sea monster.

111. Cows on the Run



Oil on canvas. 30" by 24". June, 2014.

This landscape shows the hills above Alum Rock Park in East San Jose. I felt the picture needed something extra, so I went for a saucer and a hungry, starfish-shaped alien. And everyone knows how aliens feel about cows. Even the cows know! I painted the cows a little large for how far away they're meant to be—but these cows are important, and I wanted to give the viewer a good look at them. They kind of make me laugh.

110. Hungry Bird



Oil on canvas. 18" by 24". May, 2014.

I like how the bird is about to eat a yellow square from the underlying pattern of squares and rectangles. Maybe he's come into this abstract world from the funky analog world and he's eating it. I had painted the background pattern a couple of weeks earlier, and then one morning I saw an article in the paper, with a photo of a hungry baby black-crested night heron, and I added him to the picture.

109. Two Ducks



Oil on canvas. 20" by 16". April, 2014.

I went back to the Carl Barks drawings of Donald Duck for this one. I used a lot of impasto to build up the tornado-like clouds. The two ducks might be two people you know, or the warring dyad within yourself, or the cosmic yin/yang. Or all of the above. Which are *you* today...the calm duck or the angry duck?

108. Petroglyph Man



Oil on canvas. 40" by 30". March, 2014.

Petroglyph Man shows three big plants and three petroglyphs, although the guy on the right is perhaps morphing into something more. This painting has to do with an experience I had on a trip to the big island of Hawaii in 2007—I had stepped on a petroglyph carving and I was imagining that it might come to life.

107. Laser Shades



Oil on canvas. 24" by 20". February, 2014.

I made this painting while I was working on an SF story, also called "Laser Shades." The story was for inclusion in an art book, *The Superlative Light*, by the photographer Robert Shults. The book shows photos of a petawatt laser lab, where "petawatt" means that the laser beams being generated are insanely powerful. I wasn't quite sure how to end my story, this painting was my way of previsualizing a climactic scene. The guy is wearing special laser-proof shades and he's (rather unwisely) holding a fetal "egg" in the path of a powerful laser beam. That zapped egg is going to hatch out some kind of weird person, so look out!

106. All the Visions



Oil on canvas. 24" by 20". February, 2014.

The painting is based on a 1983 photo of me. I was working on Kerouac-style novel called *All The Visions*—I typed it on a single long scroll of paper. I still have that rose red IBM Selectric typewriter in my basement. The acme of modern writing equipment in 1983. I wrote a lot of books on that thing.

105. Frog Man



Oil on canvas. 20" by 24". January, 2014.

This painting started out as a horizontal canvas of a Monet-style scene with trees and a sky—made up of vertical daubs of paint left over from *Woman With Jellyfish*. I let the landscape dry for two weeks, then had the idea of rotating the picture, and now the daubs were horizontal, like for a painting of water. On a quick inspiration, I painted in the head and webbed hands of a "frog man." He looks friendly, but I don't think I'd jump into the water with him.

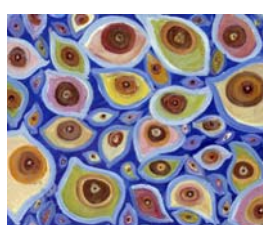
104. Woman With Jellyfish



Oil on canvas. 24" by 30". December, 2013.

At the Monterey Bay Aquarium, my wife and I admired a big tank of sea nettle jellyfish. I took a photo of her by the tank, and at first I wanted to paint that. But in the end, the woman didn't look at all like my wife, and the painting's viewpoint suggests that either we're looking out from inside the tank at the woman, or maybe the jellyfish are floating around in mid-air. I gave the woman green hair and made her kind of punky. I think she's talking with that big jellyfish.

103. Eyes



Oil on canvas. 20" by 24". October, 2013.

This was an easy painting to make I just did a lot of eyes. I didn't particularly try to make them scary. I was more interested in them looking alert. I had fun with the colors, getting all the shades to be fairly even intensities of mild pastel colors.

102. In Her Room



Oil on canvas. 22" by 22". July, 2013.

This is a painting of our bedroom, showing my wife's mirror and some of the things on her dressing-table. That painting on the left is by her, it's called *Kate Croy*. I got the idea for the painting when I was coming into our room, and it was dark, and the hall-light behind me was on, haloing my silhouette in light, and I saw myself in the mirror. I like the objects on the dressing-table, they're like symbolic icons in a medieval portrait but they mainly represent aspects of my wife. That green shape is a wormhole bridge between two realities.

100. Gubs and Wormholes



Oil on canvas. 22" by 22". September, 2013.

Yet another painting relating to my novel, *The Big Aha*. This painting started with a depiction of two wormholes, also known as Einstein-Rosen bridges. Wormholes can act as tunnels connecting two parallel universes. For the purpose of illustrating this concept, I'm depicting the universes as simple planes in this painting. Although the purely geometric version of this painting looked nice, I felt it needed some life. So I went ahead and included two of the alien creatures that I was calling gubs in *The Big Aha*. I like how alertly the green gub is watching the spotted one, just like in 98: *A Gub On Her Bed*.

101. Picasso's Girl Before A Mirror



Oil on canvas. 20" by 24". August, 2013.

Picasso's original has always been a favorite painting of Sylvia's, and I love it as well. It was *lots* of work to copy it, as so many details kept unfolding. I'd never quite understood the face of the shadow woman on the right, but I learned how to see it. Also I'd never before realized that the woman on the left is pregnant. Also, her hands can't penetrate in the mirror world, but it looks as if some sketchy, skinny arms might be reaching out. For my final sessions, I put the original out of sight and focused on making my version smooth and balanced. Fun. If only I had enough momentum to keep painting like this on my own!

99. The Mr. Normals vs. The Myoor



Oil on canvas. 24" by 18". July, 2013.

This is another of my paintings for my SF novel, *The Big Aha*. The picture has to do with a scene where my hero has sicced some creatures called Mr. Normals on a sinister giant alien slug called a myoor. In the process of making this painting, I decided to make the Mr. Normals look like Gyro Gearloose's Little Bulb in the old Donald Duck comics. The way I painted the hero matches my two earlier paintings 93: *Louisville Artist* and 94: *Night of Telepathy*. In a certain very loose sense these are self-portraits.

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98. A Gub On Her Bed



Oil on canvas. 24" by 20". June, 2013.

I always like the idea of a painting that seems like an illustration of some unknown proverb or fable. At a metaphorical level, the gub might symbolize some kind of marriage problem. At a more factual level, the painting relates to my novel, *The Big Aha*, which features unprepossessing yet god-like alien beings called gubs. The piebald gub shown here is named Duffie, and he's in love with a green female gub you can glimpse her in the sky outside the window. The gub is perched on my character Jane's bed, and he isn't particularly welcome there, as he's somewhat shabby and unclean.



97. Ant and UFO

Oil on canvas. 20" by 16". May, 2013.

Somebody mentioned that they'd like to see me do another ant painting. I searched the web for good images of ants and I found a nice clear drawing in an exterminator's ad. After I'd painted the ant, I wasn't sure what else to put in, although I was thinking it would be nice to have a tiny UFO another of my recurrent motifs. The ant's body was at an odd angle, so I had the idea of having her be standing on three blades of grass, which made for a nice composition.

96. Grandpa's Birthday



Oil on canvas. 24" by 18". March, 2013.

I based this painting on a photo taken of me on my birthday. Grandpa has 67 candles—42 on the cake and 25 stuck into strawberries. A granddaughter is helping him. I like Grandpa's hair, and the patterns in the tablecloth.

95. The Two Gods



Oil on canvas. 24" by 24". March, 2013.

Working on my novel *The Big Aha*, I was trying to visualize a pair of warring supernatural beings in the background, and I came up with these guys. They're like lizards, a little bit, with long tails going off into the beyond. The background is based on the start sequence seen in old Warner Brothers cartoons of the Merrie Melodies or Loony Toons ilk a colorful tunnel or perhaps a sequence of doors.

