

2024

## Reflections of the Long Light: Poems and Images

Foad Satterfield

(Retired) Dominican University of California, f.satterfield@icloud.com

Kimberly Satterfield

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An abstract painting with a rich, textured surface. The color palette is dominated by various shades of blue, teal, and green, with accents of purple, yellow, and brown. The brushstrokes are thick and expressive, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is a complex, layered composition that suggests a natural scene, possibly a landscape or a reflection of light on water.

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Poems & Images

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## Contents

Dedication	4
Strata of Illumination	5
Foreword	7
The Gods Say	8
It Is So...	11
Why We Create—Conversation & Manifesto	13
I Am of...You of	14
Effortless, the Day	16
Jewel Lake	19
Earth Becomes Air	21
Seamless	23
Living to Know	24
In between	26
Angels Are Always In Our Heads	28
Look into Memory	30
The Delight of...	33
How Many Fingers & Toes	35
In Support of Kimberly as Poet: Learning How to Listen	36
Ways to Support Foad & Not Lose My Mind	37
How in Words	38
Not Absence	40
Is There Water? Is there Air?	43
Urgency in the Dark Woods	45
Angels are Ready in the Dark	47
Occupied	48
Prayers in the Soft Dark	50
Gratitudes	52
Bios	53
Credits	54

## Dedication

We dedicate this book to our beloved daughter-in-law and love, Amelia Tavistock, who made her transition in 2022 from COVID when she was 42 years old. She was an artist and a writer, although she probably would not claim these accomplishments. She was a dedicated loving wife and fiercely dedicated mother. We miss her every day and know that she lives on because we continually experience her presence.

### Double Tanka for Amy

a monarch chooses  
to linger mid-October

like the newly dead  
not yet ready to migrate  
to realms of the bodyless

wing tips burn orange  
fluttering against fall winds  
on an off-course glide

loved ones' breath will redirect  
her flight and let her go.

2022

### Strata of Illumination

*~In memory of Amelia Tavistock*

The winged light  
my son witnessed  
as it left his wife's cool body  
becomes the blinding glow  
above the meadow  
where her son now plays.

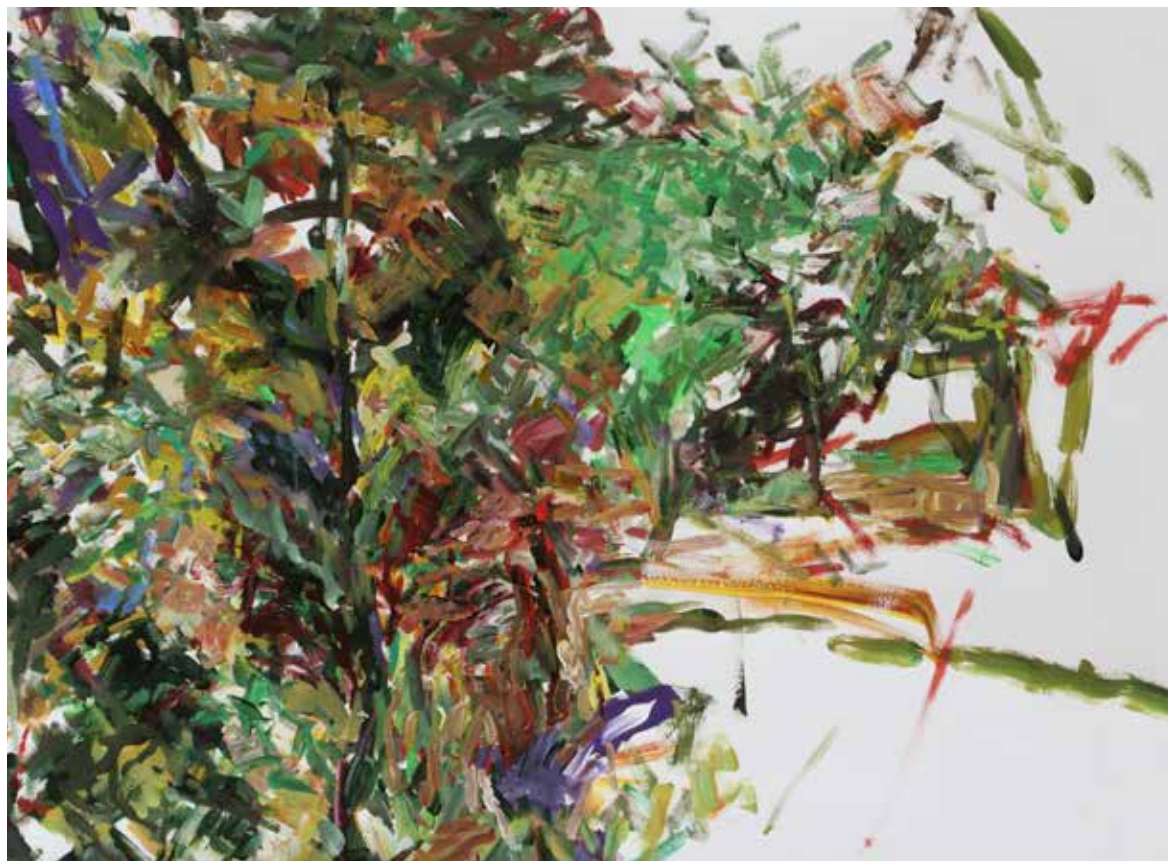
This light—  
welcomes the brightness  
of dreams, births dirges  
from its shimmering effulgence,  
rendered red roses  
float in space.

In her sister's vision  
a long night tunnel culminates  
as inextinguishable flame.

A luminescence  
that softens grief, gleams sleep,  
glimmers

an inquisitiveness  
in the rich brown pools  
of her daughters' eyes.

2022



## Foreward

Over the course of the last year this project has deepened and expanded in scope. What began as an effort to create a platform to jointly share our creative efforts has shaped itself into an attestation of our lives together. It is a testimony to our individual and shared commitments to our work, to our family and friends, to our communities, and most importantly, to our forty-year relationship with each other—personal and shared spiritual relationship.

Ultimately, this work is an ever-unfolding love story and a reflection of the long light of living and being.

We are seekers committed to a spiritual philosophy that affirms life as a benevolent and eternal pattern of being in which nothing is excluded. We believe in this paradox: while all around us and within us, change is both beautiful and devastating, anticipated, and unpredictable, reliable, and undeniable—there is always something permanent, complete, immutable, and ever-present that sustains us.

We are artists, together and separately. We are each other's first beholder of our fledgling efforts, and each other's most reliable loving critic and champion. It is both a gift and a challenge to live and work together, to enjoy long periods of parallel play while also respecting each other's often contradictory rhythms. Would our work be fully realized without each other? We don't think so.

### The Gods Say

*turn around—  
full circle*

*spin fast, spin flow  
but spin  
like a Sufi*

*turn around*

like a Sufi  
whose feet have learned  
to move on their own accord

whose arms lift  
like wings.

Or

say the gods,  
stop  
*abruptly or softly*

when your body, mind  
& heart opens  
to discover a direction—

*This is not the right way  
or wrong way, they say  
it's a way, be curious.*

You will pass  
the street of the moon  
the street of Venus  
the street of ghosts  
the street of roses  
with petal & thorn shops.

Beware of the street  
of birdcage makers  
avoid barbed wire,

remember  
even cages  
made of gold wires  
are still cages.

2022 *After Denise Levertov*







### It Is So...

~Inspired by "Vita Terrestre"

Like Sun and Moon we have our duties—  
sweep our thresholds

water the last of our tomatoes  
feed our dogs, turtles, chickens, and cows

feed ourselves on Rumi, Ross Gay and Howard  
Thurman  
who remind us—

revolution is not dependent  
on any particular day.

It's fueled by generations of angels  
with muddy boots and lit wings.

They say Keep Walking  
toward mountain tops, across rivers

over bridges, through streets.  
Find an oasis in the driest of lands.

Breathing deep  
we remember: the only guarantee

is change.  
Spring's green leaves in fall are fallen.

