

# Mille Fontaines

*Vernal Éclipse*



*Eighth Edition*

*Spring 2026*

# From The Editor

Dear Reader,

Throwing written words into the wind spreads the letters like so many leaves, which fall gracefully to earth. In their natural process, they will be decomposed, providing fertile soil in which new ideas will grow. This is the hope and desire of any writer. That their thoughts, when shared, may sow the seeds that germinate in others, and by this endeavor new reflections will cause change and growth.

Smearing paint on a canvas, spreading graphite on paper, forming wet clay into a solid baked shape, converting pixels of light to either static or moving images... each tells a story from the creator's perspective. Equally do they inspire another in the mind of the beholder. Whether those align or not is beside the point.

This spirit of interaction between creator and audience is shown through our stunning array of contributions. Each contributor shed off their winter shell, emerging from a cocoon to greet the world anew. Fresh life and energy abound between these pages. After many seasons of contributions, it is clear to see our artists have changed and grown. They have surpassed previous bounds, evolving towards their more actualized selves.

While the work is never done, it is an exciting prospect that there will always be novelty to discover. Each step forward only reveals another to take, slowly clarifying from the vague fog of the future. This yearly metamorphosis we all undertake allows one to surpass or outshine their former self. But, just as a heavenly body eclipsed by another is not truly gone, our previous renditions lie hidden beneath the surface—ready to inform or guide our matured versions along their paths.

In this sense, each spring season leads to a transcendence, and it remains a phenomenon to celebrate rather than fear. We at *Mille Fontaines* hope this Eighth Edition can bring you, our dear readers, your own *Vernal Éclipse*.

Amicalement,  
Charles P. DeLeon-Franzen

# *Mille Fontaines* Staff

## Editor in Chief

*Charles P. DeLeon-Franzen*

## Design Lead

*Sammy Aldover*

## Editors

*Elliott Grassi-Montoya*

*Erika Neemeyer*

## Designers

*Maeve Gilmartin*

## Special Thanks to:

*Cameron Cook*

*Nicole Rigby*

# Table of Contents

<i>She Watches Over Us as Belle Watches Over Me</i> - Ariel Sophabmisay	Cover
<i>Cette tendresse</i> - Natalie Meulenbroek	06
<i>A Lamb's First Day</i> - Natalie Burchett	07
<i>Cows in the Rain</i> - Virginia Kostmayer	08
<i>Moroccan Crackers</i> - Ella Leafgreen	09
<i>A Pastry With No Name</i> - Cara Halford	10
<i>This Woman Can Move Mountains (Portrait of Dean Yumna)</i> - Alessia Redwine	11
<i>Café Med au printemps</i> - Polly Tappan	12
<i>L'habitude</i> - Sonia Gustavson	14
<i>Quilted</i> - Madrigal Frederick-Law	15
<i>Café Vanim</i> - Mallory Gibbs	16
<i>Arles</i> - Polly Tappan	17
<i>« Ma bonbon chérie »</i> - Olivia Weidele	18
<i>the damned Pigeons</i> - Justin West	19
<i>street 1</i> - Sammy Aldover	20
<i>street 2</i> - Sammy Aldover	20
<i>Mont Sainte-Victoire</i> - Polly Tappan	21
<i>Third degree</i> - Phoebe Mikolaj	22
<i>The Dove</i> - Violeta Báez	23
<i>human, for a moment</i> - Celine Suleiman	24
<i>Punic Ports</i> - Ella Leafgreen	24
<i>Carthage Baths</i> - Ella Leafgreen	25
<i>Coffee in Cudillero</i> - Sheelagh Doe	26
<i>The In-Law Suite</i> - Phoebe Caterer	27
<i>The Botanical Gardens</i> - Sophia Gladieux	29
<i>Car Thang</i> - Ella Leafgreen	30
<i>La rue</i> - Helen Gross	31
<i>Frozen Families</i> - Violeta Báez	32
<i>Pattern as a Wound</i> - Ariel Sophabmisay	33
<i>The Martyr</i> - Ariel Sophabmisay	34
<i>The Hunter</i> - Ariel Sophabmisay	35
<i>Membranous Wings</i> - Sheelagh Doe	36

<i>Old Shirt</i> - Megan Chalfant	37
<i>Untitled #2</i> - Ava Hyrne	37
<i>Ghostly Gurls</i> - Olivia MacLeod	37
<i>Aix à Linge</i> - Anabelle Smith	38
<i>Joy is...</i> - Alessia Redwine	38
<i>Tangerine</i> - Hayden Carroll	40
<i>Partita in A Minor mvt Allemande</i> - Madrigal Frederick-Law	40
<i>Tipping Point</i> - Ella Leafgreen	41
<i>Surrendering</i> - Ben Lucarello	41
<i>Ma vue depuis la terrasse</i> - Polly Tappan	42
<i>Mon cœur</i> - Polly Tappan	43
<i>Vase with Branches</i> - Megan Chalfant	43
<i>Still Life</i> - Virginia Kostmayer	43
<i>Iridescent Bells</i> - Juno Gregg	44
<i>Opaline Iris</i> - Juno Gregg	44
<i>Les fleurs</i> - Charlotte Hughes	45
<i>Release So You Can Receive</i> - Alessia Redwine	45
<i>House of Green</i> - Cally Gudroe	46
<i>Untitled #3</i> - Ava Hyrne	46
<i>Untitled #4</i> - Ava Hyrne	46
<i>Sound of Rain (Helps Me Let Go of the Pain)</i> - Alessia Redwine	47
<i>Migration</i> - Ariel Sophabmisay	48
<i>The Shape of Returning</i> - Cally Gudroe	49
<i>Still Life with Lilies &amp; Fruit</i> - Natalie Burchett	49
<i>Summer Peaches</i> - Megan Chalfant	50
<i>Digitalgurl</i> - Olivia MacLeod	50
<i>Three Trees</i> - Megan Chalfant	51
<i>Streets</i> - Ella Leafgreen	52
<i>Mr. Fish's Motorcycle</i> - James Bird	53
<i>Send off</i> - Phoebe Mikolaj	55
<i>Tomari Iyumachi</i> - Natalie Meulenbroek	57
<i>Rizon</i> - Ella Leafgreen	58
<i>Magpie</i> - C.P. de León-Franzen	59
<i>Unknown Bird</i> - Elinor Gass	59



Eighth Edition

# *Cette tendresse*

Natalie Meulenbroek

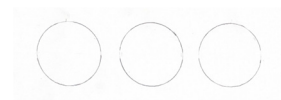
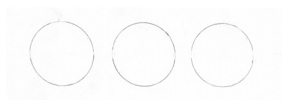
Cette tendresse  
Si mélodieuse  
Si faible  
Si brillante  
Si illustrée  
Cette tendresse  
Faible comme une bougie  
Et éternelle comme l'enfance  
Quand l'enfance se termine  
Jusqu'à ce que cette tendresse disparaisse  
La vie si sombre  
La vie si violente  
Si humaine  
Si fragile  
Et si douillette  
Dans l'obscurité comme les monstres dans l'ombre  
Ou sous le lit  
La tendresse illumine le paysage  
Si sage  
Un chouïa de pouvoir  
Mais sans suprématie  
Pas malhonnête  
Pas piquant  
Pas brisée  
La tendresse accueille la brutalité  
Et fait sans animosité  
Douce comme un câlin  
Délicate comme unE chanson  
Mais résiliente comme un voilier  
Aussi satinée que la mer tranquille  
Aussi vive qu'un papillon  
Aussi raffiné que l'horizon  
Cette tendresse

