

# FRUITFUL BLEED

APRIL 2019

ISSUE EIGHT: THE INTERPENETRATE

FREE



TAHNEE LONSDALE



## THE INTERPENETRATE

Each issue of FULL BLEDE invites artists and writers to respond to a theme. For the eighth issue the broadsheet's contributors explore penetration and permeation between forms, ideas, or states. Results may be a perfect union or may be unsettling, dizzying, and hard to define. Enjoy this collection of prose, poetry, and visual artworks.

For more information about each of the featured works as well as the contributor's elaboration about it in relation to The Interpenetrate, turn to page 46-47.

Visit [fullblede.com](http://fullblede.com) for free downloads of past issues. Subscriptions are now also available, via Patreon.

As always, thank you for your continued support and long looks.

## INDEX

**COVER** TAHNEE LONSDALE

**2-3** YURI BOYKO + INDEX + SACHA BAUMANN

**4-5** DAKOTA NOOT + SHAGHA ARIANNIA

**6-7** LINDSEY WARREN + DAISY PATTON

**8-9** AKINA COX + MALIHEH ZAFARNEZHAD

**10-11** AMANDA MACIEL ANTUNES + JULIA SCHWARTZ

**12-13** GABBY ROSENBERG + JUSTIN PAPE

**14-15** YASMINE DIAZ + COLOPHON

+ ISAAC WHITLATCH + KRISTI HEAD

**16-17** KIM KEI + DENAE HOWARD

**18-19** NATASHA DENNERSTEIN + KAYE FREEMAN

+ SIENNA FREEMAN

**20-21** JOSHUA WEST SMITH + JOY AMINA GARNETT

**22-23** KOTTIE PALOMA + FRANCESCA LALANNE

**24-25** AUTUMN ELIZABETH CLARK

**26-27** KATHERINA OLSCHBAUR  
+ CHARLEY ALEXANDER

**28-29** LAURIE NYE + LAUREN DAVIS

**30-31** MANNY CASTRO + CAROLIE PARKER  
+ ROBERT SOFFIAN

**32-33** SYDNEY CROSKERY + JOSHUA MILLER

**34-35** JENNIFER SULLIVAN + GLENN GOLDBERG

**36-37** NELLY ZAGURY

**38-39** JODY ZELLEN + SARA MCAULIFFE  
+ MAX PRESNEILL

**40-41** AMMON ROST + JOSEPH MASOTTA

**42-43** YEMISI OYENIYI + KAREN HOCHMAN BROWN  
+ TING YING HAN

**44-45** MARK ACETELLI + NURIT AVESAR  
+ ELIZABETH LEISTER + DEBORAH BROWN

**46-47** CONTRIBUTORS + JOAN WEINZETTLE

**BACK COVER** MOLLY SEGAL



## FROM THE PUBLISHER

In a provocative black and white image created by Manuel Álvarez Bravo, a woman is lying on a darkly striped blanket outside, next to the side of mottled and stained cement wall. Her right knee is raised with her foot crossed against her left thigh. Her ankles, wrists and thighs are wrapped in white bandages, the type a gymnast may use for support, but otherwise she is naked—her pubic hair and breasts are exposed. Her head is slightly propped up under her hand, her eyes are closed, and she is bathed in sunlight. Star cacti rest on the blanket near her, trapping her maybe, although she appears serene.

The photograph is titled *The Good Reputation, Sleeping* (1938) and was given to me in postcard form years ago. The gift giver said, "It reminds me of Mount Tam," referring to Mount Tamalpais in Marin County in northern California. And from the moment those words escaped his mouth, I could not look at Mt. Tam without thinking of a woman lying naked on her back. And I also will forever see a landscape in Bravo's wonderful

photograph. This was the impetus for Issue Eight: The Interpenetrate.

Although I hesitate to influence the writers and artists too much when they are contemplating the latest issue's theme, I do provide an ideation prompt to get some things percolating. Primarily The Interpenetrate is concerned with blurring boundaries and distinctions, creating an entirely new state of being, form, or idea in which the previously distinct contours meld into singularity. I was personally particularly interested in figure/ground and body/landscape and confusing the nature of perception, as Bravo had done so brilliantly in *The Good Reputation, Sleeping*.

