



Photo courtesy of Robert Wolf

Close-up: Robert Wolf

Robert Wolf is a keen observer of the American scene. For over four decades he has traveled America's back roads and backwaters, searching for iconic American figures and regional folkways. This led him to establish Free River Press, a nonprofit, in 1990, with the mission of documenting contemporary American life through writing workshops that he conducted with workingmen and women across the country.

Since that foundation, the press has published 26 titles, and in 1991 Oxford University Press published a collection of Free River Press writings, *An American Mosaic: Prose and Poetry by Everyday Folk*.

Though Wolf has come to be known primarily through his work as an editor, publisher and writer, his six-part radio editorial for Iowa Public Radio, "On Developing Regional, Rural Economies," won the Sigma Delta Chi Award from the Society of Professional Journalists for Best Radio Editorial of 1994. When he travels, he is never without sketchbooks, pens and pencils. He is drawn to record the many faces of the American landscape, and when he arrives home, he frequently uses the sketches he produces on the road as the basis for easel paintings.

"The preservation of the rural American Heartland is another of my preoccupations," Wolf says. It is a "preoccupation" that is amply on display in the three paintings—all oils—he shared with *Rootstalk* for this issue.

Wolf's most recent book, *In Search of America*, is a memoir of his life in the 1960s when he rode freight trains and hitchhiked across the country in search of the American soul. You can learn more about Wolf, Free Rivers Press, and Wolf's projects at www.freeriverpress.org and www.robertwolfwriter.com. 



NOT TOO FAR FROM HOME, OIL,
24" x 12," 2004



SPRING DAWN, OIL,
36" x 24 1/4," 2014-2015

HIGH SUMMER, OIL,
26" x 28," 2003-2013

