

CARVING MY LIFE



Angela Treat Lyon

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Volume I

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Please note: The variation from picture to picture of colors that you will sometimes see in the same piece is caused by different lighting and camera angles, and the fact that some of these shots were scanned from xeroxes of photographs that were in an early brochure, since I don't have the original shots anymore. And, some of the image files are over 30 years old, and I had not one clue how to edit them correctly back then—although I sure thought I did. Ah well.

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CARVING MY LIFE

Angela Treat Lyon
Volume I

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Angela Treat Lyon - Italy 1989

Angela Treat Lyon

*for Aaron and Isaac,
my best, most amazing creations*

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Raw stone and tool box - Italy 1989

Preface

I make art because I must. It's like a cellular need, a compulsion, an addiction, a Beingness I cannot and will not deny. Well. Unless I want to feel like walking dead. Which doesn't particularly sit well with me.

Images dwell within me getting fat and juicy, until they just simply will not allow me to sit on them one more minute. Many many nights I'll wake up with designs and ideas cramming my head, all clamoring to come out at once, and I'll have to get up and draw or paint furiously till they're out and happy.

When I was very young, I made a pact with myself not to do any artwork that depicts pain and suffering—after all, why paint that when we see so much of it all around us, every day?

What I wanted, and still want to see and surround myself with, was expression of the intense vision and feeling I have in my heart about how I feel life could be, and actually really is, on levels we don't usually think about or have visual access to during the mundane, distracting glare of the light of day.

I intend my work to do with joy, celebration, and the great, incredible depths of the invisible world that we inhabit, that inhabits us, and that swirls in and all around us in un-nameable curling, flowing eddies all the time.

Mood, emotion, feeling and the underlying spirit—this is what I love.

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And rather than attempt the rigors of painting or carving in anything even close to anatomical correctness, I see bodies as fluid and constantly changing in form and motion. I leave the anatomically perfect drawings and realistic renderings to those who are much better at them than I.

I prefer strange color combinations and exaggerated bodies and movement to depict emotion. The motion of the body; the expression of the heart; the glory of color; the voices of joy and wonder and connection with each other; the unity we each have with Spirit: these are the things that matter to me, that I draw, paint, and carve.

The older I get the looser my work seems to become. My hand flies, and my mind and my heart feel alive and connected to some amazing, enormous, endless source. I'm delighted with this work, no matter the medium—it makes me happy.

People always ask me where I get ideas for my work.

I get them from the most diverse places:

...A young girl in a sarong crossing the street who I see in a flash out of the corner of my eye as I'm driving becomes a sculpture.

... Or maybe I'm sitting on the beach and look over to see a mother holding a child in a certain way, and it catches me and becomes a painting.

... Or a feeling of loneliness and wanting to fly home produces a horse flying free; a color in a sunrise becomes an abstract. These are some of the ways my images come to me.

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I'd say that feelings are the source of my image ideas. Not sentimentality, but deeper, more mysterious feelings, more archetypal.

I just finished a painting of a woman riding a strange monstrous-snake thing, into an enormous, inexorable sea of light. Images like that come from a place I couldn't identify—I just know it's there, I go there and "see" the vision, and come back with it. Basic Image Retrieval, I suppose.

Some of my images are not for the faint-of-heart, nor are they the kind you might think of as a simple-Sunday-afternoon-feel-good kinda look, either. They tend to whack one a bit, although they are certainly not meant to be evil or malicious—it's just that I recognized a long time ago that yin and yang can't live without each other.

If I use, for instance, yin in a painting or a sculpture, without the yang, it will either be sappy nice-nice or destructively violent. It will carry no "heart juice." And we all know that for a piece of art to work it's got to have heart juice!

Maybe that helps you understand a little better where ideas seep out of everyday reality for me to plop onto a canvas or carve out of a hunk of stone.

I appreciate your love of art, and your interest in what comes out of this mind to be shaped by these hands. I've been asked time and again to create books with my work in them, so I hope you enjoy this one a lot.

Angela Treat Lyon

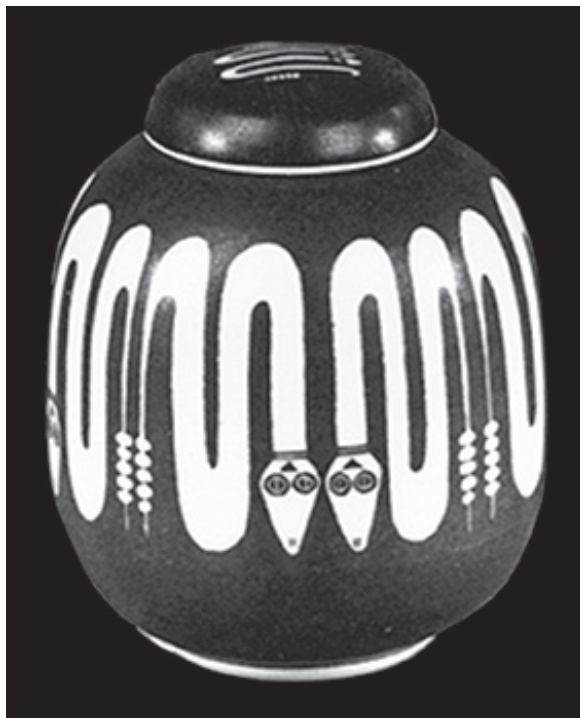
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Angela Treat Lyon and La Balanza,
*Oamaru Limestone, 48" x 36" x 24" (2 tons) at the
New Zealand Oamaru Stone Symposium*

Journey with Me

In 1966 I lived in Santa Cruz, California, taking some extra curricular clases in art at a local college. Drawing, Ceramics...and Chinese. I know, weird. I loved the clay work so much I decided to become a potter. For the next 16 years, clay, clay dust, slippery slips, underglazes, glazes, firings, kilns and pottery sales filled my entire life.



