

# In All Its Shades of Grey:—another musing on perspective

## Sequel to The Domestic Life of the Rainbow

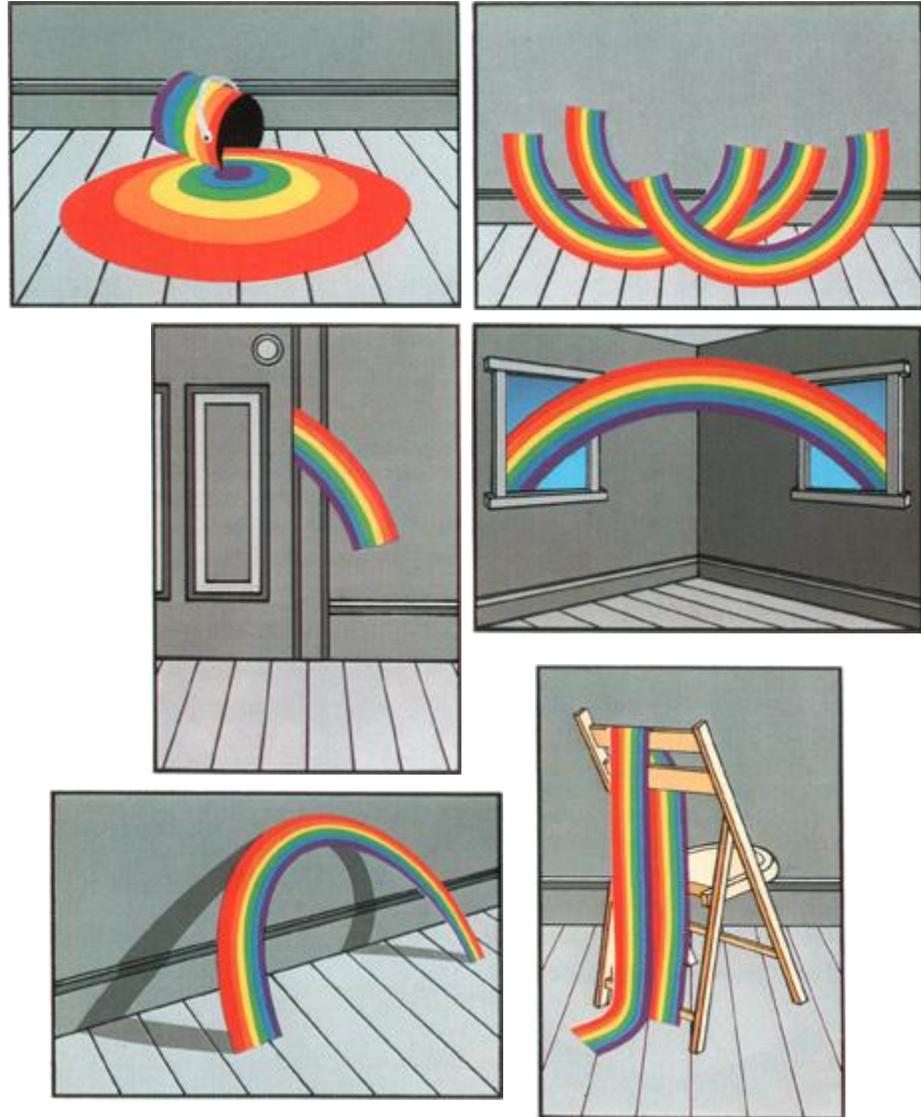
Four views of a rainbow at home;  
fluorescent colors (all but indigo)  
stand out unnaturally  
against the grey background.  
Stretching from window to window  
In all its glory;  
Doing sit ups in the living room;  
Choosing a multi-colored hue  
to paint the floor;  
And finally leaning against the wall,  
casting a shadow;  
The rainbow unbends at home.

That's all fine;  
but you have left out  
the other everyday scenes.

We want to see a rainbow  
pushing a lawn mower;  
watching Wheel of Fortune reruns;  
worrying about investing its pot of gold;  
taking out the trash and storm debris;  
buying Wonder Bread;  
laughing over a baby's first step;  
reading *People* magazine;  
frying bacon in an apron;  
walking with a cast;  
glaring at the morning paper;  
smearing on Oil of Olay;  
humming tunes from *The Wizard of Oz*;  
putting on Wellingtons and a sou'wester;  
and taking Contact with orange juice.

We need to see domestic life  
in all its shades of grey,  
untransformed by prisms  
and without its silver lining  
Otherwise we'd spend our lives  
chasing rainbows.

Jean Stallings  
July 10, 1988



The images above are selected from "Behind the Rainbow, Patrick Hughes: Prints 1964-83" Paradox Publishing, 1983. Originally a set of 6 screen prints in a boxed set that also included "Upon the Pun" by Patrick Hughes and Paul Hammond.

This whimsical, yet thoughtful poem by a teacher friend of mine (now deceased) is just right to share whenever we need to look at life's realities. Besides focusing on seeing life as it is, the poem invites

us to see ***the whole picture*** , or ***the other side of the picture***. Such broad perspectives are so important for us to discover and nourish.

Jean's poem uses an interesting twist on modeling. Rather than modeling on a poem as we did with "If I Were in Charge of the World," she draws her inspiration from a series of paintings by Patrick Hughes called ***The Domestic Life of the Rainbow***. The style, wording, tone and rhythm of her poetic comments are consistent with that of the art. Her comments are in the form of a list poem, a relatively accessible form for you to use. The perspective and voice Ms. Stallings uses seems to be that of an amused truth-teller.

Now, of course, you know what I invite you to do. Choose a favorite poem or piece of art and write a sequel to it (a different or broader point of view or perspective) as my friend did. You may model on Ms. Stallings list poem style or use any poetic format that you think works for the commentary you want to offer.

If you prefer, you could model more closely by writing your own "Sequel to the (school life, athletic life, love life, etc) of a Rainbow" using Patrick Hughes' drawings and Jean Stallings' poem. Or, as I mentioned before, the more daring and free-thinking among you may choose different art and a different poetic format.

Before we totally "let loose" let's discuss the following:

1. Do a brief word association on Rainbows
2. What does it mean to you to chase a rainbow? What rainbows have you chased?
3. Is being a dreamer more important than being a realist? How can we find balance between the two?
4. In what areas are you more of a dreamer? (love, your future, talents, etc) When are you more of a realist? (love, future, talents, etc)
5. What is domestic life?
6. What are some details of your domestic life?
7. Which of these are pleasant and which give you a roaring headache?
8. How are the domestic details of Hughes art different from the details Stallings focuses upon?
9. What are the shades of grey of domestic life? What other areas of life have shades of grey? (school, sports, jobs, love, grades, friendships...explain this)
10. What is Jean Stallings saying to you about real life? Does this make you feel positive or negative?

If you will always think and wonder at least this much before you write, you'll always end up with a richer piece—a possible *je nais sais quoi*.

This piece will be due, along with your transformation piece, before or by Oct 10. If you model on art and/or poetry other than these two please include a copy (or at least a citation) of what you are modeling on.