

The Brush Dances & the Light Sings by John Palka & Yvonne Palka, in memoriam

John Palka writes:

“The book presents a selection of paintings by my beloved late wife, Yvonne Palka, interwoven with my photographs and with a focus on nature. It is an expression of our love of beauty and art, of our devotion to nature, of our spiritual search, and of our shared journey of sixty years. . .

"I have sought in these pages to bring together those of Yvonne's paintings that most express her warm, joyous, loving, and uplifting spirit. I complement these images with photographs that resonate with the paintings in one way or another—sometimes in form, sometimes in color, and always in spirit.

"I see this book as an expression of our lives together.”



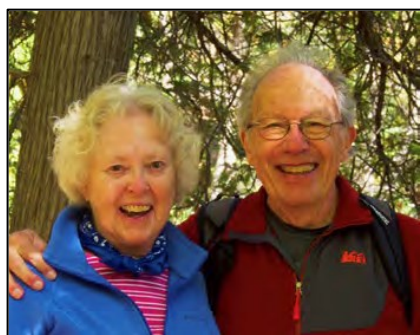
The Brush Dances
& the Light Sings



JOHN PALKA &
YVONNE PALKA, IN MEMORIAM

Yvonne and John Palka were together for more than sixty years. Both grew up in immigrant families Yvonne's parents emigrated from Switzerland for economic reasons, Johnny and his parents were political refugees from the then Czechoslovakia. They met in their first year at Swarthmore College, and they graduated together in biology —though, as Johnny always points out, “she graduated with highest honors in the Honors Program!” They spent the next year traveling together in India, and they married in Delhi in 1960. Returning to the U.S., they both did post-graduate work at the University of California at Los Angeles: her PhD was in neuroendocrinology, his in neurophysiology.

The Palkas shared a love of science and of the natural world, they raised a family together—two beloved daughters—and they both had distinguished careers as college professors, she at Antioch University Seattle and he at the University of Washington. Shortly before her retirement from Antioch in 2000, Yvonne began her study of Asian brush painting—sumi-e—an art form she pursued for the rest of her life. She illustrated with sumi-e paintings the two award-winning books she authored and published: *Dragon Fire*, *Ocean Mist* (a children's story about dragons living on a beach in the Pacific Northwest) and *Super-Simple Sumi-e* (an introduction to sumi-e painting designed for children). Shortly after John's retirement from UW in 2002, he began writing a wide-ranging history of his family. This included his immediate family's two escapes from Czechoslovakia, first in 1941 from the Nazis and then in 1949 from the Communists, and also the stories of several forebears who were prominent in Slovak history. John explored this rich heritage in a book that was published first in Slovakia (*Moje Slovensko, moja rodina*) in 2010 and then in the United States (*My Slovakia, My Family*) in 2012.



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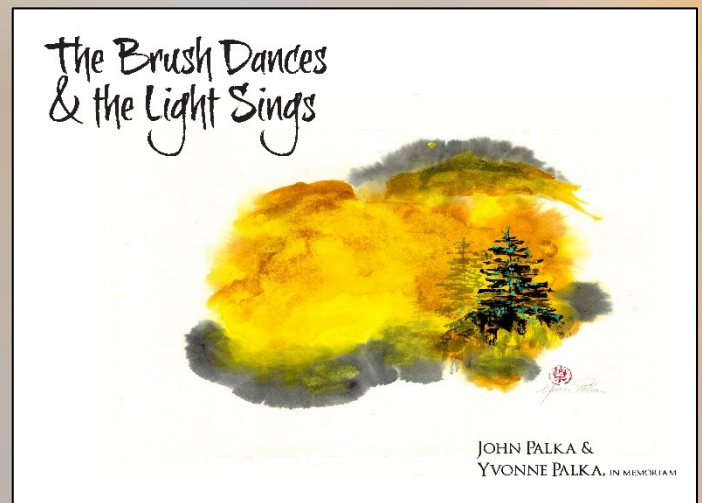
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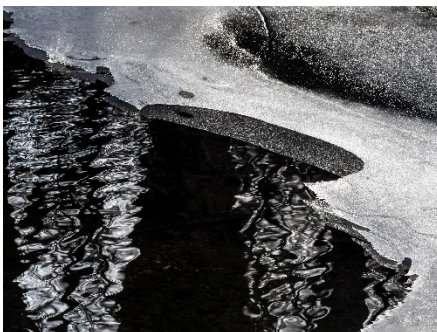
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The book presents a selection of paintings by my beloved wife, Yvonne Palka, interwoven with my photographs. It is an expression of our love of beauty and art, of our devotion to nature, of our spiritual search, and of our shared journey of sixty years. This book was conceived from a creative thought that Yvonne had in the summer of 2019—that she and I should hang a joint show at the Whidbey Art Gallery on Whidbey Island, Washington, of which she had long been a member. With her passing later that year, the show became impossible. The book is my own expression of Yvonne’s vision. I have sought in these pages to bring together those of Yvonne’s paintings that most express her warm, joyous, loving, and uplifting spirit. I complement these images with photographs that resonate with the paintings in one way or another— sometimes in form, sometimes in color, and always in spirit. Yvonne is no longer here to lend her physical voice, but the spirit that first imagined such a project has continued to be with it ever since. I see this book as an expression of our lives together.



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