Looking for Work

Cecelia Estrada Vaughan/iti kafi

Manuel looked for work for almost a month. A job where he could work with his hands or outdoors, and there with no time limits. He could read and write English, and spoke two other languages, conversational German and French.

As a young man he was a sign painter, worked in a hardware store mixing paint. By trade owned skills both as a carver and printmaker. At the age of forty-two Manuel was pushing away any doubts he could find the work or an apprenticeship.

Today he ventured into an unknown neighborhood. The streets were ordered and tree-lined several yards had aromatic roses. He found a small sitting area and public water fountain. He ate his sandwich with a thermos cup of black coffee.

Quiet and peaceful on a bright Autumn afternoon. A young man entered the small common, sat on a bench and opened a black sketchbook, and became totally absorbed. Manuel sensed from experience he was the still life subject. He approached the artist with a smile and received one in return.

“Hey, my name is Manuel. Are you an artist?”

“Yeah. I’m on my break. I like to sketch ideas and get fresh air. I work over there in that building. It’s an artist cooperative. We teach art classes and share work responsibilities to be able to have studio space. Have you seen the outdoors wall mural on the other side?”

“That’s a cool idea. Not yet. I just moved here, I’m an artist too. looking for work. I miss not creating any art. I rent a room over by the ballpark. This is a nice area.”

“I’m Archie. I would be happy to show you around the cooperative. Maybe we can work something out until you can get back on your feet? Believe me I know what it’s like not being able to hang with other artists.”

“Thanks man. I would like to get involved. The possibility gives me something to look forward to. Hey when you’re ready, I’d like to see the mural you mentioned.”