Kiwis linger in December ready to be plucked,  
apples generously sacrifice themselves to pie.

Can we accept the daily fruit angels offer?  
Listen—

their songs written in sky language  
lighten our feet.

If we keep the door  
of our hearts ajar

we will receive  
instructions.

2016

*Notes:*

\*Rumi is a 13th century Persian mystic whose devotion continues to flow from his words into my heart and the hearts of readers worldwide.

\*Ross Gay's book, *Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude*, finalist for the 2015 National Book award, is a favorite.

\*Dr. Howard Thurman, a 20th century mystic, is a prophetic voice. Author, philosopher, theologian, educator, civil rights leader, and founding minister of Church for the Fellowship of All People, his *Meditations of the Heart* is one of my favorite books.



### Why We Create—Conversation & Manifesto

*To participate fully in the mystery of Life—  
its pathos, passion, the confounding contradictions of love~*

I write whether I'm inspired  
or despairing,  
words are cape or cocoon.

I paint to become vulnerable on the canvas,  
to respond to loneliness & anguish—  
to engage with the affairs of being human.

I write to undam words  
till they flow with flirtatious clarity,  
buzz the mind in search of light.

*To pursue the inscrutable—a relentless inquiry.  
It is here we find connection—intuitive & conceptual comfort~*

Some poems are questions.  
Some poems are answers.

I paint to express existential concerns—  
I pick up the brush,  
select hues that correspond to  
self, place & relationships.

I write to share  
my constantly breaking heart,  
to increase the capacity  
to fill cracks with the gold of love.

I paint to enliven & stimulate  
through & beyond visual interest  
so the painting can be felt.

*We create to engage fully with life, its give  
& take, to find existential freedom~*

I write to bend  
with the curves  
of this round world.

I paint to approach conundrums  
aesthetically,  
without argument,  
confrontation, or alienation.

I write to share  
what is beyond the limits  
of the news, to discover what's new.

I paint to discover  
emotional & creative agreement.

I write to testimony  
youngsters and oldsters  
hooping in a corner lot.

Some paintings are questions.  
Some paintings are answers.

I climb air mountains  
to write bridges between  
what is seen & felt.

I paint to find  
resolutions, interstices,  
commonality.

I write to bear witness  
to the hummingbird  
flashing its iridescence  
inches in front of my face.

*We create to pursue the mystery, the foundation  
of work & life, to satisfy our soul's need to  
experience interdependence~*

2023

**I Am of... You of...**

*~For Foad, 23rd Anniversary*

I am of air, you of fire  
I warm in your flame,  
in my sky I will fly you.

I am of music, you of silence.  
With lyrics I cover you,  
in your quietude I rest.

Residing in your abeyance,  
I float. Come  
slip into my reverie.

I am of word, and you of image  
tracing your arcs of color.  
Find me in lines within lines.

I am of heart, you of mind.  
I dye your thought with my devotion,  
image me into motion.

Gathering fragments  
you've cast aside  
I behold your completeness.

Collect  
pieces of me,  
bring them to your chest.

I am of land, you of water.  
Taste my persimmons,  
while I savor your salt and sea.

In raw winter chill  
may we drape our bodies  
in quilts of each other's country  
and in summer free ourselves  
of secrets, unclothe mystery,  
layer our lives in unmeasured reciprocity.

2018



**Effortless, the Day**

*~Inspired by "What Matters No. 2"*

Between gray buildings  
morning wakes from her dream—

A heroine rising from the dark  
she paints the sky with two colors  
effortlessly.

One white gardenia watches  
with a question,

Why?