# *A Lamb's First Day*

Natalie Burchett



2025, Oil on Cardboard, 24 x 19 cm



# *Cows in the Rain*

Virginia Kostmayer

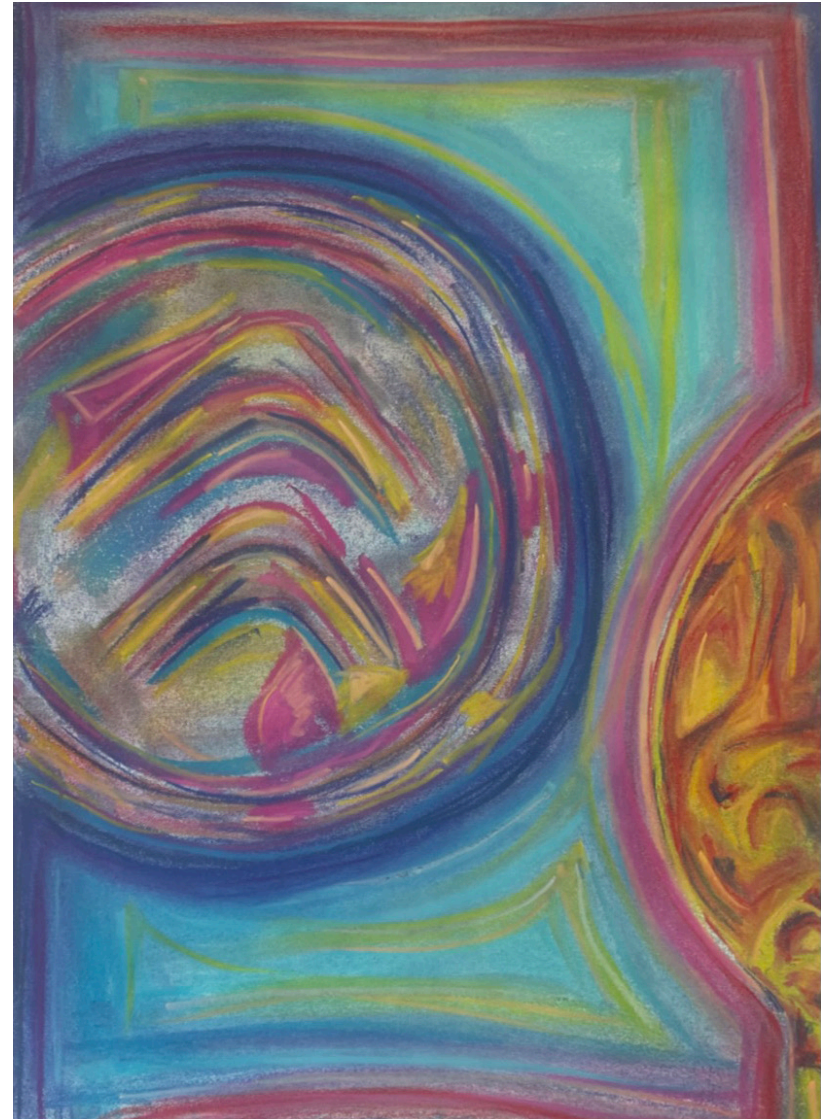


2025, Oil on Canvas, 50.8 x 50.8 cm



# *Moroccan Crackers*

Ella Leafgreen



2026, Oil Pastel on Paper, 25.4 x 20.3 cm



# *A Pastry With No Name*

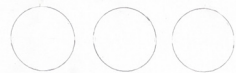
Cara Halford

My first bite is mostly brioche. As I feel my teeth sinking into the pastry, sweet clouds fill my mouth. It's as if I become one of the many pigeons pecking around my feet, flying up to meet the puffy masses above me.

When I was young, my mother used to tell me the freckles that patterned my cheeks and arms came from angels that hid in the fluffy clouds. "Coffee flecks" they were called. As angels lounged on their pillowy beds, the dregs of their afternoon drink would make their way down to create a patchwork of spots on the people below. I pretend I am one of these angels: sitting beneath the eggshell arbor of the cafe, as each flake of my pastry falls to the ground, peppering the pavement. I contemplate my next bite. The buttery light of the sun drips down and spills onto the wicker seats, prickling my skin that is so accustomed to the clouds. I could not tell you the name of this pastry if my life depended on it, all I know is that it faintly resembles the top of a fat jolly tulip, waiting for spring. The voluptuous vanilla *crème* sits in the center of a circle of dough perfectly browned and topped with slivered almonds and bits of sugar. This manicured pastry, hours of handiwork, now sits in the grimy hands of a vagabond. I stumbled upon this pastry and the patisserie it was procured in by accident, dizzied and slightly deranged from hours of flying and walking. I am still stuck in a strange sleepless purgatory between my departure and my final destination, a hotel bed. In my glazed stupor I have somehow picked an Italian patisserie, *Manlios*, as my first taste of France. An irony or perhaps a commentary, depending on your political persuasion. Here I am an American with German heritage sitting in front of an Italian patisserie in France. I can almost hear de Gaulle rolling in his grave.

As you could imagine, and as de Gaulle would also probably remark, I am staggeringly out of place. My bag - far too large, a vestige of American consumerism, turning my shoulders into bent and burned strips. I am hunched over when I should be sitting straight, my hair properly tucked behind my ears, my mouth should not be coated with powdered sugar that makes every crack into a desert and every fissure a fixture of my own embarrassment. I should be speaking, not simply stumbling and mumbling over my own words. I wish I did not care for the sun outside, the couples giggling, the flashing pharmacy sign, the comically small cars bleating like lost sheep. I should, I should...

I let an almond fall onto my finger. I glance at the freckle on my right hand, now also covered in the powdered sugar that coats my lips, and I notice a spot of water right next to it. I look to my angels in the clouds, blindingly white, and they seem to chuckle at me, their cherubic cheeks glowing as I begin to cry. An ache sprouts in the back of my head and climbs up my scalp in between my eyes. Another tear etches its way down my face, getting caught on the corner of my lips, trickling down like a small stream.



# *This Woman Can Move Mountains* (Portrait of Dean Yumna)

Alessia Redwine



2025, Oil on Cardboard, 22.9 x 30.5 cm



# Café Med au printemps

Polly Tappan



2025, Oil on Cardboard, 22.9 x 30.5 cm

The world goes quiet. It's just me and my pastry. The stones beneath my weathered boots dissolve, my shoulders slump from the weight of my bags, and I let the napkin that was crumpled in my hands fall. I feel like one of the tall tan houses around me on rainy days: shutters closed, dust piling up in the corner. I am without furniture, empty. At one point, longer ago than I would like to admit, I had covered my walls in the Arc de Triomphe, my windows had become the Eiffel Tower, my mirror and furnishings tilted and turned in a cursive script. My childhood home was a collage of far off dreams and superstitions, maybe they had all closed and faded like the Bed Bath and Beyond where all that filigreed decor came from.

I could not tell you how long I sat in this stupor until the high note of a saxophone cut through the fog ever so faintly. Then a voice rings out, strong and rich as a cup of steaming coffee. A voice reminiscent of Louis Armstrong and Count Basie reaches my ears, which are curled in on themselves like the escargot I promised that I would try. The voice wraps around my head to the nape of my neck and soothes the ache that had blazed there moments ago, dimming the sun's rays. *La vie en rose* weaves its way through the streets. It reminds me of the movie *Sabrina*, in which a young Audrey Hepburn visits Paris and comes back home sophisticated and grown up as ever. Did she feel like an empty house too? Or were her shutters thrown wide open?

"*Madame... madame, vous avez laissé tomber votre serviette,*" a crackle in the radio, a shift in the frequency.

A withered man in a moss green cap holds my crumpled napkin in his nobbly hand, a misplaced garden gnome in this strange city.

"*Oh, merci*"

His eyes crinkle, I am gripped by the sudden fear that he is going to correct me, that he is going to ask if I speak English, that he is going to ask the most dreaded question of all, am I American. But no inquiries come. He simply turns and begins a slow shuffle away, stopping only once to light a cigarette.

My fingers have grown sticky from the sap of the pastry. I register the clicking of the moss man's shoes, his chestnut brown loafers tracing their way across my mind. I only have a bit of pastry left, most of the almonds have fallen on the ground. The freckle on my right hand is still there, wiped clean of powdered sugar now. I look for the saxophone but only find a radio in the window of *Manlios*. I blink again, still feeling a bit like a vagabond. My phone lights up, the hotel room is ready. There is a bed waiting for me, white sheets and all, I am moments away from becoming one of the coffee fleck angels and yet I can't move.

Something inside me still aches to hear the notes of the saxophone, to taste the sweet vanilla custard of the pastry, or to simply smile at the man in the moss green cap... something aches to go back to the moment that seconds ago felt so blistering.

- Cara Halford

# L'habitude

Sonia Gustavson

## La Rue à l'École

Je marche dans la rue, la rue est ce que je connais bien, une meilleure amie qui me tient la main en marchant jusqu'à l'école dans le froid et puis le chaud... c'est ma route, c'est la route de moi-même, je suis la reine de cette route vers l'école. (Genoux soulagés) Je marche dans cette rue, ce n'est plus la route de moi-même, mais c'est ma route. Elle a d'autres amies, mais ça va. Elle deviendra aussi ma route, un jour!

## Croissants aux amandes

Si doux et marron, la coque décadente  
Tendresse du coeur sous chaque strate belle et fine  
Je ne trouve que toi, toujours entre mes dents  
Moi, une véritable croissant machine

Un équilibre des saveurs délicats  
Oui, j'avoue que c'est une vraie obsession  
Une chasse comme celle d'une souris et un chat  
Un croissant aux amandes. Pas d'exception.

L'habitude triomphe, pâtisserie vaincue  
Merci August Zang, victoire des viennois,  
Je les mange chaque jour, rien d'ambigu  
Un passion dont j ne connais pas la cause

Croissant aux amandes, vous êtes un miracle  
Quand je vous consomme c'est un vrai spectacle



Quilted  
Madrigal Frederick-Law  
2025, Digital Artwork

## Déchets

Déchets. Un petit secret: je ne les trouve pas toujours dégoûtants.  
(Bouchon d'Heineken) Je suis leurs histoires  
Quelquefois abandonné comme un orphelin  
Ou peut être un fugitif échappé

Je les vois sur ma route  
Chaque jour  
(sucette) Les petits sentinelles  
Qui gardent le chemin  
Fortes contre les balayuses

Je les salue  
(vitrine cassée) Sans aucun accent, aucune confusion  
Je ne m'inquiète pas de mon comportement  
(tasse d'espresso) Leur nationalité est évidente  
Mais on parle la même langue.