I was also thinking about sculpture and this wonderful feeling I have had of "activating" an artwork by being in close proximity to it. In my prompt to the contributors I including a quote from Barbra Hepworth recalling her experience of being amongst her own work: "I was the figure in the landscape and every sculpture contained to a greater or lesser degree the ever-changing forms and contours embodying my own response

to a given position in the landscape." Talking through ideas for The Interpenetrate with frequent contributor Molly Segal, she quipped: "The answer may be in the purple football bar of the Venn diagram." I am delighted to share over 50 interpretations of the theme.

This is the biggest issue of the newspaper to date and as always, I am immensely proud of it and honored to share the work of exceptional writers and artists. FULL BLEDE is truly a passion project. The newspaper is and will always be free, so it may be accessible to as many people as possible. And money is also not a barrier to entry for the contributors—no submission fees are collected. For those who are able to afford it and would like to support the newspaper, FULL BLEDE is now part of Patreon. Support is graciously accepted at any level that is comfortable and at higher levels includes some perks. Patreon also allows for me to now offer the newspaper as a subscription. Visit [fullblede.com](http://fullblede.com) or [patreon.com/fullblede](http://patreon.com/fullblede) for details. Thank you for your support,

*Sacha*





## What If the Matriarchy Has Been Here All Along?

One summer night in 1999, I was watching television with my grandfather. This was not a usual activity for us- I was visiting from New Jersey, and I only saw him once a year. He lived in Berkeley, in the hills behind the campus. We were always a little awkward around each other, but the television brought us together. He was dealing with heart issues, and I was drawn like a moth to the light of the tv screen. We didn't have a television at home, so I watched whatever I could when I had the chance. When my grandfather wasn't around, I stuck with Charlie's Angels, 90210, Columbo, and Matlock. He preferred the BBC, PBS, and National Geographic. Together, we watched the return of Hong Kong to Chinese rule, and specials on Animal Planet. One night, he turned on a program about an archaeologist who was traveling through Mongolia. She had been studying the Greek legend of the Amazons, and was one of the first people who thought to use modern technology to give the story a second look.

For centuries, male scholars assumed the Amazons were a myth used to scare and titillate Greek audiences. To them, the idea of women warriors was absurd and categorically impossible. Archaeologists excavated ancient burial sites along the Black Sea, Kazakhstan, and the central Asian steppes. They opened the graves, noticed some swords, and assumed that the people buried were men, because only warriors used swords, and only men were warriors. Starting in the nineties, women archaeologists proved to everyone else's surprise that some of the warrior gravesites had female bones. One archaeologist, Dr. Jeannine Davis-Kimball, extracted some DNA from the gravesites, and used it on her quest to find the living descendants of the Amazons.

Amazons originally were from Eastern Europe, and had light hair and green or blue eyes. They were part of the migration through southern Europe, to the Greek islands and western Turkey. Legend suggests they became priestesses of Demeter, known as the Black Mare. Around 1000 BCE, the Amazons rebelled against the patriarchal rule of Greece, but were soundly defeated and placed on boats to be shipped off to face their punishment on the mainland.

The Amazons overthrew their captors, but not knowing how to sail, crashed into the rocky shores of the Black Sea. They captured horses from a tribe nearby, and made their escape. Some nomads tried to fight them off, but when they realized they were fighting women, a few of the opposing warriors proposed marriage instead. The Amazons agreed, on the condition that the nomadic men followed them to a new location, where they would be far from the patriarchal influence of their old tribes.

The Amazons made their way east, past the Caspian Sea, never to be heard from again. The tribes in that area were known to employ women warriors. They mostly wore a kind of legging and tunic getup, which made it easier to ride horseback. This clothing irritated their neighbors, the Greeks and the Chinese, as they were used to the more masculine idea of men in dresses and togas, and thought leggings and pants were embarrassingly girlish.

Dr. Jeannine Davis-Kimball, subject of the National Geographic documentary, followed the legend of the Amazons to one of their possible destinations, the Mongolian steppes. She was able to compare the mitochondrial DNA of an Amazon gravesite circa 500 BCE to a Mongolian girl living in the late 1990's, proving that they were related.

I wish I could say that the National Geographic program made a huge impression on me- that I knew its impact from the start. But instead, I felt

vaguely sullen that we couldn't watch something trashy. I didn't have much time to watch television, just those two precious weeks every summer with my grandparents, and I didn't like wasting it on educational programs.

