





Press Release

VANISHING ART no. II/5

"Swimming Hole Nymphaeum" (riverpeople Canto IV)  
Moonday June 6, 2011 (also Odilon Redon Day & Festival of Chin Hsien,  
Taoist spirit of wine)

This small work was enacted to honor the nymphs & undines of the swimming holes of Esopus River, & especially Aegina, daughter of the rivergod Esopus of ancient Greece, who was raped by Zeus (in Canto III of riverpeople, my long poem-&-prose with history & hydrology of the Ulster Co. NY Esopus Kill (almost finished).

Collaborators Raymond & Shiv drove down from Woodstock & we ~~then~~ proceeded to Stone Ridge in Marbletown, where we bought sandwiches & drinks for a Pic-nic. Then -- to Tongore Road & the nice little rural park named after legendary Warranawarongkong Chief Tongore, on the Esopus in a former Indian cornfield, near "Fort Wyltmeet", the long-vanished Indian village. (See Canto VI for info on the Dutch/Esopus Indian Wars of the 1660s.)

A perfect (i.e. normal) June day, limpid & illuminated -- park rather busy but not unpleasantly so -- little league baseball game, old folks with dogs, a few kids swimming despite the NO sign, etc. We got there about 5 PM as afternoon was sliding slowly toward evening. We ate our sandwiches. We lit a few frankincense sticks. I took the little iron mermaid out of her shopping bag & began to fill her hollow body with appropriate symbolic jewels -- i.e.: blue topaze earrings set in silver, aquamarine pendant with gilt clasp, freshwater pearl necklace & bracelet with cats-eyes & gilt clasps; and Shiv donated a green peridot, a moonstone, pieces of jade, turquoise & malachite, with a few cowrie shells & spiral shells from India, & a pinch of sage. (Total cost, with statue, about \$125.) Into the bottom of the statuette I placed a folded color print of the vèvè of La Siren the Voudou goddess of water, inscribed to her on the back with a crescent moon & a prayer to her to protect the River. Then I sealed all with melted wax of a blue candle.

After a short informal "puja" to the now-empowered statue, we left Tongore Park & drove a couple of miles to the "swimming hole at an undisclosed location" eulogized in Canto IV, on the Esopus -- a sort of beaver lake with downstream rapids, quiet & deserted, surrounded by shady trees (at the bottom of someone's farm), busy with wild ducks, redwing blackbirds & other species, all having a good old time.

We submerged the statue in a well-hidden (but still discoverable) place, lit some more incense, took pictures, & left quickly so as not to be seen.

-- P L Wilson



Photos by R. Foye

Tongore Park



The Mermaid

cover: The Nymph Under Water