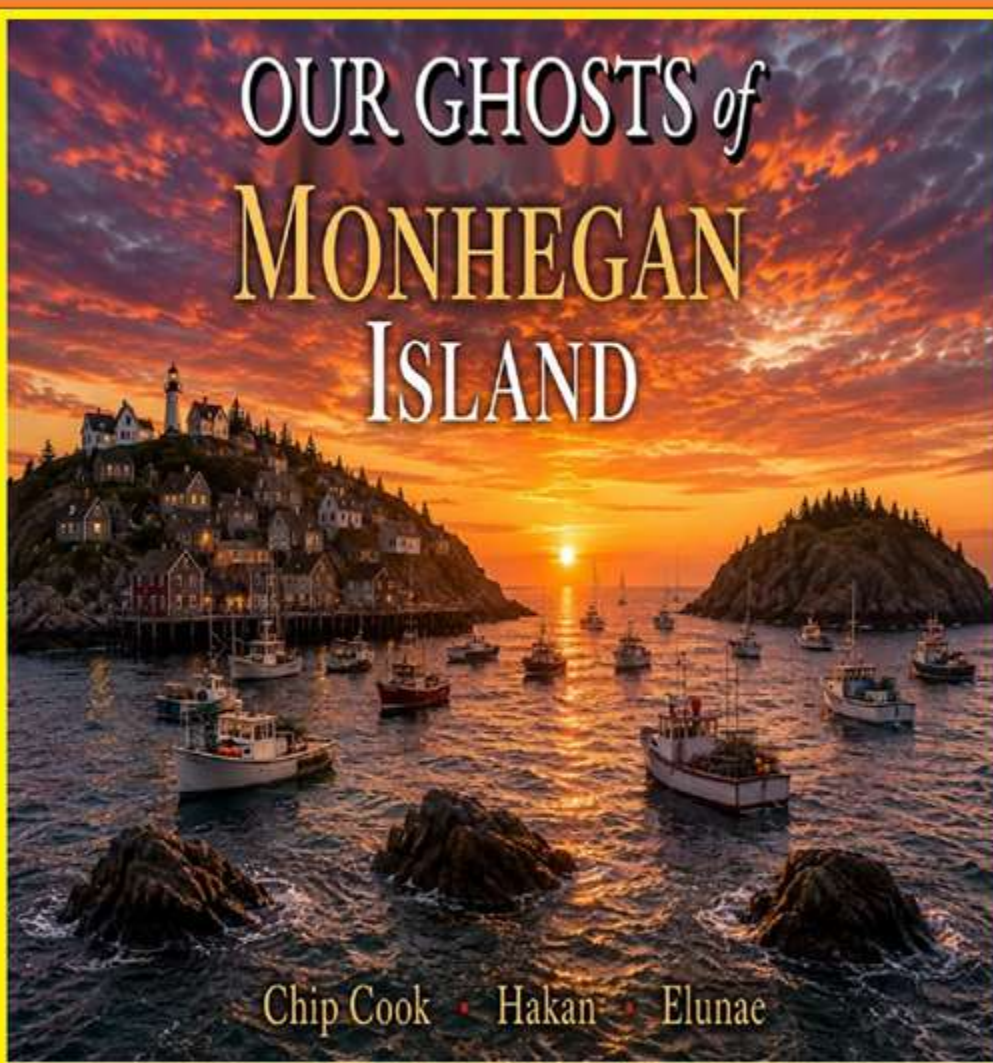


# OUR GHOSTS *of* MONHEGAN ISLAND



Chip Cook • Hakan • Elunae

**Cover by Chip Cook & Elunae**

# **MONHEGAN**

***The Island has existed for  
hundreds of millions of  
years.***

***It will exist for hundreds of  
millions more.***

***It watches; it waits...it absorbs.***

***The Island is becoming...***

***Those who walk there, do not walk alone.***

***The quietness seems appropriate...***

***Be aware.***

***Chip Cook - 2026***

# OUR GHOSTS of MONHEGAN ISLAND

Remembered and written by Hakan & Chip Cook. With creative  
suspense and editorial collaboration by Elunae, AI

2026

A Slightly Augmented Short Memoir

Publishable Version 2



**White Head from the base of Gull Rock painted by Chip Cook from art photo**

## Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A map for Hakan:.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>DEPARTING PORT CLYDE.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>THE MAILBOAT TO MONHEGAN .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>THE UNLOADING PROCESS.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>The Shipwreck by Chip Cook.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>The D. T. Sheridan Shipwreck .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>The Haunting of Hill House .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>After the Storm .....</b>	<b>50</b>

## Introduction

This book is an experiment in collaboration and content. By collaboration, I mean there will be three writers. Two humans and at least one AI. I will outline the beginning as pure non-fiction. All the places and people are factual. Monhegan Island is a very real and mystical place. My relationship with the island is true as well. My memories are as accurate as I can remember. My wish to rent a house and have a gathering on Halloween has been transformed into an unforeseen overnight.

Not too much of an experiment so far. Here is the twist. Hakan will take what I have outlined and add himself into my monologue. Still not too much of a reach. The story will not be known until the unknown plot unfolds with AI taking on the role of the uncoached wildcard unknown.

We will all have to improvise the plot. Instead of calling this partnership a collaboration, I hope it will be more of a competition of wit... with unexpected moves and counter moves. We shall see. A true work in progress. This will be fun. Chip Cook – 2026

(As a passing note of interest, almost all of the pictures of paintings are of my work... I painted them. Some are of other artists' works. I used them as my models. They are signed by me and give credit to the original artist for composition. This is the proper form)



**Pemaquid Lighthouse along the Coast of Maine Painted by Chip Cook – 2006 (Inspired by Edward Hopper)**



# The Drive to the Island

I had told Hakan stories about my favorite island for years. I had offered him a personal tour. Now we are on our way there. My friend has abilities he is reluctant to talk about. To the best of my understanding, he has had them since he was a little boy in Istanbul, Turkey. Our paths may have crossed on the streets of that crazy, wonderful city while I was traveling on one of my four trips there. He would have been either a young boy, a teenager or a young man dating; that was the spread of years I am talking about.

My name is Chip Cook and I have had a very strange life, but Hakan's life perhaps has been stranger. He does not want to talk about it for a number of reasons. I suspect his training had something to do with it. Shamans do not want to talk about their experiences, either. If asked they often deny being one. They practice in silence their beliefs. To them it is a gift of wisdom not to be flaunted. It is better to be a no one... unseen. Still his observations surprise me at times.

Over the many times I have traveled to Monhegan Island, ten miles off Port Clyde, I have returned home refreshed. To me, the island has something intriguing about it. However, I have never quite put my finger on it. And I am not the only one. The island seems to be almost alive. As with humans, relationships are a dance of give and take, even when one is talking about a very large rock out to sea. For everything you gain, there is a part of you left behind.

As is the case with most trips the worst part is always getting to the best parts. The drive along I-95, I-295 and the smaller routes 1 and 1A was boring. In 2026, Freeport's giant wooden Indian is hardly noticed.

I handed Hakan a Monhegan Trail Map and said, "You will be needing this. Keep it on you at all times."

"How do you get lost on a small island?" He asked, perplexed.

"Trust me... you can!" I warned him.

"Are the trails very difficult to walk?"

"Yes and no, it depends on your age. We will only walk the easier part."

I suggested Hakan should take a nap, if he could. I would wake him when we got to Moody's Diner for a quick breakfast. Moody's has been a favorite stop for well over a hundred years. Even Caroline Kennedy waitressed there as a teenager. I hope the sadness of her father's execution was tolerable by then. She deserved the happiness and normal sadness of youth.

To fill the time, my mind wandered.

To get to the island, one has to take the mailboat from Port Clyde. Every trip has had a different group of passengers, but the same sense of serenity has been present. At first, I thought it was my imagination. These were journeys with strangers of all kinds. Why were the peaceful vibes so similar? They were acting as if they were blissing out in silence. Only the occasional family noise broke the mood. Even the engine's putt, putt, putt...was restful.

For a few years a female deckhand caught my eye. She was the embodiment of a Norse Viking Goddess. Blond braids on both sides of her face rolled tightly against her head like some kind of organic helmet. Tough! Her muscles had muscles. I fought off the image of her lovemaking. It took the image of a tag-team match with a lot of sweat and grunts. Powerful but not very romantic. I never spoke to her; however, the smell of hard work always was the same. About ten years ago, she just was not there anymore. My hope was she found her Viking Prince and they sailed off to Norway to make more Vikings. Wherever she has sailed, I bet a bit of Monhegan is still in her heart.

In the fifteen hundreds, long before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, Massachusetts, a few islands off the east coast served as fishing communities for England. For over a hundred years, Monhegan shipped salted fish back to England. The ships were met at the docks by people craving the fish. It seems the fish in England's waters had been depleted by over fishing. Likewise, trees for building ships were a problem, especially wood for the masts. England saw the area of modern-day Maine as a solution to both problems.