94. Night of Telepathy



Oil on canvas. 40" by 30". November, 2012.

This painting started out with the abstract background pattern, which I made using leftover paint from 93: *Louisville Artist*. I decided to put in some figures in, and I thought I'd like to reuse the *Louisville Artist* figures. In the novel, *The Big Aha*, that I was working on at this time, the two characters (Zad and Loulou) had spent a night in bed in telepathic contact with each other. And I wanted to give an impression of an odd, dreamy night. The six little rats correspond to some subdimensional creatures that might be scuttling around inside people's dreams. And the other creatures are just there for fun.

93. Louisville Artist



Oil on canvas. 24" by 20". October, 2012.

I grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, so the title of this picture is a bit of a parodistic self-image riff. In other words, that could be me on the right, shirt all untucked and with no fingers on my hands. The woman might be my muse. Another interpretation is that the two figures are characters from the novel, *The Big Aha*, which I was working on when I made the painting. In painting this picture, I thought it would be interesting to put in some figures that looked like children's drawings, so I worked from a messy sketch I'd made. The colors are more pastel than usual for me, and there's a bit of a Japanese quality.

92. God's Eye



Oil on canvas. 24" by 20". June, 2012.

I've always been intrigued by a certain image that one sees in old European churches an eye inside a triangle. This icon also appears, of course, on the dollar bill. It's meant to represent the all-seeing eye of God or perhaps the divine light within every object. In researching my novels with Bruegel and Bosch as characters, I got the impression that medieval people really did think God was watching them. So here I've painted the eye as looking down through clouds like a spy-satellite. I made the "skin" in this image pink as a kind of joke on the fact that God is sometimes visualized as an old white man. What expression does the eye seem to have? I'd say it looks engrossed, with a possibility of becoming judgmental.

91. Garden of Eden



Oil on canvas. 40" by 30". May, 2012.

My frequent partner in art, Vernon Head, went out for an *en plein air* painting session with me on the bank of a stream that runs into the south end of Lexington Reservoir near Los Gatos. It was a lovely spring day, and we daubed away. The one thing that caught my attention the most was a particular bend in the trunk of a tree overhanging the creek. That made it into my painting, but not all that much else about the actual scene. Instead I put in two of my favorite things: a dinosaur and a UFO. I'm not exactly sure what the scenario here is perhaps the UFO is in some way bringing enlightenment to a prehistoric pair, an Adam and an Eve.

90. Loulou and Skungy



Oil on canvas. 30" by 30". February, 2012.

Loulou is the somewhat mysterious woman in green, Skungy is the rat, and the guy holding the rat is named Zad Plant. Loulou is luring Morton and his helper-rat Skungy to follow her. When I painted this it was, once again, like an illustration of an unknown proverb or a forgotten fable. I didn't entirely know what was going on. I was feeling around for ideas and images for a novel I was just then starting, *The Big Aha*. The composition was inspired by a Joan Brown painting, *The End of the Affair*.

89. The Lovers



Oil on canvas. 24" by 20". January, 2012.

The idea is that these two lovers are in a nearly telepathic state, sharing a single thought balloon. And in the thought, they're merged like a yin-yang symbol. Her 1940s bob acquires an infinity symbol, and their lips form a pair of little hearts. An early Valentine's Day picture!

88. On My Home Planet



Oil on canvas. 20" by 24". November, 2011.

This is a fairly abstract picture. I started it with that squiggly green line. And then I had the idea of making the lower part be like the surface of some jungly world, with the upper part being like the sky above. The yellow network might be a kind of planetary mind, or perhaps it's the nervous system of a blob-creature. I used an impasto medium on this picture in order to get a lot of surface texture.

87. Four-dimensional Ducks



Oil on canvas. 30" by 40". October, 2011.

I started with an abstract painting with seven globs. I tried to make the globs look different from each other, and to have intricate, three-dimensional forms. And then I started thinking of the globs as cross-sections of four-dimensional creatures. And then I realized they should be loosely based on the master cartoonist Carl Barks's drawings of Donald Duck, as if they were rotating in and out of our space. Four-dimensional ducks. Moving my pop surrealism style towards abstraction.

86. Rigging



Oil on canvas. 20" by 16". September, 2011.

The reflections of sailboat rigging fascinate me. I took some photos for this painting during the same session where I started 85: *Santa Cruz Harbor*.

Back home I copied one of the photos for an oil painting. I put on quite a few layers, and used a gel impasto medium to emphasize the brush strokes on the masts and lines.

85. Santa Cruz Harbor



Acrylic on canvas. 20" by 16". September, 2011.

Vernon Head and I went to Santa Cruz Harbor for a painting session. The waters were full of life—apparently a school of mackerel had swum in, and the pelicans and seals were there feeding. I liked how this cute baby seal seemed to hover so weightlessly in the very clear water. I started this painting on the spot, and finished it at home, working with some photographs I'd taken. It had been awhile since I used acrylics, and I was pleasantly surprised by how quickly I was done.

84. Cow and UFO



Oil on canvas. 24" by 18". August, 2011.

I like to use certain simple images when I'm scribbling a drawing for my children or grandchildren. Over the years, I've honed my favorites down to clean, cartoony icons such as the "Cow and UFO" shown in this painting. Back to basics!

83. Noon Meeting



Oil on canvas. 40" by 30". August, 2011.

This is one of those pictures that is a bit like an unknown parable. I started out with a set of pebble-glass windows that I like, making a background grid of green and yellow rectangles. I put three characters in front of the windows, happy to be getting together in the daytime: a woman, a dog, and an octopus. I feel like these three friends are people I know. Indeed, I might be the dog in the middle, bringing the two others together I've mentioned that I used to have a dog who looked a lot like that, Arf. When I told Vernon about the theme of my new picture, he said, laughing, "Ah, yes, the three fundamental elements of any successful painting: a woman, a dog, and an octopus." My other artist friend Paul Mavrides had suggested that I try using an impasto medium to build up more of a texture on my pictures and I did this here, with a nice effect.

82. Stolen Picasso



Oil on canvas. 18" by 24". July, 2011.

Imagined news story: "A 1939 Picasso painting, *Woman in Blue Hat*, which was stolen from the Picasso show at the DeYoung Museum in San Francisco, has now been located in the home of an ex-professor who styles himself as a painter and a writer." *Software* theft that is. I liked this painting so much after seeing it at the show, I painted a copy as a kind of homage and to learn a little more about how Picasso did it. The more I worked on this painting, the more little things I saw. I missed quite a few of the master's tricks but eventually I was happy with how my version looked—it had become

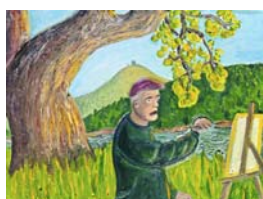
81. V-Bomb Blast



Oil on canvas. 40" by 30". July, 2011.

This painting relates to my novel, *The Turing Chronicles*. My hero, Alan Turing gets *inside* a nuclear weapon called a V-bomb it lies beyond the A-bomb and the H-bomb. Also, I occasionally use “V-bomb” as a nickname for Sylvia. Turing is in there tweaking the bomb until the last minute. And due to Turing’s efforts, the bomb explodes in an odd fashion: it makes a fireball that shrinks, rather than growing and then the bomb explosion tears a hole in space and disappears into another dimension or into another level of reality. The early nuclear devices really were hut-sized metal constructs, as shown on the right. Somehow I ended up putting a naked woman inside the bomb instead of Turing. In the middle we have a kind of sunflower/fireball with a zonked face on it. And on the left, a small explosion-ball disappears into a vaginal rent. The woman seems to be pulling a cord that sets the bomb off in the first place. I like the picture because, as with some of Bruegel’s paintings, it seems to illustrate a detailed parable whose precise meaning is forever a mystery.

80. Painter Near Mt. Umunhum



Oil on canvas. 24" by 18". June, 2011.

