



the memory of atmosphere

Kyle Parker Cunningham

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The Memory of Atmosphere
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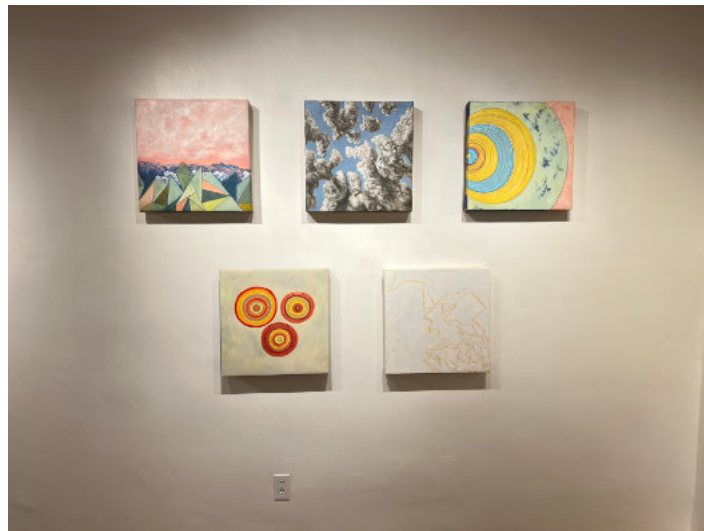
I gazed up into the atmosphere. Listening. Pondering the afternoon sky, conjuring predictions of weather patterns, checking my anxiety. Last September's lightning strike to my left arm left me uneasy when out of doors at moments when it felt necessary to contemplate horizons. I looked again. I listened.

A faint rumble instructed me to contemplate time and geology; those cycles of rain which shape the rocks and earth into fantastic forms. "Us clouds you are terrified of are powerful in many ways," the sky spoke. Then the clouds floated on effortlessly over the expanse of Rio Grande Rift - admiring the geological wonders their moisture will minutely sculpt. Time scales, memories evolve.

The memory of the earth is entrusted to the basic shapes: outlines of catastrophe and gardens of rebirth. Mountains rise, canyons sink. The earth continues its constant evolution, permanence illusionary inside geological memory: the hardest granite dome will succumb to the erosion of airborne water vapor.

I painted and listened and experienced the wind, sun, bugs, and the ground. Organizing chaos I found patterns, I erased details finding circles, triangles and squares. I turned reality into feelings. Brush strokes recording the intensity of being: the light of the atmosphere, the essence of a slope, the ponderosa, the mariposa lily's, the Towhee, and the crow.

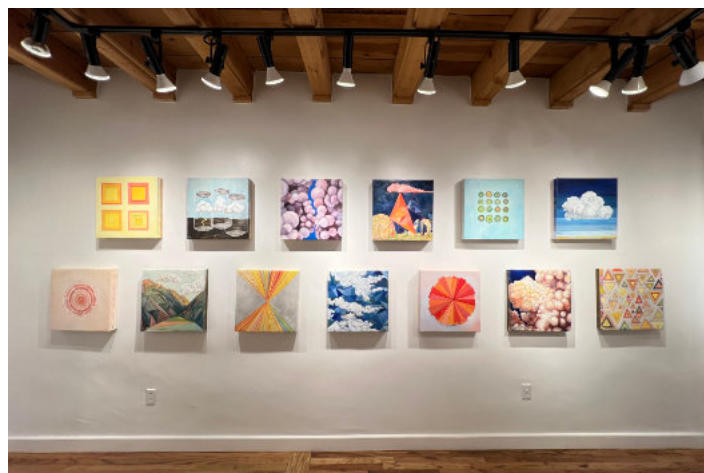
To paint a cloud is to understand memory; as the



first brush strokes defining the form are laid, the cumulonimbus instantly morphs. Memory adapts forms, eroding details down into basic emotions conveying poetically the impression of an event. I paint not the cloud seen but the cloud I want see continue existing, the story I decided to tell.