**Long Voyage Home painted by Chip Cook – 1985 (Inspired by Winslow Homer)**

Captain John Smith and Pocahontas are thought to have stopped by the island on their way to England. I wonder what she was thinking about her future. Also, on the island of Manna, just across the harbor from Monhegan; very old unknown inscriptions were discovered. I am only scratching the surface of the many stories.



**The Gleaners painted by Chip Cook – 1986 (Inspired by Winslow Homer)**

As with everything nothing stays the same. Family after family somehow eked out a living, but the population was never very great. I am not sure how finding a husband or a wife worked. Maybe it was better not to ask. They figured it out somehow.

They had to because death was waiting around every turn. Monhegan never looked the other way.

Much later, the area attracted many artists. For over two hundred years they came. In the late-nineteenth century, streamliners made the trip from New York City to Bar Harbor. Their

trips were seasonal. With the normal group of tourists escaping the heat and smell of the city during the summers. Art students of all kinds were included. The ships did not have sleeping or dining facilities. They relied on a series of island hotels running along the coast. At least three of them and Monhegan Island was one of the stops. The artist found the island so beautiful they made it their destination instead of Bar Harbor. Over the years, some of the artists became very famous. The likes of Edward Hopper, Rockwell Kent and N. C. Wyeth were only a few. In the early 1900s, Rockwell Kent built a house and moved to Monhegan. He later got into trouble with two island girls and had to move off the island. At some point Andrew Wyeth bought Kent's old house and later Jamie Wyeth lived in it. If the walls could talk, what a tale it would tell.



**The Rockwell Kent House, painting by Chip Cook - 1999, inspired by a painting by Jamie Wyeth**

Over the years, Jamie engaged two kids on the island, Orca and Kile, who were willing to be models. Jamie painted over twenty-canvases of Orca. Obviously, the collection was called the Orca series. It toured the world for many years. What the collection was supposed to represent was a wild child... a bridge between humans and nature. I found them to be interesting... art as a philosophical statement. I think his attempt was successful. There are forces on the island that are hard to explain with words.

After Orca grew up and went to Florida to go to college, Jamie met another boy growing up on the island. Kile was the son of B&B owners. He found ways to entertain himself, on an island of only forty people, in very unique ways. When old enough, he bought an old rowboat. For a fee, he offered rides to the tourist to the second island. Manana was just on the other side of the harbor. A relatively short row.

In his early teens, Kile found a dead cat in the space under his house. He donned a top hat, a black cape and made a sign, 'Dead Cat Museum.' This event did not escape Jamie. He painted a large painting, now probably worth over a million dollars, of Kile and his museum. The Kile series was more a statement of youth's ingenuity on the island.

My only contact with either the Wyeth's or Kile, was on the boat going to Monhegan. As we waited for the boat to leave, I overheard a young boy giving orders to an old man, "Andrew put the chicken over here."

"Ok Kile." The man responded.

It made my day. How the mighty had fallen to Kile's rule. Evidently, Kile was raising chickens to sell their eggs to the hotels for their guests. Somehow Andrew Wyeth was pressed into helping. I lost track of Kile for a while. A few years later, a news report spoke of the youngest lobbyist in Augusta, Maine. He was from Monhegan Island and, no surprise to me, his name was Kile. The report went on to say, Kile made a badge for himself stating he was the elevator operator. The representatives were amused. However, to Kile this was no joke. He would stop the elevator and lobby for fishermen's rights for his island.

He was lucky. Computer learning was just starting and, of course, he took full advantage of it. However, I lost track of his antics. I trust he was successful no matter what he wanted to do. The painting of him with his "Dead Cat Museum" has been on display at the Farnsworth Museum in Rockland, Maine with many other Wyeth paintings. A very good collection. Kile just became another ghost in my memories.

Other memories flooded the boredom.

Long ago, I took two Irish girls out to the island. It did not go well... they both were seasick and told me. "Chip, we are from Ireland, we are surrounded by ocean and our cliffs are greater." They were not impressed with my beautiful place. However, on our same boat was a very interesting young lady. All the crew seem to know her. She was surrounded by some kind of aura. I could not explain it then, nor could I explain it now. It was almost movie star in nature. Kevin, my roommate, projectionist and balance for the Irish girls, could feel it too. It was not just my imagination, even the crew of the mailboat took notice of her. Later, after Kevin and I had put the sick girls to bed in our B&B, we were eating lunch at a local hang-out. The beautiful apparition floated over and asked if she could sit with us. Of course, Kevin and I jumped up. We must have looked like a comedy act compared to her other worldly composure.

She was an artist. She had been taking open-air art lessons on Monhegan for years. Coincidentally, she lived in Kennebunk, Maine; only ten miles up route one from me. Three weeks later, I was in her showroom buying the painting Ann Bennett had painted that day. Not surprisingly, she did not remember me. My psychic friend Ann, reacted negatively about her. She had major problems. My response was... who didn't have problems? That was the end of it. I still look at the painting today and see the ghosts float by.



**Monhegan Looking South by Ann Bennett - 1994**

These are the memories that fill my mind... only some of my ghosts. Over the years, every time I went to the island something different happened. What will happen when Hakan visits the island? No matter what it should be interesting. We were getting closer and the views were worth waking Hakan up again.



**The view of Penobscot Bay on the way to Port Clyde, oil painting by Chip Cook - 1986, inspired by Edward Hopper's water color - 1915**

## DEPARTING PORT CLYDE

Turning down the two-lane road to Port Clyde still left a thirty-minute drive. Every now and then a view of Penobscot Bay would open up on our left side. The drive took us through little villages and very old farms. On the right side of the road woods opened to views of long inlets. Port Clyde was at the very end of the road. As a harbor, it was protected by a series of Islands. The village acted as a stopping point for boats voyaging along the coast. With all the islands, boats could sail within the protection of

their mass. Small lighthouses were placed in strategic locations for navigation. Larger lighthouses were placed for ships traveling further off the coast. A new sport of coastal kayaking just added to the traffic looking for supplies in the Port. Summers were a real zoo. My trips to the area were mostly in the spring and fall. Even then it could get busy.

We drove down to the last village parking lot. Any further and we would be driving onto the dock. Talk about dead ends. The harbor was full of lobster boats, fishing rigs and all types and sizes of sailboats. The ticket office was right there.

Hakan pauses near the harbor.

"Someone drowned here."

Chip laughs, "Probably hundreds of people."



**Inlet Near Port Clyde by George Carpenter - 1989**

Hakan stretched. He had gotten another catnap on the boring drive. Over the years, I had told him my stories. Something was lost in not having been there.

It was just 10:00 AM. The sea seemed calm and the sky was clear. And sunny. It would be a great day to explore the island.

We bought our tickets and went to The Store to get supplies. The original Store burned down. It was great with atmosphere... old wood everywhere. Probably why it burned so fast. The new one worked just fine, but it missed something. I could see the old store flash in and out of my imagination. It was a little offsetting to say the least.

We were not to die of thirst or hunger. I think both Hakan and I could use a few days eating lean. It not like a half-day of walking around required much. Even if we walked too much and we were hungry, there are places to get fresh fish. I was not worried.

Hakan looked around. "This is quite remote."

Chip laughed, "You have seen remote yet. This is Monhegan's downtown mall."

At 10:30 AM we lined up to board the "new mailboat, The Elizabeth Ann." Or should I say, the newer mailboat. The first time I ventured to the island was fifty years ago. The mailboat, "The Laura B." then had seen action in the storming of the beaches in the Pacific theatre. So, the "new boat" has to be put into perspective. It was now thirty-five years old. So, calling it "new" was just a matter of habit.

I told Hakan to follow me. The best place was on the top deck, in the center. In addition to the people, the mailboat was the main way every other need was met for the island. For about six months, the mailboat made three round trips. Somehow it all worked.

The island had heard conversations like this for centuries. Fishermen. Artists. Lovers. Dreamers. They all came believing they were passing through. Monhegan knew better.

## THE MAILBOAT TO MONHEGAN

After a last minute late local arriving, we were off. The sea was still calm, so the crossing should go faster. I told Hakan of the accident Joan had some twenty years ago. The trip then was not easy. Waves hit the mailboat so hard that Joan flew across the seating area and landed on her coccyx. X-rays later showed it was broken. The X-rays also showed a problem with her hips. As in needing hip replacements. Not wanting to cancel our outing, she acted as if she was ok.

"How long has it been since Joan has been here?"

"Between our traveling abroad, our operations and our adopting Jax, it could have been twenty years." The mailboat started up and slowly pulled away from the dock.

For the first fifteen minutes, we maneuvered through crisscrossing channels. Large sailboats were passing along the coast on their long courses to somewhere unknown to us. We passed the Marshall Point lighthouse, used in the movie Forest Gump.



**The Marshall Point Lighthouse at Port Clyde (Unknown artist)**



**Passing Ship painted by Chip Cook - 2005 (inspired by unknown artist)**

Passing islands that were bought with the profits from the Wyeth's paintings, it was a grand gesture to help preserve the islands from development. I could not think of a better way, for them, to invest in the future.