Vernon Head and I were painting *en plein air* in the Almaden Quicksilver Park south of San Jose near the Guadalupe Reservoir. I was about to get my left hip joint replaced, due to

arthritis, but I led Vernon up to a nice oak I admired on a hilltop. I framed my picture to include the reservoir, Vernon, the oak, and Mount Umunhum in the background.

“Umunhum” is an Ohlone word meaning “home of the hummingbird.” The box on top is a leftover from an Air Force radar station, and it’s due to come down...someday. I layered on my paint thicker than usual, using my palette knife to imitate the grooves of the bark on the tree, the waves in the water, and the long stalks of grass.

79. A Skugger’s Point Of View



Oil on canvas. 40" by 30". March, 2011.

In this painting I wanted to create a rendition of an extreme first-person point of view...in which we see the dim zone around a person’s actual

visual field. The person in question is the Alan Turing character in my novel *The Turing Chronicles*. He has become a mutant known as a “skugger,” and he has the ability to stretch his limbs like the cartoon character Plastic Man. He is traveling across the West with two friends, a man and a woman. In this scene, Turing’s cohort is being attacked by secret police, one of whom bears a flame-thrower. Turing is responding by sticking his fingers into their heads, perhaps to kill them, or perhaps to convert them into skuggers as well. We can see Turing’s arms extending from the bottom edge of his visual field. Even though it’s not quite logical, I painted in his eyes as well because they make the composition better.

78. Monument Valley



Acrylic on canvas. 24" by 18". January, 2011.

I started this *en plein air* at Monument Valley in September, 2010, and finished it at home a few months later.

Those rock formations on the left are called the Mittens. This is an amazing place, with a strong spiritual vibe. The day after I painted this, I got up before dawn and hiked down into the valley, around the mitten on the left, and back up which took about four hours.

77. Turing and the Skugs



Oil on canvas. 40" by 30". October, 2010.

I made this painting while gearing up for a novel involving the computer pioneer Alan Turing, the beatniks, and some shape-shifting beings called skugs. I got the word “skug” from my non-identical twin granddaughters, aged three. When I visited my son’s house in Berkeley, I always liked to open up his worm farm and study the action with the twins. We found a lot of slugs in there, and we marveled at them. The girls tended to say “skug” rather than “slug,” and I decided I liked the sound of this word so much that I’d use it for some odd beings in my novel. I was supposing that Turing would carry out some biochemical experiments leading to the creation of the skugs. Here we see Turing outside the Los Gatos Rural Supply Hardware garage, with two skugs backing him up. Alan is meeting a handsome man who may well become his lover. Unless the skugs eat the guy.

76. She Has a Pet



Oil on canvas. 24" by 18". September, 2010.

This picture began as a landscape painting in a hot, dusty park near Cupertino, California. In the park, I

was thinking about Hannibal crossing the Alps with his elephants, but I didn’t actually put in the elephant until I got back home. The landscape seemed like it needed something big to pep it up. And, as I added layer after layer to the picture, I came up with a somewhat mysterious encounter between a woman leading the elephant, and a man she meets. The title is a bit of a joke, as in, “I met a nice woman, but she has a pet.” I was also thinking of someone who carries a lot of personal baggage. But ultimately, I’m getting at something more general, mythic, and imprecise. An encounter.

75. Nude Nabs UFO



Oil on canvas. 24" by 18". August, 2010.

I started this one during an *en plein air* painting session on a pocket beach near Davenport with Vernon Head. I had the rocks and the water, and I

added the UFO, modeling its shape on the lid of my water bottle. And at home I put in the two nudes, to liven things up. The scale of the flying saucer didn't look quite right, and it was unclear how far away it was, so I had the guy take hold of it, thereby shrinking it and bringing it into the foreground. I have it casting a shadow like a beach umbrella onto the California woman to further anchor its position. And finally I had the idea that the guy is shaking the UFO, and two of the little aliens inside are falling out.

74. The Riviera



Oil on canvas. 40" by 30". August, 2010.

I was going for a kind of French Impressionist look with this one, thinking of a garden party. Another inspiration was that I'd recently seen

the Mel Brooks theater production of *Young Frankenstein*. But I went for a robot or mechanical man rather than a Frankenstein's monster. I like how he's glowing from the inside. In a way, this painting is an image of my Sylvia and me, on a car-trip we took to the French Riviera in 1966, the year before we were married.

73. Davenport Cave



Oil on canvas. 24" by 18". July, 2010.

This one started as an *en plein air* painting atop a cliff in Davenport, California. I was there with Sylvia and Vernon. It was a windy day, so I didn't

work on the picture for very long at the site. I was struck by a little sea cave in the side of the cliff and by the towers of a shut-down cement plant to the right. Back home I worked on the painting for another week, adding a man, a woman, and a shadowy crab-like shape inside the cave. I like that the cliff shape looks a little like the head of an elephant.

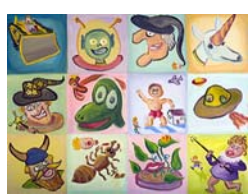
72. Buddha and the Mouse



Oil on canvas. 18" by 24". July, 2010.

I took a photograph of an interesting statue of a twelve-armed Buddha in a small Asian art museum in Pasadena, California. The somewhat sinister pattern of the arms and shadows interested me. So when I got home, I painted the image, and I added a mouse to give the picture a bit of a narrative quality, that is, a story-telling flavor.

71. Billy's Book



Oil on canvas. 40" by 30". June, 2010.

My friend Terry Bisson talked me into making illustrations for an illustrated version of his collection of off-kilter stories, *Billy's Book*. There were thirteen

stories in the book, and to speed things up, I divided a large canvas into twelve squares, and did a Billy picture in each square. (The thirteenth picture is a detail of my *Fractal Skate Posse* painting.) Billy has yellow hair and a green shirt, and traces of him can be found in each picture.

70. Fractal Skate Posse



Acrylic on canvas. 24" by 18". May, 2010.

As I mentioned in the note on 69: *He Sees the Fnoor*, I was working with higher-order fractals during this time

period, and I found a really nice double spiral that came from a cubic Mandelbrot set. I saved off a high-res image of it, and started selling the image online as a print and as a skater T-shirt with the caption "Seek the Gnarl." And then I decided to do a painting of this fractal, quixotic effort though it is to paint an infinitely complex object. Once the painting of the fractal was done to my satisfaction, the image needed peppering up, so I put in five thrill-crazed skaters.

69. He Sees The Fnoor



Oil on canvas. 16" by 20". May, 2010.

This is an image of a guy seeing a vintage fractal in the sky, an object known as the Mandelbrot set. When I painted this, I'd just come back to fractals after a twenty-year hiatus, and I was creating extremely gnarly images. I was thinking about fractals all the time, seeing them in my dreams, and seeing

them when I closed my eyes. I made videos, art prints, T-shirts, and a blog post at tinyurl.com/rudyfractals. At the same time I was thinking about a made-up word of mine, *fnoor*, which first appeared in my novel, *The Hacker and the Ants*. Fnoor is meant to be an old-time graphics-hacker term for incredible weirdness on your screen, a kind of image that the early programmer Bill Gosper used to term "seething dog barf." I was writing a science fiction story with the working title, "Fnoor," in which the characters see some fnoor-like aspect of the natural world that suggests that (a) the world is a type of computation and (b) they can learn how to tweak this computation to improve their lot.

68. Werewolf



Oil on canvas. 20" by 16". April, 2010.

This was a fairly quick painting. I started by painting a "hen and chicks" cactus that was growing in our garden. And then, to liven it up, I put a wolf-like figure in the background. To give

his eyes more impact, I glazed on a thin coat of metallic gold paint.

67. First Contact



Oil on canvas. 40" by 30". April, 2010.

When I first started this painting, I was thinking about Aboriginal art paintings that I'd seen in Australia, paintings in which the artists would depict their home area in fairly abstract terms. But then, after I started, I went to a show of Wayne Thiebaud's paintings, and got drawn into his style of making colorful landscapes that border between being realistic and abstract. When I was almost done with my painting, I felt that it still looked a little empty, so I added a UFO with starfish aliens in the same style that I'd used before in 2: *Arf and the Saucer* and in 37: *Montgomery Hill*. Maybe the UFO is a little too large for the perspective; the hope is that the viewer will understand that the aliens are of a giant size.