I nurtured memories' lesson, allowed it to infest my being, soothing the trauma of being struck by lightning. Slowly transmuting that terror: I'm left with the image of myself floating for a moment between the atmosphere and the earth, so close to death even one atom could have changed fate. Perched between two eternities; now living on to tell my stories.

Everyday, a tiny cog in these cycles of life, each chooses to live again telling personal versions of this story we are all co-creating. Symbologies intertwined electronically. This act of creating and sharing our memories of the atmospheres we've lived infectiously inspires living together. Communally navigating this intense world. Mutually moving consciousness towards the existence we choose to live.





above the clouds

Tres Piedras, New Mexico looks out to the east over the great expanse which is the Taos Gorge valley. The clouds often sit low out there above the Rio Grande Rift weaving through those ancient volcanoes and from this vantage point tucked up just a bit into the tree line - you feel as though you are above the clouds.



orbits (plankton dreaming of a sedimentary afterlife)

Recycling atoms. This year's compost growing next year's garden. Millennia of plankton floating in the ocean transforming nutrients and sunlight into sedimentary stone: actually forming earth. The ocean floating as clouds back to aforementioned ancient rocks to dissolve the same exact atoms slowly back to

the ocean from whence it birthed. Using that recycled rain water to grow this years garden.



towers

Tilt your head back, look straight up and imagine the clouds you see. The wind, wafting intoxicating nectar from off towards the river. Afternoon towers waking up, slowly donning their costumes in order to put on their summer theatrics.

Later, towards dusk, maybe a break in the rain falling. Light fades and then explodes for one last instance over the scene.



the atmosphere's electric finger

Behold the awe which is the blinding light of lighting strikes when surrounded by the intense darkness of encroached clouds while miles away from domesticated electricity.



twenty-one years

Information overload and pressing forward with unparalleled zeal; an attitude of sheer indestructibility. This painting feels like being 21 years old to me. That is, being 21 years old, seeing only your expansion into the endless world on the horizon.

I started painting in earnest when I was 21 years

old as a photography and philosophy student in university. I had always been good at painting, but at this age, I realized that was what my mission in life was to be. I'm now 41 and look back at the last 20 years of work and think forward towards the next 20 years of creations, balanced, and understanding that I've now momentarily know myself.



does math control nature?

Select occurrences in nature which follow the Fibonacci sequence: the way the seeds grow in a sunflower, the way plants grow leaves to maximize sunlight and minimize shade, spiral arrangement of florets, sea shell spirals, rabbit breeding patterns, the way honey bee's family trees are structured as noted in their DNA inheritance patterns, pinecone spirals, each complete cycle of DNA's double helix is 34

angstroms by 21 angstroms, pineapples, cauliflowers, the way tree branches grow and split to form new branches, spiral galaxies, hurricane storm structures, human face layouts, and the proportion of length between our finger bones.



two squared

Two sets of two couples. Individuals emulating geometry; understanding their moment interpreted through personal emotions. Capturing light between pigments; glimpsing familiarity and adventure. Dichotomy in thought, separations and justifications. Remembering memories: a mother robin calling "geek geek" for it's child.



alpenglow at mineral creek with the adults after the babies have gone to sleep

A perfect day from a perfect trip. I sit down to paint just at twilight and sketch this out to bring home to Tres Piedras and finish painting while remembering the little ones bouncing around the tents and that rain storm an hour before and the crisp air and that cold, cold alpine river. The details melt away and I'm left with this glow of a moment of happiness in a wonderful place.



bottled lightning

On occasions, the electrons get out of balance. Randomly you just happen to be in that place at the wrong moment, right time and the atmospheres' electricity chooses to flow through your body. It's rare to be touched by the sky's electric finger, united between the heavens and the earth in a split moment of wonder. Slowly, the shock transforms into awe and you bottle up that

experience and keep it on the shelf as a pretty object, and remember to remember the atmosphere often.



felt and lived

The dream world. Intersection. The waking world.
At one point two realms commingle.

