

ALCHEMY OF AWARENESS: HOW PRAIRIE EXPERIENCES BECOME AN ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

MARILYN KLINKNER, W20531 Gilbo Lane, Galesville, WI, 54630, USA

Abstract: “Alchemy” is a medieval chemical philosophy concerned with the transmutation of base metals into gold, according to the American Heritage Dictionary. An artist engaged in prairie activities with repeated opportunities for observation, develops awareness of the prairie aesthetic and ability to express it. Aesthetics is a guiding principle for those devoted to the search for beauty. Alchemy often happens with art, where the result appears to be much more than the raw materials and effort expended. Art is defined as a discipline that does not rely on the scientific method. However science and art-making have much in common for both often deal with materials and rely on observation and experiment to arrive at their methods. An artist’s devotion includes varied experiments, called works of art. Development of the work might include a deliberate rhythm of the brush, a gust of words mimicking the wind, or use of sound or color to re-engage a perception, using it to express the idea or feeling arrived at in nature. If we immerse ourselves in prairies, develop our perception there, this can result in profound love for prairies, nature and of course, ourselves, as nature. The purpose of this work consists in presenting samples of the author’s poetry and low-fired pottery. Prairie activities become metaphors for human impulses in poetry. Prairie grasses and forbs are painted on functional pottery. Earthenware makes it possible to use many distinct colors in the firing process. Abstractions of prairie forms and colors are also represented.