Je me délecte dans ce petit jeu chaque matin  
et chaque soir  
Je leurs fais confiance  
(étiquette de Paul Cézanne) ils font partie de mon petit paysage  
Bouchon, sucette, vitrine, espresso....-> espresso, étiquette de Cézanne,  
vitrine, sucette.

Les déchets fiables.



# Café Vanim

Mallory Gibbs

## La calligraphie sur le mur

La calligraphie sur le mur  
Est chinoise en nature  
Elle m'appelle avec des murmures  
Je regarde la peinture

La langue je ne peux pas la parler  
Je dois me demander  
Ce que ça doit signifier  
Si je peux deviner...

Le mur et la calligraphie  
Le mot « longévité »  
L'espoir qui reste pour toute la vie  
Bien vivre on le dit

Le caractère me parle bellement  
En deux langues également  
Le mur qui restera vivant  
Indubitablement

## Le temps

Quand je regarde l'horloge fondante, je pense au temps au café  
À longueur de temps  
L'horloge reste au café  
À temps perdu  
Tu la regardes au café  
Air du temps  
Elle a vu le café à la mode et démodé  
Mais après la pluie, le beau temps  
Elle compte beaucoup de minutes et de clients au café  
Le temps passe trop vite  
Elle reste au café pendant tout le temps  
Pour s'inscrire dans le temps  
Le café et son horloge sont connus à Aix  
Depuis le bon vieux temps jusqu'à la fin des temps  
L'horloge contient le passé et le futur du café  
Peut-être que le temps au café fond comme l'horloge elle-même



## Iced latté macchiato avec caramel

Une américaine est assise à une table  
La fille a dû chercher le café  
Elle regarde son portable  
Quelle américaine !

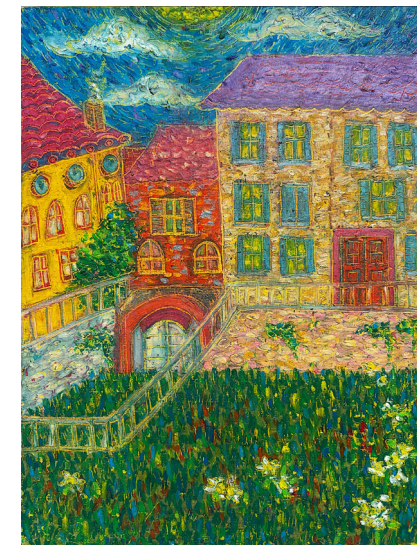
Quelqu'un a donné une recommandation  
On peut étudier et parler là  
Elle apporte son ordinateur  
Quelle américaine !

Elle est très consciente de son apparence  
Un sac-à-dos et les yeux nerveux  
Son « bonjour » est trop timide  
Quelle américaine !

Elle ne peut pas ouvrir la porte au début  
Aux États-Unis elle tire les portes  
En France il faut les pousser  
Quelle américaine !

Elle répond aux questions qu'elle ne comprend pas  
Elle bredouille beaucoup avec la langue  
Elle ne sait pas dire « espèces »  
Quelle américaine !

Finalement elle étudie dans ce café  
Avec un grand sac et un ordinateur  
Elle boit un bon iced latte macchiato  
Et elle trouve une bulle américaine en France



Polly Tappan, *Arles*  
2026, Oil Pastel on Paper  
25.4 x 20.3 cm

## Vanim

Mon frère m'a parlé de Vanim *Vanim est un café à Aix* Tu connais Vanim  
*Non tu ne reconnais pas le nom Vanim* Vanim est un petit café *Si tu passes par*  
*Vanim, tu pourrais ne pas le voir* Vanim passe inaperçu *Mais si tu vois Vanim*  
Il faut entrer dans Vanim *J'aime le temps que je passe à Vanim* Mon frère m'a  
parlé de Vanim *Je montre Vanim à mes amies* Les Américains vont à Vanim  
*J'ai parlé à trop de personnes de Vanim* Mais Vanim reste le trésor de moi et  
mon frère



# « *Ma bonbon chérie* »

Olivia Weidele



2026, Charcoal & Chalk Pastel on Paper, 45.7 x 61 cm

# *the damned Pigeons*

Justin West

It would've been tolerable if he could've even just a day, even just a day without seeing, even just a day without being seen. NO! Watched by the damned Pigeons. They sat on window sills, power lines, deck rails, bus stops, on the stoops of doorways and everywhere he went. When he opened the door leaving the apartment building: Bird. When he opened the gate to leave his complex: Bird. When he walked to the bus stop: Bird. Sometimes they even got on the bus, their fat little bodies mixing with people. Watching.

There were other birds here too, *des hirondelles, des étourneaux, des moineaux*. But those birds flew. Those birds stayed in a sky all their own and didn't bother him. It was the damned Pigeons that didn't fly, the damned Pigeons that walked, that strutted around the city acting as people do, watching him as people did.

Today, like usual, he awoke to their cooing, the damned Pigeons cooing. He twisted his keys in the double locks to make sure they wouldn't come in while he was gone. He looked and looked again at one bird watching him. Not a starling, swallow, or sparrow: it was a damned Pigeon.

He would've liked to shake it off. His brother told him that the birds, the damned Pigeons, weren't really watching him. But today, this bird, this particular one, was watching. Every time he looked back, there it was. He had seen a bird get on a bus, but never so few steps behind him, lifting itself with its wings, paying no fare. He had seen a bird get off the bus, but never at his stop, following him personally.

He didn't want to run. He knew what it looked like the derangement to run away from a bird, but that didn't slow his pace. As each step he took hit the ground faster than the last, so too did this bird accelerate. Past the *patisserie*, past the *pharmacie*, past the *pizzeria*, he ran. He sprinted over cobblestone, though stone-walled alleys rising like cliffs around him. Wings pattered. Every turn back showed the same, this bird, the damned Pigeon following, chasing, watching.

Turning and winding down streets and plazas: *Paul Bert, Matheron, Jaubert, Richelme, Fauchier, Annoneire Vielle*, dead end. Not only a dead end... more damned Pigeons. He should have no reason to fear this hollow-boned dinosaur progeny, but the prospect of it following him, trapping him here, scared him. Here, he was watched not by this bird alone, but dozens no hundreds. As many eyes as wings, blinking, fluttering, focused.

He breathed heavy, he must've run a mile before finding himself here, trapped and wheezing. His heart *thumping-bumping-jumping* out of his chest and not slowing, not stopping when his legs did; though he wished it would. He would rather be over with the whole affair - sweet



mortality - and not know if he were still being chased, watched. But his blood kept pumping, his heart kept jumping, his chest kept thumping, but all the sudden something

...

He woke up in a pile of trash in a dead end alley, *Annoneire Vielle*, to cooing. That one bird, the damned Pigeon, alone now, was all he saw. That damned Pigeon, pecking at crumbs, occasionally lifting its head to ensure he was still there, cooing to others unseen. Judging by the sun and the angles of the shadows cast, it was no longer morning. He gathered himself under the bird's watchful eye and carried himself not to work, where he had left this morning to go, but to his brother's flat just steps from where he found himself, almost as if the bird had chased him there on purpose.

"It's these birds, these damned Pigeons. They're following me I swear!" He wept to no avail. He knew how he sounded - the derangement but felt the same. His brother didn't, couldn't understand. His brother didn't notice like he did, how he was watched too. He had to get away, no longer could he endure his avian panopticon. Perhaps somewhere rural,



Sammy Aldover, *street 1 & street 2*, 2026, Film Photography

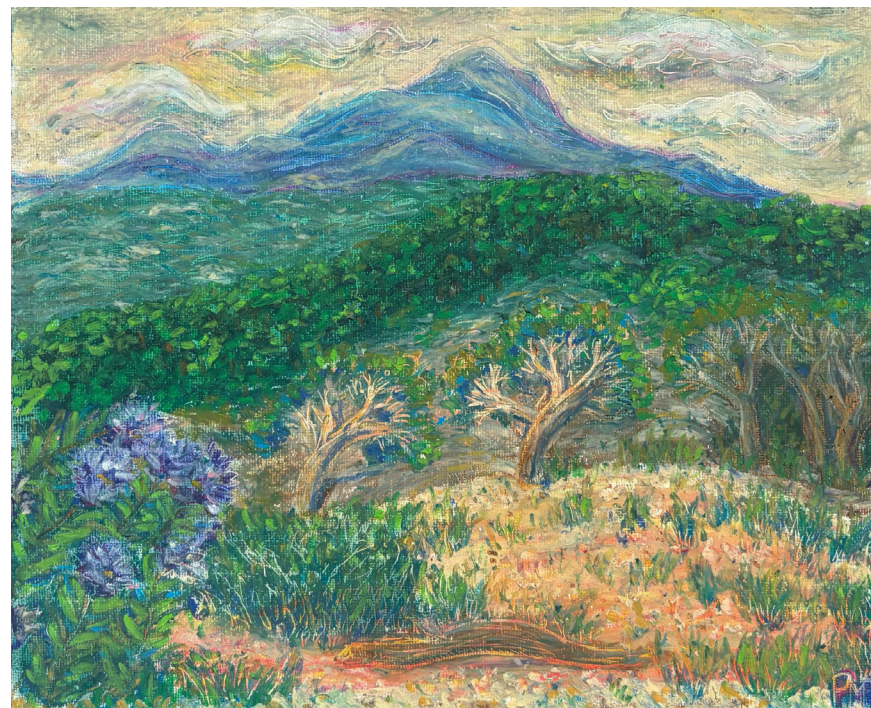


perhaps he could be free, perhaps he could escape.