Snake Jar: Porcelain, 6"h

I didn't always make fancy-dancy pots like the one you see to the left. I started out by making homely functional stoneware pots: cups and vases and bowls and such.

After a few years it was obvious that in order to be financially viable in the Real World, I either had to do mass production ware I could sell for very little, or unique, fine art pots that were so nice I could get incredible prices for them.

I spent several years experimenting with various Chinese formulae for clays, slips and glazes. I ended up with a beautiful line of very thin, high-fired porcelain pots you could see light through. Many of them were carved with a celadon glaze, or decorated in tight, bold black and white.



Sun & Fish Frolic Bowl
Porcelain, 6" x 8" round , 1981

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Leaf Bowl

Porcelain, 3" h x 4" round, 1981

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*In the pottery shed with greenware
about to be loaded into the bisque kiln*



Dragon Platter, Leaf Jar, Lion Jar, Snake Jar

Porcelain, 6" to 14" h, 1981

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Because glazes usually run like crazy at the extreme temperatures I was firing to, it was unusual to get such fine detail. So far, no one has figured out how I got a high-temp, non-running glaze that didn't also make the underglaze design runny, too. Maybe one day I'll reveal my secrets. In the meantime, it's fun to hear from other potters, "Angela, I just can not figure out how you got those precise lines, and that amazing clear matt glaze! And you're firing at 3000 degrees?"

I loved making pots. Getting my hands into the clay; creating something out of it—imagine that! I could get dirty all I wanted and produce something of value. Yes! I loved that. I designed and built a fantastic kiln that never gave me a bad firing. I was so sorry to dismantle it when I decided to focus on carving stone. I still remember it with love.

But, after sixteen years of making pots, I felt burned out. I'd started carving designs in the pots themselves, glazed with Celadons, like the tile on page 17. I liked them. But there was just 'something' missing.

"You'll never walk again. Get used to it."

Then, disaster struck. In 1981, at the tender age of 36, I was in a horrendous car wreck. I was told by the first doctor that I'd never have use of my legs again. I fired him. I fired the next three, as well. I was supposed to go on without being able to walk? I was too young for that! With two very lively little boys? I don't *think* so!

A friend turned me on to a chiropractor who just happened to live and work right down my own street (angels are always closer than we think!). I had to be driven there the first few times, but in a short time he had me not only walking but out of pain. He gave me one of the most important gifts, ever. As I started to walk away from my last appointment, he laser-sighted in on my eyes and said, "Angela, I believe in you. Just do what your heart says to do. Do it *now*, and don't you ever let up." I do my best to remember that if/when I'm immersed in self-doubt or beating myself up with criticism.

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Kane's Daughter
Porcelain TILE, 6" x 6"

The love of my life

That year I had a huge show of my pots at a gallery in San Francisco. A fellow artist there gave me my first piece of soapstone. After the show, I went right out and sat down on my truck's tailgate, pulled out my handy dandy pocketknife and carved it into a funny little frog. I was hooked. That was IT. Lightning bolts, shivers and chills. Forever. Right then and there in my mind, I quit pots and went for carving stone.



I tried! I really did! I tried to stay with pots as a smooth-transition thing, but my heart wasn't in it. Everyone told me not to give up making pots. But I couldn't help it—you've seen how obsessed teenagers get when they fall in love!

That was me. I only wanted to carve. I couldn't figure out why I should keep going through all the hassle of making pots to carve on when there were nice hunks of stone out there just waiting to be carved into something beautiful. No making the pots, no glazing, no firing.

My next task was to sell off all my pottery clays, equipment, tools, and even my fabulous kiln.

Mud sculpture

First Frog: Soapstone, 3" h

As I focused on learning about carving stone, a lot of the clay and glaze materials I wanted to sell, didn't. What to do with it? I still had my tiny electric bisque firing kiln. So I started making up batch after batch of

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Ash Horse on Hawaiian Koa Wood Stand
Mt. St. Helen's Ash, Garden Dirt, Glaze Materials - 6" h

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strange goo made up of weird combinations of dirt and left over glaze materials. When the mixes seemed right, I poured the goo into milk cartons. I removed the final, dried blocks and carved them, firing them at low temperatures in the little kiln.



Sunset Dreams: Lava, Mixed Goo, 10" h

Some of them fell apart at the first touch.

Some cracked two days later into a million pieces.

Some made it through a firing, but then fell apart. I eventually got a mix worked out that was made of part glaze materials, Mt. St. Helen's ash, garden sand and, since I was back again in my beloved Hawaii, some crushed lava rock.

In the round was hard!

When I first started shifting from making pots and carving shallow designs, it was really hard to think 3-D and carve in-the-round.