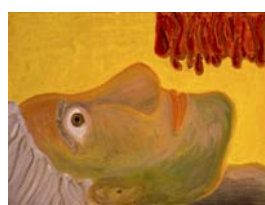
66. Giant Octopus with A Silly Hat



Oil on canvas. 24" by 18". March, 2010.

This particular picture emerged almost at random, I was simply fooling around with shapes and colors until I found something that I liked: a giant octopus in a silly hat that might be a washtub or a lampshade. At this time I was still waiting to have that procedure done on my heart. After I'd been working on this picture for a couple of days, I suddenly realized that the red octopus was in fact a symbol of my heart with its arteries. My subconscious thoughts become manifest when I'm painting! Somehow doing this painting made me less anxious, and in the end, getting my heart fixed wasn't a big deal. In this painting and in picture 65: *Heart Exam*, I was using an *alla prima* technique—this is the practice of finishing a picture while it's still wet, as opposed to letting it dry and then applying successive layers. With oils, the paint stays quite wet for two or three days, so you can stretch out an *alla prima* session.

65. Heart Exam



Oil on Canvas. 24" by 18". March, 2010.

I was having some pains in my chest, and I went in for a series of heart exams. Ultimately I had a relatively minor procedure done—some stents. At the start of the process, I was very anxious, and I painted a picture of myself lying on an examining table—with a curtain of blood overhead. I had been wanting to return to painting with oil instead of acrylic paints, and I made the switch with *Heart Exam*. Looking through my old tubes of oil paint, I found an oddball tube of metallic gold paint. I used that whole tube on this painting, covering the canvas with an underlayer of gold paint, and leaving the gold exposed for the empty part of the background. It gives the picture a nice icon-like quality.

64. Flower Dream



Acrylic on canvas. 40" by 30". March, 2010.

I think this picture might be the dream of the somewhat ordinary flower at the lower right corner, or maybe it's the dream of the bug. The picture arose fairly spontaneously. The first thing that went in were those two big red shapes, the fork and the hook. I combined the paint left over from my previous picture, 63: *At the Core of the World*, and filled in the background. And then I kept on adding stuff to make it jungly.

63. At the Core of the World.



Acrylic on canvas. 24" by 18". February, 2010.

I considered calling this painting *Unknown Legend*, as it's not very obvious what the story is here. I painted this is a previsualization of the second-to-last chapter of my novel *Jim and the Flims*, just before writing the chapter. Those flying beet thingies are called "jivas." As I mentioned in my comment on picture #46, *The Flims*, I got that word from the artist and cartoonist Jim Woodring. The tall figure in back is the goddess of Flimsy, she's made of mist. And in front, that's my hero Jim and his wife Val. I was surprised to see that jiva not putting up more of a fight in my picture, and this affected the way that I wrote the chapter.

62. Amenhotep's Ghost.



Acrylic on canvas. 16" by 20". February, 2010.

When I painted this, I was nearing the final stages of my novel *Jim and the Flims*. In my story, the characters have stolen the ancient gold sarcophagus of the pharaoh Amenhotep. And Amenhotep's ghost has emerged from the casket in the form of a menacing, unhappy scarab beetle holding an ankh, a crook, and a flail. In my designs of the hieroglyphs on the walls, I was influenced by my daughter Isabel's graphic novel, *Unfurling*.

61. Surf Pilgrim.



Acrylic on canvas. 40" by 30". October, 2009.

I trekked down to Four Mile Beach north of Santa Cruz with Vernon and started this one *en plein air*, getting the composition, and finding some of the colors. Some of the surfers at Four Mile noticed me working on this canvas—and they approved. The "surf pilgrim" in the foreground looks determined. At home, I dialed up the colors to match my memories, which tend to be brighter than reality. It was a big canvas to carry to the beach. A certain amount of blowing sand got stuck to the paint, which is nice, as it adds physical texture and a you-are-there quality. My mother was a painter, and she liked to do this, too.



60. Topology of the Afterworld

Acrylic on canvas. 40" by 30". August, 2009.

This picture has to do with my mental image of Flimsy, an afterworld that I describe in my novel *Jim and the Flims*. I wanted to fit an endless world into a finite volume—that Flimsy (the afterworld) is inside each electron. I turned to M. C. Escher's engraving, *Smaller and Smaller I*, as an example of how to fit infinity into a nutshell. He has things shrink as they approach the middle. I started with six streams of beings: humans, cuttlefish, dogs, ants, lizards, and birds. And then I filled in the blanks with globby beings designed to fit the extra spaces.

59. Magic Doors



Acrylic on canvas. 14" by 18". July, 2009.

In fairy tales and science fiction stories, people often encounter magic doors to other worlds. Here I started with a kind of grid that's based on the reflection patterns in water. And then I filled in a lot of little "doors," arranging them so that the whole pattern makes a door in itself.

58. Fjord at Balestrand



Acrylic on canvas. 20" by 16". July, 2009.

On a trip to Norway, I was struck by views of the fjord, as seen from Balestrand, a town where painters used to gather. I like the theatrical way that the mountains on either side of the fjord frame the view.

57. The Abduction



Acrylic on canvas. 40" by 30". June, 2009.

I painted this scene to help visualize a chapter in my novel, *Jim and the Flims*. In the background we have a giant geranium plant that's being used as a castle by a race of flying people. In the foreground, a man's girlfriend is being abducted by an alien who's taken on the shape of a dinosaur. The sun is a glowing alien being known as a "jiva" and shaped like a beet. On the left is my old dog, Arf.

56. Man in Flame Car



Acrylic on canvas. 24" by 18". May, 2009.

I've been fascinated by cars with flames ever since I was a kid poring over my big brother's hot rod magazines. In 1973 I had a fairly generic white Ford that I painted some flames on myself. It was an amateur job—but it was fun. I happened to go to a car show in Southern California in May, 2009, and I got the idea to paint one. It's hard to pin down the mood of the guy in the car. A little sad and lonely, but calm. In a loose sense, the guy represents me—he has flashy flames on the outside, but inside, he's on his own, as we always are.

55. Geranium



Acrylic on canvas. 16" by 20". April, 2009.

I wanted to paint a still-life for a change, and I ended up combining aspects of two potted geraniums in my back yard. At some point, I always have to stop looking at the object and start making things up, otherwise I'd never finish. With this geranium I did have something extra in mind, that is, I was working on a kind of urban fantasy/SF novel called *Jim and the Flims*, and my characters were about to make their way to the castle of the King of Flimsy. And I had the idea that the castle could look like a giant geranium. Those leaves are thick, you see, with rooms in them, and the flims are buzzing around them like gnats, only too small to see in the painting but in 57: *The Abduction* I came back to paint the details.

54. The Clone Garden



Acrylic on canvas. 24" by 18". April, 2009.

In working on my novel, *Jim and the Flims*, I wanted to get an image of another world called Flimsy. And this was the picture I came up with. My original inspiration was van Gogh's painting, *The Sower*—I started with a man sowing seeds into a field. Two people greet him, they just came out of that interdimensional tunnel visible in the house-like structure made of lavender spheres. The sower is casting baby-seeds into the field; we see human heads growing up—and the head of one green alien.

53. Big Sur at Lucia



Acrylic on canvas. 20" by 16". April, 2009.

I started this on my birthday at a rustic old motel, Lucia Lodge in Big Sur, about 30 miles south of the hamlet of Big Sur proper. I was perched in a meadow of poppies at the edge of a cliff, just like the painting shows. That's a century plant on the right, a fitting thing to paint on one's birthday.

52. Pig Surprise



Acrylic on canvas. 40" by 30". March, 2009.

