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Final Project

Seeking Spring

Since this winter has been particularly extended beyond its normal length, I felt it was appropriate to express my hopes in finally experiencing a true spring through this project – hence the title: “Seeking Spring.” This project began as a simple idea of transitioning between seasons, moving from the dreary coldness of winter to the lively warmth of spring. My goal was to combine images representing both seasons and show a shifting of seasons within the final picture itself. In addition, I wanted to add color to emphasize the contrasts between winter and spring.

I chose a black and white photo of a normal sidewalk curving off into the distance as the base photo because the pathway was an obvious yet poetic analogy for the movement from season to season, and I liked the idea of an implied circle of seasons. The runner in the picture is appropriate as well since the seasons are constantly changing, no matter how long one in particular may seem, and we are always following along – perhaps, seeking the more pleasant seasons and running away from the others.

I began by changing the base photo from grayscale mode to color. Almost by accident, I discovered the nice blend of light blue and pale yellow with the use of gradient masks and alpha channels to create the illusion of a misty dawn. In actuality, the picture had been taken at dusk; however, the difference was not too perceptible in grayscale. A side effect of these two gradient masks was that everything took on a gray cast, including the runner. In the attempt to pull him out from the background, I created an alpha channel for him and adjusted the brightness through levels and with the dodging and burning tools.

Additionally, I chose a winter scene with leafless trees and snow on the ground to contrast the colorful photo of red tulips on a field of green. I cut portions from each and pasted them into the final image, positioning the elements so that the foreground consisted mainly of wintry elements, which faded away into the colors of spring. I tried to blend in the snowy parts to give an almost ghost-like effect to represent the fact that we are on the brink of crossing over into spring, and winter will soon be a memory – until next year at least. Some image adjustment, including scale, distortion, skewing and perspective, was necessary to make everything fit nicely and roughly to scale. In addition to pasting and painting in the lush field of grass along the path, I also included the red tulips on the left as a sure sign of spring. I chose to emphasize these tulips by keeping them more clearly visible than the objects surrounding them. I felt that the red contrasted nicely with the misty greyness of the snow, thereby showing seasonal contrast as well. I copied the trees in the background from the tulip picture as well since the light greens and pinks helped support the idea of color in spring.

The final image appears in somewhat muted colors. Instead of using the extremes in terms of bright red or green versus gray and white throughout the entire picture, I chose to keep everything a bit “misty” to help the colors blend more easily. Indeed, it appears we are still in the midst of transition – perhaps our spring is just around the corner.