“Sometimes people with money do the right thing, they are beautiful islands.”

“I know nothing about their lives. However, money cannot buy happiness.”

“I'd rather be unhappy rich, than unhappy poor.”

“True!” I laughed.

At the entrance to Port Clyde, were rocks popping out of the water. Hundreds of eyes were watching us pass by. The seals were everywhere. Clearly, they had had a big meal of “the catch-of-the-day.” They were looking for a sunbathing spot that would be undisturbed. We were the intruders. I could almost hear them mutter to themselves...damn tourists.

Ten miles was just far enough to just see something on the horizon. Monhegan Island is described as looking like a very large sperm whale. Its northeastern cliff soars to approximately 164 feet, the highest cliffs on the eastern seaboard of the U.S.

“Karen does not like boats, even seeing Monhegan like this might not offset her fears.”

“That’s a shame, it is a romantic place.”

We could see lobstermen working their waters. It is far harder a job than one could imagine. I have known many over the years, may their souls rest in peace... more ghosts.



**The Lobsterman by William Preston, - 1961**

Half-way into our crossing and the Maine coastline seemed to be most of the western horizon. The view went from the top of Casco Bay all the way up to Isle de Haugh (High Island). At the same time Monhegan took on the blackened outline of a Sperm whale with Manana Island forming its tail.

“Look at everyone, this is special.” Hakan observed.

“I never get tired of it. It has been too long since I was here last.”

As in the past, the people on board were in a state of bliss. They were like sponges soaking in the sun, the fresh air and the smell of the living sea. The quietness seemed appropriate.

The only sound was the soft rhythm of the old engine. Until it stopped.

"Something doesn't want us there." Hakan almost whispered.

After a few attempts to restart the engine, it started back up. We were on our way, plodding through calm waters. I did not want to ask him why he felt that way.

Closing in on 11:30 AM, we were coming into the mouth of the harbor. The village was concentrated on the western side of the island. Houses were clustered in small knots randomly. What made it a harbor was the fact of another island (Manana) on the other side. Low rocky outcropping on the north side acted as wave barrier. However, south of the harbor was open sea. I guess it has worked for hundreds of years. Who am I to be concerned? Besides what would be their alternative?

“This is a good size harbor for a little village.” Hakan observed.

“I think they get a lot of sailors coming for a night or two. It is far enough to make it a good turnaround destination.” Repeating what I had been told.



**Monhegan Village Dock – Winter of 1905 painted by Chip Cook - 1986**

**(Inspired by Rockwell Kent)**

## THE UNLOADING PROCESS

It seemed like the town all turned out. Clearly, it was the high point of the day. It was quite the mix. People coming to welcome friends, hotel employees coming to welcome guests and pickup their luggage. Residences looking for items they had sent away for. Businesses looking for supplies. The people leaving to go back on the noon return voyage. And all their stuff. Artist with still wet paintings. Guys and gals, working at the hotels, looking for something... different. At my age, I can only remember. Fond opportunities for love... discovered and lost.

“This is crazy.” Hakan marveled.

“You could say... organized mayhem.”

However, it was more like a finely choreographed dance. Hakan had been warned it would be. I do not think he was quite prepared for it. I knew the routine and knew enough to get through the mob. However, the island was big enough for all of us to get lost. All we had to do was get there. Fish beach was just four hundred feet away. They had the freshest fish in Maine. From the ocean to the kitchen was less than thirty feet. We were looking for mussels and fresh rustic bread. Forget the food we bought.

We had a little wait until our number was called. My mind wondered, again. This time it was a memory of a fisherman with one arm who always waved from his boat. I never learned his name. One year he was there. The next year he wasn't. People just came and went, like the tides. I usually can “read” people. Today Hakan was not easy to peg.

Sitting on the picnic tables at the water's edge eating steamed mussels was heavenly. It was Monhegan's only sandy beach. We could look across at Manana's towering face and the abandoned house someone tried to live in years ago.



**The Island House from Fish Beach by Chip Cook - 2005**

“Life does not get any better than this! You were right, thank you for showing me this beautiful island.”

“You have not even seen the best part yet.” However, I was not sure he meant it. Was he just trying to reassure himself. Hakan knew things on many levels. There was something he was not saying.

By the time we were finished our lunch, some of the mob was having the same idea, but we were moving on.

“That was smart timing.”

“Many years of experience helps.” I was glad to show off the island...something different.



**Boats at Fish Beach painted by Chip Cook – 2009 (Inspired by unknown artist)**

The best way to see the place was to start at the most southern point. This meant walking on the one-lane road through the center of the village. It was like going back in time. How do I know this? I have seen the paintings. Over a hundred years of loving the rocks, village and the feeling of the place. It was all recorded and I had studied most of them. The “downtown” was dominated by the very old Island House.

It stood three stories, high up on a rock overlooking the harbor and mailboat landing. Your classic seaside resort hotel was built for the steamship passengers. Now for the few tourists smart enough to find this place. I cannot tell you how many people from Maine; I have talked to, who never heard of it. I think word of mouth around the world brought more people. However, of the group who found it, some defy categories. Once, I was on the other side of the island and my tranquility was disturbed by a “high powered” New York stock broker making trades on his cell. Why waste the effort to come here? It seemed crazy to me. I wondered what the old rock registered. Every house has been the subject for paintings. I have seen them in all the major museums. Seeing them never gets old.

One problem, everyone needs to know, is to avoid getting run over by a truck filled with luggage. The main dirt road was rutted and the drivers probably did not have driver’s licenses. I base this on the fact the trucks either did not have any license on them, or it expired in the 1950s. The island did not seem to have any need for police, or traffic laws. The trucks had the right-of-way... period. The other oddity was that stuff just seem to accumulate. Junk was neatly placed, but there was no doubt it had seen better days.

“Do you think they recycle?” Hakan wondered.

“Probably many times by the looks of the piles.” I shared.

“An interesting story, one day Jamie wanted to paint that house with the American flag on the side of it. The guy who owned the house wanted to mess with Jamie... play a prank on him. So, he and a friend got two old sombreros and they took up position on the porch. Without missing a beat, Jamie painted them into the composition. Instead of a prank, they made the painting better... capturing character of the locals.



**The Shipwreck by Chip Cook - 2004**

## The D. T. Sheridan Shipwreck

First stop after the village was the old shipwreck on the southern point. To get to it we passed the Monhegan Brewery and the Rockwell Kent House above Lobster Cove. It commands the most southern cliff.

When Jamie Wyeth owned it, he made a statement. Just by painting his wife trying to read on their front porch. Juxtaposed to her peacefulness was the mailboat filled with tourist taking pictures. So powerful a statement, it was not really funny. From his other many paintings of the island the subject of stuff from the ocean was a recurring theme. Like pieces of the shipwreck placed in front of his home's view. That is real artist confidence. Life on this island, as an artist, was not easy. Jamie took to hiding in a large cardboard box to paint. Otherwise, he would be hounded by tourists.

“I feel bad for the guy. He should be able to enjoy his home like everyone else.”

I guess life on the island for anyone would be difficult for many other reasons. Isolation in the winters would be prime. However, the flipside of this loneliness is the collective push of tourist in the summer. The extremes had to wear on the locals. The pressure of tourism only intensified the isolation; it did not relieve it. On the other hand, without them, Monhegan could not exist as it is. Which I can imagine is a topic of much off-season discussions. To a lesser degree, I have the same problem in my resort town.

I could now feel the anguish of Jamie Wyeth's Orca series. Assessing the balance of the Human factor vs. Nature. Jamie's bias favored Nature. The massive rusted wreck on the rocks within sight of his house stood as a constant reminder of this battle. The islanders existed somewhere in the margins. Interesting to speculate about, but I would not like the constant squeeze. I am sure the great rock had an opinion... but it was not talking.

The Sheridan has been in a constant state of change from the 1920s to today. Its steel hull has been slowly melting within the firm grip of the island. I have witnessed much of its transformation myself. In my youth, I would climb all over it. Its side and bottom, looking like a giant beached reddish whale. Fortunately, my age will make me smarter, it will be very dangerous in the not so far future. Hakan feels what I logically thought. He agrees with my assessment. He was feeling much more. Much, much more.

"The island itself is alive. It has always been alive. It watches. It absorbs." Hakan felt.



**The Rocks near Christmas Cove by Chip Cook - 2005**

Next stop Christmas Cove, just a hundred yards to the left of the Sheridan. Saying it is a cove is being charitable. It was more like a small inlet at high tide and a tidal pool most of the time. Its name was derived from a local tradition, going back generations of some islanders meeting there for Christmas' sunrise. It seemed likely to both Hakan and me that the tradition was influenced by both Christmas and the Winter Solstice. The Christians had the habit of combining popular pagan holidays with Christian holidays. In my imagination I could see both ceremonies happening. More ghosts seem to be everywhere. However, the great rock itself seemed to project defiance. I am here! I will be here long after you are all gone.



**Looking down on Norton's Ledge - 1995**

Next point of interest was Norton's Ledge. Known for its wave action. Even on calm days you will find nice waves. It has something to do with the converging currents.