...

It has been four weeks since he moved in with his aunt. Her quiet country home with a well water spring and well kept garden soothed his nerves. Far fewer birds pecked at far fewer breadcrumbs here. On warm mornings like this when the clouds around Sainte-Victoire broke away for the sun's rays to touch the Earth's plants, he often laid in the lavender field that surrounded the country estate. Quite the opposite of a scarecrow, it was more often him scared of the crows than the typical arrangement. He saw one fly in from acres away, the direction of the city, as if eager to deliver a message. He watched the crow as it in turn watched him, inching towards him as he in turn inched away. Inches turned to feet, feet per second, his pace quickening through the long lines of lavender, his destination clear. There were no alleys here, no dead ends in which this crow could trap him, as the damned Pigeons had; only home, the safety of his aunt's manor of stucco and stone. Slamming the wooden door behind him he cautiously peered through the ancient glass *fenêtre* to see the damned Crow, watching just as the damned Pigeons he had run so far to escape used to watch.

- Justin West



Polly Tappan, *Mont Sainte-Victoire* 2026, Oil Pastel on Paper, 27.9 x 35.6 cm

# Third degree

Phoebe Mikolaj



2025, Oil on Canvas, 16.5 x 16.5 cm



# The Dove

Violeta Báez

White wings were never meant for cages.

They say the wind is too wild,  
flight is foolish,  
small bones are not built  
for open air.

Sometimes they gather fallen feathers  
and hold them up like proof.  
Look, they say,  
you were never meant to fly.

But the sky remembers differently.  
Even with wings made ragged by careless hands,  
even when silenced by irritated ears,

even then  
something inside still leans toward the horizon.

Below, their voices name limits as laws of nature:  
Fold your wings  
Bury your song  
Perch where you were placed.

They point to narrow branches  
and call them destiny,  
say some wings were only meant  
to warm the nest,  
to watch the sky  
but never to claim it.

And when the dove rises anyway,  
they call it reckless,  
call it unnatural,  
call the open sky a place  
it was never meant to be.

But somewhere above the branches,  
beyond the reach of careless hands,  
the dove cuts through the air,  
cooing freely,  
proving that the sky  
was never theirs to guard.



# human, for a moment

Celine Suleiman

Rabat, Morocco

I had one of those infrequent, deeply touching experiences that linger quietly in your heart long after the journey ends. It happened at a vibrant historical site, alive with color, history, and echoes of the past. I noticed a group of young Moroccan students on a school trip. Their laughter rang freely, pointing at details, asking questions, and absorbing the world with unfiltered joy. Watching them, I felt something soften inside me.

Something about their energy drew me in, and I asked if I could take a picture with them. The reaction was instant, they crowded together excitedly, happy and receptive, willing to spend a moment with a stranger. Just before the picture was taken, one of the students asked me where I was from. "I'm from Palestine," I said softly, without thinking much of it.

I was ill-prepared for what came next. Emotion filled the children's faces. They stepped forward to embrace me one by one. Some hugged tightly, as if trying to protect me. Others held my hands, reluctant to let go. A few whispered words I didn't fully understand, but I didn't need to, their tone carried everything. In their eyes I saw empathy, the kind that hasn't yet learned restraint or indifference. They were not children from another country, and I was not a traveler passing through. We were simply human beings sharing something wordless and true.



All linguistic, national, and geographic barriers vanished. It was a simple, genuine, and profoundly touching human connection. I felt seen, held, and understood in a way words could never fully capture.

Then something unforgettable took place. A young girl, perhaps eight or nine years old, slowly approached me. She was quiet, almost shy, tiny hands gripping her backpack's straps as if seeking reassurance in their stability. She hesitated for a moment, then reached inside and produced a small Moroccan flag. She placed it in my hands and handled it with care, as though it was a priceless item. "This is for you," she said gently, her eyes gleaming with tenderness and pride.

I couldn't speak. My heart felt too full, and my throat constricted. That little flag, so light in weight, became one of the most substantial presents I have ever been given. It was more than just a representation of her nation, it was an unreserved act of love, solidarity, and humanity.

I was reminded at that moment that compassion is universal. I was reminded of the true meaning of humanity from these kids in a world that is so frequently divided by distance and disagreement. I will always be impacted by their unplanned generosity, compassion, and capacity to form such a strong bond with a stranger. It was an authentic, unadulterated human connection rather than a staged tourist encounter.

That day, I took more than just pictures with me when I left Rabat. I carried a small Moroccan flag, full of significance, and a hopeful memory. It made me realize why travel is important—not because of the sights we see, but because of the people who help us remember who we are.



# Coffee in Cudillero

Sheelagh Doe



2026, Marker & Pen on Paper, 10.2 x 17.8 cm

# The In-Law Suite

Phoebe Caterer

The woman listened for footsteps on the hardwood above her. She waited silently for Stefanie to come downstairs and greet her, give her the morning meds, and put the coffee on. It was earlier than usual; the sun hadn't lit up the basement hopper window yet, but the grey glow of early morning was still evident through the frosted glass. The Australian Open played softly on TV. The woman watched, crossed her feet, and rocked them side to side just slightly. Her oxygen machine hummed rhythmically in the corner of the room. There she watched, and crossed, and drank her water from yesterday, but stopped drinking it because she realized she had to pee.

When a campaign commercial for Hillary Clinton came on, she nodded slightly and grinned. The thought of a woman her age in the Oval Office, it's what she and her college friends had worked so hard for. It would be like getting elected herself! She sat, she thought about Hillary Clinton, she rocked her feet, she admired Roger Federer, she waited.

The window was glowing yellow now, almost time. Still no footsteps, but the woman had to go. There's no way Stefanie would be down in the next ten minutes, she thought. She's always late. Stefanie's not cut out for this, and neither is Josh. Neither of them are good about being on top of her meds. Not to mention the kids. She hasn't seen her grandson in three weeks - what was the point of moving into the basement if the kids were going to hide from her?

The commode made eyes at the woman from across the room. There it sat, the portable toilet brought into the living room because she'd stopped being able to make it to the bathroom six months ago. It seemed to say, "You're not even human enough to pee without assistance. Pathetic." A grey seat resting delicately on a large white basin, held up by black metal poles. It was a plastic throne, a living-room latrine, which reminded the woman of her total incapacity to complete everyday tasks. She didn't know if she could make it off the couch by herself this morning; getting from the bed to her spot in front of the TV had taken fifteen minutes to begin with. The commode looked at her again. That damn toilet bowl. The woman's mind flashed back to a Sunday before the oxygen. George was alive, and movement was thoughtless. They sat and watched tennis together, not because it's all they could do, but because they were doing



it together. Before the oxygen. Before George died. Before the burden of perpetual breathlessness. Where is Stefanie? She doesn't even work today. What could she possibly be doing?

With an exasperated "Shit, I'll do it myself," the woman grabbed hold of the two handles of her walker, positioned right in front of her. She squeezed the handles to activate the locks. The woman breathed in, then out, then grunted as she gave her body a hoist. Her butt was lifted two inches off the soft pillow of her "spot" before her whole body was thrust back down by the weight of gravity. Standing felt insurmountable, walking was a joke. The commode laughed at her as a little pee came out, and she deflated back into the couch.

The yellow glow of the frosted glass was fading. She remembered that the weather said it would be overcast in the late morning. She breathed in, then out, then hoisted. This attempt was fueled by more than necessity - it was driven by anger. Where were her caretakers when she actually needed them? Was this not the agreement? If they could take care of her, then she would stay in this basement and not her beautifully-lit Sugar Grove condo - she might as well have stayed there if she had to take herself to the bathroom every morning.. She grunted as she strained, and managed a stand. Her hands squeezed the handles again to unlock the wheels. The commode, positioned against the wall next to the TV, was four steps away.

One step. She kicked the TV tray and her multivitamins scattered on the ground. "Oh, fuck." Her second step pressed the gummies into the rug - there was no avoiding it. The window was now totally darkened by the clouds. Where the hell is Stefanie? Known the girl for twenty-seven years, and she's never changed. Since she was fifteen and started dating Josh, she's always been flaky. The third step was taken without looking. Her compression sock caught on the fallen TV tray, and the wheels of the walker were pushed forward by the weight of her body.

Stefanie, on the phone with Cindy's doctor, heard it from all the way on the third floor. Her breath stopped. Dropping her phone to the ground, she raced out of her bedroom. Stefanie flew down the hardwood stairs. At the bottom, Stefanie was faced with the door to the basement in-law suite. She flung open the door. Cindy, on the floor, lay sideways in a wet puddle on the rug.

