



**Happy 2010! The dragons are still in Minnesota, continuing their adventures with their cousins in Lake Superior. I've been presenting in schools - the latest being teaching sumi painting to art classes at the Armitage Academy in Wisconsin. Fun!**

**[Northwest Beaches: Working to Restore Puget Sound](#)**

**[Dragons: More About Ice Dragons!](#)**

**[Asian Art: Simple Sumi Bird Painting](#)**

**[Northwest Beaches: Working to Restore Puget Sound.](#)**

Many of you know that part of the proceeds from the sale of **[Dragon Fire, Ocean Mist](#)** goes to organizations working to preserve and restore Puget Sound. In December we donated to two of our favorite organizations, Washington State University's [Island County Beach Watchers](#) and [People for Puget Sound](#). Each of these organizations works to educate adults and children to the many aspects involved with Puget Sound - from what lives on the beach to protecting water quality and habitat as the population grows. They also have citizen science and research programs for trained volunteers as well as many opportunities to get engaged and help. Check out their websites. And also check out the website of the state agency dedicated to protecting and restoring the Sound, the [Puget Sound Partnership](#). It's inspiring to learn about what we can do together to protect and restore the beautiful place in which we live.



**Yvonne Palka**

Yvonne is the award-winning sumi-e artist who wrote and illustrated *Dragon Fire, Ocean Mist*. A retired college professor, grandmother, biologist and naturalist, she is passionate about introducing children and adults to the wonders of the natural world.

[VISIT YVONNE'S BLOG](#)

**I loved your book! You have combined a heart-warming story, good message, lovely illustrations, the natural world of the Pacific Northwest with some teaching and learning activities at the end. WOW!**

**Elizabeth Davis, environmental lawyer and activist, author of *Wind Whispers Softly: Northwest Forest Haiku*.**



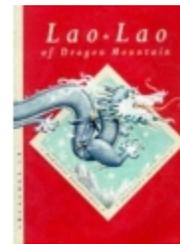
**Dragon Fire  
Ocean Mist**

Written & Illustrated by  
Yvonne Palka

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**Dragons: More About Ice Dragons!**

Well, here it is cold and snowy in Minnesota and the ice dragons are extremely happy. With icicle whiskers and glistening diamond white coats they play up north, especially by Lake Superior. As far as ice dragon folk tales go, I did find one from China. It's called [Lao Lao of Dragon Mountain](#). Once there was an old woman who lived in a village at the foot of the mountain where the Ice Dragon reigned. She was very skilled at making paper cuts of flowers, animals and anything else that people wanted. People came from far and wide to receive one of her paper cut images. Long story short, the emperor found out about her skill and had her imprisoned to make jewels for him. Outraged at what had happened to his friend, the Ice Dragon flew over the tower where she was imprisoned and breathed out his icy fire, freezing the guards and the emperor on the spot and rescuing Lao-Lao. Now she rides on the dragon making paper cuts which fall to earth as snowflakes in the winter. Check it out - especially the paper cut images!



**Lao Lao of Dragon  
Mountain**



Simple Sumi Bird

**Asian Art : Simple Sumi Bird Painting.**

Recently I had the good fortune to teach sumi painting to 5th-8th grade art classes at the Armitage Academy in Kenosha, Wisconsin. What fun! It inspired me to think about the essence of sumi-e - simple lines capturing the essence of the image. So here is a sumi bird with 3 main strokes of the brush. Holding the brush on its side, make one stroke for the crown of the head, and 2 strokes for the sides of the body. Now with the tip of the brush put in the bill and the eye. Add a branch for her to sit on and some claws for the feet. Laying the brush down again you can pat the brush to make some tail feathers. And, voila! - a Simple Sumi Bird!



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