Distortions in our analog minds corrupt memory
towards the simpler, better version of reality. Idealized
and rarely lived up to: it's hard to revisit a past
experience. You've changed from that person you
were; you no longer fit in the memory. Astonished,

the details slip back into the other state of
consciousness and we go on living new mythologies.

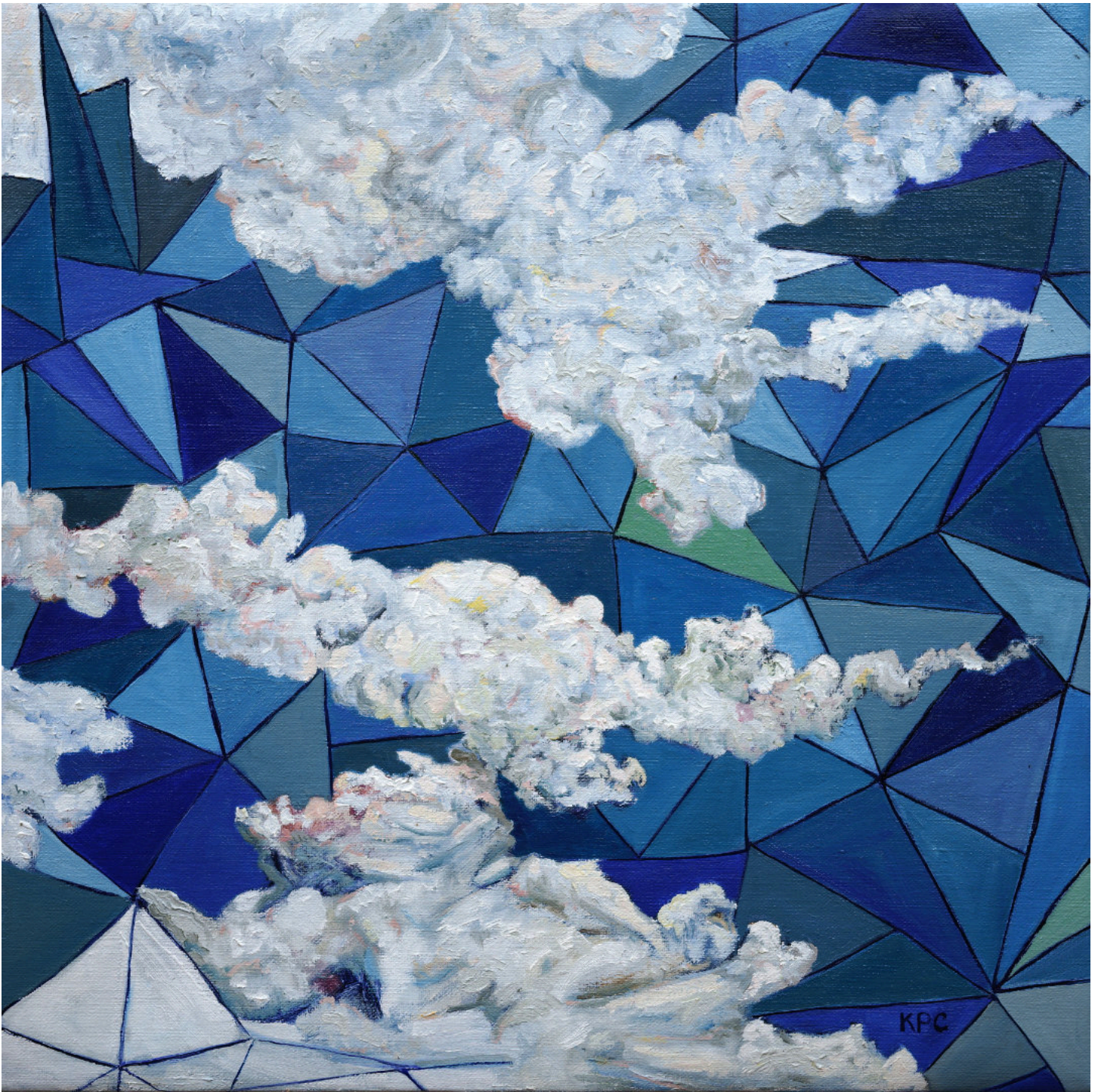


the river in the sky

Magic is the transportation of millions of gallons of water over thousands of miles in the rivers of the atmosphere. Each molecule of water drifts aimlessly on a cyclical pilgrimage to the tops of the mounts only to erode their way back to the melting pot of the oceans.

And then again upwards over the mountain.

Time moves forward and my memory grows long, so long those choice memories of the past are now but impressions of emotion. Erosion of forms. Elongation of acceptance. Pronunciation of the winds.



the algebra of water vapor

Conjured by migrating birds, triangulated pathways facilitate efficient passage over the geography. Swimming through the thin water of the atmosphere. Generational knowledge hard won over spans of time best measured in permutations of DNA. We have mapped the atmosphere with our technology but before us all

of the birds up there on a wing have known a math which shrinks time and spans lengths continental.



symbologies intertwine electronically

Phantom images superimposed on the trigonometry of an electrical transmission. This is the way I will remember being struck by lightning: suspended for an instant by a mass of electrons between the earth and the atmosphere. Electrical transmission of thunder and light and cataclysmic force. And then I will remember that I am alive and am experiencing this life.

Living. It's hard out here. Impossible all too often to know what we are supposed to do. Now constantly bombarded with imagery and powerful words once

used only for the sacred. And our minds are hardwired to believe. And now we are all super interconnected on the information highway. Of course it's complicated when all of our symbolism gets intertwined.