I had a big canvas and I wanted to do something flashy. I started out with random blotches of paints, and then I started seeing some images. At first I had the picture rotated 180 degrees from this, and the claw was fire, and the red disk was a setting sun. But that looked dull. So I turned it the other way, made the claw...and added a pig snout and ears. Pig Surprise! Another reason for the title

is that I went to Big Sur a week before painting this, and my daughter Isabel was teasing me, and said I was going to Pig Sur. Yet another interpretation might be that I was working on my income tax return while painting this—a docile citizen facing the Eagle.

51. Yellow Vines



Acrylic on canvas. 18" by 24". March, 2009.

I took a photo of this spot when it was raining a lot, and I was struck by the contrast between the snaky pale vine and the damp bark of the branching tree. And I loved the 3D curve of the vine. When I went back a month later, it wasn't so rainy, and the contrast wasn't so high. I had my paint kit with me and I started this picture on the spot. I noticed two more vines I could put in the picture. The picture seems symbolic of something—but I'm not sure of what.

50. Four Mile Beach



Acrylic on canvas. 30" by 24". February, 2009.

I was out at Four Mile Beach on Route 1 north of Santa Cruz. I brought a big canvas there and my paint kit for an *en plein air* session.. The only other people around were surfers; they thought it was nice that I was painting them. This was a clear day before a big storm moved in. The waves came out well—I did that part in under an hour, right there on the beach. I reworked the cliffs and rocks at home. I like this picture a lot. Sometimes the easy ones are the best.

49. The Flims



Acrylic on canvas. 20" by 16". February, 2009.

I was working on a novel called *Jim and the Flims*, about a man who finds a way to get to an afterworld beside our own reality. And this world is inhabited by the so-called “flims.” I wanted to see what they looked like. To start with, I took some leftover paint from 48: *Thirteen Worlds* and painted a landscape in the shape of some shadows that were falling on my canvas. The straight lines are shadows of telephone wires; they indicate this is a portal zone. I call the menacing beast at the lower right a “yuel.” When I was in Louisville in January, 2009, I'd imagined seeing something like this in the woods, with a Tibetan demon look. The other two beings are modeled on what the cartoonist Jim Woodring calls “jivas.” Jivas appear, for instance, in his book *The Portable Frank*. For him they're a bit like free-floating souls, or paintbrushes. They're villains in my novel.

48. Thirteen Worlds



Acrylic on canvas. 24" by 18". January, 2009.

I started this painting before Christmas—we were hanging up some glass ornaments and I was thinking about the reflections in them. I remember reading somewhere that a good exercise for a painter is to practice drawing circles—and then spheres. I didn't actually look at all that many mirror balls to paint this, it's more that I thought about them a lot, although I did keep one reflective ball next to my easel so I could figure out how my hand with the brush would look. It seemed more interesting to have all thirteen artists be different. Cory Doctorow used this image as one of the alternate covers for his collection *With a Little Help From My Friends*.

47. Welcome to Mars



Acrylic on canvas. 40" by 30". December, 2008.

I wanted to do a big science-fictional painting. In the title, I'm using “Mars” in the generic SF sense of “a strange alien planet.” I started out with an abstract pattern created by using up the paint remaining on my palette from my previous painting. The first thing I got was a big yellow triangle, which seemed like a beam emanating from a flying saucer. That green band started as a line of foliage, and became a hive creature with multiple eyes and mouths. The very last thing I added was the group of little people and critters watching the saucer land. It represents a new order. I thought of the pair of people in front as newly elected President Obama and his wife at the Inauguration! Welcome to Mars, indeed.

46. Caw!



Acrylic on canvas. 16" by 20". November, 2008.

A lot of noisy crows gather in the trees near our house. I love them and their cawing. I think I'd like to be a crow. There's an inhuman, predatory side to birds as well—after all, they're probably descended from dinosaurs. These two are about to share a lizard. I like the anxious look in the poor lizard's eyes. I put a pattern of nested scrolls into the tree foliage.

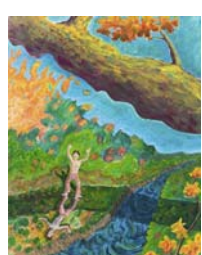
45. Romeo and Juliet



Acrylic on canvas. 20" by 24". October, 2008.

I started this one as a pattern of rectangles. The shapes reminded me of buildings, so that's what I went for. The steep city street is inspired by Wayne Thiebaud. And the idea of Romeo and Juliet appealed to me—my wife and I had just seen a ballet version of it. I like having the woman be in silhouette with a ponytail, and she's painting a picture. Romeo seems somehow to have the moon inside his room with him.

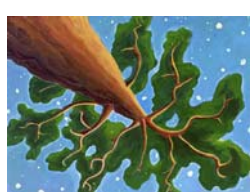
44. A Fork in Time



Acrylic on canvas. 24" by 30". October, 2008.

This picture was inspired by Ambrose Bierce's, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," a tale about a guy who thinks that he's survived being hung...until *anugh*, he realizes different. For me, the significance of this relates to my trip to the hospital at the start of July, 2008.. By the time I painted this picture, I'd learned that I'd completely recovered, and that I wasn't going to have another brain-vein pop. But I was thinking that in a different branch of the universe, I died. The picture shows a fork in time, with me, happily, entering the live fork. Note, however, that the season is autumn.

43. Georgia's Tree



Acrylic on canvas, 24" x 18", September, 2008.

Georgia is my first daughter's name, but this painting is inspired by Georgia O'Keeffe's *The Lawrence Tree*. She painted her picture around 1929, while visiting the former ranch of author D. H. Lawrence near Taos, New Mexico. Describing that time, O'Keeffe wrote, "There was a long weathered carpenter's bench under the tall tree in front of the little old house that Lawrence had lived in there. I often lay on that bench looking up into the tree...past the trunk and up into the branches. It was particularly fine at night with the stars above the tree." In some books and prints, "The Lawrence Tree" is shown with the trunk at the lower right, but a number of scholars feel that O'Keeffe wanted the trunk to be at the upper left, with the tree disconcertingly growing down, as I've arranged it in my version.

42. The Wanderer



Acrylic on canvas, 24" x 18", September, 2008.

This painting is loosely inspired by Hieronymus Bosch's *The Pedlar*. I made the background in an abstract-expressionist fashion by simply painting shapes to match the shadows of leaves that happened to lie on my canvas, and then fashioned it into a mountain scene and added the Wanderer. To fill it out, I put some creepy critters into those rocks on the left, perhaps they're memories from the Wanderer's past. For me, *The Wanderer* represents my own life's journey, with me at a somewhat confusing bend in the road, and the future entirely uncertain. I was still recovering from having a vein burst in my brain at the start of July. I was wondering whether I was near my life's end, or whether I was starting a new phase.

41. The Big One



Acrylic on canvas, 24" x 18", September, 2008.

I used to edit a science fiction webzine called *Flurb*, and my friend Michael Blumlein sent me a kind of magic fish story called "The Big One," and the magic fish got into my head to the point where I painted him. A technical painting issue that interested me here was how to get transparency effects, that is, glazes and veils, when you're using the somewhat opaque acrylic paint.

40. Cerebral Hemorrhage



Acrylic on canvas, 24" x 20", August, 2008.

This is a picture of me in the hospital at the start of July, 2008. It's supposed to show how I felt when I nearly died. I like the 3D blob of blood and its shadow on the sheet, also the way the guy's soul is flowing out through the soles of his feet...with the lobes of his brain piled up on the right like a compost heap, with a terrified, watchful eye on top, this eye twinned with the eye of the soul in that starfish shape. Spooky, but somewhat uplifting.

39. Alien Picnic



Acrylic on canvas, 20" x 16", August, 2008.

Another *en plein air* painting on St. Joseph's Hill in Los Gatos, California. My earlier work, 18: *Summer Day*, was painted at almost the same spot. Here again, once I had the landscape, I wanted to liven it up, so I thought of two cute little eyeball-shaped aliens having a nice picnic together. I sketched in some towns on the hillsides, and used gloss medium to layer on some different colors.