There it is—green flash—scarlet throat—  
a hum of wings—

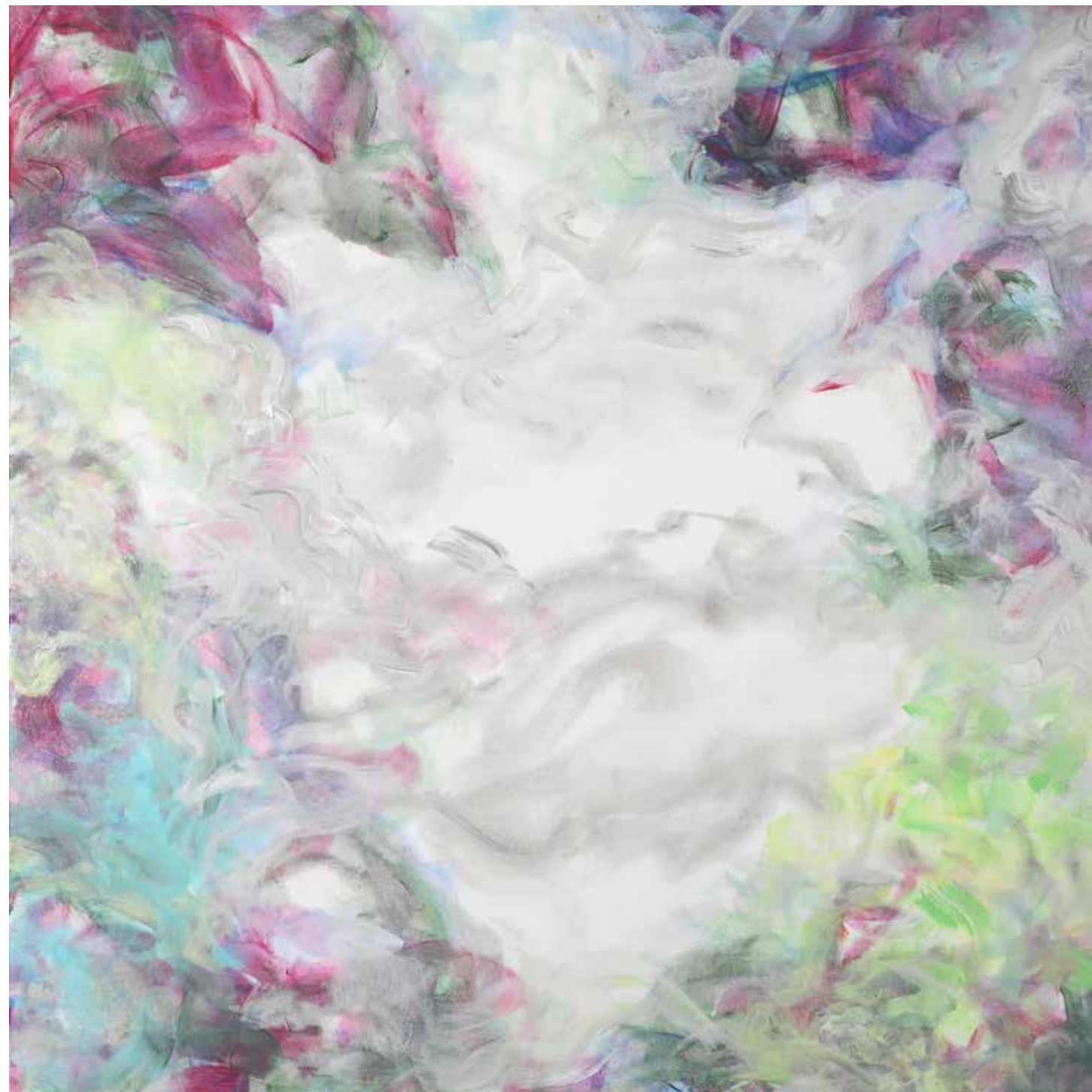
I stand at the foot of my bed

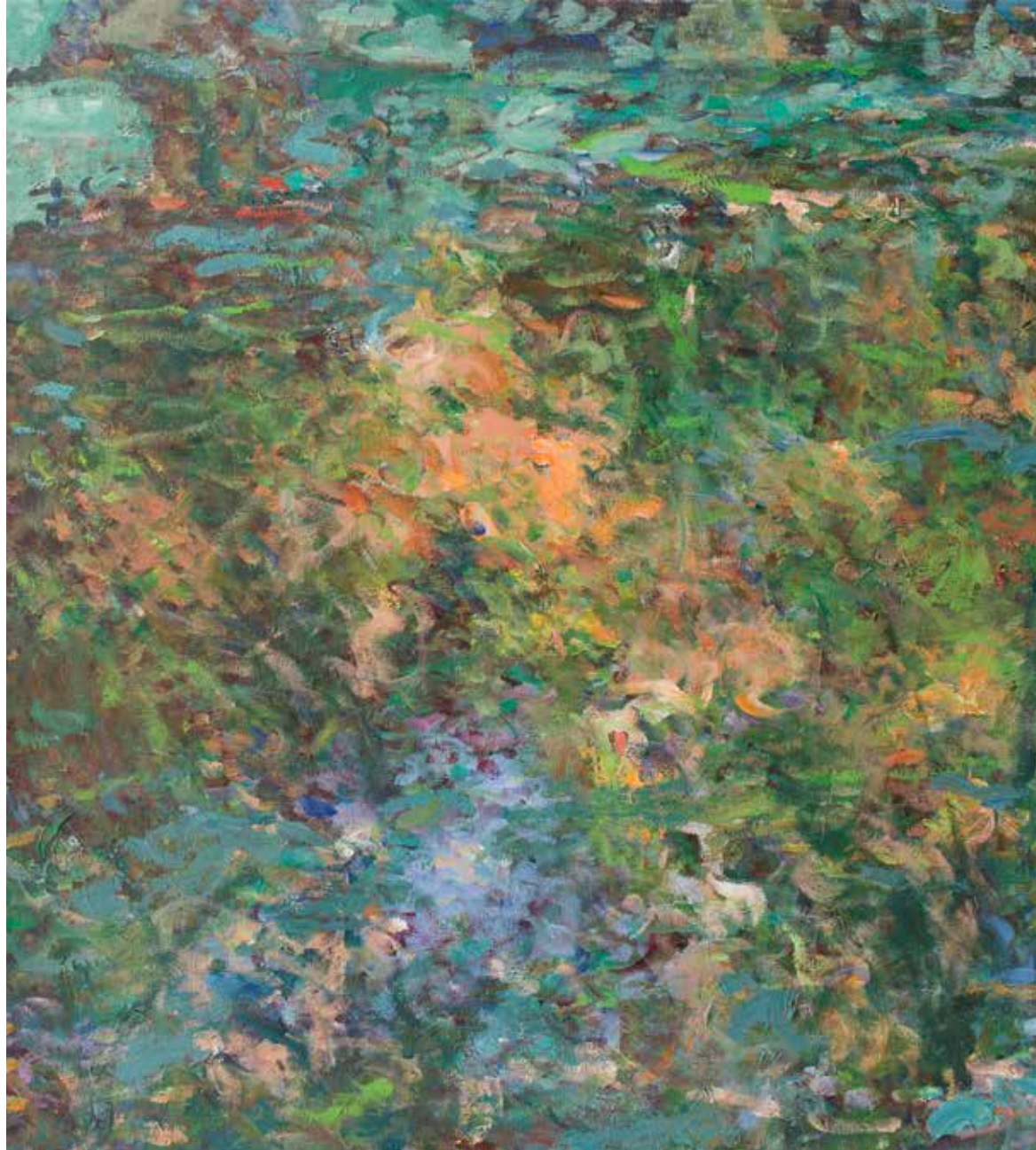
breathing deeply  
watching

red and gold flirt and swirl.

The gardenia perfumes the air.

2020





**Jewel Lake**

*~After "Jewel Lake"*

turquoise strands

loose knots of green

small suns,

flower petal clouds

pink parenthesis—wings—

lake language

remnants on a slow breeze

time lives in layers of water

history inverts

parrots, parasols

feathers attach to fins

2017



### **Earth Becomes Air**

He's been working the canvas for weeks  
sometimes for hours a day  
sometimes only minutes

to discover  
with color and shape  
the dynamism of belonging.

Why is his border between earth and air  
more delineated  
than what separates land from water?

Perhaps this is why hidden wounds  
seemingly insoluble  
lack definition.

What do we know of encroachment,  
roots stubborn resistance  
to relinquishing space,

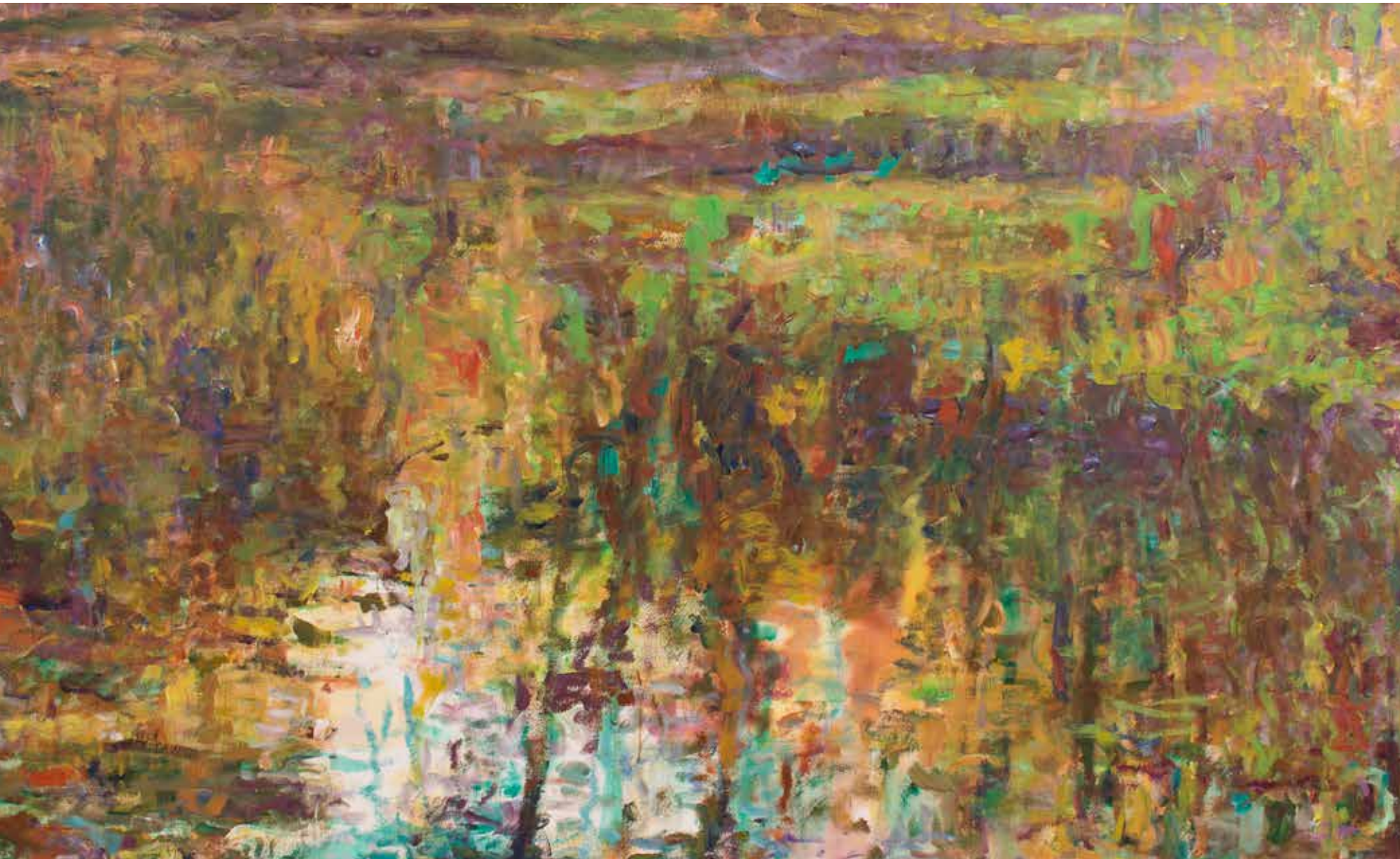
how elements, so familiar—

stick, stone, sun, lake  
strive to sculpt  
this foothill environment?

The solution is not reductive.  
So, he turns the painting  
on its head—

Perspective  
Inverted.