- Phoebe Caterer

# *The Botanical Gardens*

Sophia Gladieux



2024, Gouache on Paper, 17.8 x 10.2 cm



# Car Thang

Ella Leafgreen



2026, Chalk Pastel on Paper, 25.4 x 20.3 cm

# La rue

Helen Gross

Le but d'une rue est toujours de mener ailleurs. Sa création et son existence même traduisent un désir, une impatience. L'existence d'une rue signifie qu'il manque quelque chose, qu'il y a un ailleurs à atteindre, un besoin encore inassouvi. Un jeune homme en costume, attaché-case à la main, marche d'un pas déterminé. Il ne regarde ni les vitrines, ni les passants. Devant lui, s'étend l'avenir. À mesure qu'il avance, la frontière entre son identité personnelle et sa carrière s'estompe, le transformant en une extension de son travail. Derrière lui, une rue déjà oubliée.

Les rues, elles sont la soif. Qu'elles soient issues d'une ville antique, pavées de pierres usées par des âges oubliés, ou tracées par des machines dans le tumulte moderne, elles gardent leur mission : avancer. Une rue est une promesse de mouvement. Un ouvrier, pantalon taché de peinture blanche, sort de la boulangerie d'un pas lourd, un sandwich dans une main et une bouteille d'eau dans l'autre. Son dos voûté, son cou endolori, semble vouloir s'enfoncer entre les pavés. Il marche, il mange, il avance comme tous ceux que la rue entraîne sans jamais les retenir. Là où il y a une rue, il y a de l'humanité, car être humain, c'est désirer, espérer, et évoluer. Elles appartiennent à tout le monde, et pourtant, elles ne retiennent personne.

Les rues, elles sont la faim. Elles marquent les frontières invisibles entre les riches et les pauvres, les locaux et les étrangers, les ambitieux et les errants. Un sans-abri dort sous l'embrasure d'une porte, le bras tendu par habitude, même dans l'oubli du sommeil. Il marchait d'un pas qui n'existe plus, mais son geste exprime toujours un besoin, un espoir, une prière silencieuse à ceux qui passent sans s'arrêter. Parmi eux, le jeune homme en costume l'évite d'un pas automatique, absorbé par son appel, tandis que l'ouvrier baisse les yeux et serre un peu plus fort sa bouteille d'eau. Chaque rue est un témoin silencieux des inégalités, un passage où se croisent les destinées opposées. Elles portent les pas pressés de ceux qui rêvent et les pas traînants de ceux qui survivent seulement.



# *Frozen Families*

Violeta Báez

Late for work, she runs around the house,  
Distractedly searching she puts on her blouse.

Her keys in the kitchen, her purse on the chair,  
Muttering softly while brushing her hair.

A knock at the door echoed loudly.  
I called from upstairs, *¡Mami, están tocando!*

*Quédate arriba*, she shouted in haste,  
Fear in her voice I could suddenly taste.

I heard Mami pleading, her voice turning weak,  
*My child is upstairs*, I heard Mami speak.

I ran down the stairs to see what was wrong,  
But everything happened too fast, I heard her yell *¡NO!*  
Two men were pulling her out through the door,  
Her cries filled the house like never before.

*¡MAMI!* I shouted, my heart full of fear,  
She tried to be strong when she saw I was near.

*No te preocupes mi niña*, she cried,  
But sorrow and terror were clear in her eyes.  
The world felt too loud and yet instantly numb,  
As if all the air in my lungs would not come.

I wiped at my cheeks  
But the tears would not cease,  
Through blurred, shaking sight,  
On their backs I read: ICE.



# *Pattern as a Wound*

Ariel Sophabmisay



2025, Oil on Canvas, 162.6 x 121.9 cm

# *The Martyr*

Ariel Sophabmisay



2025, Oil on Canvas, 60.96 x 60.96 cm



# *The Hunter*

Ariel Sophabmisay



2025, Oil on Canvas, 137.16 x 101.6 cm

# *Membranous Wings*

Sheelagh Doe



2026, Colored Pencil on Tinted Paper, 12.7 x 20.3 cm

# *Old Shirt*

Megan Chalfant

I woke up this morning to find  
that my heart  
had been stretched out  
and wrinkled up

like an old shirt

it's just lying there  
in the pile of sheets and bedding  
which my restless sleep  
has tangled together

as I sit here

I think about searching through the jumble  
to give this heart of mine a hand  
fishing it from the mess  
smoothing it out

but then again

maybe it is just easier  
to go without it for the day

or

maybe  
when I go to pray, I'll take it with me  
and God will see it and  
in compassion  
stitch me a new one



Ava Hyrne  
*Untitled #2*

2026, Oil on Cardboard  
15 x 28 cm



Olivia MacLeod  
*Ghostly Gurls,*

2025, Digital Photography



# Aix à linge

Annabelle Smith

## Bonjour les étudiants

Bonjour les étudiants ! C'est pas la pluie  
qui tombe sur vos têtes, ce n'est que

mon linge qui sèche grâce au soleil.  
Voilà, ça c'est le pantalon qui m'a amené

aux pieds de Saint-Victoire pour devenir  
un petit Cézanne. Voilà, ça c'est la chemise

qui câline tous les oranges en boule de tissu  
que j'ai acheté d'un fermier aixois

en face de l'Hôtel de Ville. Voilà,  
ça c'est la serviette de bain de mon enfant

qui éclabousse dans les flaques d'eau.  
Non, il ne pleut pas des cordes, les étudiants.

La seule corde, c'est mon linge  
qui secoue toute son eau sur vos têtes

dans la rue du Bon Pasteur. Je vous promets  
que je rangerai mon linge et, demain,

vous pourrez regarder en haut pour voir  
mon visage souriant et bien habillé.

## Le pantalon violet

Je ne peux pas porter mon pantalon violet.  
Je suis entrée dans Saint-Sauveur et le prêche m'a houspillée.  
Je suis allée à Béchard et le pâtissier a rigolé  
de moi. J'ai tapé sur la fenêtre d'Hermès et la vendeuse s'est affolée.  
J'ai fait des courses à Monoprix et le caissier m'a consolée.  
Je me suis assise sur la Fontaine de la Rotonde et le monde m'a isolée.  
J'ai donné un bonjour au Roi René et il m'a fusillé  
du regard. Mais pourquoi ? J'étais si gaie  
quand j'ai découvert mon pantalon violet.

Je ne peux pas porter mon pantalon violet  
mais je porte mon pantalon violet quand même.  
Je traîne les pieds à travers un trottoir  
avec des vermicelles d'or. Si le monde rigolait de moi,  
je trouverais un monde lui-même violet.

Je porte mon pantalon violet  
et je suis un chemin d'or jusqu'au Musée Granet  
où je rencontre un homme qui ne rigole pas de moi,  
un homme qui raffole de mon pantalon violet.  
Et moi, je raffole de son portrait d'une montagne,  
ni grise ni marrone ni noire ni blanche,  
mais une Victoire de bleue, de jaune et de violette.



Alessia Redwine, *Joy is...*

2025, Oil on Cardboard, 27.9 x 40.6 cm

## La robe

Tous les aixois soufflent un waouh  
quand ils regardent ma belle robe rose.

Tous les aixois crient, passez encore une fois!  
Et ils ne disent que waouh.

Ils ne savent pas que j'ai trouvé ma robe  
le samedi, au-dessous du soleil d'un jour de marché.

Tous les aixois trouvent des trésors, mais  
ils sont envieux que j'ai trouvé le plus beau.

Je balance mes hanches et ma robe envoie  
des bisous aux aixois qui murmurent : waouh.

Sur le Cours Mirabeau je rencontre  
un vieil aixois courtois, qui tournoie autour de moi

comme un moulin rose, et après,  
il nous applaudit et s'écrie waouh !

Même le ciel s'abaisse, en regardant les pétales  
de moi, une aixoise en rose, une waouh-oise !

Mais le ciel jaloux pleure. Les sanglots  
me trempent et ma belle robe rose fatigue.

Non ! Ma robe de marché est trop spéciale.  
D'Aix à Avignon à Gap il n'y a pas une robe égale.

Mais le ciel s'éclaircit, le soleil retourne, et waouh  
pleine d'eau, ma robe rose devient ma robe rouge.



# Tangerine

Hayden Carroll

The needle dropped, the room began to spin.  
MJ's Thriller, a memory of Grandma,  
the first groove belonged to her  
the start of his collection.

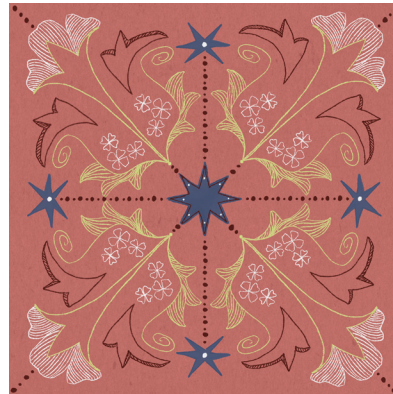
Tangerine: pillars of color;  
walls of sapphire, a complementary pair.  
Aisles of genres, from jazz heard at the harbor,  
to hip-hop played in the Metro.