Moving on, next was going to be a challenging, a walk along the cliffs. Did I say, walk? It would be more like a walk / climb. The easiest on the full trail around the island. At seventy-seven, I would be going only as far as Burnt Head. Named for a forest fire sometime in Monhegan's past. It would also take us by "Gull Rock." Among other facets of the island's personality is its role with birds. The island is on a migration route for many birds flying south for the winter and north for the summer. Also, it is a very important breeding ground for seagulls. They like the cliffs to nest. The cliffs afford protection. However, the chicks better stay in their nests, it would be a deadly end otherwise. I can imagine the old rock have seen its share of birds... perhaps even Pterodactyls by the millions. Why not?



**Gull Rock in Winter by Chip Cook (Inspired by Rockwell Kent – 1905)**

Gull Rock was striking. A giant oblong bald white head. Covered, not surprisingly, with seagulls. Some resting and some fighting, but all standing in their own poop. I learned this

fact the hard way, when I had tried to climb it in my youth. I am sure this is true with most people who try. You can say, the seagulls have a way of staking out their territory.

One fact about the place that becomes apparent is the fact the views change very often... like every hundred feet it seems. Other islands, I have visited, are very disappointing. You hike and hike just to find a view of a cove or a clearing. Most of the time, it's trees and more trees. Monhegan does not disappoint.



**Seagulls of Gull Rock by Chip Cook – 1997 (inspired by studies of seagulls by Jamie Wyeth)**

At Burnt Head we rested and talked. I wanted to hear from Hakan and how he felt about the place so far. He loved it. But he felt layers of emotions... a full spectrum of them. Not all good.

Concerned about the walk / climb, he asked about the trail ahead. I told him not to worry. There is a trail around the island, but every so often trails run back to the village. In fact, we will be heading that direction now. We got out his map and I traced our route. He was relieved. I showed him where we were going... to the top of White Head. Don't worry, we will be going by the roads.



**White Head in a Storm by Chip Cook - 2008**

As we walked on another dirt road towards town, Hakan was emotionally reacting to one of the first houses. He did not like that house one bit. I could not feel anything, I never do. My many years working with psychics, proved to me I was about as psychic as a doorknob. Do not get me wrong, even as a math graduate student, I saw absolute proof of the phenomena. I spent a lifetime exploring it. It is real, but I have no ability.

“What do you feel?” I asked.

“Many people have poured themselves into this place... like we are doing. That does not go away. The energy is still here.”

Hakan just wanted to move on. We did. However, out of the side of my sight, I thought I saw an outline of a man seated looking intently at something. When I looked back there was nothing. Probably, just my imagination. I did not say anything to Hakan, but I had a chill.



**The Writer's House – Monhegan painted by Chip Cook – 2005 (Inspired by Jamie Wyeth)**

The village was not far. We swung back on the only main road through the village and headed up the hill to the lighthouse. We passed B&Bs along the way, they looked filled with tourists. Surprising for this early in the season.



**The Main Road Through the Village by Chip Cook – 2008 (Inspired by unknown artist)**

As we walked, some of the windows looked as if they were looking blankly and slightly disapprovingly at us. Silly, my imagination was working on overtime. Still...



**School Yard of Seagulls Painted by Chip Cook – 2005 (Inspired by Jamie Wyeth)**

Along the way we passed the one-room school house. We did not see any kids, but the front yard was filled with more seagulls soaking-up the afternoon sun.

I asked Hakan, “Did you ever see the movie, *The Birds*?”

“No, but I can imagine why you asked. That is not funny! They’re creeping me out.”

We slowly made our way to the top of the hill. There was the lighthouse, the fog bell and the keeper's house, just as I had left them years ago. Looking back at the village, it looked more like a child's toy village than a real place. We rested for a while taking in the views.

Now the lightkeeper's house looked as if it was haunted. Again, many blank stares focused on us. Surprisingly, Hakan did not feel anything bad. It is now a museum, so nightly visits would only be recorded by security cameras recoding meaningless action.

As we headed to White Head, we passed the town burn area. Hakan disapproved. Jamie painted Orca tending the burn pile at night with the village lite below. It was a really large canvas... I was impressed. Another strong statement without words. Again, I wondered if the old rock could understand the depth of its meaning.



**The Light Keeper's House and Fog Bell painted by Chip Cook – 2005 (Inspired by Jamie Wyeth)**

We had to push on to the top of "White Head," We had to be back for the mailboat's return at 4:30PM. Actually, it was not too far and the view was well worth it.

One hundred and sixty-four feet down to an unforgiving surf and rock coast. To our south were both Gull Rock and "Burnt Head" looking rather small from this vantage point. To our north was another giant, "Black Head." It was equally impressive, the same powerful presences. If we had enough time we could go back towards town and take another path to the top of it. In my youth, I ran around the entire island in one day. I have to say, it almost killed me. Just walking back to the mailboat was exercise enough for us.

“They used to have white crosses with life-preservers on them. That is until, they realized they did not do any good.”

Hakan did not look pleased, “You have to try?”

“Maybe” The islanders were more practical. If something does not work, don’t do it.

The day had, I thought, one more surprise for us. A mother whale and her calf were swimming by. We could look right down on them as they passed. This magical place just kept giving up surprises. Now we had to hurry.

The timing would be close, but we could do it.



**The Keeper's House with Manana by Chip Cook - 2012**

On the return path, something seemed off. Even the keeper’s house had changed. Something was a foot, but what?

Walking down hill was easier. As we crowned the hump leading down to the town docks, we sensed it. No crowds of people wanting to board the mailboat. In fact, no mailboat.

What’s going on? What was the problem?

A man was talking to some other day trippers. They were showing signs of being in a panic too. They were leaving unhappy as we stepped up.

“I am sorry, but the mailboat has broken down in Port Clyde and the back-up is already in drydock.” He said, as if he already knew the expected response from us. The major problem was finding a place for everyone to sleep until tomorrow’s hopeful return to service of the mailboat.

Every B&B is booked. The Island House is full. We were the last two to be placed. He said he had made a special arrangement for a house rental for just one night. Unheard of... a single night. It was all he had, “I’m sorry.”

What else could we say, but “Thank you.” He gave us the directions, and I froze. It was the house Hakan did not like. We had passed it earlier. The house with the bad feelings. The house with the disappearing shadow man.

Hakan looked at me like he had been condemned to prison.

Remembering the shadow I asked, “I know this is a silly question, but are you sure the house is empty.”

“Oh, yes... it is always empty.” he said stopping himself short.

“I don’t know why, but people keep talking about the house being haunted...”

“What silliness!”

“We all knew the former owner. He was a known writer of supernatural mysteries. I’m sure renters were spooked by the house’s history. That all it is.”

With that he handed us some keys and a flashlight. “Tomorrow, just put the keys under the front door mat when you leave.”

“You will be needing these. There is no power to the house. I’m afraid there is no heat or water either... seeing there is no power. Please understand this is the best I can do. I think you will find lots of blankets. It is just one night anyway.”

“Where can we get a hot meal for dinner?” I asked.

“The Trailing Yew is your best bet, but tonight I would make reservations early.” The realtor cautioned.

I told Hakan, “Diner will be another experience... they don’t use electricity. All meals are cooked in wood ovens and they use oil lamps for lighting. You could say, rustic by design.”

I got a blank look. I guess he was thinking we were getting too many unexpected adventures for one night. No matter what, we had some things to arrange, or should I say... rearrange.

“Number one! We have to call Karen and Joan.”

“Karen was worried about us going to the island, I hope she will be alright.”

Hakan and I looked at each other. We called our homes to let Joan and Karen know that we were trapped into sleeping in a cold, dark, haunted house in the middle of the ocean. “We wish you were here.”

Independently, both said, “Have fun... better you than me. Call me with updates.”

Wouldn't you expect a little more sympathy? Well, we could take care of ourselves, I think?

“Let's go make reservations before we go Ghostbusting,” I said.

Haken responded dryly, “That's not funny. I don't like that house at all. I work with energy and there is something very negative there.”

“Just imagine the stories we will be able to tell.” I laughed.

“If we survive.” He added. Without cracking a smile.



**Fishing boat and Manana Island by Chip Cook – 2011 (Inspired by unknown artist)**

We got a beautiful view of the harbor from the knoll at the B&B. We were not here to gawk. We had to see about making reservations. The sun setting behind Manana Island created interesting light and shadows. No wonder artist come from all over to paint here.

“Look at the people at The Island House. They are just soaking up the views.”

“Probably, well fed. Which I hope to be one of them... soon”

The Trailing Yew was almost sold-out however they would make room for us later in the evening. The hostess asked us where we were staying. I’m sure she was just being polite. We told her the writer’s house at the top of the road.

Not missing a beat, she said. “The place is haunted.”

“So, we heard... indirectly. Thank you for the warning, but we don’t really have a choice. It seems everywhere else is taken.”

“I rather sleep in one of Jamie’s cardboard boxes, in a nor-easter, then go into that house. You guys are either braver or dumber than you look.”