38. Collaborators



Acrylic on canvas, 20" x 16", July, 2008.

This is an image inspired by collaborating on a science-fiction story with my friend and fellow author, Bruce Sterling. We quarreled a lot about this particular story, called "Colliding Branes," but it turned out well and we sold it to *Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine*. Thinking back on the experience, I thought it would be funny to paint two long-armed men choking each other. Actually this painting started out as an *en plein air* portrait of a different friend painting with me on St. Joseph's Hill near Los Gatos, California. But then it diverged into the cartoony mode. I was feeling negative when I painted this picture, as was recovering from a blood vessel bursting in my brain at the start of July, 2008—see picture 40: *Cerebral Hemorrhage*.

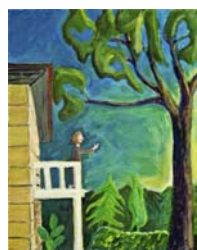


37. Montgomery Hill

Acrylic on canvas, 24" x 20", May, 2008.

I painted this in Montgomery Hill park in east San Jose, next to Evergreen Valley Community College. The park is named after aviation pioneer John Montgomery who died when his glider, The Evergreen, crashed here in 1911. I added a UFO to liven up the picture, with some star-shaped aliens like in my early painting, 2: *Arf and the Saucer*.

36. Dawn



Acrylic on canvas, 14" x 18", May, 2008.

In the morning, the sun comes up behind our house and slants across the yard, coating the trees with warm light. Sylvia calls it "the lamp," as in "Is the lamp on yet?" This is a painting of her standing on the back porch greeting the dawn. I redid the face about twenty times to get the right look, although it still doesn't look like my wife. We're so highly tuned to recognizing faces that the tiniest smidgen of paint changes everything.

35. The Sex Sphere



Acrylic on canvas, 14" x 18", April, 2008.

My novel, *The Sex Sphere*, is about a being from the fourth dimension named Babs. Her intersection with our 3D space looks like parts of a woman, squeezed together and rounded off. She manipulates some of the characters into setting off a terrorist A-bomb in Florence, Italy. You can see the mushroom cloud in the background. I liked painting this, as it's so intense and cartoony and surreal. I think the sex sphere looks a little scary. Originally this painting was going to be a landscape looking out over Silicon Valley. I went up on St. Joseph's Hill with a canvas and paints and started the picture there with Vernon Head. Vernon knows my working habits by now, and he knew something weird was going to show up in the foreground. For awhile I wasn't sure what it should be, but when I realized I needed a cover image for the new edition of *The Sex Sphere*, I was ready to go.

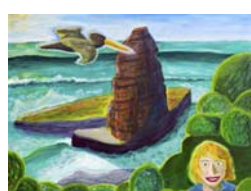
34. Spacetime Donuts



Acrylic on paper, 17" x 13", April, 2008.

In April of 2008, I arranged for a small press to reprint two of my early science fiction novels, *Spacetime Donuts* and 35: *The Sex Sphere*. As part of the deal, I did the cover art. *Spacetime Donuts* is about punk young mathematician who finds a way to shrink down so small that he wraps around the scale axis and gets big. Scale turns out to be circular, and spacetime is in some sense like a donut. I wrote this novel in 1979, and it can be argued that this was one of the very first cyberpunk science-fiction novels. The characters in the book plug their brains into computers, which is why I have that wire coming out of his neck. He's wearing an earring that's a variation on the W.A.S.T.E. symbol in Thomas Pynchon's novel *The Crying of Lot 49*. As it turns out, the book's plot resembles this symbol. I had fun making this image pop with cadmium red and cadmium yellow.

33. The Muse



Acrylic on canvas, 24" x 18", January, 2008.

My wife Sylvia was out of town for a week visiting our daughter in New York, and I took a knapsack of paints and a canvas out to a cliff overlooking Four Mile Beach north of Santa Cruz. This spire of rock was part of a natural bridge many years ago. I often walk along the beach to this spot; it's usually deserted and very beautiful. You don't see any sign of human activity in any direction. This was the first time I'd gotten onto the cliff right above the rock. It was a very windy day, and I found a depression in the cliff, a little grassy dell, and I settled in there. I particularly wanted to get the shape of the long, breaking dark wave near the horizon. A pelican flew past and I got a digital photo of him. I wished Sylvia were there with me. At home, I printed out a large image of the pelican I'd seen, also an image of Sylvia, and I slid those images around on the canvas until the composition looked right. And then I outlined those spots and painted copies of the images. I think of the woman as the muse. When I go out alone in nature, that's who I'm hoping to hear from.

32. Giant's Head



Acrylic on canvas, 18" x 24", December, 2007.

Like 31: *Mossy Trees*, *Giant's Head* is a painting I started outdoors in Castle Rock Park near Saratoga, California. This particular rock is called California Ridge. I circled around on a narrow ledge to get to this vantage point. I was somewhat worried about falling off; there was a hundred foot drop to the ground. I painted my hand in there, like clutching at the rock to show that I was scared. The rock itself reminded me of the profile of Homer Simpson. There were a lot of little lichen patches on it; I just tried to suggest those with some spots of color. That white line in the sky is a jet contrail. The green of the trees was really lovely, it felt good being alone up here on the ledge. I didn't have room to stay very clean and I got a lot of paint on myself.

31. Mossy Trees



Acrylic on canvas, 18" x 24", November, 2007.

I got into an *en plein air* thing again in the sunny winter of 2007. I wore a paint stained overcoat and wedged my paints into a knapsack and strapped a canvas to that. It was great to be all covered in paint clothes with a knapsack. I looked like a bum. People looked askance. On a ridge in the Castle Rock park above Los Gatos and Saratoga I found some trees that were completely covered

with fronds of moss. The sun was going down in the west over the Pacific Ocean, edging the mossy trees with brilliant yellow-green. The tree's a little like a woman's legs, too, very fertile. To pep up the picture, I added an eye. I like to wrap my paintings around, painting on the edges so I don't have to frame them. I put another eye on the left edge, though you can't see it in this image. It was beautiful here. I was thinking of a drawing by Bosch where he puts an eye on the ground and an ear on a tree.

30. Shells



Acrylic on canvas, 30" x 30", October, 2007.

When I was at Glen Moriwaki's workshop in Caunes, I met the artist Kevin Brown. He was a good influence on my painting; as he works very rapidly and freely, often finishing a large painting in a few hours—and just as often going back and totally changing the painting a few hours later. Kevin owns and runs the Live Worms gallery in the North Beach area of San Francisco, which he rents out to emerging artists who want to stage a show of their own. As I'd accumulated quite a few paintings, and I wanted to do something special for the launch of my new novel *Postsingular*, I got my publisher to help me rent Live Worms for a combined art show and book release party. To round out my set of pictures, I painted a still-life of a bunch of seashells that I had around the house.

29. Prickly Pear Cactus



Acrylic on canvas, 24" x 24" September, 2007.

I love the shapes of prickly pear cactus. I spotted a big stand of them up near the Sacred Heart Jesuit Center that stands on a hill over Los Gatos. Vernon and I went up there and I set to work.

28. Lexington Reservoir



Acrylic on canvas, 20" x 16", August, 2007.

Another blazing hot summer day painting *en plein air* with Vernon Head. I wanted a scene with water, and I'd found a likely inlet off Lexington Reservoir near Los Gatos. When we got there it was early afternoon, and the only shade we could find was far up in a gully, quite an awkward spot to sit. The annually dwindling water supply of the reservoir etches the steep gravelly sides with horizontal lines like bathtub rings. Some white egrets were hanging out here, and I did see one land, although I didn't actually paint him in till I was back home.

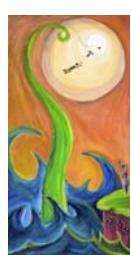
27. The Talking Pitchfork



Acrylic on canvas, 16" x 20", July, 2007.

