

Keep the Home Fires Burning

By Martin Esteves

One of the most vibrant and colorful eras in the history of creative arts is referred to as the *Dark Ages*. While today we tend to think of those times as lacking light and electricity, a situation that lasted well past the Renaissance, the people of then saw and depicted themselves as living in bright surroundings. The Medieval illuminations were afire with radiant, primary colors, often worked on by the light of candles and hearths.

As autumn oranges and ambers bleach into winter, more of the colors we see will be made by us. This is not so much a conscious reaction to the oncoming white, as a useful acceptance of the changing seasons. We still see ourselves as surrounded by chroma and we are, even in the dead of winter, with all its natural fall fusion and striking winter clarity. Just look at all the falling leaf plaid and ski run pastel. The point is, that we can make and use our own colors in bleak and changing vistas just as we can make our own fires on cold, wintry nights.

This can be demonstrated all the more appropriately without bombast. The Flemish, Burgundian, and Mozarabic illuminations are contemplative personal beacons. Often the smaller gestures better represent our need to keep the home fire burning. A drawing can be as colorful, brash, and intimate as a cathedral or snowstorm.

Germany is now enthralled with Israel Kamakawiwo'ole's cover of *Over the Rainbow*. It is better known for commercial use here but a mega-smash there. Originally the song was a timely call for hope, signaling the end of the depression. The current success in a cold weathered country is made only more fitting by the use of a ukulele.