2022



**Seamless**

*~After "Epic Jewel Lake"*

in the blur

bodies covered in paint

turtle feet stir water

my fingers dip in yellow and vermillion

whirl confetti into sludge

you are green and umber swallowing space

rolling toward center

we discover

there are no seams in this lake

2018

## Living to Know

*~for Foad Satterfield*

Nature,  
its vast body  
an early confidant and friend

despite Jim Crow.  
Your mix-matched bouquet  
of neighbors—  
a comfort

in deep southern green,  
strangled light  
and confluence of waters.

Knowledge, fuel  
for the engine of your mind  
served with large shovels  
full of family love—

Great-aunt Bertha  
who taught you how to sew  
renegade clothes

her leather chest teeming  
with world treasures  
inspiration for your adventures—

Cool California summers  
with San Francisco cousins, the DeYoung.

Vietnam, a gash  
between college and graduate school.

Marriages, children, swarms  
of grandkids, cats and dogs.

The industry of academia  
Cairo, Paris, Florence, Istanbul, Barcelona, the Americas—

For you, the geometry of making  
life's connective tissue,  
the impulse to paint

in color, form, space  
to discover the swirl and stream  
of creation—shimmering, alive, immutable.

2021





### **In Between**

1.  
It is not in harsh light  
but in the soft and steady  
however brief  
of in between—  
night slipping into day  
day resolving into darkness.

He paints abruptness  
with a yielding edge

to cool a flash  
of anger—

crimson to  
violet.

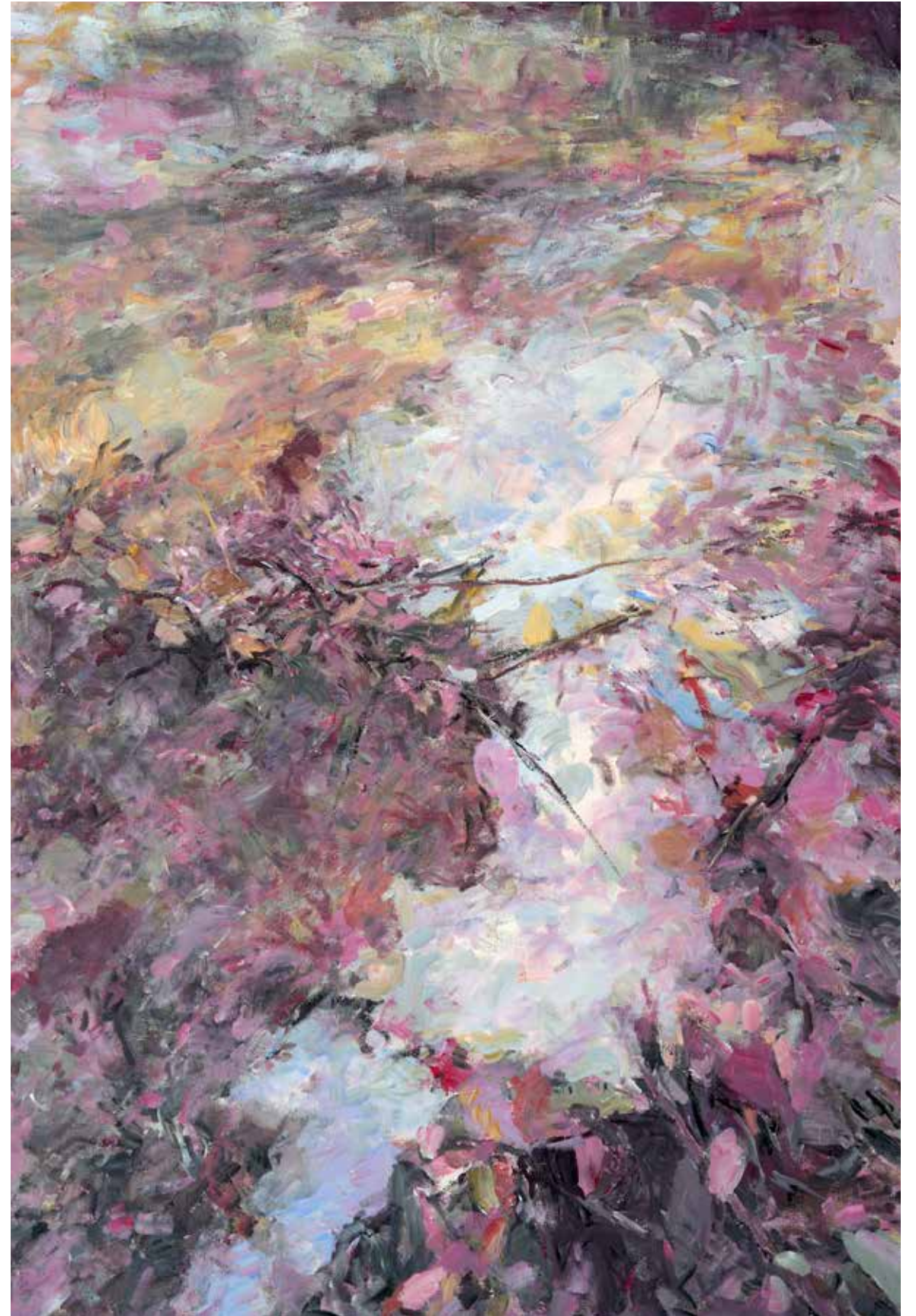
2.  
An extra moment of sleep  
allows eyes to open slowly  
Rising mindfully  
feet keen to explore space  
this day an undiscovered  
constellation.

Eastern scriptures tell us  
every breath is sacred—  
in each moment  
the completeness of time.

When he invites the bell  
concentric circles of sound  
enlighten the room  
the space inside me  
no longer limited  
by the body.

In soft light  
life merges into life.

2015



### Angels Are Always in Our Heads

We tell ourselves:

*You're too \_\_\_\_\_, You're not \_\_\_\_\_  
Oh, that hair. That belly.*

We mistake the angels' laughter  
as ridicule, but they laugh  
because we judge ourselves.

They're trying to teach us  
how to play,  
to squash our *seriousness*  
like a bug.

We are like balls needing air,  
and the angels are trying to inflate  
us to the right amount of *bounce*.

Last week, a grey-haired grandmother  
with slow moving wings  
told me, *It's alright dear.*

Yesterday, a team of angels  
glided across the track  
of my heart on roller skates  
& I broke into joy.

2020



**Look into Memory**

He studies the black and white photo  
in his left hand  
a sunlit mountain lake in spring—  
while the brush in his right hand  
slides thick paint  
across canvas

He wills memory  
into arm, hand, fingers  
without glancing at the palette

Looking beyond,  
he chooses color  
by instinct.

2020





**The Delight of..**

*~After "Tunnels"*

We will never have our fill  
of the clear turquoise sea  
where angelfish are queen  
and parrotfish glow like stoplights.

The ocean is never blasé—

We swim near blooms  
of tiny yellow tails and fins.

