Dear all, as for all of you I'm sure, some days are better than others. One day I wrote: ' I had just finished the next key stage of a large piece I am working on, in the detailed biodiversity series of paintings, and I have gone to open the main photomontage to work on it and I cannot find the one I so carefully saved. The latest one I can find has at least 24 hours of work missing from it, and, of course, I have no idea exactly what is missing, what I put in during those missing 24 hours of work.

This, as you might imagine, is a trifle frustrating. However, at this point there was a ping, which told me that the painting I have had running in the background is finished. I have paid it very little attention over the last 12 hours or so that it has been painting, just an occasional glance to make sure nothing was going wrong and to turn down the brush size progressively so that the feathers of the great crested grebes in the painting are faithfully reproduced. I made this configuration some time ago, and I love the way that it does all that I ask it to do, which is to paint the details with a tiny brush and the block in the extensive areas of water with fairly big bold brushstrokes.

So, I have a painting to share with you and also shared some good news. Under the Thinking Tree had been offline briefly and was fixed. The website is back up and running normally. This is good, because I have a number of rather lovely grebes to add to it es well as a 'to do' list of items to address.

I expect that some time, long into the future, I will find the missing version of the photomontage I am working on. By that time it will be irrelevant, because, having been able to share good news with you all, I am feeling much calmer and looking forward to re-doing the missing changes. I am very blessed because, I love the work that I do. On my old laptop, sitting in front of me, being painted very slowly, is an absolutely gorgeous evening painting of a great crested grebe swimming powerfully but calmly across a beautiful lake. The computer has been quietly and patiently following the series of processes that I asked it to do sometime late yesterday evening. I think it will finish sometime in the small hours tomorrow. I don't mind because through all of that time, the painting is gradually emerging before my eyes and it is utterly beautiful.

I am also feeling calmer because, whenever I am feeling really frustrated for one reason or another, I always pick up a bible and find two particular passages. I read them to put my own frustrations in perspective. First I read either Matthew 26:36-46 or Mark 14:32-41, in which Jesus and some sleepy disciples spend time in the garden of Gethsemane just before his arrest. Jesus is troubled and sorrowful and prays 'Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." 'This cup' refers to the death and resurrection which Jesus feared, yet obediently did. My frustrations are trivial compared with that.

The other passage I read is John chapter 17. Actually, I normally flip back a few verses and start at 16:25-33 which provide the contextual introduction to remind me who Jesus was and is, and what he did and why. In chapter 17, Jesus prays, first for glory and eternal life (for us all) to come from what he was about to undergo, death on the cross, burial and then resurrection. Jesus carries on praying, first for the disciples, and then for all believers. It completes the work of reminding me how much God loves each one of us, including me in particular, and of putting my frustrations in perspective. Then I am ready to go back to work. Love from Rick'