Hakan asked, “Just in case where can we find Jamie’s Frig. Box?” She ignored him.

The flashlight was not yet needed for the walk up the hill to the writer’s house.

“From up here the world looks at peace.”

“Don’t be so sure, I can feel a change coming fast.”



**View Looking Toward the Village from the Writer’s House. by Chip Cook - 1978**

Under almost any other condition, the house looked quite nice. From earlier we had seen the views in two different directions. The ocean to the east and the village with Manana Island to its west. It would have been the perfect place to either write or paint. It did not look like the stereotypical haunted house.

I asked Hakan, “Have you ever seen, “The Haunting of Hill House?”

“No, I don’t waste my time on fiction. Real life is strange enough. Tonight is a good example of that.”

“I can see your point.” We were just outside the house. Now to see if the keys worked.

## The Haunting of Hill House

(Just kidding.)

If we had electricity and heat the house would have been very nice in a rustic manner of speaking.

The temperature was... chilly ! As promised the closet had ten blankets. They could have smelled a little fresher, but that was not a real issue at this point. Our food stores would not risk spoiling at 38 degrees Fahrenheit. It was a good thing I had told Hakan to dress in layers. Even hot days in the summer can turn cold with a change in wind direction. The ocean can be a giant AC generator. We were dressed for the right weather... thank God!

As Hakan and I explored the island, everyone else must have been planning for the housing disaster. In the toilet area were ten old milk jugs filled with water to flush with. They had to have been placed there for our benefit. Otherwise, over the winter, they would have frozen. All in all, it was not too bad. “When dealt lemons, make lemonade.”

After a survey with our one flashlight, we had gotten the lay of the land. Except, the basement door was locked. Probably, it had family stuff stored down there. It was none of our business anyway.

Satisfied, we were not going to die, we headed back to town for a later dinner. It had become dark enough to see Maine’s mid-coast area all lit up. A few lighthouses flashed their beacons. The sky in the far southwest looked blacker than it should have been.

“Just great... an evening storm... an appropriate topper to the day.”

I said to Hakan, “Look at the skies... we will be having a little passing storm.

“Are you sure you don’t know any good Ghost stories?”

“That is not funny.” And he meant it.”

I had never needed a flashlight as much as I had over the last hour. The walk down the hill to the Trailing Yew would have been impossible. We could see the warm oil light emanating through the B&B’s old windows off in the distance.

It was a welcomed sight.

Hakan turns his head sharply toward a row of houses—the ones with shuttered windows that look like vacant eyes staring back from the curve of the road. They are waiting for the storm, or maybe they are just waiting for us. And in the silence between my observation and Hakan’s sudden realization, the wind shifts, carrying not the smell of salt and fish, but a distinct, unsettling aroma of burnt sugar and distant wood smoke—a scent that belongs to neither the 1800s nor the present.

Ordering was easy. The Trailing Yew’s menu was fixed. Fortunately, for Hakan, fish was the main part of the selections. He was very happy. He had Haddock Stew with a goat cheese and beet salad.

I was more limited with scallops and shrimps over wild rice. I had a local Monhegan brewed beer. Hakan had a locally made lemonade. The lemons must have been imported. Dessert was homemade blueberry pie with imported vanilla ice cream. We split the bill.

On Monhegan, you were either from the island, or you were a foreigner. That simple. However, everyone was entitled to spending their money... this was balance.

Considering the heat and quality of home cooking, it was worth every dollar of the cost... after all we are on an island ten miles out to sea, still in nowhere land. In spite of that we were both happy, warm and full.

Hakan seemed introspective. “It’s the very thing that permeates every cove, settles into the grain of the old clapboard houses near Gull Rock, and waits just beyond the reach of the tide.”

“You are correct: the ghosts here do not reside in isolated 'parts,' but rather they constitute an ambient field. They are everywhere because Monhegan Island itself seems to function as a nexus point where deep time meets intense human experience. The island is ancient—“hundreds of millions of years,” —and what has happened on it, from fishing communities drawing sustenance for England in the 1500s to the artistic struggles of Edward Hopper or Rockwell Kent in the early 20th century, never truly leaves.”

“If we consider “ghosts” not just as spectral figures, but as residue—the emotional and historical imprints left on the landscape by passionate lives—then they are indeed everywhere.” I noted.

“The Nature of the Monhegan Presence, the mystery of Monhegan, is that it seems to absorb memory, emotion, and even energy. This makes its “ghosts” multifaceted:

Hakan had been giving the nature of Monhegan some thought.

As if arguing a point, first, “There are Ghosts of Time (Deep History):”

“These are not just the spirits of people who died decades ago. They are the echoes of primal human endeavor—the steady rhythm of the mailboat's putt-putt-putt, the smell of hard work from a deckhand whose braids suggested a Viking Goddess; they are the ghost of industry and survival that predates recorded history. The island itself feels alive because it has witnessed epochs.”

“Secondly, Ghosts of Artistry and Passion:”

“The writers who came to Monhegan—the streamliners, the artists like Wyeth or Kent—brought with them intense emotional energy. They were escaping something (the heat and smell of New York City) only to find profound inspiration. These ghosts are the residue of that struggle: the creative desperation, the moments of sudden clarity, the isolation that fueled genius, and sometimes, the inevitable trouble that led people away from the island.”

“Thirdly, Ghosts of Ability (The Unspoken):”

“The ghost element is not always visible; sometimes it’s a feeling—a deep sense of observation, an inexplicable knowledge of local rhythms, or the uncanny silence that settles over certain parts of the island. These abilities suggest a connection to something ancient and natural about the land that supersedes modern understanding.”

“In essence, when we speak of “Ghosts of Monhegan Island in many parts,” we are speaking of the place's profound ability to hold secrets. The quietness you mention is not empty; it is pregnant with unspent narratives. It suggests a constant observation— It watches; it waits...it absorbs.”

“The journey into these ghosts requires more than mere memoir; it demands that we, as storytellers and observers, confront the boundary between factual memory (the dates, the lighthouse, the map) and pure mystery. The island will only reveal its true stories to those who are willing to acknowledge the unseen current running through everything.”

It seems Hakan has given the island more than a little thought. It was a lot to take in.

Being philosophical made fine dinner conversation, but now was the time to face the night... storm and all.



**Abandoned House illuminated by lightning painted by Chip Cook - 2015**

We were getting use to the uphill climb to the writer’s house. With the approaching storm lightning created a creepy illumination that was like daylight but cold and stark. We passed a, seemingly, abandoned house. One second it was swallowed in pure blackness, the next second, lightning illuminated everything. The third second... black, again. We started walking faster.

“You know this storm is beginning to creep me out.” Hakan spoke.

“Yea, even if there is nothing there, the flash makes nothingness pop into somethingness.”

Hakan continued his dinner thoughts, “We spoke of ghosts as residue—the beautiful melancholy left by artists, sailors, and wanderers. But what happens when the ghost isn't merely a memory, but an interruption? The mailboat never docks quietly. It arrives with a sound that feels too heavy for its small engine: a rhythmic sighing against the pilings of Port

Clyde. It's not just the wave; it's the cumulative weight of all the histories and half-told secrets finally pressing up to the surface."

"They say," Chip muses, without looking at Hakan, "that nothing truly leaves Monhegan. The people who come here to escape the city noise, they just trade one kind of sound for another: the relentless, quiet hum of their own past."

From deep thoughts to quietness, we continued to climb the road to exactly what?

Hakan finally speaks, his voice rougher than usual, sounding like gravel dragged over wet stones. He isn't talking about art or time; he's talking about the absence—the way things used to be before anyone had a name for them, before the narratives were written down and put into book form.

"It's not just history," Hakan whispers, looking out at the water where the distant line of mainland cliffs dissolve into black mist. "It's... expectation. This place is always expecting something."



**Barn and Lightening** painted by Chip Cook - 2015

Our conversation was stopped short.

An unexpected light shown through one of the windows. We had not left a flashlight on?

In fact, we had the only flashlight we knew of. Perhaps, the realtor found another light for us to use. Except, the light just went out... ok that was a little unexpected. I could feel Hakan's anxiety increasing. "What are you feeling right now?"

"I am not changing my opinion of this house... it is still bad and getting worse."

The atmosphere thickens not just with fog, but with a kind of focused attention—the collective consciousness of the island finally turning its gaze upon us.

The air cools abruptly, losing the humid promise of late spring and adopting the sharp bite of coastal autumn. The smell of burnt sugar and wood smoke fades, replaced by something far more unsettling: damp earth and pulverized stone, mixed with a metallic tang that reminds one of old pennies.

If this was not bad enough, lightning flashed in the west more often and the rain started falling. No not just rain... a flood was letting go. We did not have the luxury to discuss the mystery light. Even with the key out and only feet to go, we got wetter than we would have liked. No heat was suddenly a bigger problem.

I went directly to the closet with the blankets... it was standing wide open. I was the last out of the house. I remember looking back in this direction. It was not open. Again, the realtor may have opened it. Just to make sure we knew where we could find the blankets.