I was shaken by that bolt, and frightened of future clouds approaching from the horizon. I pondered a new agreement with the sky, running circles in my mind not perceiving an agreement was already made and slowly growing inside of me. The bolt opened a new portal inside of me, a distant pin of light I must now quest towards. A pathway becoming creation of works transmitting the intensity of life.



triangular circles

Three point shapes folding in mesmerizing pinwheels
understanding an existence not bound by
trigonometry. We all day dream of other lives; lives
only the simplest changes in arrangement away.



pollen and larvae

Endless mutations resulting from the constant sex happening all around us. Pollen and larvae, cracked eggs and delivered placentas. Life is constantly experimenting; trying out minutely tweaked DNA to see if this, one, maybe, just might be the one.

A cocklebur gets stuck in the foot feathers of a Sand Hill crane and finds itself on the the Asian side of the

bearing straight. The desert to the arctic. A new try at life, a miniature invasion, hoping ancient memories will help it grow in this new land. Seeds explorers carried over continents on feathered starships.



low angle sun rays

Wonder, about water vapor, dust and light angles. Effortlessly floating down the spine of the continental divide transporting moisture and spores. Aimlessly re-sculpting top soil creating art works while simultaneously eroding them like Buddhist monks and sand mandala's. Endlessly

enigmatic, effortlessly aloft.

Sunset approaches and everyone has eyes glued to the horizon.



*out there,
on the horizon,
a solitary cloud*

A proud cloud caught in the act of looking perfect while it thought no one was looking.

For three days straight I gazed at the clouds attempting to decode their structures. The

transparencies, translucency, opacity, luminosity and hues. The sky fades, how to think about that. Abundance of daytime around the solstice and the puffs and tufts of dew on wing up in the sky were delightful.



equilateral equilibrium

Rationing time and energy. The artifacts of ones life in need of attention and devotion. Finite existence demands decisions. Life's quest to find balance; constantly wondering what lies around the next corner (if we just go a little bit further.)

When too many of the triangles of life are out of balance I struggle and so I paint these three points where two lines meet with the utmost care in the hope they will help me towards equilibrium.