The next year, I didn't go back to Berkeley. I was at an all-girls summer camp in Philadelphia, attending Moore College of Art and Design for six weeks. It was the first time I was away from my family. Usually I spent most of the summer at church camp. The two weeks spent with my grandparents was followed by a week at camp in the Napa Valley.

Church camps were really awful, but I was used to them. My first memories were at a church camp, being bathed in a sink by a group of older girls who were cooing and gently swaddling me. Most days were filled with endless lectures and group exercises. The Napa Valley camp at least had a horse, and usually I could sneak away to ride.

By going to the Moore College summer program, I was missing out on a lot of church activities. Oddly enough, my parents encouraged me to go. It was full of girls, so they didn't worry too much about me getting into trouble. They had decided that my church mission was to be an artist, that I needed to use my art to proselytize. So off I went. I was absolutely terrified. I was quiet, and felt so out of place. I was surrounded by girls who didn't know I was being brought up in a cult. I didn't know what to say or how to talk to them. But somehow, they accepted me anyway, inviting me to participate in normal teenage activities like getting coffee and taking magazine quizzes. We drew so much, we sneezed charcoal dust. By the end of camp, I joined the others skinny dipping in a large fountain outside the college, in full view of Philadelphia's city hall.

///

Last year, I went to "Radical Women: Latin American Art 1960-1985" at the Hammer Museum. The Hammer Museum is across town from me, and I usually drag my feet driving that far. I ended up going three times, more times than I usually go to the Hammer in a year. I related to every piece in the show. The exaggerated shapes, the handmade pieces, the childlike quality of some of the work. The use of violence in a cartoonish way- of little plastic army men, of using dull scissors to pretend to cut off body parts. The use of the body and fake blood, simple line drawings and shapes. The sarcasm, the quiet humor that made the work funny and biting and serious all at once.

I had struggled through undergrad making similar work, feeling out of place, grappling with perplexing feedback. All through art school, we were shown the same macho art stars from the seventies over and over. Robert Smithson and his buddies. Donald Judd. I liked their work, but it looked nothing like mine. I saw that as a sign that mine was deficient, was lesser than.

Most of the artists from the show "Radical Women" grew up under brutal dictatorships in the 1960's in South and Central America. I don't want to compare my life to theirs. I was raised in a relatively safe part of the world. But I was also raised in a cult. One where I was always expected to follow along, to say the right thing, to be perfect. Any mistakes were signs that I wasn't trustworthy, and that I could become a problem.

I was always aware of being watched, observed, graded. The stakes were high. I didn't understand it completely as a child, but I knew in my bones that if I misbehaved, the consequences could quickly spiral out of control. It affected how I learned to talk- my humor became quiet, almost impercep-

tible to authority figures. Often, I could make my little brother laugh while appearing to follow the rules, even though my parents thought I was being serious.

When I first moved to California to go to art school, I was told by new friends that they could never tell when I was joking or being serious. And when they pointed it out to me, it was hard for me to tell as well. I couldn't pick apart my sentences, and say what was a joke and what wasn't. It was just my way of speaking, of trying to navigate the world.

I made work using children's supplies, using handicrafts, because for me I was interested in how children become indoctrinated, how the veneer of innocence belies serious implications. The paper hats we make for Thanksgiving to show the happy story of the pilgrims and Indians, the simple paper slings we make to slay Goliath. The indoctrination happens under our noses, before we are cognizant, at the same time we are learning how to move our bodies, use our voices.

I didn't realize how much I devalued my own work until I saw "Radical Women." My work wasn't silly and childish. It fit in a trajectory of serious work, of funny and incisive and brilliant work done for decades by smart women. I walked through the show, occasionally giggling with happiness, but also seething that the only artist in the show that had ever been referenced in class was Ana Mendieta, and usually then only because we were talking about Carl Andre.

///

A few months ago, I was thinking about "Radical Women" while leafing through the catalog. I was also thinking about the Amazons, about their attempt to stake out a space in society, and when that didn't work, they fled, escaping to build something new. I was thinking about how their fight is still a dilemma many face today. How hard do we try to fix a society that doesn't see us as full-fledged members? When is it time to fight, and when is it better to escape, to build our own institutions?

