Dear all, earlier in January I wrote this ‘owing to misunderstanding the letter that announced that I would be able to enter the Peterborough Art Exhibition I now know that I have been successful and because they have had so many entries, I will, like everyone else who entered three entries, be able to show only two.’

After my long history of ponderings on anxiety, you can imagine the flap that I got into about this. And then I found myself watching a robin, singing his beautiful song. Of course, through the window, I could not hear the song, so it could have been a robin singing her beautiful song. Female robins sing at least as well as the males, just quietly. I once got to know one well enough to hear her sing daily for several months - she had a magnificent grasp of melody.

For some days I have been thinking about painting a robin, but just have not got round to it because I wasn't sure why. As I watched the robin today, I knew why.

In Matthew 6:25-27, Jesus says ‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? (NRSV)

I already had the photo, a public domain image from the Wikimedia Commons, where a minority of the photos are CC0 or public domain. I had already chosen this photo: a Eurasian robin, which fills the frame, except for some space in front of the bird; a background that was soft focus, so that the bird was the centre of attention. As soon as I found it a few days ago, I stopped looking.

Today, I wanted to make something very obviously a painting, since there was no rush. Recently I developed a configuration which paints the canvas blue and takes ages to cover it up, using a mixture of large brushstrokes in soft focus areas and much smaller strokes, very suitable for feathers or fur, in areas with lots of detail. I love the paintings that it makes and will use it a lot.

I did make one other painting of the robin because I knew that the brushstroke configuration would not capture the reflection of the sky in the robin's eye, so I ran a quick acrylic paint configuration and painted in the eye from that painting.

I am always happy when I see or hear a robin sing. It makes me happy, and that is appropriate because the word Jesus used over and over again in the beatitudes earlier in the sermon on the mount in Matthew 5:3-12, is makarios. Makarios is an ancient Greek word meaning happy or blessed. I know when I am happy but at that time I was less confident about blessed, so I tended to think of the word Jesus uses over and over again as happy because I can get my head round that more easily.

So, I stopped flapping, the painting worked perfectly, and I was able to tell you about my misunderstanding without anxiety. And I am happy because my anxiety has calmed. I am no longer worried about having said I had three items in the exhibition when I only had two. I have told you all, and I am happy. Love from Rick'