I carved solo—I had no carving teachers or mentors, for ten years. So unless I followed the exact 1-2-3 step procedure I mapped out at that time, I flubbed and floundered.

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Contemplation

Lava Mix, 14" h

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I used up my remaining clay making some coil-built sculptures. Ben (below) was a little guy I saw one night out of the corner of my eye crouching up on the top of my outdoor stairs. When I looked again, he was gone! Ben now lives on Kauai. His humans give him orchid, pikaki and maile leis from time to time, and he gives them good luck....



Ben: Clay, 14" h

I started at the base of the piece, and slowly built up coils of clay, shaping and texturing them with a little paddle of wood I'd made. When I got to the top, I sealed it off from underneath. The whole thing is hollow.

I never liked coil building all that much, and was really glad when my shipment of stone arrived.

As I was waiting for the stone, I experimented with cement, too. I have a friend who makes model airplanes. When I complained how heavy the concrete pieces I made were, he suggested that I add micro-balloons to the mix.

Micro-balloons???

Micro-balloons look like a fine white powder. Kind of squeaky if you smush them between your fingers. They are little micro-sized hollow balls that are used for fill when making model planes, because other fillers are too heavy and make it hard for the planes to get off the ground and fly.

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Zen Froggie (top), **Ready Frog** (L), **Froggie Buddies** (R)

Bronze, 2" x 2" x 1" and 2" x 2" x 2"



Peace

Bronze, 16" x 14" x 14"



Peace: Concrete Mix, 16" x 14" x 14"

Peace was the first one. She was made out of cement, scuffy dirt from my garden, the micro-balloons, Mt. St. Helen's ash, and sand.

Peace is much lighter than she'd be if she were made from regular concrete, but still very durable.

Off with her head! Er...oops!

Her head was supposed to be upright, but as I carved her head, the whole top part came off. Agh! What to do?!?

I put her aside. A dream showed me how she should look, and that's what you see in the finished piece.

I decided that I liked her so much that later on I cast her as a limited edition bronze.



Rock Lizard

California Soapstone, 6" x 5" x 4"

Zen Frog, Ready Frog & Frog Buddies

When I started carving stone, I only had a few little pieces of soapstone I'd been given to play with as I waited for my bigger order of stone to arrive. They were about fist-sized, and the stone was soft enough that I could use my pocket knife to carve them.

These frogs were my first carvings after **First Frog. Zen** looked so...zen! I couldn't help thinking of her sitting quietly under a big leaf in the lush tropical garden.

Ready is all set to dash off in a 26K marathon. I used my left-over glaze materials and lava to form and carve the originals, and used molten glaze for the round eyes. Ready had such a mischievous gleam in his eyes!

Frog Buddies was a piece for my mother. She had died young, at 69, only a couple years before. I was so mad at her for going! We were only just beginning to get to know each other as adults, and off she went! How dare she!

Frog Buddies was tiny—only 3" tall—but carving it and thinking about her as I did, reliving scenes in our past, really played a major part in my ability to let go of my resentment. The ones you see on page 23 are all bronzes.

Rock Lizard

The next set of critters I carved were lizards. They were the perfect practice shape—long skinny tails, funny feet, fat bodies and heads that popped up the way they do so they can see—I just loved them. If I fell away from carving for any length of time, I'd always warm up with carving a lizard.

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Queen

California Soapstone, 10" x 8" x 7"

Hand carving in Hawaii...

I carved using only hand tools for ten years before I felt I was ready for the heavy bite and intense speed of electric or air-driven tools. I wanted to embody in my fingers, hands and belly the feel of the various types of stone, how each one responds to a tool, various movement, type of cut. I wanted to know which type of stone was how hard, came in what colors, could be used for figurative or simple design.

During this first stone testing and learning time, I moved over from Kauai to Honolulu (see right), where my two boys and I lived for a couple years. Then I got a wild hair and traveled and camped all over the western states and parts of Canada on a 'walkabout.'



...to Winter in Redstone, Colorado, 2 years later

I carved ***Moon Bear*** and ***Moon Dreams*** during the the winter of 1989 in Redstone, Colorado. It was the end of my 2-year Quest. It was bone-aching cold.

One morning I looked out through the 6 and 7-foot icicles at the thermometer, and

saw that it was a full hundred degrees colder out than what I was used to back in Hawaii. I pondered once again, "What on earth am I DOing here?"

"Walkabout." In the US. In a truck. (Truck-about?)

I originally took off down the road because in Hawaii, although I had had a nice house, wonderful almost-teenage kids, a good car, lots of friends, a decent living... but I was deeply unhappy. Crazy, right? I had everything I could ask for. Almost.

I knew the answer lay within. One night I dreamed that I wasn't really an artist. That art-making was only in my life because my parents had kept me quiet with it—"here, honey, take this pencil and paper and go sit down and be quiet." Now I look back at that and see how silly that is, but at the time, it felt real. My kids went to live with their Dad. I sold or gave away everything but a few possessions—and my tools, of course!—flew to the mainland, and bought and outfitted a truck.

I vowed two things:

1. to drive everywhere I wished I could have gone when I was younger, and
2. to not make any art until it felt like "mine." From a deep-in-my-core mine.