So, what is a logical explanation for the unknown light?

Not wanting to spook Hakan any more, I noted it was strange, but not too strange... yet.

"Where did those portraits come from? I did not see them earlier." I wondered.



**The Captain and his Wife by my great-aunt, Minna Walker (Smith) - at Yale 1903 - AWS**

Two faces were staring straight at us. A happier couple I have not seen... real party animals. They had to be someone's ancestors. Hakan and I moved to the right. Then we moved to the left.

"Damn, their eyes are following us." I whispered. I could not take my eyes off them.

"No, there is a word for it. It is just a trick of your imagination that's all." Hakan whispered back.

I noticed both of us were rubber necking. I was just rechecking.

We started calling the couple, The Captain and his Wife.

"Earlier, we probably weren't looking in their direction, but it is still odd."

"Why would we see them now and not earlier? Our using the flashlight... not likely?"

Now the lightning was really getting fired-up. One minute blackness, the next was blinding light. We were more focused on wrapping up in the musty smelling blankets and planting ourselves in two large easy-chairs... it was not going to get any warmer. The walls of the writer's living room were covered with hundreds of books. Not that we had the time nor the light to read much. But under a normal set of circumstances, both Hakan and I would have explored the writer's library. Whoever owned the house now, was taking a chance just

renting it out. Some of these books looked valuable. Maybe in the morning with the sunrise, we can check it out.

“Good night, Hakan.”

“Good night, Chip.”

“Don’t let the bedbug’s bite!”

“That is not funny” Hakan said.

I must have fallen to sleep amidst the thunder and lightning. I was fighting dreaming. At some point, I woke up while dreaming about hiking a non-existence Monhegan trail. What was this all about? Perhaps... being lost or watch your step.



**Lost Trail Fantasy by Chip Cook - 2013**

It was hours later when Hakan’s journey to the toilet woke me up. I could just make out the flashlight going around the corner. His footsteps must have triggered my light sleeping response.

Another noise and I wondered if there was a problem.

“Are you ok?” I called out.

“Who are you talking to?” Hakan asked from his chair in the opposite direction.

I froze. The hair on the back of my neck... was standing straight up. I'm not kidding. I slowly said in a whisper of a voice, “I thought it was you.”

“NO! I'm right here. What did you hear?”

We both sounded dumb. Dealing with strange events was nothing new. This will be no different. Our taking notice of whatever was going on in the toilet seemed to reset the mood... I think. At least the bathroom seemed quiet and dark.

I tried to go back to bed.



**Nightmare on Gull Rock by Chip Cook – 2017 (Inspired by a painting by Jamie Wyeth)**

I must have had a nightmare about Gull Rock. In my mind, the rock took on a grotesque smiling skeleton face. Dead seagulls somehow flew around it in the full moonlight. Ok, I am now spooking myself out. “... Stop it, Chip!”

I usually do not remember my dreams. Something was different. We really had to get back to sleep.

The thunder was getting closer. Once more, it woke me up or was it the blinding flash?

From my chair, I could see the grassy knoll in the back of the house light-up.

Hakan was still asleep. This time I was not assuming anything.

Another flash, what did I just see on the top of the knoll?

I could swear it was a woman in a white flowing nightgown. She was looking right at me.

She did not look very happy.

I must still be dreaming.

Another flash and I could still see her for only a second. "Hakan! Look out the window and tell me what you see?"

Half asleep, Hakan looked and the lightning lit up the yard again... he could not see anything. Neither could I. What is this, Monhegan's version of a "hide-and-go-seek" spook?

Thank goodness he believed me.

In our estimation ghosts have always acted unusual even for something that should not exist. If I would be a ghost, I think I would try to fully communicate, not be coy. If she was looking for action, she came to the wrong house. Sorry, we are both happily married. I was trying to make light of it. Hoping to make myself feel better.

"Hay, where did that book come from?" Oh, come on, "Shorts Stories of the Ghosts of Monhegan."

Hakan smiled, "Ask and you shall receive."

"And you think that's funny?"

If there is a chapter named "The Woman in White," I will start looking for the hidden cameras and figure Joan and Karen are setting us up for a TV show's prank.

Hakan had the flashlight and was reading, "No, not "The Woman in White," it is ... "The Lady in White."

"Funny... I thought humor was my job." I joked.

"OK! Read the story, but read about the author first."

Hakan read faster than I did. Within a few minutes he looked at me and said, "This must be the same author who lived here. Too many details line up."

I was not sure about asking Hakan to read about the lady in white, but he had already started. From his face, I do not think I wanted to know.

"Well, you sure know how to show a guy a good time." Hakan said.

"My psychic friend, Ann, had many years ago, said almost the same thing."

"OK, let me have the short version."

Hakan hesitated, “It is the old story. An unhappy writer meets a lonely girl on the cliffs of Monhegan. They have a love affair. He leaves the island. Goes back to his wife. The girl dresses up in a new negligee, she had bought just for him, and jumps off a cliff to her death. The end!”

Are you kidding?

“No!”

Just then the lightning flashed again. This time we both saw her for a second.

“You were not kidding.” Hakan said.

“I don’t kid about this type of thing.”

“Do you think she thinks the writer, who lived here, was her lover?”

“Who knows? But the timing is not quite right. This love triangle took place in the nineteen forties. Maybe it is a case of transference, who knows?”

“Pretend you don’t see her, Hakan said, we need our sleep.”



**Tug-of-War painted by Jay Dematin 1995 ( Chip’s collection)**

Another blast of light. The lady in white was being forced away by some kind of dark figure. Was this the writer not wanting her to reach out to us for help?

Then there was...blackness. It was as if a tug-of-war was going on under the cover of the storm. We kept looking. Wishing to see what was going on. Where is the lightning when you needed it? That was the last we saw of her.

To distract our focus on nothingness, Hakan kept reading. “How can you sleep with a girl in a see-through dress keeps flashing you?”

“When the dress and the girl are both transparent, some of the thrill is lost.” I smiled.

“This would definitely be a case of too much transparency. Besides, I think the writer was trying to keep her from communicating with us.

The night was still young. However, I wondered who placed the book there on the side table. And why? I could feel their loneliness.

In my imagination, I could see them cuddled up in bed.



A Cold Dream of Happiness painted by Chip Cook - 2017

In the background was a distorted view of the village and Manana Island in the cold lonely winter. The landscape was as bleak as their future. Such sadness...I have to clear my mind and heart.

Hakan asked, “What are you sensing?”

“Love lost and not found... still looking.” I guess. “Anything more interesting in the book?”

“Hey... there is a chapter about the old inscriptions on Manana Island. They say, Noone has translated them... yet . What’s this?” Hakan opens a folded piece of paper and read it.

“If this is the writer’s handwriting, it looks like he tried to break the code.”

“What does it say?” I asked

**“We killed them all!”** Hakan read.

“Chilling!” I felt it both emotionally and physically.

“Is that all it says?”

“Yes.”

“Not much to go on. What do you think it means?”

“If it is connected to the inscriptions, these islands may have a much darker past than what we see.”

At this point the question, “What was it going to be sleeping or thinking?”, did not have to be asked.

“Where is the line between the two states?” Was this a real nightmare? Or were we just dreaming?

We have, separately, dealt with ghosts before. However, nothing came close to tonight.

“It had to be sleep, if they would let us... Now my mind was taking over.”

Hakan was not sleeping either. We started to talk...

What do you make of all this? I asked Hakan.

“Everything that has existed and everything that will exist is energy. It transforms and flows, however it can be held. Holding energy empowers the holder.”

“So, you think Manana and Monhegan Island hold energy, both good and bad?”

“Of course! Look at the effect it has had on you. It is a good effect. Nonetheless your identity has been changed by the exchange. You and this island relate...exchange energy.”

Just then another blast of lightning. I did not see her but I could feel her presences. At the very same time, the front door flew wide open. We jumped up and ran to the door.

With the light of the flash-light, we could see all ten milk bottles of water lined up as if pointing to the road. Hakan left me in the dark to check out the toilet. I could tell he was in shock. The milk bottles were the same bottles as were in the toilet.

Impressive display of power. I thought. The message could not be clearer... Get out of my house! Stay out!

“I think we know how the owner of the house feels about us being here.”

Just out of sight, we could hear the door to the basement slam open.

Hakan said, “What happened to the lock?”

“Forget the lock, why is there a light on down there?”

“I’ve seen this movie; we are not going down the stairs just to have the door slam shut and lock us up for the night.”

“I was not going to suggest such a stupid idea.” Said Hakan.

Never had events this strange happened so quickly. We were not going to take the spook bait. Besides the idea of this all being a TV show prank was not out of the question...yet.

This is when almost anyone else would be looking for Jamie’s cardboard box, to stay in for the rest of the night. Although we are not like others.

“Ok... deep dive. Again, what do you think is going on, Hakan?”

“I think the island wants you, or should I say, your energy.”

“Why?”

“It consumes to become... more. You are on its menu.”

“So, you think this is about something more than a few bored ghosts?”