A new needle lowering, Prince,  
Purple Rain, father's album.  
A sound from Minneapolis,  
home, reaching Marseille.

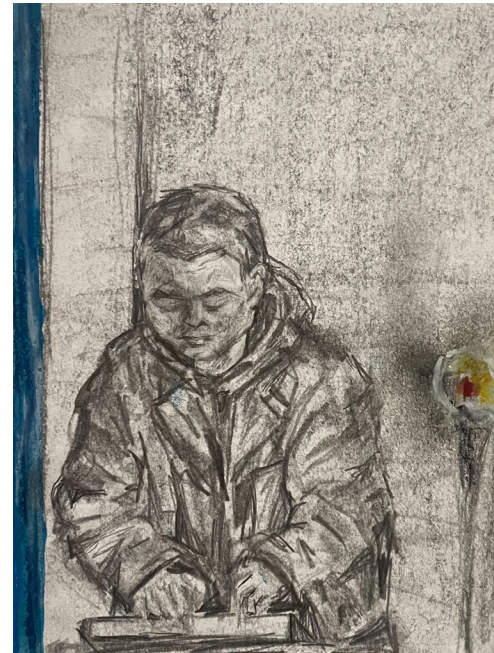
A record shop named for a fruit,  
skylight, dangling fixtures,  
boxes about. Murals of the Sea,  
glistening like the Med that morning.

The needle falls again, Lux by Rosaliá,  
a favorite of Gio's, a friend made only a month ago,  
now trading albums and artists,  
each song sharing small details of their lives.

The music trips on itself, as he does out the door  
a tote bag of new songs, ready to be spun.



*Partitia in A Minor met Allemande*  
Madrigal Frederick-Law  
2026, Digital Artwork



Ella Leafgreen, *Tipping Point*, 2026  
Oil Pastel & Graphite on Paper  
10.2 x 12.7 cm



Ben Lucarello, *Surrendering*, 2025  
Acrylic, Gouache, & Plastic Beads on Mat Board  
61 x 45.7 cm



# *Ma vue depuis la terrasse*

Polly Tappan



2026, Oil Pastel on Paper, 35.6 x 27.9 cm



# *Mon cœur*

Polly Tappan

Although our breeze  
is too far overseas  
You still reach me  
in daydreams.

And I think back to your warmth  
between my knees  
Oh, these days,  
my body se refroidit.

J'oubliais toujours mon parapluie  
à cause de toi.  
Mais ton sourire  
est mon rayon de soleil.

Oh mon cœur,  
it's you I adore.  
Oh mon cœur,  
I still feel you anyway.

Tu es mon jour préféré,  
the sunshine of my ray  
les fleurs tout de mai  
oh I still feel you anyway.



Megan Chalfant, *Vase with Branches*  
2026, Oil on Cardboard, 34.5 x 22.5 cm

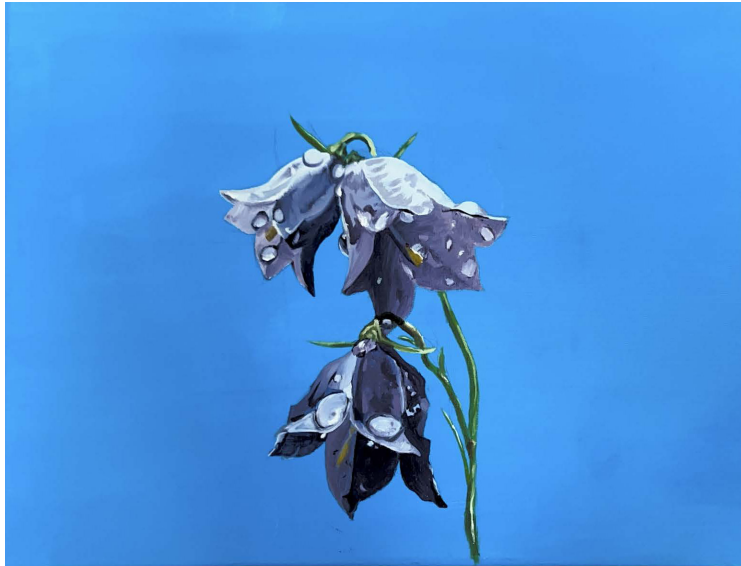


Virginia Kostmayer  
*Still Life*  
2026, Oil on Cardboard  
50.8 x 50.8 cm

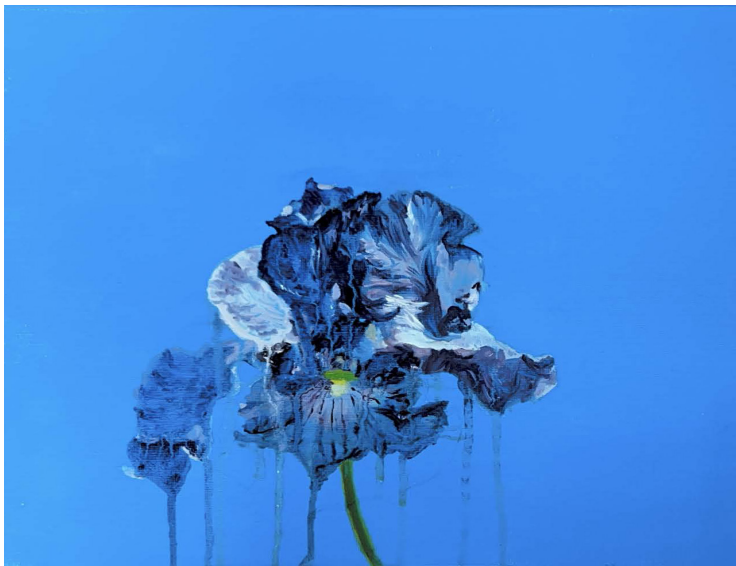


# *Iridescent Bells & Opaline Iris*

Juno Gregg



2025, Acrylic & Oil on Canvas, 30 x 40 cm



2025, Acrylic & Oil on Canvas, 30 x 40 cm



# *Les fleurs*

Charlotte Hughes

Je ne vois pas de fleurs  
Quand la cloche sonne huit heures  
En m'asseyant, je regarde  
Un groupe de flâneurs

Le beffroi est grand  
Mais sans trop de largeur  
Mais la place est tranquille  
Les bruits sont mineurs

Je vois quelques fleurs  
Quand la cloche sonne neuf heures  
Les camions arrivent lentement  
Parmi tous les coureurs

La Diabline m'approche  
Et me fait un peu peur  
Quand j'écoute de la musique  
Dans une très bonne humeur

Je vois plein de fleurs  
Quand la cloche sonne onze heures.  
L'air est rempli  
D'une très bonne odeur.

Baucoup de monde mange au café  
Et ils parlent aux serveurs  
Et les autres discutent  
Avec tous les vendeurs.

Je vois moins de fleurs  
Quand la cloche sonne treize heures  
Ils ont vendu la plupart  
Avec toutes leurs couleurs

Deux hommes se demandent  
C'est quoi le marché meilleur  
« Je préfère celui-ci »  
« Et moi, j'aime plus la Place des Prêcheurs »

Je ne vois pas de fleurs  
Quand la cloche sonne quinze heures  
Les seules personnes sont celles  
Que habitent dans les demeures

Tout est calme sur la place  
Les aixois sont en bonheur  
Mais on se souvient  
Du marché et de toute sa splendeur.



Alessia Redwine  
*Release So You Can Receive*

2026, Oil on Canvas, 20.3 x 25.4 cm

# House of Green

Cally Gudroe

I found solace in vines that curled like whispers,  
trees that pressed their shadows against the glass,  
and leaves that shivered awake  
in the soft breath of the morning breeze.

The walls of our house surrendered to the green  
ivy crawling from clay pots,  
ferns spilling from shelves,  
roots stretching into corners until  
beige faded beneath  
a living mural of leaves.

Each morning I rose beneath a canopy,  
light fractured by palms and orchids,  
my footsteps softened by rugs of moss.  
Windows yawning wide, sliding door ajar,  
the air sweetened by the garden,  
where I shared breakfast with the bees.

It is a wild sanctuary built not of brick and paint,  
but of stems sprawling,  
petals softening the air into something holy.  
My mother's hands tended this place  
as if she were coaxing the earth itself indoors,  
and in her quiet rituals I learned my own:  
patience, wonder, reverence.

Those walls became my first forest,  
and in their shade I grew  
toward the green,  
toward the hum of bees and breath of leaves.  
It is why, even now,  
the sight of a single sprout  
feels like home.



Ava Hyrne, *Untitled #3 & #4*, 2026, Oil on Cardboard, 15 x 28 cm

# Sound of Rain

*(Helps Me Let Go of the Pain)*

Alessia Redwine



2025, Oil & Rain Water on Cardboard, 27.9 x 38.1 cm

# Migration

Ariel Sophabmisay



2024, Oil & Acrylic on Canvas, 111.76 x 71.12 cm

# The Shape of Returning

Cally Gudroe

Last October,  
I sat beneath the red maples,  
watching the leaves burn down to their roots:  
small flames caught in the air,  
refusing to die quietly.