After the trip to France, I was more enthused than ever about *en plein air* painting. Vernon Head is an outdoor painter, too, so we started going on outings around Los Gatos, not just sketching but taking paints and easels along. This is a field on St. Joseph's Hill; we were up here on a very hot August day, so it was very much a matter of finding a shady spot to paint from. The landscape seemed a little too simple to me, so I went ahead and put in a character who was just about to appear in my novel *Hylozoic*: a god-like talking pitchfork named Groovy. When I painted this picture, I was thinking that the pitchfork was going to be evil, but as wrote about him more, I learned he was a pretty good guy. A Kentucky hillbilly, basically.

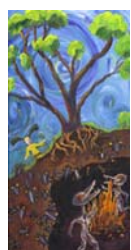
26. Hylozoic Triptych (Right Panel): Beanstalk to Infinity



Acrylic on canvas, 19" x 38", September, 2007.

The triptych developed over four months along with my plans for my pair of novels: *Postsingular* and *Hylozoic*. I've always been fascinated by the fairy tale, "Jack and the Beanstalk." It's a powerful, archetypal notion: a seed that grows a beanstalk that you can climb to heaven. Given that I planned to write about actually infinite levels of the universe, an endless beanstalk seemed like a good way to get there. I got the composition for this panel from *The Ascent of the Blessed*, which is a panel in a lesser-known Bosch triptych, depicting souls flying up to a circular disk of white light. You can see Jayjay, Thuy, and Duxie the Hrull way up at the top. And one of the subbies at the bottom is waving good-bye. After painting this picture, I knew I wanted a scene like this in my novel *Hylozoic*: my characters flying up an endless beanstalk that they find growing out of the subdimensions.

25. Hylozoic Triptych (Left Panel): Thuy and the Subbies



Acrylic on canvas, 19" x 38", August, 2007.

This painting grew out of an *en plein air* session on St. Joseph's Hill with my painter friend Vernon Head. There's a big oak tree growing at the edge of a drop-off; although it looks a bit unstable, I've been visiting it for twenty years. I like the tree a lot, and I like how I can see some of the roots exposed in the gully wall. I filled the sky with Zhabotinsky scrolls and got the tree done pretty quickly, but then the dirt wall was looking dull. So I covered it with little critters; I was thinking of them as nanomachines, which infest the Earth in my novel *Postsingular*, which precedes my novel *Hylozoic* (the central panel of the triptych). Those birds dancing around the fire underground are sinister subdimensional beings called subbies. In *Postsingular*, they actually try to eat my character Thuy; you can see her uneasily looking down at them.

24. Hylozoic Triptych (Center Panel): Jayjay and the Hrull



Acrylic on canvas, 38" x 38", June, 2007.

This is the biggest picture I've done so far. I painted it with the canvas still unstretched, stapled to a wall in the studio in Caunes. I was just getting started on my novel *Hylozoic*, which features a newlywed couple called Jayjay and Thuy. "Hylozoic" is a word referring to the philosophical doctrine that everything is alive: rocks, atoms, stars. The scattered globs of light in this painting are there to represent the notion that in a hylozoic world the very air currents are alive. My character Jayjay has been getting painting lessons from no less a master than Hieronymus Bosch (so of course the picture has to be a triptych.) And that's the back of his wife Thuy's head in the front; she has long pigtails. Duxie the Hrull, a flying manta ray, is about to take them for a ride. But never mind about that.. The main thing here is the colors. It was tough bringing this big unstretched canvas back on the airplane from France; I rolled it up inside some foam rubber and managed to talk the stewardesses into letting me park it in a little closet that they had for their coats.

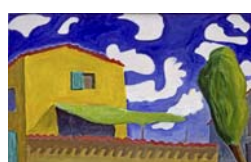
23. Caunes Vineyards



Acrylic on paper, 23" x 18", June, 2007.

Another landscape painting from the South of France, one of my favorites. I took some photos at this spot overlooking Caunes, did a pencil sketch, and painted it back in the studio. Before starting, I primed the paper with some gesso that I'd tinted pink, which gives the whole picture a nice warm quality. The style of this one is inspired by Wayne Thiebaud's late paintings of the fields and rivers in the delta region near Sacramento, California. I was also influenced by Kevin Brown, who was painting next to me in the studio every day. Glen said this painting of mine demonstrates that I could in principle let go of my science-fictional imagery and produce landscapes that are fantastic and dreamy without any additional props, and he's right. But now and then I still like to paint SF things anyway.

22. Minerve Awning



Acrylic on paper, 21½" x 13½", June, 2007.

Our teacher Glen Moriwaki took our class on an outing to the ancient walled town of Minerve. As I was walking around looking for something to sketch for a painting, this awning caught my eye. This scene had the added virtue of being in front of a comfortable bench—which is a good way for an old man like me to pick his subject. I sketched it in pencil, took photos, and filled in the painting back in the studio, simplifying the scene considerably. This picture was featured in a poster for a group show we had at the Live Worms gallery in April, 2008. Someone wanted to buy it, but I gave it to my daughter instead.

21. The Old Marrieds



Acrylic on paper, 22½" x 14", June, 2007.

In Caunes, some trees like chestnuts were blooming in long branching flowers. I wanted to paint the leaves and flowers. To simplify things, I traced the shapes of the leaves onto my paper. I set the flowers into two small pots facing each other. And then I had the idea of making the flowers be the tentacles of creatures like cephalopods or hermit crabs. As I painted them, the creatures became deeply entwined, reaching into each others' stuff, like bickering, inseparable partners.

20. Yellow Couch



Acrylic on paper, 22½" x 14½", June, 2007.

In June, 2007, my wife and I went to a painting workshop in Caunes, a small village in the southwest of France. Our teacher was the artist Glen Moriwaki. It was great working with him; he brought my art to a new level. This was the first painting I did in Caunes; a yellow lawn-couch on the grass outside our group studio. So as to make it easier to bring the paintings home, I worked mostly with acrylic on paper at the workshop. I like the smoothness of the paper painting surface, but when you're done it's a drag to have to frame the thing. The nice thing about canvases is that I can paint on the edges, and then it doesn't really need a frame.

19. The Hollow Earth



Oil on canvas, 24" x 24", September 2006.

We might suppose the Earth to be hollow like a tennis ball, with the inside filled with jungles, floating lakes, and a mysterious pink light emanating from the center. Also found are shrigs (= shrimp + pigs), flying nautiluses, and the Great Old Ones that resemble giant sea cucumbers. The painting illustrates my adventure tale *The Hollow Earth*, supposedly based on an account by Mason Algiers Reynolds, a 19th Century traveler to the Earth's interior. From the novel: "All lines of sight near the Earth's center were warped and distorted, surrounding the center's blobs of blue with weird halos and mirages. Earth's interior was illuminated by the branching pink streamers of light that stretched from the core to the inner surface of the great planetary rind we'd fallen through."

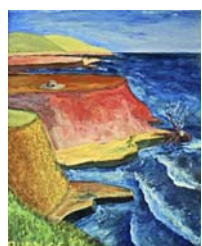


18. Summer Day

Acrylic on canvas, 14" x 11", July 2006.

I painted this *en plein air* on a 105 degree August afternoon on Saint Josephs Hill above Los Gatos, California, sitting on the ground with ants crawling into my underwear and biting me. The empty field had stakes from a former vineyard, but they looked confusing. So I made the stakes into alien snails and added—of course—a flying saucer. I think the saucer makes the picture.

17. Davenport Cliffs



Acrylic on canvas, 16 x 20, July 2006.

My wife and I saw a Monet show in San Francisco and I got excited about painting *en plein air*. I painted this on a cliff near Davenport, California. Later I added in a UFO, an alien, and a giant squid. Perhaps this was overkill, as it's a pretty strong landscape on its own.

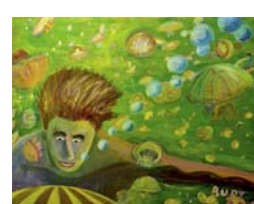
16. Surfin' Tiki



Oil on canvas, 24" x 24", June 2006.