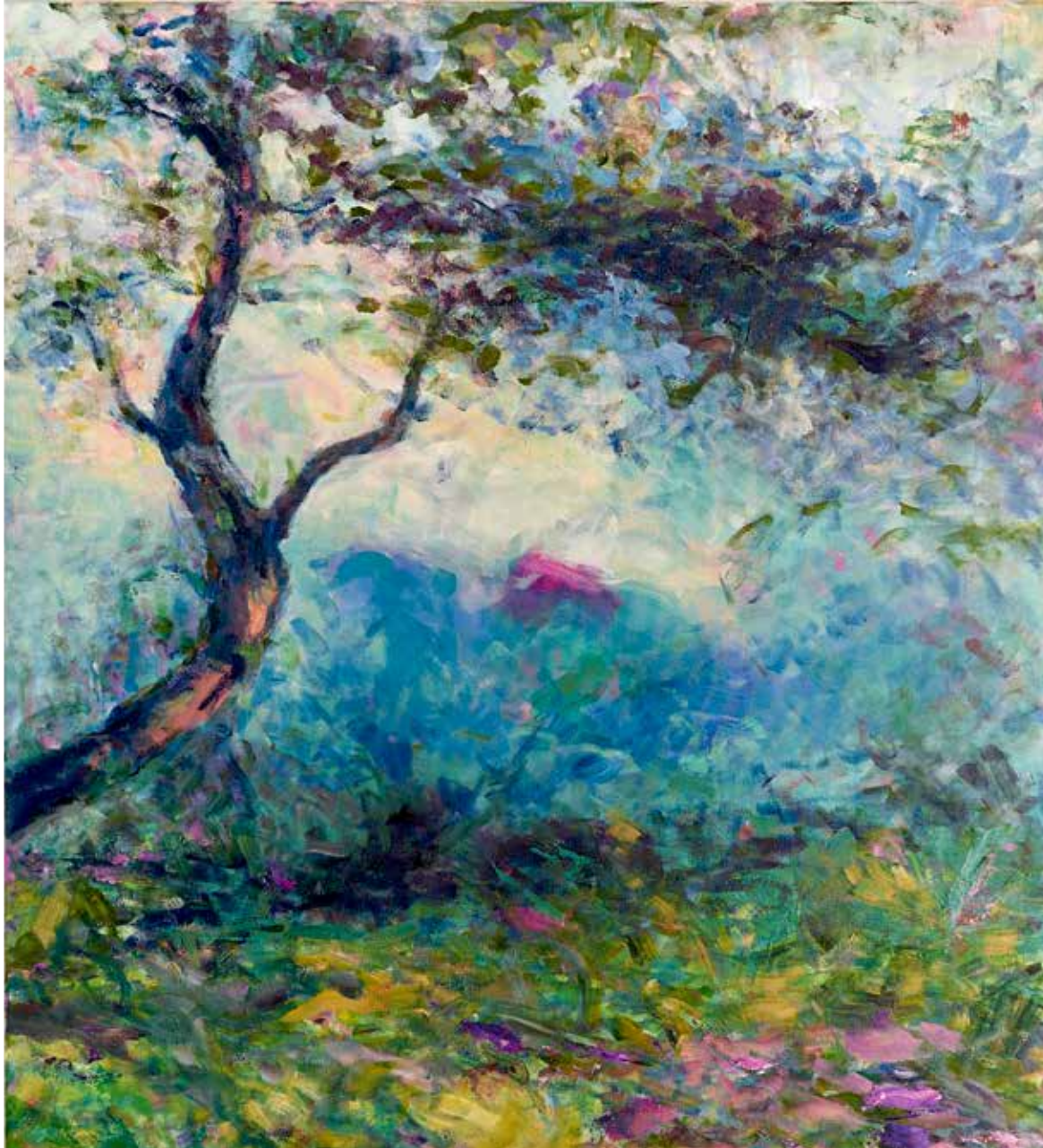
The silent jargon  
of blue tangs mesmerize

until with wavelike movement  
a loan velvet-finned stingray treads

too near with its sword  
and we retreat to the delight

of warm sand on bare feet and  
chocolate flan after perfectly spiced ceviche.

2005



### **How Many Fingers & Toes**

*~ for my beloved Foad on our 27th anniversary*

Beneath the Spanish dagger tree  
petals stain the sidewalk,  
ants burrow into topsoil  
prepare for rain or  
climb brick walls  
& enter through a cracked window  
to nest in the overgrown begonia  
that aches for more light.  
How many fingers & toes does God have?  
How many branches, scales, fins, eyes?  
Does it really matter  
when there is evidence & harvest—  
Hard hairy kiwis can only hang so long  
before they soften.  
Who are we today in our sagging bodies  
& greying hair but an aging love story.  
You with a brush  
full of blue paint  
me scrawling bird words  
across the page  
God surely knows more  
than we do about this messy life  
God with their scales, claws  
& soft kisses.

2022

### **In Support of Kimberly as Poet: Learning How to Listen**

I am learning that in order for language to become a poem  
words require the necessary light and space to clarify and congregate on the page.

May my heart, eyes, ears be as open as our unwalled, physical space.

May my words be salve not wound.

May I remind myself that any explanation satisfying only the speaker is incomplete.

May I continue learning patience and how to be available.

May I accept that the language of sharing can be as precise or as elusive as where the next raindrop  
will fall.

May I respect our two unique creative flows. Currents that sometimes run parallel, sometimes cross,  
and sometimes obstruct each other.

May I respect the precious moment when there is no other alternative to making a poem.

May I remember that when poet and painter are in right relationship,  
witnessing each other supports both of us.

Love,  
Foad

### **Ways to Support Foad as Painter & Not Lose My Mind**

Appreciate his genius.

Practice gratitude for enduring love.

Notice the small patch of red in a gray blue sky, a yellow flurry when he says, there is not enough  
articulation in the painting.

Hold a stop sign in front of his face before he paints out an exquisite unrefined corner of the  
canvas.

When he repeatedly says I'm tired, don't say I'm tired, too.

Remember that meticulous care of his brushes, does not translate into cleaning peanut butter  
from knives, plates, surfaces...everywhere.

Be creative about the inequitable delineation of space.

Be available to edit his emails, artist statements, grant applications, interviews.

Make a game out of coming up with titles for his show.

Buy flowers, make tea, offer snacks for studio visits.

Avoid piling shoes in visual range of his workspace.

Breathe deeply. Listen again and again to his words and what is behind them.

Be willing to navigate the waters of confluence & divergence.

Bless both of our tender hearts throughout each day.

Love,  
Kimberly

**How in Words**

*~For Foad on his 75th Birthday*

How in words  
does one express the portrait of a life?

What to include, what to leave out?  
The pillowy soles of your feet,

your fleshy palms, eyes that are  
one moment half-moon

in the next wax three quarters,  
the soft roundness of your ass,

the precise articulation of your lips  
between wide nose and narrow chin.

This sounds so unembodied. So, I say instead  
it is your furnishings that

brings me comfort—  
an indulgent bed for me to rest in.

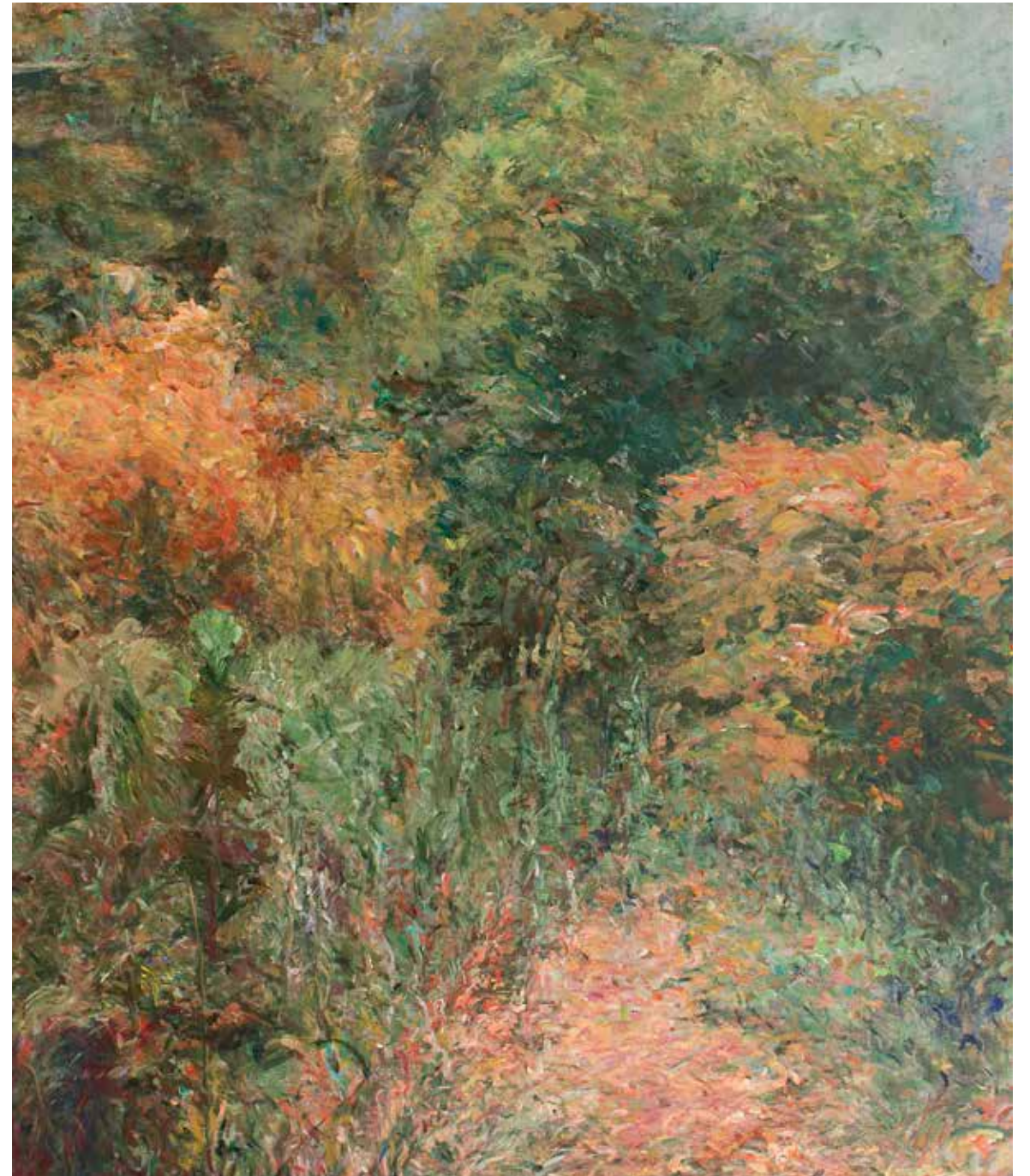
You are steely stove, succulent meal,  
bathtub large enough that when I float