That part was hard. There were times my fingers itched to pick up pencil or chisel or knife, but I didn't give in. I wanted to know from the very deepest depths of my heart that Making, that Art, was as natural to me as breathing.

Looking, looking....

At first, I visited friends all over California. Then I just wanted to be alone. So I camped out in the snow on Mt. Shasta with wildcats and deer; hiked around Tule

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Moon Bear

Virginia Black Soapstone, 16" x 12" x 8"

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Lake (TOO-lee); drove for miles through fields of gnarly old stunted trees and across rivers and shallows, through the high tundra in the way northern part of California....

You can hike down through many of the lava tunnels at Tule Lake, which is right across the border from Ashland, Oregon. You can walk for miles underground, each tunnel different.

There are deep lava pits you can climb down into that have many-thousand years-old ice at the bottom because the temperature 30 to 40 feet below the surface is freezing and doesn't change year round....

Right near Tule Lake there's Glass Mountain, a mountain-high pile of hauntingly lovely translucent red-streaked black obsidian you can walk through that is so sharp you look down and your legs are streaked with thin rivulets of blood and you never felt the cuts. It's where I got the Tule Ash (frozen glass from the volcano) that I carved into Tule Mama, to the left. She's about 10" tall.

Cliff walls were crammed with petroglyphs; and if you get there at the right time of year, a Modoc Indian Gathering welcomes the spring bird migration, turning skies black....

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Moon Dreams

California Soapstone on Curly Walnut Burl Stand, 18" x 16" x 7"

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Maka'ala (Watcher)

California Soapstone on Walnut Burl Stand, 16" x 13" x 4"



Maka'ala (Watcher) - Detail

California Soapstone on Walnut Burl Stand, 16" x 13" x 4"

I drove about every back road in California, Oregon & Washington and up into Canada—even up to Kamloops to visit some friends. I was astounded at how small Canada seemed on the map, but surprisingly huge once you go from this little place to that little place—how far apart everything was! And stunningly beautiful!

I found family, even when I felt most alone

As I cruised by the Three Sisters Mountains in Oregon, I discovered that nearby was Belknap Crater—a shield volcano in the volcanic fields in the Oregon High Cascades. So what? Belknap is my maiden name. Family! Here! Well, kind of.

Miles and miles of corrugated black lava, deadly sharp to walk on, seductively lovely. The types of lava there are called a'a (AH-ah), a rough sort; and pahoehoe (pah-HOY-hoy), a smooth, ropey looking kind.

There were Belknap Hot Springs on the McKenzie River in central Oregon; two Fort Belknaps: one in Texas, and another was an Indian Reservation in Montana. And a Belknap Mountain in New Hampshire! Not that I was going there.... But later on, I looked them all up and found the Belknaps who founded those places were all related to my family. Think of that!

My poor little ego

Driving through Nevada with all my windows down in the long parched stretches between ridges, ranches brown and desolate down in the valleys, I was bored silly.

My tape deck was broken, the A/C was out, 120 degrees in the nowhere-to-be-seen shade...sucking down gallons of water, streaming with sweat, screaming to myself, "I am SO BORING!!" Because all I could think of were complaint-thoughts.

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Hah! And there I was trying to be so “Spiritual” and Good and On A Quest. My ego quailed in that heat.

After I screamed that out loud, I thought, “AM I really?” And I realized that, much as I hated it, yes, I really was boring. My thoughts did nothing but cycle endlessly through everything that I considered wrong with me, the truck, the heat, Nevada, my family, my artwork.... I was so embarrassed for myself. Was this how I appeared to others? Oh my. It was a great revelation. I made the choice then and there to be more kind to myself and others, and listen more to others, from then on.

As I ate my lunch in a tiny coffee shop in Ely, Nevada, I saw a gal who had funny eyes, and had a flash that she needed to check with her doc to see if she had a thyroid condition. I was afraid to approach her; but I finally did it. She was surprised and shocked, naturally. But, I was glad to hear from her months later that my flash had probably saved her life. I liked that.

There was a magical day when I dove into the swirling confluence



Confluence

Oils on canvas, 36" x 48"

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of three big rushing streams in eastern Idaho, feeling the rush of the currents come together in a big whirlpool, wanting to press me down to the bottom, crush me; millions of bubbles flying about all around me. I found and hung onto a kind rock as I stayed under the surface, allowing my body to equalize with the cold. All at once feeling warm and almost as if I could breathe the air in the bubbles. Drying off afterwards in the freezing wind on the wet muddy banks....

After having lusted after Pendleton blankets for years, being able to find Just the Right One for Me (purple, of course) at the Pendleton Store in downtown Jackson Hole, Wyoming....

Camping out all over Utah, from Arches and down under the cliffs beside what I call Secret Petroglyph River; with the annual peach picking Mormons from back east at the big campground at Fish Lake National Forest, and of course I took in with giant breaths the required sunset vista at Bryce Canyon—the tall, piled-up rocks at strict attention like red soldiers saluting into the evening under the stars....

My favorite camp ground at Zion National Park with its elephant skin mounds and brilliant yellow, ochre and rust-red valley walls streaked with sienna and black water stains hovering above rippling shallow rivers you could freeze your tootsies off in....

I met hundreds of wonderful other campers, all of whom asked me one question at first: wasn't I afraid, all by myself? No.

