July 20, 2015

Catherine Rowland
Senior Advisor to the Register of Copyrights
U.S. Copyright Office

Dear Ms. Rowland,

I am a nationally known watercolor painter, specializing in birds. My work has been licensed by companies in the US and Canada, particularly companies like Lang, which publishes 3 calendar titles of my work each year, as well as other related products. There are many other companies who license my images, new and old, for use on products like puzzles, greeting cards and decorative garden flags. My licensing is handled by my publisher and agent, Wild Wings. For 26 years, licensing has been the major source of income and support for me and for my family.

It is terrifying to me that the US Copyright Office is considering changes to the copyright laws that have protected my work for all of these years. Each work of art is and should be a unique expression of that artist's creativity. Each painting I do is based on years of research and understanding, and on years of experience with my medium.

Financial security for me has been based , not only on the new work that I am constantly generating, but also on past images. If you deregulate this and make it possible for these internet bandits to steal the very essence of what I do, I will no longer be able to sustain a career in this field. Please do not sell us out! Copyright protects so much more than lines and colors on paper – this is my life work, a labor of love, and I beg you to protect the integrity of my art from the piracy of those who would love to make plenty of money without doing any of the work.

Thank you, Mr. Rowland, for considering my plea.

All my best,
Susan Bourdet