I copied the sky for this picture from the beautiful spring sky overhead, then painted in the waves and the tiki. The surfin' tiki's appear in a story I wrote with Marc Laidlaw, "The Perfect Wave." They also appear in my novel *Postsingular* where I have some giant aliens who look like Easter Island moai statues. Here's a short passage where one of them appears to the main character Thuy: "Thuy thought she saw a live moai peering at her over Jayjay's shoulder—huge, cave-browed, luminous, a tiki god with a pursed mouth that was almost a smile."

15. Jellyfish Lake



Acrylic on canvas, 30" x 24", June, 2005.

This is inspired by a trip to Jellyfish Lake in Micronesia near Palau; some of my fellow divers took an underwater photo of me in this very pose. I put this scene into my novel *Mathematicians in Love*, where the big jellyfish just under the diver is a kind of god. Here's a passage describing this scene: "I dove down to about twenty feet, looking for the big one. My visual field held only sunlit yellow-green water and jellyfish, everywhere and at every angle. Just then I felt an upwelling as something huge moved towards the surface. Without even slowing down, the giant jellyfish engulfed me. Each of her gestures was ideally formed and laden with meaning; each gesture was a novel, a theorem, a cosmic work of art."

14. Disco La Hampa



Oil on canvas, 36" x 24", October, 2004.

This is a kind of alien nightclub scene. I was thinking about the other-worldly hangout La Hampa that appears in my novel *Mathematicians in Love*. Also of the classic Toulouse-Lautrec poster, *Moulin Rouge*. That's a star frog in the limo on the right. The jellyfish are based on Belousov-Zhabotinsky scrolls, which are one of my favorite types of cellular-automata-based computer graphics.

13. Da Nha Duc



Acrylic on canvas, 30" x 24", July, 2003.

This was my first painting with acrylics. I like how fast I can work with acrylic paint, and how easy it is to clean up, and you can in fact use mediums with the acrylic paint to give it more of oil's transparency and workability. This image was inspired by a frame of a Carl Barks comic book. Naturally I put in a UFO and, if you look closely, a tiny snowflake-like alien in the middle. Sylvia had the idea of giving my duck a Vietnamese name, reminiscent of all the friendly Vietnamese students that she and I have taught here in Silicon Valley. I ended up putting Da Nha Duc into my novel *Frek and the Elixir* as a cartoon character, with his nephews Huy, Lui, and Duy, "throwing back his shoulders and curving his beak in triumph."

12. My Life in a Nutshell



Oil on canvas, 24" x 20", March, 2003.

This is an homage to Philip Guston, who sometimes painted eye-heads like this starting at empty bottles. In a way these were self-portraits. My Guston-style self-portrait shows me focused on a computer keyboard, which is how I while a way a great deal of my waking time.

11. The Hacker and the Ants



Oil on canvas, 20 x 24, March, 2002.

This is my (unused) design for the cover for my Silicon Valley SF thriller novel, *The Hacker and the Ants*. I like having the hacker be a skull, a pirate, and a light bulb—and that he's wired into the ant. In my novel an evil computer hacker creates an ant-like virus which destroys television. My character rides a virtual ant through cyberspace to an encounter with the hacker.

10. Stun City



Oil on canvas, 30" x 24", December, 2001.

This image illustrates the second chapter of my far future SF novel *Frek and the Elixir*. It's a biotech world in which the buildings are grown. Next to Frek are his faithful dog Arf and his "grullo" friend Gibby. They've just arrived at a town called Stun City. I painted in a

bunch of Virgins of Guadalupe into the picture as well, even though they don't figure in the novel. I've always thought these religious icons look somehow science-fictional: a little figure floating in a spiky glowing ball.

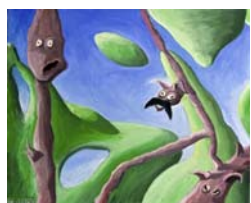
9. Under My Bed



Oil on canvas, 30" x 20", May, 2001.

In the first chapter of my novel *Frek and the Elixir*, the young hero Frek discovers a UFO under his bed with an alien cuttlefish as passenger. (Actually that's my hand in the picture, not Frek's.) I got the glowing look of the saucer door from an oven door in Hieronymus Bosch's *The Last Judgment* in Vienna. Here's the passage where Frek sees the UFO.

8. Spaceland



Oil on canvas, 30" x 24", February 2001.

I painted this to help imagine a scene in my novel *Spaceland*, where my character goes beyond four-dimensional space and into infinite dimensional Hilbert space. I like how smooth the shapes came out. That creature with the mustache is Drabk the Sharak of Okbra, which is a name I drew from Kee Dewdney's book, *The Planiverse*—with Kee's permission.

7. Saucer Dogs



Acrylic on canvas, 20" x 16", Sept 2000.

This is a simple little painting that I made for my daughter Isabel. Two dogs in a UFO! This was one of the first paintings I did in acrylic paint. The dogs are modeled on our old family pet Arf, whom I also painted into 2: *Arf and the Saucer*, 10: *Stun City*, and 19: *The Hollow Earth*.

6. Big Sur



30" x 24", August, 2000.

In 2003, I went camping alone near Kirk Flats in Big Sur. The second night I was standing there naked watching the sun go down and the moon come up. I could feel the Earth turning like a big wheel, and soon I saw the Big Dipper in the sky. I had some problems with flies biting me and I saw a lizard on a rock, so they're in the picture too.

5. A Square



Oil on canvas, 30"x24", May, 2000.

This is A Square, the hero of Edwin Abbott's novel *Flatland*. His wife is a line segment. She's beating her tail, that's why it's blurred. I got the underlying Flatland space pattern from some leaf shadows that were falling onto my canvas as I painted in the back yard.

4. The Attack of the Mandelbrot Set



Oil on canvas, 24" x36", October, 1999.

Sylvia served as the artist's model for the women under attack; I took two photos of her in the Mojave desert pretending to be seeing a saucer. A few years ago I wrote a short story "As Above, So Below," that's in my *Complete Stories* collection. The story is about a UFO that is a giant multidimensional fractal of the kind called a "Mandelbrot set." This story was also produced as a one-act play in Fort Worth, Texas.

3. Saucer Wisdom



Oil on canvas, 30" x 24", June, 1999.

In 1999 I published a millennial novel *Saucer Wisdom*. It was marketed as a non-fiction work of futurology. To complicate things, one of the characters is "Rudy Rucker." This painting shows my character Frank Shook, my character Rudy Rucker, and a Mandelbrot-set-like alien near the Devil's Butte in Montana—a saucerian locale I visited for research.

2. Arf and the Saucer



Oil on canvas, 20"x16", April, 1999.

This early painting remains one of my favorites. Beginner's luck. It shows my beloved dog Arf (who appears in four of my novels: *The Hollow Earth*, *Saucer Wisdom*, *Frek and the Elixir*, and *As Above So Below*). He used to drink out of a certain fountain in Los Gatos every day. I sketched him there and added a UFO. When I made the aliens look like starfish I was thinking of H. P. Lovecraft's obsession with echinoderm-like aliens. But my niece Stella thought of a cuter explanation for their appearance: the aliens are the stars from the sky!

1. My Parents



Oil on canvas, 20" x 16", Oct, 1999.

I started painting in 1999 because I was working on a novel about the life of the painter Peter Bruegel. I wanted to understand from the inside how it felt to paint. And I've always thought it might be fun to find an alternate creative outlet besides writing. My wife Sylvia and I took an evening painting class with the San Jose Art Museum. We learned to use oil paints, and I stuck with them for a few years. My first painting was based on a photo of my parents, taken on a rare trip of theirs to Florida in the early 1950s. I added a UFO—and discovered a personal style. Note that my mother's hair is pointing upwards towards the saucer. I used to call this picture "The

Immaculate Conception,” and say that the saucer
impregnated my mother via information-rays, as surely I’m
too special a person to be born of normal man and woman!
But now I don’t bother saying that. I’m more like my parents
all the time.