And finally getting to Colorado, where I spent half a year camping by the river on the side of Mt. Sopris—that is, until the morning I awoke with my tent buried under two feet of snow.

Time to either leave or find a place to winter over.

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Utah Hands

Utah Rainbow Alabaster, 12" x 11" x 5"

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Time

California Soapstone, 10" x 8" x 8"

Just so happened that Avalanche Ranch was right up the road from my campsite on the river. They let me rent one of their summer cabins for a small fee. I got (and quickly left) a job in nearby Carbondale as receptionist in a small smelly gym; made sandwiches for a deli for a time....

The icicle day in February, the Day that Changed Everything



At Avalanche Ranch with my pals

in the loft; the cabin is single-wall construction with narrow, long chinks in the walls where the cold air whistles through. Can't see them, but you sure can hear them! And there I am, Hawaii Girl, bloody cold!

It's now deep February. I'm hunkered down in front of my blazing little wood stove, I'm rubbing my chilly arms, my teeth are chattering, my body is shivering and shaking.

I'm wearing every last piece of clothing I can pile on my body. I've got the gas oven wide open and on high, as well as the bathroom and living area wall heaters.

But it's only a *summer* cabin, with a great big heat-leaking skylight up

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I lapsed into a kind of still place, gazing at the kindling and the larger, long-burning oak pieces in the firewood bucket. And all of a sudden, I sat straight up in a shot—I realized I had been carving the wood in my mind! “If I just take that little part off, and accentuate that part, and trim it there...it will look like....”

That was IT. There IT was! What I had been looking for—even despite freezing to death and wondering who’d find me in the spring, frozen into Popsicle Angela—underneath it all, I was carving. Making.

FREE! I was free! Art really was mine!

No one was there to shove art stuff in my hands and tell me, “go sit in a corner and shut up, here’s your crayons, dear!”

No one was giving me a gold star for the class’s best horse drawing.

No one was asking me to draw a portrait alongside mommy as she painted one of her portrait commissions. No one tittering or quipping, “oh, isn’t she cute?”

It was just *me* there. Alone. With myself. Wanting to Make Something. YEAH! It really was MINE! **Yes!**

And isn’t it interesting that the next day, my dear old friend Jack called me from Honolulu saying, “Angela, I’ve been thinking about you, and it’s time you got back here. I mailed you a ticket today.” Huh. How the angels work behind the scenes!

Within a week I was in Utah, loading a pallet of soapstone and alabaster into my small trailer. I was on the way to California to see my boys, and visit a friend on the coast. On the 2nd day of driving, I decided I would drive a bit longer, maybe until midnight. Which is exactly when I saw rivers of bright sparks flying from the axle of

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Freedom

California Soapstone, 12" x 8" x 4"

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the trailer in my rear view mirror. Oh, goodie! I was breaking down in the desert! At MIDnight, 90 miles either way to any town at all. What to do? Hunker down and spend the night there? Or try to grab one of the semis that roared by occasionally?



Go. OK, where's the next semi? Two came and went, ignoring my thumb. By the third, at the third hour, I was angry. Ignore *me*, will you?!? I jumped out into the middle of the road and stood there with my thumb stuck out until the last second, only fleeing away when it was clear he wasn't going to stop.

But he did stop, throwing open his door and climbing down and laying into me like a wild human typhoon, scolding me for being so reckless, stupid, high-handed, idiotic....

I just waited until he was out of steam, and told him I didn't think it was such a great idea to be all alone with a broken axle in the middle of the snowy desert in the middle of the night (secret: not that I believed anything bad would even happen, noticing the dearth of cars that were coming and going!).

He finally relented. We rode into Ely a couple hours later, where I was able to settle in for a few days and get everything fixed to move on so I could get back to Hawaii.

And within 3 short months after that, I took off from Honolulu to go carve marble in Lucca, Italy for 2 months. Another life-changer. More of that in the next book.

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Fooling around in the sculpture studio

Lucca, Italy 1989



Guitar Man I

California Soapstone, 14" x 12" x 4"

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Guitar Man II, Detail

California Soapstone on Walnut Burl Stand, 12" x 12" x 3"



Guitar Man III, Detail

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Guitar Man III

California Soapstone, 10" x 8" x 7"

Aftermath

When I came home from Italy, I carved several series of pieces. There's something really satisfying about carving one theme over and over again. You get to make changes you thought of while you were carving the first one—you might add or subtract hands, eyes, hair; you might carve it more abstract or more realistic.



Together

Black Soapstone, 19" x 8" x 5"

You might think that carving is a pretty rigid endeavor—chip it away, and it's gone.

In truth, if you can be flexible enough to let it happen, there's tremendous latitude in a carving.

You can start with one idea, and as you carve, the image you have in your mind will shift with the reality of the stone. Perhaps a part chips or falls off, or a nasty crack appears right where an eye was supposed to be. You can move everything a bit deeper, or to the side, or not carve that eye at all!

Your carving can move to the left or the right, it can rotate, bend, curve—until the finished piece hasn't one

thing about it that is similar to its original idea in your head! It's an adventure!

I like musicians, so I have carved many guitar players and drummers.

