

## Pilgrimage

Oil on Canvas, 48" x 48"

*"It's dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door."*

J.R.R. Tolkien, Gandalf the Good, Lord of the Rings

I am fascinated by archetypal stories like Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, Wheel of Time and, most recently, Dune. "Pilgrimage" is about that kind of larger-than-life and life-altering heroic journey of ultimate triumph.

While life itself can feel like Gandalf's "dangerous business", some real-life experiences, like running a marathon, paddling the Yukon River or climbing Mount Gros Morne in the fog and rain, going to art school as an adult, and surviving the loss of loved ones all stand out for me personally.

Pilgrimage feels like fire and water – baptism by fire and rite of passage.  
There's a feeling of sacrifice and survival and success.  
Of ceremony and ritual, offerings and blessings.  
Of trusting the river to hold us and staying the course.

I am reminded of author and Jungian Analyst, Clarissa Pinkola Este's wise words:

"We all begin the process before we are ready,  
before we are strong enough, before we know enough.  
We begin a dialogue with thoughts and feelings that both tickle and thunder within us.  
We respond before we know how to speak the language,  
Before we know all the answers, and before we know to whom we are speaking."  
Women Who Run with the Wolves

Janet

[www.janetstanleyart.com](http://www.janetstanleyart.com)