my neck and teeth stop thinking.  
You are the desk where I write this poem.

It is your starry mind,  
the kind harvest in your heart

I find constant  
and most splendid.

2022



### **Not Absence**

There is no black  
paint in the studio

no tube, no can  
he makes it

from primaries, secondaries  
ultramarine  
green  
alizarin crimson

his scrupulous secret ensures  
fullness instead of absence.

There is no manufactured  
black where he works,

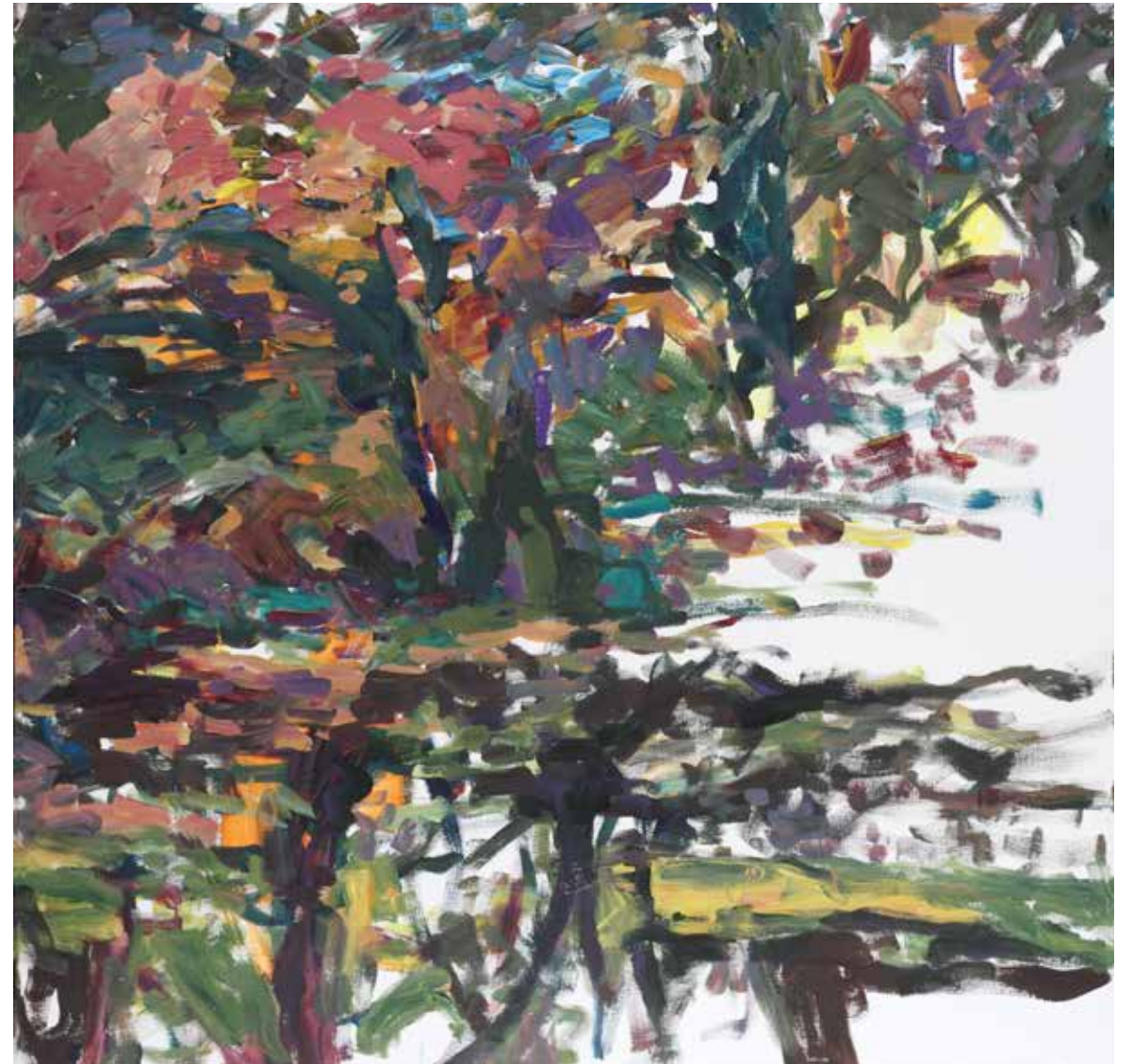
no generic from a can  
no ink of headlines.

No assumptions—  
he mixes colors

not too cool, not too warm.

He takes nothing back.

2018







### **Is There Water? Is There Air?**

*~Inspired by "Muddy Water"*

A world defined by edges  
is not contained on canvas

I sit in its atmosphere  
ready to be consumed

by what I see and do not see  
in a moment.

Brown bands obscure  
light until

orange, red and yellow  
leap into the fore,

re-claim space.

Mud skims the surface of water  
or is it the burdened air?

Branches jab  
smoke infects a hint of leaves

from above and below,  
dizzy beauty.

My eyes rest  
on one small patch of yellow-blue

until everything softens.

Now, I am behind the brown.

Air, water no longer exist.  
There is only light.

Not certain of place  
I'm aware I have landed.

2017



### **Urgency in the Dark Woods**

*~Inspired by "Big Fish Camp"*

In spattered overalls and knee pads, you stand.  
On the floor, your canvas is primed for color,  
your hands, ordinants of paint, wield brushes, palette-knife  
ready to tell the story in stabs and slashes.

What is happening in the dark woods?

There are harmonies in this distal scene  
light carved from behind a fury of saturation.

You could rub it all out, but you don't  
layers of bruised color remain. Charged hands  
forge ribbons of green lightening  
resurrecting two charred trees.

Is this the story you are trying to tell—  
In decay glimmers of life?

On your knees now, one stroke.  
Fervent and furious, hope

lives in your body.

2013



**Angels are Ready in the Dark**

*~Inspired by "Barbara's Garden #3"*

Winter is their season  
reason to return.

They live in trees in rain in long nights  
gleam the air

They use their wings to sweep,  
to sweep clean the scree.

In this time of cold and sparkle  
we can lean on them.

They urge us—  
exult weep purge keep  
wrap up

lightly.

2018

**Occupied**

for Albert Woodfox  
~Inspired by "Woodfox #7"

Your mind's  
widening stream gladsomeness  
free of that dark cell  
that occupied your body for so long.