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Rhapsody I

California Soapstone, 16" x 13" x 7"

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Rhapsody II

Bronze, 16" x 13" x 13"

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Rhapsody II

Bronze, 16" x 13" x 13"

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Dawn (Original)
California Soapstone, 9" x 2" x 2"



Dawn
Bronze, 9" x 2" x 2"

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Rainbow Celebration

Colorado Rainbow Alabaster, 12" x 3" x 3"



Delight II

California Soapstone, 19" x 14" x 9"

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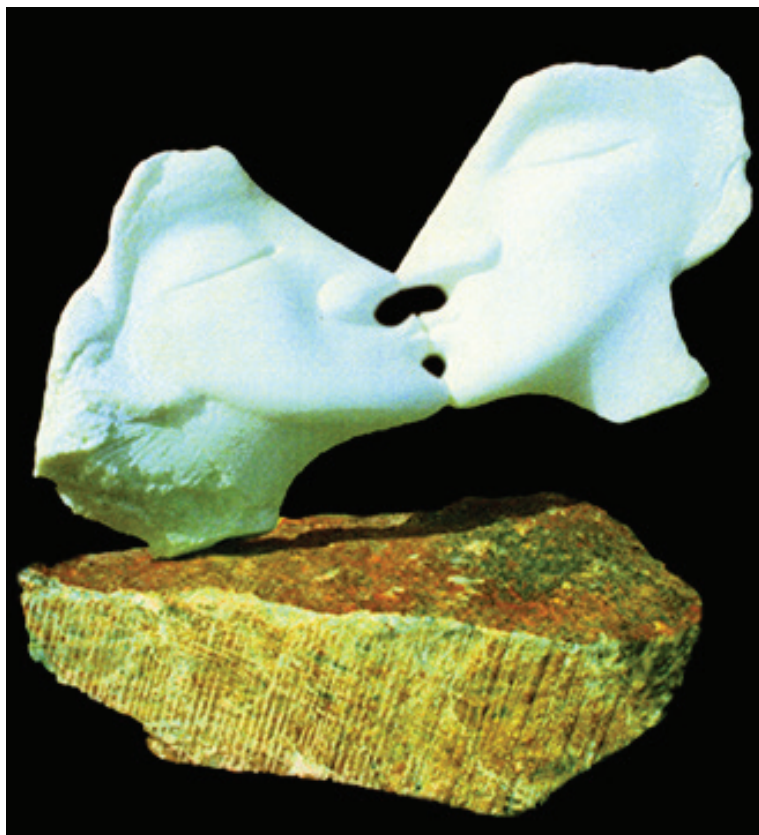


Delight II

Bronze, 18" x 13" x 9"

Little Kiss

During my stay in Redstone, I noticed block after block of what looked to me like marble lying on the river banks beside the road.



***Little Kiss : Alabaster & California
Soapstone, 10" x 10" x 6"***

When I asked my landlady about it, she said that long ago, there had been a functioning marble quarry only a few miles up the road—the Yule Marble Quarry, the same quarry where they got the stone the Lincoln Memorial was carved from.

She told me that the chunks of marble on the river banks were pieces that had fallen off the transport trucks.

My first thought was “yipeeee, woohooo! Yes indeedy! Free carving stone!”

But when I climbed down the banks to check them, almost every one of them was dead.

Dead stone? What’s that?!?

Marble is extremely porous, and will erode over time from exposure to harsh wind, snow and rain. The crystals of the stone that make up the matrix, or the crystal 'glue' that holds it all together, deteriorate and crumble. If it's a live stone and you strike the stone with another smaller one, it will "ring." If it's a dead stone, you'll get a horrid dull "thunk."

Little Kiss was a scrap of a scrap of that same marble—some of the only chunks I could find that had any life in them at all. It was during my last days in Redstone, and I was gazing at this little piece and saw the faces. How could I resist?

Waiting On the Moon

Later on in the early '90s, I traveled around the Southwest, camping and buying and trading with dealers of authentic Indian bracelets, and trying to sell my own hand-made jewelry. Between sales, I carved, because it always seemed as if an eternity went by between sales, and I needed something to do.

I carved **Waiting on the Moon** during my last stint selling my jewelry out at a gem show in western Arizona in the freezing cold of January. I had this niggling feeling that I was waiting for something important, but didn't know what it was.

So I called it **Waiting on the Moon**, because finding out what that vague niggling message was felt as futile as if I were waiting for the moon, sun or stars to fall....

And of course, the Universe backed that up when a kind (but not too positive!) friend said out of the blue, "well, girl, you know you might as well wait on the moon before you get anymore sales—the snowbirds have gone back to Canada and points north!" I left the next day.



Waiting on the Moon
Virginia Black Soapstone, 16" x 16" x 8"

Angela Treat Lyon



Waiting on the Moon

Virginia Black Soapstone, 16" x 16" x 8"

Protect the Children

I lived in Santa Fe for a few years, and made a point of attending rallies for nuclear responsibility, since I lived so near to the Los Alamos labs. The last year I was there, I heard a rumor that people from Los Alamos were bringing radiation-saturated clothing down to laundromats in Santa Fe—among them, the very one I used.

I went elsewhere from then on! But I couldn't help thinking of the children, mothers and fathers who used those facilities—if the rumor was true, what illnesses would they spring up with, would they die young, would the kids be infertile?