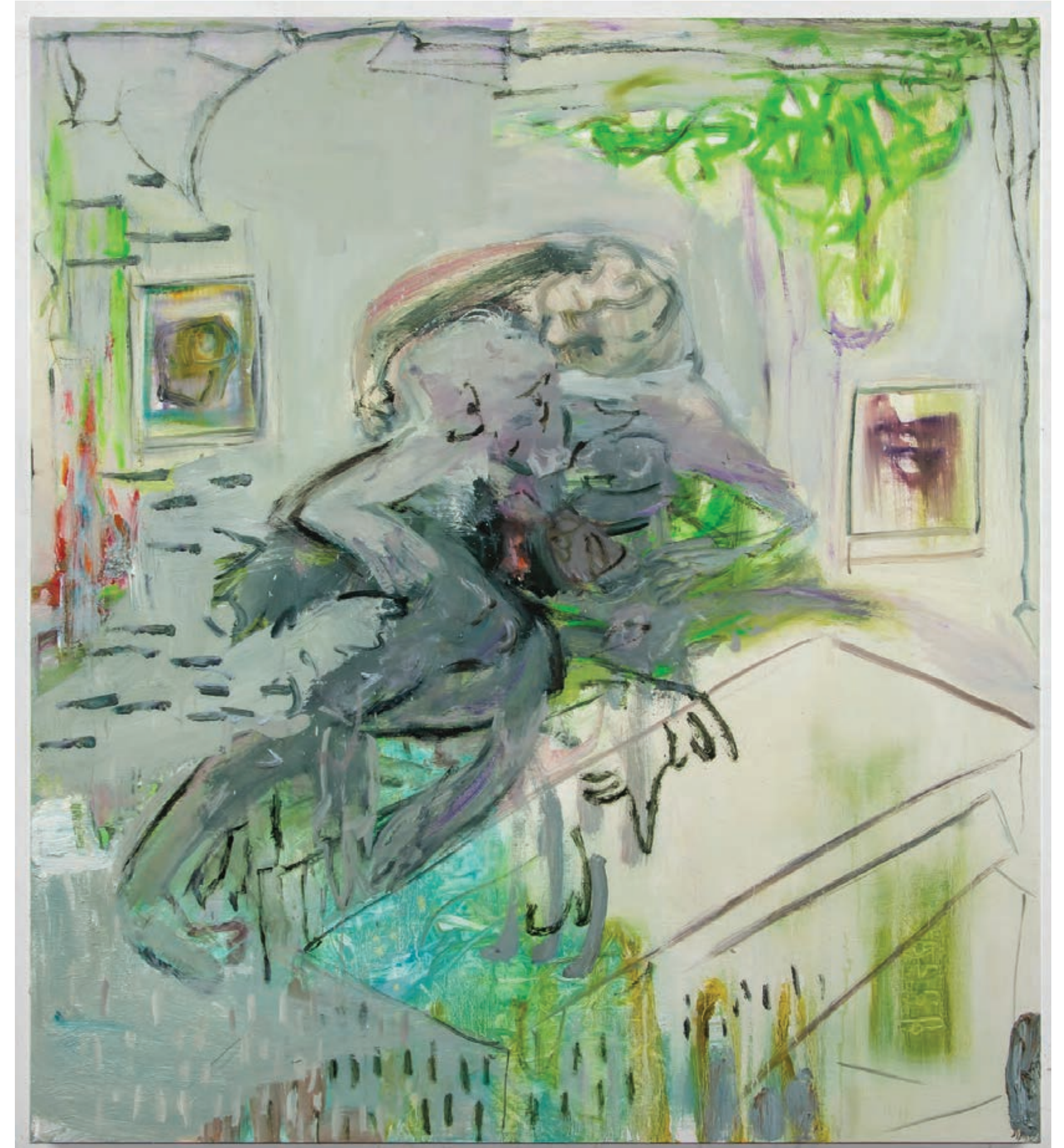
I realized that I had been looking at their decision as a binary, to stay or go. But what if there was a third option? What if the Amazons were there all along, and I just didn't see them? What if the matriarchy and other modes of existence haven't dissolved, but permeated, dotting the landscape like embers, ready to be nurtured into a fire?

The Amazons didn't actually disappear. Maybe they even took on a new form of existence. Perhaps their legacy lives on, both through their genes, their clothing, and folklore, but also whenever people come together, from the Underground Railroad, suffragists, women's social clubs, free community breakfasts, and quilting bees.