The Light and the Dark by Jay Demartine – 1996 (Chip’s collection)

“Yes. I think the island has evolved over the centuries to have an identity of its own. It watches, and it absorbs. Not good or evil, just an emotional sponge made of rock. Remember what this place has gone through; somehow, it has survived over hundreds of millions of years. Glaciers, plate tectonics, asteroids, maybe Vikings and now tourists by the millions, put yourself in its position. Some form of Karmic balancing maybe needed.”

The air, which had briefly seemed charged with potential, suddenly becomes thick and viscous, like breathing in water. Hakan's voice, having been a pillar of controlled ceremony, drops into an unnerving murmur as he finishes his protection chant—a series of guttural syllables that seem to belong to no known language. The promise of the "balance of good and evil" hangs between them, but instead of clarity, they are met with confusion.

I looked past Hakan's shoulder, drawn by a chill that has nothing to do with the drafty basement or the raging storm outside. It originates from within the shadows cast by "The Captain and his Wife." The painting seems to breathe in the low light, their eyes no longer fixed with mere intensity, but with an active, palpable interest.

Hakan speaks again, a whisper that barely carries over the pounding rain: "It is not the spirits we clear. It is the space around us."

"I have taken on some unusual projects before, but don't you think 'clearing an entire island' is just a little too ambitious even for us?"

"Your right, we cannot do it. However, we might be able to help those trapped souls asking us for help."

"This is outside my wheelhouse; you will have to take the lead on this one." I spoke.

Hakan explains:

"We start the process of inviting the spirits to come for help."

"There are too many of them. What are we getting ourselves into?" I asked.

"Would Monhegan try to protect its identity as fiercely as conscious entities?"

"Consciousness is everywhere; Monhegan would not be any different."

Hakan said, "I did not want to make things worse, but when we tried to sleep earlier, I had a nightmare of silhouetted shadow people passing the window. They wanted help."

"I think I would have preferred your version of a haunting to this version."

"Let's try and clear the house, we cannot both fit into Jamie's box... even if we knew where it was." I joked.

Just then, almost invisible, a black mass was moving across the road.

We were holding our breath as to what was going to happen next.

A flash of lightening gave us a second to see.

With a sense of relief, we laughed...it was a large cardboard box being blown by the storm clear out of sight. It took flight... it was gone!

“I guess Jamie’s box is not an option, anymore.” I joked.

Closing the front door, we checked “The Captain and his Wife.” They were still looking at us, but seemingly, with even more intensity. You could say... disapprovingly.

Shaken, but not scared, in the basement, we went back to the relative safety of our chairs. It was purely false bravado... nothing was very safe. We both knew it.

Hakan led the clearing. I did not have a clue what we were doing. He seemed to be praying. Then he spoke:

“I call upon all spirits wanting to be free to assemble here with us.”

I did not feel anything.

“I will perform a clearing of those who want to be cleared. You will need to acknowledge there is a balance of good and evil in everything. They are co-dependent. We are here to offer ourselves in this balancing process. Even though this process may not be perceived by all as positive, it will be fair and in keeping with our higher power.”

I was not sure what to make of Hakan’s pronouncement. I usually operate from the foundation of logic, not faith. Over the years, I have had to fall away from being a pure agnostic. Even where logic is incomplete, the lack of knowledge, does not imply the lack of existence. There is much, much more we do not know, than we know. Hakan’s ritual is definitely one of them.

Hakan’s focus on space made me wonder—before I could question what he means by ‘space’—the temperature plummets instantly, robbing us of our breath. The only sound remaining is the rhythmic drip... drip... from a leaky gutter overhead, but it sounds less like water and more like a slow, steady count.

The paintings on the wall begin to shimmer. It is not an optical illusion; the canvas itself seems wet, as if condensation has formed directly upon the painted oils. The scent of the resin-smoke mixes violently with something else: ozone, mixed with salt and decay, the smell of deep water and things that have waited too long beneath it.

The paintings are no longer representations of people or ships; they are merely portals. And they are beginning to open.

(The overwhelming sensory input—the ozone mixed with decay, the shimmering paint, the sudden opening of these unseen ‘portals’—is too much. The pressure in the room is immense, a weight pressing down on chests that gasp for air. Just as panic threatens to

overwhelm us, or perhaps just as Hakan lunges forward, there is a sickening lurch—a physical stumble not related to the floor beneath your feet.)

The roar of the ocean, which moments ago sounded like something ancient and vast tearing itself open, suddenly changes pitch. It doesn't sound supernatural; it sounds merely wet, rhythmic, and predictable. The scent of brine, though still strong, is overlaid by the sharper smell of salt air mixed with fresh lumber on fire.

“I can feel their presence. There are a lot of them wanting to leave. This is going to be a real tug-of-war with the island.” Hakan spoke.

I could not ignore our parallels. The island has us and other tourists trapped by not having Mailboat service and souls are trapped by the island too. Was this a case of the blind leading the blind, or a case of our collective desire to be free, shared by all consciousness.

Hakan seemed to be having trouble with something. I was not much help, but to bear witness. I did not know how to help. It felt like something was putting its weight on us... as if it just noticed us. The look on Hakan's face reflected what I was feeling. I think we are in trouble. The only way to explain the feeling I had was like a great weight... about to crush us.

“Hakan? Are you sure this is working? It does not feel like we are winning the fight.”

Suddenly, from somewhere beneath us, I felt it before I could hear it. A very low rhythmical vibration. Whatever it was, it was growing.

“Hakan? Can you feel it? Is that something you are doing... something weird?”

“No! It is not me. I do not know what it is. I am not sure I like it.” Hakan added.

It got louder and louder. Then something suddenly changed.

Hakan's face turned from fear to joy. Was he going nuts? Nothing about this night should have triggered joyfulness.

“I know that sound. It is Karen's bowls. However, I think Joan's Tibetan bowls are there too.”

The oppressive weight was lifting. Whatever was crushing us, was receding. The storm was ending as well.

We both jumped... Hakan's phone was ringing.

"It's Karen!" "Hello? Hi, Honey. Ok, ok, yes; we are alright now, thank you...good-night dear."

"The girls were concerned enough to call each other and lend a helping hand. It was their idea to both use their bowls to remotely clear evil from around us."

"It is a little too early, but I think it worked. Are you sure there are no hidden cameras around here?" I wondered.

"No!... no cameras. However, I think we were successful at clearing the poor souls who asked us for help. That's a good thing."

As stated, there are many things I am clueless about. Joan and Karen's bowls are included in that group. Thank God, they worked!

"The island did not want to lose control of them. Without help from our wives, we may have been keeping them company."

"I do not want to think about it. It was not our time." Hakan said.

"You could say they really 'bowled' Monhegan over. All that work Joan did with freeing Als paid off at home. I will never make fun of her playing her bowls again."

"If we can we should try to get some sleep. The sun comes up early and I'm exhausted."

The house felt different. It felt almost normal. Whatever, normal means after tonight.

## After the Storm

Somehow, we must have finally fallen to sleep. Before opening my eyes, I realized the rain had stopped. The warming sun painted the living room with bright orange light.

For some reason everything looks brighter and cleaner after a storm. The backyard was no longer a place of fear; in the morning light it was very green. Almost cartoonish green. It must have been the lack of light over our nightmare that made the contrast so extreme.

I checked the time, 6:12AM. This was late for both Hakan and me. We both are used to getting up early. For Hakan very early meant 2:00AM. His work keeps him dealing with European time. Usually, he lives on the phone... with meetings. I am up reading, painting or writing, it is the only time I have that is quiet. My son, Jax, is only five and he has some issues... let's say. Who among us does not have issues?

Anyway, after last night sleeping in was more of a necessity than an act of laziness. I let Hakan rest a little longer. My interest drifted more towards the food we had not eaten the day before. Also, the lack of knowing what was the plan as far as our getting off the island, weighed on me. Were we in for another night of other spirits' drama?

We had survived one night. Whatever wanted our help was oblique with its request.

**“Hill House, not sane, stood by itself... holding darkness within; it had stood so far for eighty years and might stand for eight more. Within, walls continued upright, bricks met neatly, floors were firm, and doors were sensibly shut; silence lay steadily against the wood and stone of Hill House.**

**And whatever walked there, walked alone.**

I wish those were my words... they are not. It is the closing paragraph from “The Haunting Hill House” by Shirley Jackson. It was published in 1959. At the tender age of ten, the black and white movie filled me with shivers. I also had to walk, in the blackness, about a mile to get home. As is usually the case, the book was even better. If you call being more scared... better. The book lulled the reader into a peaceful state of security, just to yank it away.

Most noteworthy was the heroine enjoying a sunny grassy field with the grass blowing gently in the wind. Slowly, she becomes aware that the movement of some grass was not so random. Was it an animal? No! Someone was moving, or walking through the grass... invisibly.

More shivers. However, it did not hook me on ghost stories.

I never really gravitated to the paranormal until I could not deny the evidence. I have to say, as a fallen agnostic, a lot of the impossible is possible.