I carved ***Protect the Children, Long Eyes*** (because he can see *far*), and ***Safe in Your Hands*** thinking about how paramount it is that we protect our children—nurture, educate, and keep them safe. Times have changed radically, and in this crazy fast and furiously paced world, things we used to take for granted, like letting them ride their bikes to school, sometimes isn't the best idea.

All Smiles and Tickle Mama

When I was in Italy I was bowled over by the sheer mass of art. It was everywhere! You name a place, there was art of some kind there. Whether it was a madonna and child, a cupid, a saint, a madonna without the kid, a personage from some part of the Bible; or just decorative work—leaves, flowers, architectural flourishes, fancy doorways, walls, floors, stairs, bannisters—everywhere!

I noticed, though, that almost all the madonnas looked sad, numb, blank—or even angry. What kind of teething had Her son gone through the night before to make her look like that, I wondered! I decided to carve some pieces where the mothers and children were bonding, having fun, teasing and laughing. That's more like it!

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Protect the Children

Colorado Rainbow Alabaster, 16" x 4" x 4"



All Smiles

Colorado Alabaster, 13" x 8" x 1.5"

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Tickle Mama

Stained Alabaster, 12" x 8" x 2"

CARVING MY LIFE



Long Eyes, and Detail

Colorado Alabaster with Soapstone stand, 10" x 7" x 6"

Angela Treat Lyon



Safe in Your Hands

Silver Cloud Alabaster, 18" x 16" x 4"

Blessed texture!

Sometimes it isn't about the stone or the theme or the style. I love texture, but so often I get seduced by the beauty of the color or the lines or figure in the stone, like curly burls or wood that has interesting grain. I end up polishing a piece way beyond the point where it says what I want it to say.

Tule mama was a carving (page 32) where overwork would be impossible. She's carved from a material that is actually glass—little threads of lava spun tight in the air as it cooled coming down from the sky. I had to use diamond tools to get her shaped at all. No way could I overwork that one.

I wanted her to practically announce herself as *Woman*, without too many outright realistic female details. Her shape and texture take me to a feeling of being back in Ancient Days...dancing around a fire...drum sounds....

Winged Dreams was more unfortunate. Here you see it when it was in its most raw, most powerful don't-mess-with-me state. A collector came by and saw it like this, and somehow convinced me that it was 'unfinished.' He wanted me to refine its edges and curves, and polish it until the translucency of the alabaster and the underlying rainbow streaking was brought out clearly. I did it, and hated it so much I never took a shot of it. I wish now that I had, though, for comparison.

Alert

The original for this and her four sisters were carved from that hardened and fired lava rock, glaze material goo I told you about earlier. I loved the texture of them, but they were so fragile I wanted to immortalize them in bronze.

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Winged Dreams

Colorado Alabaster, 18" x 18" x 5"

CARVING MY LIFE



Ku'ulei (Beloved)
Bronze, 9" x 19" x 8"

Angela Treat Lyon



Alert

Bronze, 6" x 7" x 2"

Curiosity

In 1989, I spent 2 months in Lucca, Italy, learning how to use air tools carving the amazing Cararra marble. I studied with maestro Professore Roberto Bertola, who I met through a workshop put on by painter [John del Monte](#).



He had no English, I had tourist Italian. See the little dust drawings in the window in back of him? That's how we 'talked' to each other! Wild gesticulation, little scribbles, and a lot of laughter.

Oh no! She's a Bad Person!

On my way way home through the Rome airport, I was stopped at security—seems they didn't like what they saw in the x-ray of my sculpture. I had put a stale bread roll on the tip to keep it from being bumped and broken, then wrapped the whole thing in a small blanket. I hand carried it all the way through the airport, along with two huge, heavy, work clothes-laden bags and tool box. They thought it looked like some odd kind of rifle.

Out of nowhere, all these bells and sirens and alarms went off at top volume, and 15 rather zealous, very tough, very big gun toting airport policemen scrambled to surround me, my sculpture, tool box and bags. Everyone stopped and stared....

When they opened my toolbox, they freaked—they just *knew* that the baggie of white, powdered polishing compound I had unthinkingly stashed on the top level of my tool box was cocaine, and that the sculpture was some kind of weapon of

Angela Treat Lyon

photo credit: Jamie Welner



Home from Italy with Curiosity

Honolulu 1989

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Curiosity

Cararra Marble, 10" x 13" x 7"

Angela Treat Lyon



photo credit: Jamie Welner

Curiosity

Cararra Marble, 10" x 13" x 7"

CARVING MY LIFE

great destructive capabilities. Yes! Of my back and arm muscles! I was so utterly exhausted from lugging everything all the way down to Rome on the train that I almost fell asleep as they grilled me. “Where are your other weapons? Who else came with you? Who’s in on your plan, and why are you carrying around that white powder...?”

But they didn’t get anywhere because my great-for-everyday Italian vocabulary didn’t cover being rudely interrogated. Just “where is the taxi stand?” and “how do I get to the restaurant?” and “saluté” before we ate. I think they must have just gotten so bored with me that they finally let me go, just in time to get on my plane.

I couldn’t help wondering how they ever thought anyone with a lick of brains would put illegal drugs at the top of their tool box—duh. And yeah, I was really going to hold up a plane with a 60-pound piece of dead weight I could barely carry around for any length of time. Gimme a break!