Birches arch over  
a rose-blue-violet stream  
its permeable shores.

This forest pastoral  
seems to say

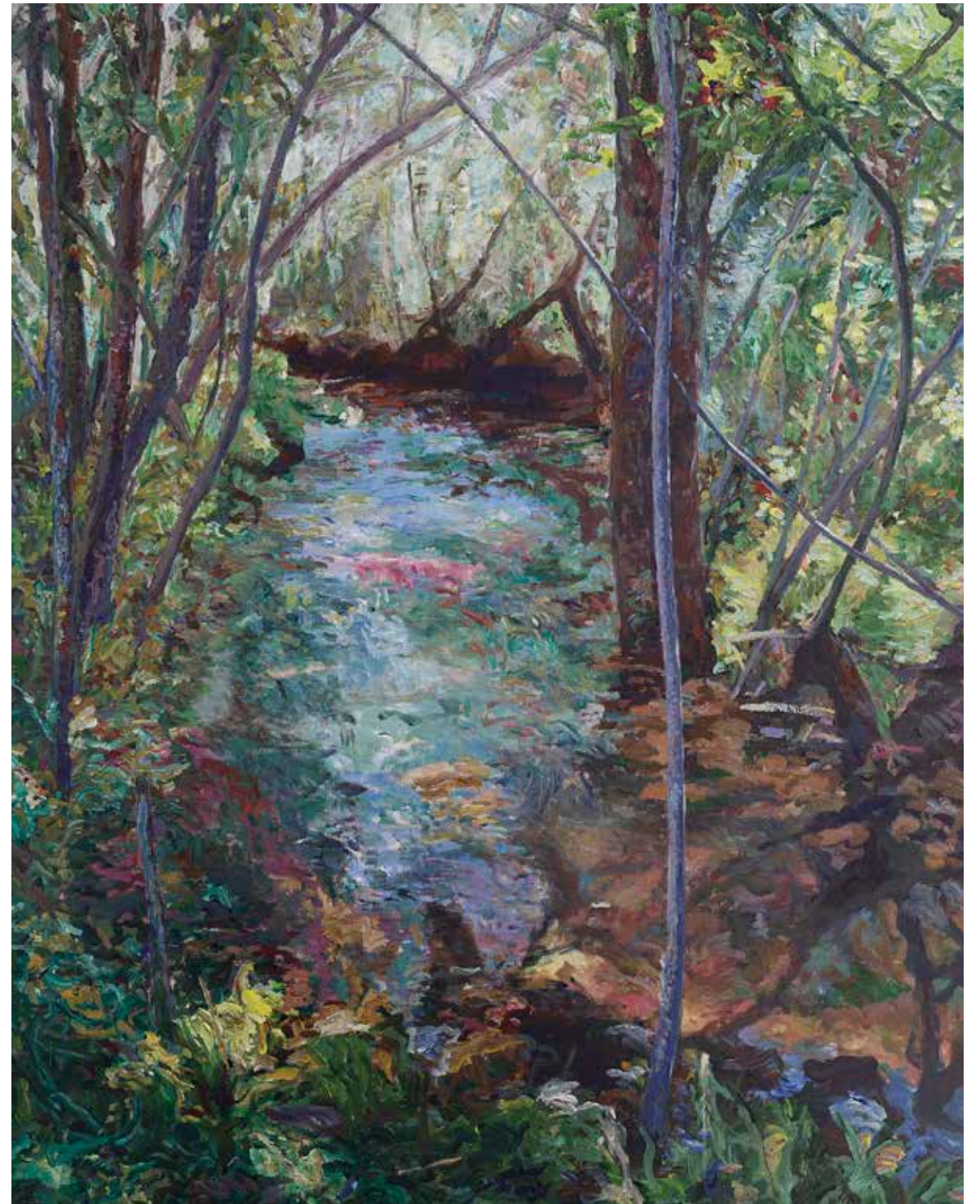
come, walk on water  
it's not too deep—

find shelter here

step into the softness  
of my harmony—

world  
within world.

2019



**Prayers in the Soft Dark**

Glad for this season  
of shorter days

for early sleep  
with hope for sweet dreams

when the sun rests  
in the west—

In flowering trees  
small birds with purple wings

banter with kind angels  
& beloved dead.

Prayers that the soft dark  
will hold our grief

that sorrow will be carried  
by the night sky.

In this cold year  
of unexpected passings—

may we accept impermanence  
is the way of the world.

May the weight of loss  
like packed snow lighten in Spring.

2022



## Gratitudes

Paintings, poems, and projects are not completed without support. This publication is no exception. We want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of those who have fortified, reassured, and championed us along the way. Specifically, we want to thank our family and friends for supporting and inspiring us, Foad's *Breakfast Group, Fresh Ink* who critiqued early versions of these poems, and especially Madeline Lacques-Aranda, Jan Wurm and Robin Michel for their skillful editing, and for Kelley Abraham and Meg Coughlin who put shape to the book. Lastly, we want to thank our sweet pup Sadie who was both a companion and an unknowing arbiter for us. As this project was reaching completion, two days after her 18th birthday she moved on to other realms.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

## Foad Satterfield



Foad Satterfield has maintained a professional studio practice for over 45 years. He served as a Professor of Art at Dominican University of California from 1980-2018, and is now Professor Emeritus.

In his work, Foad focuses on motifs from the living world. In his practice, he draws upon the profundity and spiritual qualities within the natural world by looking deeply to observe closely the seasons as they withdraw and expand.

Foad has shown his work nationally and is represented by Studio Shop Gallery, Burlingame and Maybaum Gallery, San Francisco.

## Kimberly Satterfield

Kimberly Satterfield has written poetry for as long as she can remember. Her writing is inspired by the extraordinary moments of everyday, the wisdom of the natural world, the revelations of meditation and by her work as a Centers for Spiritual Living Licensed Spiritual Practitioner.

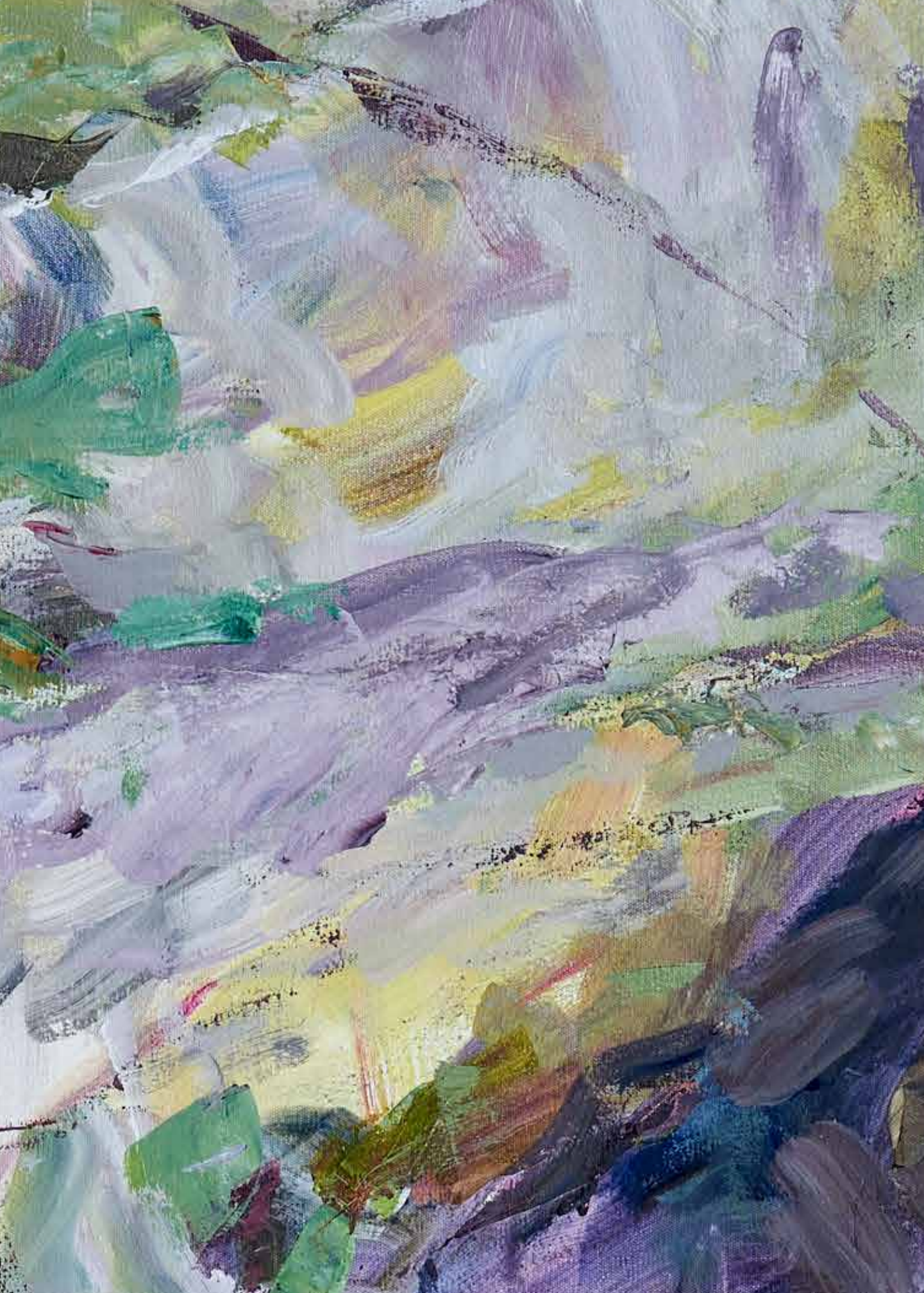
Kimberly's book, *Voices from the Field*, published in 2014, is a reflection on her twenty years as a social worker for Alameda County in California and her experience as a primary caregiver for both of her parents. Her chapbook, *My Life in the Downstream* explores metaphysical principles.

