July 22, 2015

to
Dr. Catherine Rowland, Senior Advisor to the Register of Copyrights

Dear Dr. Rowland,

Please receive this comment on the Copyright Office's report on orphan works.

I am opposed to changing the copyright laws to put private entities in control of registration or fees. I am also opposed to shifting the onus of locating the creator of a work further onto the creator and less onto the seeker.

I am the author, researcher, and illustrator of a field guide to bees. You have no idea - truly - how much work it takes to produce something really good. I didn't. A really competent writer, illustrator, or photographer has put huge parts of their life into becoming that way.

The idea that anyone else, who did nothing to help, should make money from what I worked ten years to create gives me despair. I don't think I could ever release another drawing or article knowing this might happen.

I read, "... authorize CMOs... to issue licenses on behalf of... non-members of the organization to allow the use of copyrighted works [used by] ... a digital collection."

Doesn't this mean that Google could digitize and display my work, pay a CMO group that I never heard of some fee, without my even knowing this is happening, and I would have no recourse?

What did they do to deserve this? Did they help with any part of my project?

It also frightens me that registration might be privatized. This is too dangerous, because any profit motive will corrupt the process, and not in a way that benefits creators. It is already far too easy to steal visual work.

Please continue to confine this process to the Copyright Office. There is software that allows people to hunt for images, and the Office should use it. If Google so much wants these images, perhaps they could pay for it, as a public good.

Thank you.

Liz

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N.B. I keep hearing that an image has little value once published. If it has so little value, then why are others so keen to get their hands on the rights? Just the fact that they are going to so much trouble to get this shows, by itself, that that statement is false.