When I got back here to Hawaii, my photographer friend, Jamie Welner, insisted on taking some shots of me and the work I’d brought back. So here you see me and the last shot of Curiosity. Sadly, it fell off its stand not long after that, and broke into a million pieces. Guess I ought to have left it in Lucca.

Twilight

Twilight was created in a hurried fit of pique one day when I was out of stone and wanted badly to carve. I went out to my studio and dumped a bunch of sand, dirt and other junk into a mix of plaster, and poured it all into a square, shallow form.

When the mix was sufficiently set, I took it out of the form and carved her. Since the block was so shallow, she had to be a bas relief. I had to fit her head and shoulders

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Twilight

Bronze, 16" x 16" x 5"

into a space no natural person would be able to fit—well, unless they had been flattened by a steam roller. As a matter of fact, I almost left the sculpture with the back flat. But I had a sudden flash of the page-boy ‘do’ my mother had worn for years before she had her beautiful chestnut hair cut short.

I ran back out to the studio to carve the back before the plaster mix set, and was juuuust barely able to catch the look she’d had before it was too hard to carve. She never had bangs or that demure look, though! I liked her so much I had her cast in bronze. The carving, not my mother.

Double Dolphins

I carved this one for the love of the oceans and all its creatures....

Ku’ulei

The original for **Ku’ulei** (page 70) was one of my very first larger-than-fist-sized stone sculptures. Since I’ve lived in my beloved Hawaii for more than half my life, I called her **Ku’ulei**, which actually means, ‘beloved.’

When I first saw the chunk of rusty brown soapstone I carved her from at a fellow carver’s stone heap, my first thought was, ‘that stone is upside down!’ I turned it over, and sure enough, I could ‘see’ the whole thing as if I had already carved it. It was the first time I understood on a visceral level what Michaelangelo’s fabled “carve away what isn’t the David” remark meant.

After polishing her, she became a rich, variegated set of deep red browns. When I showed her to others, they liked her so much that I made a bronze limited edition of her, cast in a foundry that operated on Maui for a few years.

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Double Dolphins

California Soapstone, 18" x 8" x 7"

More adventures to come....

That's it for this book—thanks so much for your kind and loving attention!

Not sure which to do next—Italy, New Mexico, or when I was Artist-in-Residence in New Zealand, where I spent a year and a half shivering in my skin in a tiny sheep town called Gore.

Everyone else was running around in boots and very short shorts, but I wore my big heavy red jacket just about every day I was there! After all, we were at the very bottom of the South island, and a mere 3000 unobstructed miles from the South Pole....

Well. We'll find out which comes next when the next one builds itself, won't we?!?
Life is such an adventure!

I hope you've enjoyed this volume—see you in the next one!



Much aloha love to you -

Angela

About the Author

Angela Treat Lyon was born in Plymouth, Massachusetts and grew up on Long Island, New York. She has lived in New York City; all over California; in Madrid and Santa Fe, New Mexico; Redstone, Colorado; Hawaii and in Gore, New Zealand.

She's sailed on a 31' ketch with only one other person from Nawiliwili Harbor on Kauai to Santa Cruz, California; hitch-hiked from the west coast to New York on semi trucks and driven back in a made-over hearse; she's ridden a sexy sultry BMW motorcycle from San Francisco to New York (and was subsequently disowned by her grandmother for doing so).

She has traveled for art and business all over the world from Canada to Mexico, Japan and New Zealand to France, Italy, Switzerland and the UK, the Caribbean and the other Hawai'ian Islands.

In amongst all the travel and adventure, Angela and her ex-hubbie built a home out in the mountains, grew fruit trees and an organic garden; raised ducks and chickens and goats and a sweet horse; they dug a pond and set up a sauna nearby, and a great catenary arch kiln for their pottery. They had two beautiful baby boys (with one amazing home birth), who have now grown up into very cool men and have given the world three equally beautiful grandkids.

Angela has worked in oils and acrylics, black and white media and pastels all her life; carved all manner of stone from soapstone to marble, alabaster and other weird kinds; she's made animated movies; does book and book cover design; computer generated paintings; she is a whiz at InDesign and Photoshop, and she designs and builds websites.

She also—as if she doesn't do enough already—hosts [Daring Dreamers Radio](#) and does Business [Success Mindset Mentoring](#) for entrepreneurs and others who want to make a difference in the world.

Find Angela easily

On Facebook at:

<http://Facebook.com/AngelaTreatLyon>

<http://Facebook.com/AngelaTreatLyonART> (her art business page)

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Look for Angela's books on Amazon and Kindle

A Sculptor's Life

If you enjoy sculpture—whether it's carved out of stone, made of clay, cast in bronze or concocted out of strange and unusual mixes of weird materials, you'll enjoy this marvelous collection of works by Sculptor Angela Treat Lyon.

In most art books, usually there is great conjecture (and great misconception) as to where an artist got her inspiration, why she made this, carved that.

No guessing in this book! In her casual writing style, she gives us a rare peek into her thoughts, inspirations and celebrations in her life as a highly skilled sculptor.

Have you been wondering what it's like to be an artist? Find out!

What are you waiting for?