Kimberly's work has appeared in *Milvia Street, Gathering 11, Oakland Multicultural Journal, Street Spirit, Tuxedo, In Other Words* and in the anthologies *How to Begin, The Pencil Writes the Dream, and The Gathering 11*. She is a long-time member of writing groups *Fresh Ink* and *Hillygalz*.

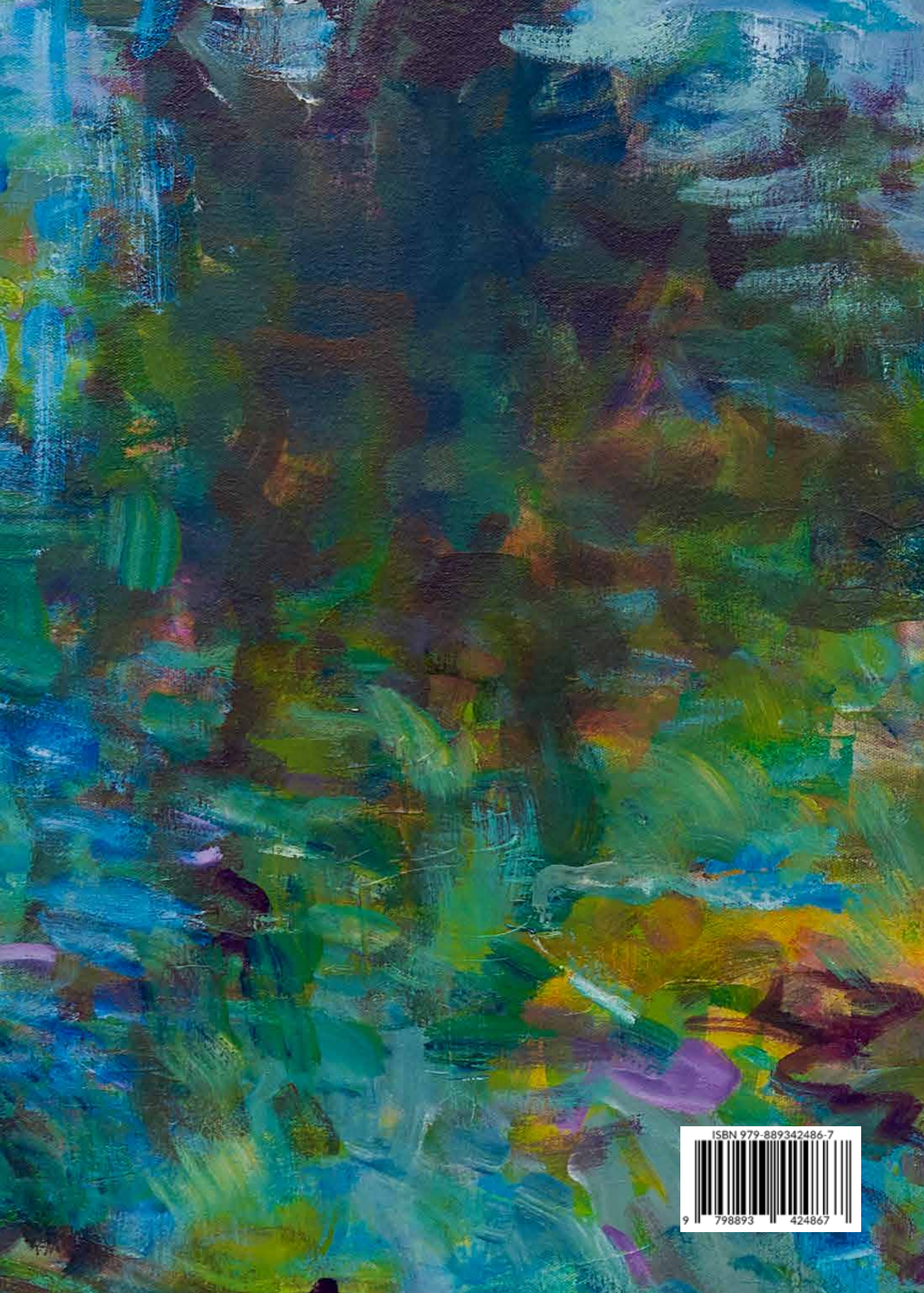


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*Broken Vessels* acrylic, pencil on paper 40 x 30" 1984 / p. 9  
*Vida Terreste* acrylic on canvas 84 x 96" 2016 / p. 10  
*Clotilda* acrylic on canvas 60 x 64" 2016 / p. 12  
*Hollis Street Park 2* paint sticks, acrylic on paper 40 x 30" 2012/ p. 15  
*What Matters No 2* acrylic on canvas 40 x 48" 2020 / p. 17  
*Jewel Lake (panel b)* acrylic on canvas diptych 60 x 50" 2017 / p. 18  
*Pink* acrylic on canvas 72 x 48" 2022 / p. 20  
*Epic Jewel Lake (panel-d)* acrylic on canvas, diptych 60 x 96" 2017 / p. 22  
*Figures in Circle* acrylic on canvas 48 x 48" 2002 / p. 25  
*Sticks and Stones* acrylic on canvas 72 x 48" 2022 / p. 27  
*Prescient* acrylic on canvas 64 x 60" 2022 / p. 29  
*Inquiry 0010* acrylic on canvas 48 x 48" 2023 / p. 31  
*Tunnels* acrylic on canvas 84 x 96" 2023 / p. 32  
*Toulouse Diptych (right panel)* acrylic on canvas 66 x 48" 2023 / p. 34  
*Barbara's Garden No. 2* acrylic on canvas 64 x 76" 2018 / p. 39  
*Ahwabnee (not absence)* acrylic on canvas 48 x 48" 2012 / p. 41  
*Muddy Water* acrylic on canvas 60 x 64" 2016 / p. 42  
*Big Fish Camp* acrylic on linen 80 x 94" 2014 / p. 44  
*Barbara's Garden No. 3* acrylic on canvas 64 x 76" 2018 / p. 46  
*Woodfox #7* acrylic on canvas 69 x 89" 2016 / p. 49  
*Sticks* acrylic on canvas 72 x 48" 2022 / p. 51







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9

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