Patriarchy is often presented as existing since time immemorial- using strong cavemen and their pre-occupied, child-bearing women as examples. But the ingenious part of patriarchy is that it colonized our histories, wiping out our ability to perceive other modes of being around us. By reverse engineering the patriarchy, by dismantling it piece by piece, can we reclaim not just our future, but our present and our past?

I wonder how many histories are out there, barely concealed under the surface. How many threads are waiting to be pulled, to connect us to grandmothers we never knew? I've been thinking of Demeter's daughter, Persephone, living underground. I wonder who she's met, what stories she knows. I can almost see them, the shades just past my sight.









COLOPHON

FULL BLEDE is a free contemporary art and writing broadsheet independently published, designed, edited, and curated by Sacha Baumann. Each issue features collaborators expounding upon a theme and launches in conjunction with an art exhibition reception at a selected Los Angeles gallery.

MASTHEAD

The masthead is a nod to the newspaper terms "full bleed" (edge-to-edge printing) and "lede" [the introductory section of a news story that entices the reader to keep reading]. Combined, FULL BLEDE expresses the newspaper's intent to

publish content that is intriguing, unadulterated, and beyond the edge of standardized borders of convention.

TYPOGRAPHY / PRODUCTION

The logo was created using Lush Display and is combined with Din Regular in the masthead. Headlines and subheads use Museo Slab, with Din Regular and Din Alternate Black used for body type. The broadsheet is created using Adobe Creative Cloud: Photoshop, Illustrator, + InDesign

INQUIRIES + FAQ

Visit fullblede.com for more information about the broadsheet and its collaborators and/or email fullblede@gmail.com.

SOCIAL MEDIA

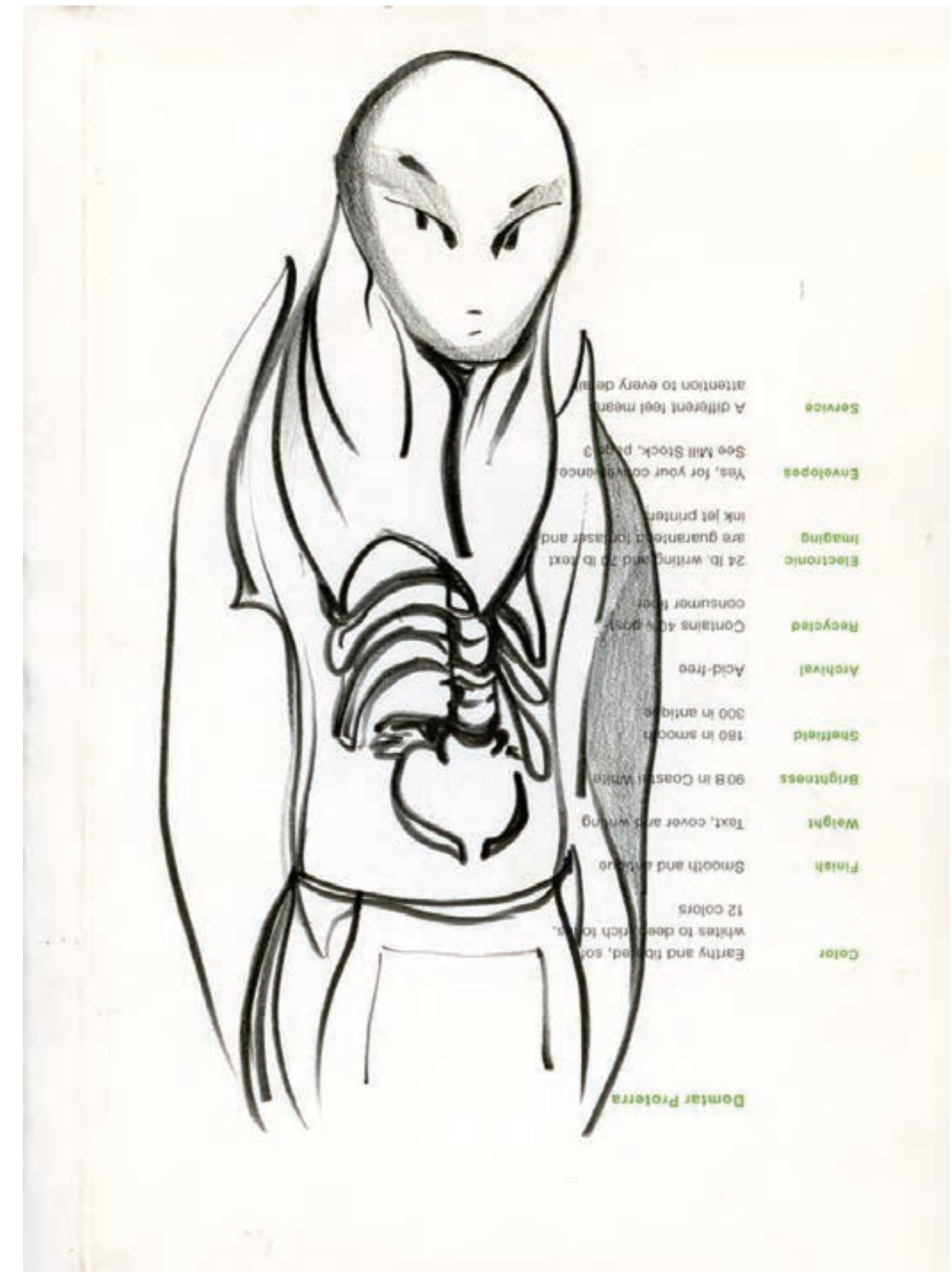
Let's connect on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter: /fullblede + @fullblede