I thought I'd grow taller by leaving,  
that distance would teach me love  
in a bigger, braver form.  
But most nights,  
I masked my homesickness  
with busy hands and assignments,  
pretending the wind didn't sound  
like my brother calling the dogs in.

Now, another fall arrives.  
The trees are bright again,  
but this time I drive north  
just to sit in that old backyard  
pumpkin guts on the porch,  
apple cider cooling on the steps.

It's an anniversary I never named:  
not of leaving,  
but of learning how to return.



Natalie Burchett, *Still Life with Lilies & Fruit*  
2025, Oil on Cardboard, 39.4 x 24.1 cm



# Summer Peaches

Megan Chalfant

Seven pairs of feet sitting  
around a fire  
Drinking peaches and cream, the best  
we've ever had  
Savoring the tang of that which is sun-drenched,  
sharp and nostalgic,  
the taste of days and nights  
fits somehow into a bowl in my hands

Our sighs rise up into the air, winding like folktales,  
our breath releasing the tension between what is  
and what will be

Moonlight drenches the hills behind you  
Now, the land that summer soaked in green  
has been dipped in the cooling night,  
studded with the sound of crickets, the pop  
of logs and the murmur  
of your voice

We are telling stories and  
suddenly I remember that I still  
haven't looked at your face  
I wonder  
will your eyes be like this fire  
with a place just beside  
where I can come and stay  
close to the heat?

Later on I lie down on a bed of grass, the wind  
covers me like a blanket, tucking me in  
under the smell of dying embers and  
I ask myself, as I drift away  
if our little corner of the world has come undone  
and slid up to Heaven



Olivia MacLeod  
*Digitalgurl*  
2025, Digital  
Photography &  
Collage



# Three Trees

Megan Chalfant



2025, Oil on Cardboard, 30 x 32 cm



# Streets

Ella Leafgreen



2026, Oil Pastel on Paper, 10.2 x 12.7 cm



# Mr. Fish's Motorcycle

James Bird

Mr. Fish always checked to see if she was there, every time he left his apartment and every time he came back. This time, as he left for the *boulangerie*, she was not. She remained absent from his life most days, but when she was there she sat as if waiting for him on a motorcycle perpetually stationed outside the front door of his building. A bad omen, thought John Fish, that she was not there today. It had always been that way, little things could alter the trajectory of a day, spiritual things, like the presence of the pure-bred white dog that would appear in his life from time to time when he was little. He could see it now: its white fur shining in the morning light, barking noisily at passersby, at him; running, chasing little animals, leaping at them, always out of reach. She was there too, his mother. She walked with him, through Prospect Park to the place that had once been their home, answering his endless questions and telling him stories. It was a different time and the world had been a different place. He had grown to forget what had once entranced him; as if a horrible filter had been placed over his eyes, his mother's stories had become tainted with the perceived reality of his life. What happened? Aside from the obvious, which he would rather not think about. Perhaps he'd grown up too quickly, become too focused on what he wanted from life, rather than what he felt. But what was it he wanted so badly? Money? Fame? Probably the latter, he thought, as he walked past the motorcycle and onto the pavement, into the cool air of an evening that had once been a warm day.

He stood in the middle of the street, on an island separating two lanes of traffic, waiting for the light to turn green. Wesley would be so pleased to have bread with dinner; Wesley thought very highly of him, and Mr. Fish didn't want to sully that reputation. They had been in school together just over two years ago, and he could still see their classroom as it had been, with its long wooden tables and plastic chairs, its big beautiful windows that never opened, effectively trapping its students in a stuffy mess of humid air. The planes that flew overhead left white trails that looked like the scratches on that old chalkboard. The professor had liked him, he knew, but he remembered constantly wondering what his classmates thought. Did they think him smart? Pretentious? Stupid? None of that mattered, though; what mattered was what he wrote, what he learned. But what if they thought he was stupid? He would get nowhere if even his classmates thought that of him; he simply wouldn't amount to anything. Because he would be gone one day, and if he didn't get to leave his trace on the world, imprint his name in the minds of others, then it would be as if he'd never lived. He had to worry

about money, too, for that was the only way he would ever be able to make a living, and if he couldn't write well enough to impress a group of students, then he would never be able to make a career out of his work. He would die penniless and forgotten.

What a terrible thought! All that had kept his worthlessness at bay was the affirmation of his professor, who would say things like "Excellent point" or "Interesting observation" when young John spoke in class. He would give him good marks on his tests and papers, adorning them with phrases like "Bravo!" or "Incredible work!" He had been kind and supportive, a real role model to John; he had such an intellect and passion for the written word, John couldn't help but look up to him. He couldn't remember the last conversation they had, the last words he'd heard come out of his good professor's lips. If only they'd had more time, thought Mr. Fish. He should've savored it more, been more present, so every moment they had together would be cemented in his memory forever. Alas, they had run out of time and he had forgotten much. Did he ever express his gratitude, truly? He certainly thanked him, but had no way of knowing if his gratitude was conveyed, for words have that quality to them, don't they? In time they are stripped of whatever singularity they once had, if they ever had any at all, and turned into an awful, regurgitated, ingenuine mass riddled with inevitable inaccuracies and imperfections. But his professor understood him, and even if his thoughts had been said a thousand times before, they were still genuine, and his feelings were still his own. They had talked right before the day of his graduation, when he walked the stage and felt such pride from his father, nearly as equally as the absence of his mother. But that's just the way things were; it was all in the past, a collection of memories which, if thought about for too long, would only continue to fester.

When the light finally turned green, Mr. Fish stepped off the island and crossed the street towards the pavement, walking in a straight line past a small patch of grass, a vacant bus stop, and Ms. Bécot's flower shop, which was closed for the day. He checked his watch. He had about fifteen minutes before the *boulangerie* closed, plenty of time. But still he rushed, barely taking in his surroundings. He would get to see Ms. Tourvel: good, sweet Ms. Tourvel! She had welcomed him when he first arrived in Aix-en-Provence, dampening some of his homesickness with brief moments of warmth whenever he came in to buy bread. Her baked goods sold well and her business was successful; it was a general consensus in town: *Au Bonheur Des Boulangers* was the best around. He'd always wondered about that name: *Au Bonheur Des Boulangers*. A Zola reference? Likely, Zola was raised in Aix-en-Provence, after all. But perhaps it meant something in French he did not know; Mr. Fish was not yet fluent in French and had only ever read Zola in translation. He'd never talked to her about the name, and seeing as

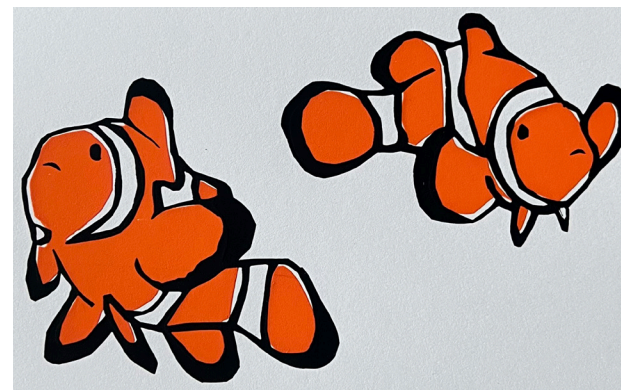
54 their conversations generally consisted of only a few words, was not likely

to. Regardless, it was growing late and he was worried she would be out of bread by the time he got there. All the more reason to rush.

He arrived at the *boulangerie* ten minutes before closing time, and greeted the *boulangere*, in proper French, upon entry.

"Good evening, Ms. Tourvel!" he said.

"Ah, good evening to you Mr. Fish!" she replied, "We still have two baguettes left, is that what you're looking for?"



Phoebe Mikolaj, *Send off*  
2025, Hand Cut Screen Print, 7.6 x 17.8 cm

Mr. Fish smiled and told her that was exactly what he wanted. He looked at the shelf behind her, which was nearly empty - holding only the two baguettes in question, propped up against the wall like a pair of picture frames without stands, and a large focaccia decorated with tomatoes and rosemary. Making bread like that was such fun, he thought, dimpling the dough, pushing into its soft surface and letting it rise before putting it in the oven, enjoying its smell and rich flavor when it came out. He hadn't made bread like that since he was little; perhaps that was just another thing lost to time. He took the baguettes, paid in exact change, and started his walk home.