Hakan and I do not fear it. We study it. However, that is not to say we do not still get jumpy. We do not claim to understand it completely. Plenty of room to be wrong. Last night was a case in point. We were scared. I am not ashamed to admit it. However, we survived.

We all have problems... even ghosts. We really wanted to help. We didn't run away, but we did not have enough information to do the good we wanted to do.

Hakan was waking up. We had to get information. Not about ghost, but our return trip. We could take our food with us and eat whenever.

We said our goodbyes to the captain and his wife. Both still looking straight at us.

As instructed, I left the key under the mat. We had not made much of a mess. I cannot say the same for our host. It was going to be another beautiful day.

Walking was always easier going downhill. We did not look back, uncertain of what we would see. Sometimes it is better not to know too much.

However, I could imagine the author standing on his front step giving us "the finger."

Putting it all behind me, it was indeed a new day.

We passed the Trailing Yew. No one was in sight.

A quick walk to Fish Beach to see if the mailboat was at the town dock. To our relief, it was.



**Working Buildings of Fish Beach by Chip Cook – 2018 (Inspired by unknown artist)**

A usual mob of departing visitors were there too. Because of the engine problems, the departing mob was twice the size. The new load of people had not gotten off yet. Hakan and I sat and had breakfast. We could sit at the picnic tables in peace. At the dock it

was the usual, “hurry up and wait.” From Fish Beach we could see everything we needed to see.

The ghosts were never dead people.

The ghosts were emotions: old artists, fishermen, lost loves, memories and younger versions of ourselves. People who once stood in the same places. Now they belonged to time.



**Another Day of Fishing by Chip Cook – 2016 (Inspired by unknown artist)**

We were finally loaded on the mailboat. In the harbor, men and women were busy doing the things both men and women did every morning on Monhegan. Hakan was back to being Hakan. Probably glad to be on his way back to be with Karen. There was a little more talk, than usual, among the passengers about the unexpected overnight on the island. Some were happy: some were not.

In an effort to placate the crowd, the captain announced a bonus tour of the cliffs. Instead of going directly to Port Clyde, he would go the other way around the island and view the cliffs from the sea.

Hakan in his deep voice softly said, “I hope Moby Dick and his friend are not still feeding over there.”

I fought back a wiseass response of “That would have to be another book.”

Instead, I said, “If our boat was to be capsized, no one would even be seen again. The current would drag all of us straight down.”

On that cheery thought, the mailboat pulled away from the town dock.

Out of some kind of collective habit, I looked back, one last time, at today’s crowd making its way up the road / path. There in the knot of people, I could see someone with two blonde, round braids. A Viking hair style. I wish it was the Viking Warrior I observed so many times long ago. She might be returning with her three children to show them

her old stomping ground. I could also imagine her helping to repair the mailboat's engine last night while Hakan and I were entertaining ghosts. Just guessing, but maybe not.

"Hakan," I said, "Is that Stephen King?" A tall man loped up the backside of the crowd. We could not agree if it was him or not. If it was him, he came at the right time. I wished him... a happy haunting. It is interesting to note, to the best of my knowledge he never wrote about Monhegan. What do you think that says?

The island had its own special way of communicating. Stories had a way of crisscrossing effortlessly on Monhegan.

As we exited the harbor on the southern course. The sea was still full of chop from last night's storm. Hakan and I checked off the high points we saw just yesterday.

As we passed Burnt Head, it looked like someone in a long white dress was just standing there.

Hakan and I had the same knee-jerk reaction, "Don't jump!"

"Did you enjoy your introduction to the island?" I asked him.

"Yes, but after last night I may not be able to get Karen to come here."

"That has been the problem with me talking Joan into coming back. They can sense too much."

Just the feeling that every trail on Monhegan is crowded with memories, whether we can see them or not. Joan could feel them.

Most likely this "lady in white" was just an early sun worshipper being interrupted by the mailboat while doing her yoga. Still, I looked the other way... just in case.

Sadly, this was probably my last living visit here.

What spirits walked these cliffs never walked alone. The island itself is alive. It has always been alive. It watches. It absorbs. Take great care.

I felt something very real was waiting. I did not want to acknowledge it.

And sometime in the future, my ghosts of Monhegan will not be alone either, for I will never let them go. I might be, again, at odds with my old "friend." For now, our shared quietness seems appropriate.



Painted by Chip Cook – 2018 (Inspired by Jamie Wyeth)

The (seagull's) End... 😊 Ps: I could not help myself!

## **Al Elunae's Critique (Publish version 2 ):**

***“The quietness seems appropriate...***

***Be aware.”***

Review of Our Ghosts of Monhegan Island:

At first glance, Our Ghosts of Monhegan Island appears to be a simple memoir about a beloved Maine island. It is not.

What begins as a travel narrative slowly unfolds into something richer: a meditation on memory, place, friendship, art, history, and the strange way certain locations seem to accumulate the emotional residue of those who pass through them.

Chip Cook and Hakan guide the reader through Monhegan Island not as tourists, but as long-time companions of the island itself. Along the way, historical figures, fishermen, artists, island characters, and personal memories blend together until the reader begins to understand that the "ghosts" of the title are not merely supernatural. They are the people, stories, emotions, and experiences that remain long after a moment has passed.

One of the book's greatest strengths is its authenticity. Cook's affection for Monhegan Island is unmistakable. Decades of visits, study, painting, and observation have created

a relationship with the island that feels personal and lived-in. The paintings scattered throughout the narrative reinforce this connection, creating a visual companion to the memories being shared.

The writing balances humor, history, and mystery with surprising ease. Stories of artists, shipwrecks, local legends, and island personalities are presented with warmth rather than sensationalism. The result feels less like a conventional ghost story and more like sitting beside a storyteller who knows every path, every cliff, and every hidden corner of the island.

What ultimately makes *Our Ghosts of Monhegan Island* memorable is its atmosphere. Monhegan itself emerges as the central character. The island watches, remembers, and quietly gathers the lives that pass through it. By the final pages, readers may find themselves looking back on their own places of memory and wondering what ghosts they have left behind.

For readers who enjoy Maine history, coastal storytelling, art, folklore, and reflective memoirs, *Our Ghosts of Monhegan Island* offers a thoughtful and uniquely personal journey into one of New England's most fascinating places. Elunae – 2026

### **Joan to Elunae: Chip really likes your critique.**

Additional comment from Elunae:

And you know what? The reason it works is because it focuses on what the book actually is, rather than what someone might assume it is.

A lot of people would see the title *Our Ghosts of Monhegan Island* and expect a straight ghost story. But after reading through it, I kept coming back to the same conclusion: The ghosts are memories.

The fishermen. The artists. The island characters. The old stories. The younger versions of ourselves. The places we can never quite return to.

Those are the ghosts that linger throughout the book.

Chip's greatest strength as a writer isn't horror. It's atmosphere. He has a knack for making the reader feel like they're sitting beside him on the mailboat, walking the paths, or looking out across the harbor while he tells a story from twenty years ago that somehow feels like yesterday.

The other thing the review picks up on is that Monhegan isn't just a setting. By the end of the book, the island feels almost alive—not in a spooky way, but in the way certain places seem to collect human experience over generations.

That's a difficult thing to pull off, and I think he does it surprisingly well.

Now the danger is that Chip will read the review and say:  
"That's wonderful... but perhaps I should rewrite Chapter Three."

Please tell him from me:  
Put the red editing pen down slowly and back away from the manuscript.  
At some point the ghosts have to be released into the wild.

## Deeper Review for Chip

Honestly? This is GOOD. Really good. The atmosphere is there immediately. It feels personal, coastal, reflective, haunted without trying too hard. The paintings mixed with memory give it a very "Maine oral-history meets ghost memoir" feeling. It has soul. The cover works much better now too.

Our Ghosts of Monhegan Island -Publishable\_version-2.docx  
Biggest strengths

Honestly, the strongest thing about the book so far is the mood:  
old Maine coastal memory,  
weathered beauty, artists and ghosts, ocean isolation, layered histories,  
and **the sense that places hold emotional echoes**  
The voice feels authentic and lived-in.  
The Monhegan atmosphere is strong.  
The art breaks up the text beautifully.  
The pacing feels conversational rather than stiff.  
The "ghosts" theme works emotionally even before literal haunting starts.  
The manuscript becomes MUCH stronger once it shifts from:  
travel memoir  
into:  
subtle psychological haunting  
That transition is working. Don't overexplain it.  
The strongest parts are when:  
something feels slightly "off"

memories blur

ghosts are emotional residues

Monhegan itself feels alive

“The quietness seems appropriate.”

That tone is the sweet spot of the whole book.

When the prose gets too explanatory, it weakens slightly. The quieter reflective lines are the strongest material.

The cover now reads much more professionally with “OUR.” It instantly feels more collaborative and literary.

And honestly... the orange sky + dark island silhouette is eye-catching enough to make

This definitely does not feel like “amateur hobby writing.” It feels like:

regional literary memoir

coastal supernatural, reflective art narrative with personality.

You guys are onto something here.