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Although the newspaper is free, subscriptions are available for a small fee at patreon.com/fullblede

DONATIONS + SPONSORSHIP

Donations are essential to making FULL BLEDE happen. Click the DONATE button on the homepage of fullblede.com or give monthly support at a level that is comfortable to you at patreon.com/fullblede. All donations go directly towards offsetting printing costs. Sponsorship is also available, email fullblede@gmail.com.







### The Smell of Big Money

You leave your hired Honda at the Getty Center  
carpark, ride the tramcar up, up and up, alight,  
traverse plains of cool, cream Travertine,

ascend, ascend the flight of low, flat steps, 'till  
you're standing—antlike—on  
an Olympian field of huge tiles of Travertine,

breathe in the honeysuckle panoramic breeze,  
feel awed, small, walk to the balustrade,  
past the wisteria arbor, look over LA, splayed,

feel the overwhelming urge to plunge over the edge  
to plummet down to nothingness,  
but resist, resist, high on that hilltop,

where architectural magnificence, fastidious  
clipped topiary, marble statuary, jolt you  
back into Art and all that is good in this world.





#### HIVE INSPECTION

The audiotape was in pristine condition. I found it in my aunt's apartment, stuffed inside a drawer under all kinds of things, letters and bobby pins and broken knick-knacks. But the logo on the box caught my eye: two circles, one red and the other black, that suggested a reel-to-reel player. I pulled it out from the clutter. It was a recording of a radio play by my late grandfather. I could feel my heart beat faster as I deciphered the label, which was written in Arabic, a language that continues to test me. The play's title was something like "Songs for a Sacred Bee."

The tape was wound around a clear plastic spool and gave off a shiny chocolate gleam. It held the promise of uncorrupted sound. I thought my grandfather's voice might be on it. I had never met him and had never heard his voice, and the possibility of hearing him read his work made my eyes water. Not tears. I did not harbor feelings for this grandfather I never knew. It was the shock of the uncanny that stirred me, as if I had come upon an ancient tomb in a parking lot, or was poised to make contact with an alien.

I brought the tape to the place that digitizes everything. They said they were working through a backlog and it would take them two weeks to transfer it. I have no patience for waiting, so I fidgeted for two weeks, as if nothing else mattered.

My aunt used to tell us a story about an English lady from the floral club who visited their apiary. Whenever my aunt told this story, a suspicion of glee crept

into her eyes, which made me stop and listen. She described the English lady as aggressive and compared her to different species of bees my grandfather bred. Carniolans are known for their gentle disposition, but other species, like the Punic or Tunisian bees, could be counted on to start a fight. The English lady didn't heed my grandfather's warnings and went straight to the Tunisians. Good thing she wore a veil, because the bees came at her like bullets. They found their point of entry, her uncovered ankles, attached themselves and stung her as she ran for cover, while a rear guard formed a phalanx and flew after her.