The evening had become dusk, and a cloud had moved in front of the moon. Mr. Fish noticed the three stars of Orion's belt; they always seemed to be there when he looked. He remembered seeing them for the first time, watching his mother trace the stars' outline into the shape of a man, recounting Orion's myth as she traced. He remembered Orion was a great but egotistical hunter who constantly bragged about his prowess, claiming there was no animal he couldn't defeat. This angered Gaia - or was it Artemis? Gaia, Mr. Fish decided, took offence by Orion's words and sought to punish him, using a scorpion as her means of retribution. The great Orion was no match for Gaia's anger, and soon he was on the backfoot; he was afraid, and rightfully so, for the scorpion chased him to the ends of the Earth and eventually killed him, putting an end to his hubris. To immortalize the scorpion's triumph, as well as Orion's shame, Gaia gave them a second life

in the stars, chasing each other across the sky forever. Forever? Surely that was the most unrealistic part of the whole story, Mr. Fish thought. Nothing lasts forever. Everything is constantly changing, although we cannot ever fully realize it, and only once we look back can we understand the extent to which things have changed. The very second someone leaves a moment they are no longer; they crumble and shift into a new being of the same name. It's inescapable, time's terrible toll; it kills all of us countless times, and it's only until our minds spring upon us the forgotten memories of a past life that we realize we are living another, that we have died and been born again, and soon we will die once more.

Mr. Fish walked back the way he came, retracing his previous steps over the pavement, and soon found himself just a block away from his apartment building. He was walking more slowly now and realized he was surrounded by lines: of cars, trees, cracks in the pavement, houses, windows. His life had been much like one of those lines; intermittent, yet unbroken. So much had changed since the last house he'd lived in, the last car he'd driven, and yet it was all the same, one wholeness that pertained to him and only him. The markings on the window he sat in now were so abstract that he couldn't possibly have conceived of their appearance back then, when he looked out from another. And yet, he could not have made it to this window without coming from the last. And who knew what he would look out of next! How foolish he had been, not to realize it all would change, for better or worse. There was no regaining the time he had lost, that which was truly lost in the depths of his memory, and that which he did remember was still just the past. But is that not how we all live, through our memories? The alcohol had gone down easily that night, he remembered; he had woken up in a bed which was not his own, been told stories of which he had no recollection. And yet, he lived it. But he didn't experience it, so to him, it was as if it never happened. But how backwards that is, how wrong! He had lived with the shame of his drunken stupor for years on end, *that* he could remember; *that* was real.

He turned a corner and oh. There she is, he thought. Right there, sitting on the motorcycle with its eyes closed and a peaceful look on its face, was a spotted gray cat. His mother had always told him animals, especially when found in unusual places, were good signs; bringers of joy, symbols of whole, natural being. She saw in them a certain authenticity, one which is present everywhere and in everyone; an authenticity which is buried deep and hard to recognize, nearly impossible to bring to light. She believed human beings were born into this world as if they came from another; a world obedient to laws of kindness, selflessness and artistry, laws which are passed onto the soul and remain in one's being as they are born onto the Earth. She lived as if her soul remembered its life on this other world and

was guiding her subconsciously, imploring her to be kind, to care for others, to create and take steps towards that world from which it first came, that world which also belonged to her. She did not fear death, for it was only an extension of life. She died believing she would return and live again under those unknown laws, free to obey them until the day of her eventual rebirth.

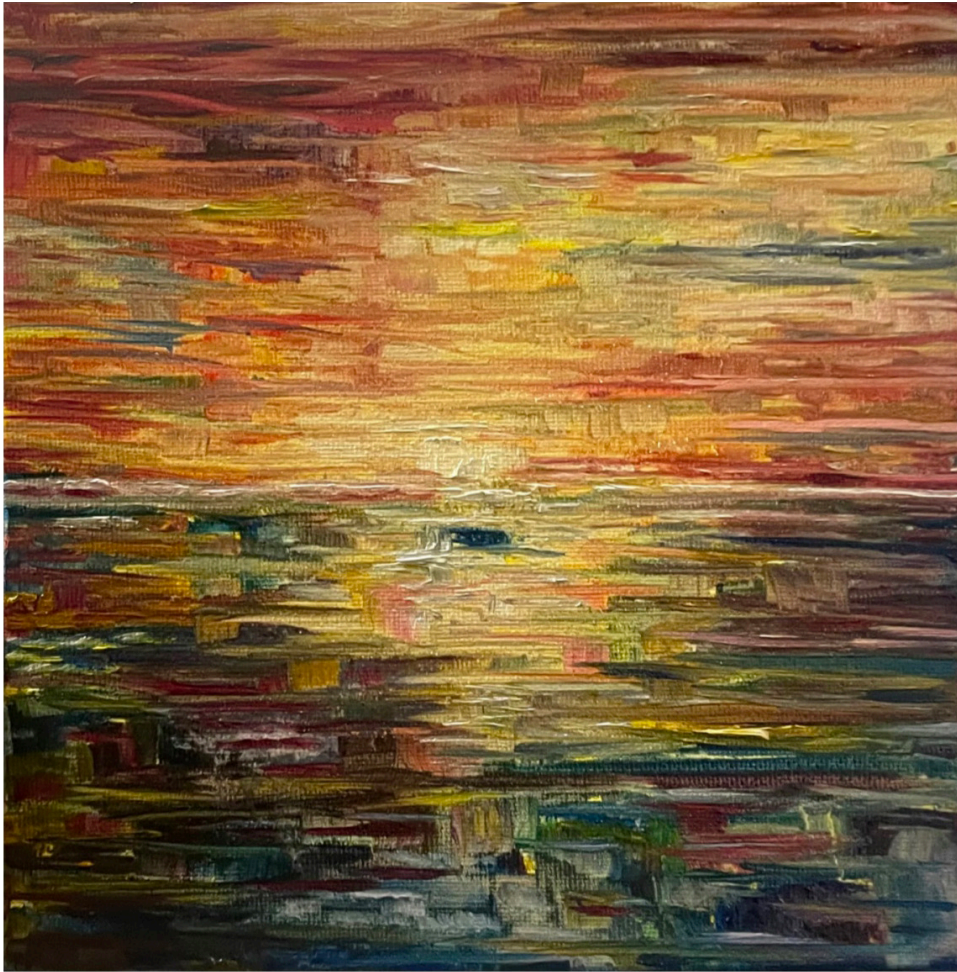
He walked towards the cat slowly, careful not to make any sudden movements, and, when he drew close enough, extended his hand as an olive branch towards the little creature, whose figure was covered by the shadow of an overhead tree. But his movement must have frightened the poor thing, which suddenly raised its tail in the air, leapt off its seat and ran straight past him, into the brush that lined the pavement near his building. He watched as it quickly darted out of the brush, crossed the street, and ran down the road, getting farther and farther away until it was finally out of sight. Her absence struck his body before it did his mind, returning in the form of a knot at the bottom of his stomach, leaving him with an overwhelming sense of incompetence. She wouldn't want me to feel this way, thought Mr. Fish, who, before walking up to his apartment, lingered in the doorway for a moment, looking back at the motorcycle whose worn leather seat had returned to emptiness.

- James Bird

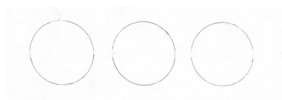


Natalie Meulenbroek, *Tomari Iyumachi*  
2026, Oil on Canvas, 40.6 x 50.8 cm

*Rizon*  
Ella Leafgreen



2026, Oil on Paper, 10.2 x 10.2 cm



*Magpie*

*cbkackbcbkackbka*

scratching rattles

pierce the air

slice the silence

call and response

flash of black and white

crossing shock of baby blue

barred by sunflower yellow

*Pica pica pica's*

idle chatter

often precedes unobservant observation

familiarity breeds contempt

contempt breeds inattention

only the immediate survives

How unfortunate to bypass Nature's miracles mere feet above our head...

Did you know they even grieve?

dead body on the ground

squawks ring out from a bypasser

crowd gathers

cacophony in c minor

passing of a bell's turn

grass wreaths left in mourning

one by one

falling silent

leaving the scene

until only memories

remain



Elinor Gass, *Unknown Bird*  
2026, Watercolor on Paper  
25.4 x 15.2 cm



For more information about *Mille Fontaines*  
please visit: [millefontaines.org](http://millefontaines.org)

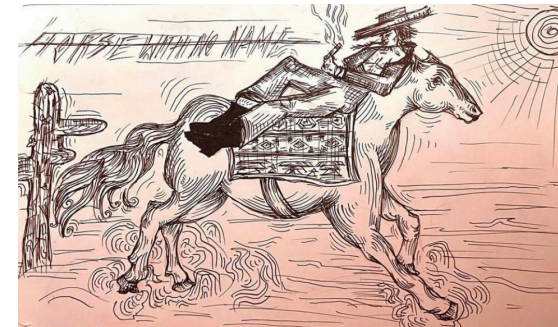
## Mission Statement

---

*Mille Fontaines* provides a platform for artistic expression regardless of media, genre, or language. It highlights the work of creatives, giving them the opportunity to be heard and recognized. More than that, it puts art and artists in conversation, pairing visual art with the written word, enhancing it all with excursions into the audio and video spheres.

Centered on the ACM-IAU community, *Mille Fontaines* is a fruitful space for students to share their experience of living and learning around the Mediterranean. In doing so, it becomes a crossroads for various cultures to interact through art.

---



The American College of the Mediterranean  
&  
The Institute for American Universities



Literary & Fine Arts Journal