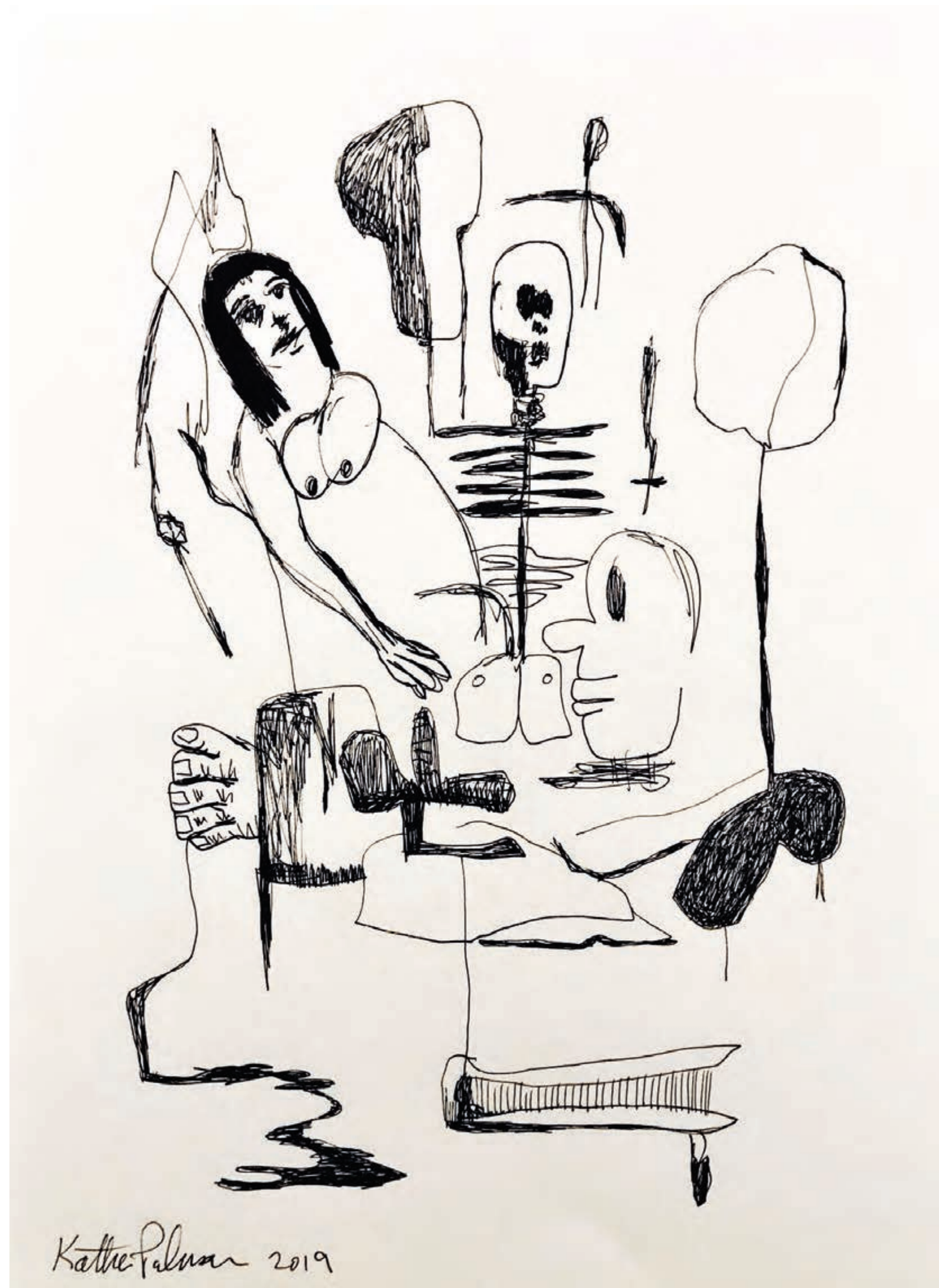
I have a promotional photograph of my grandfather at a recording studio somewhere. I wonder if it is the same studio where he recorded the tape I found in my aunt's apartment. He is seated in front of a mic, surrounded by a handful of broadcast technicians and actors. He is chubby and balding in his wide-lapel suit and striped tie. It is one of the rare shots where he smiles for the camera. I like my grandfather smiling more than I like him serious.

It does seem that he preferred to be portrayed as a serious man. In most photos, he stares, unsmiling, into the camera. He gazes into the distance, or maybe it is the future he sees. He only smiles when he is caught off-guard or when he poses with his daughters, the older one who is my aunt, and the younger one, my mother. A photo of the three of them in their garden brings tears to my eyes.

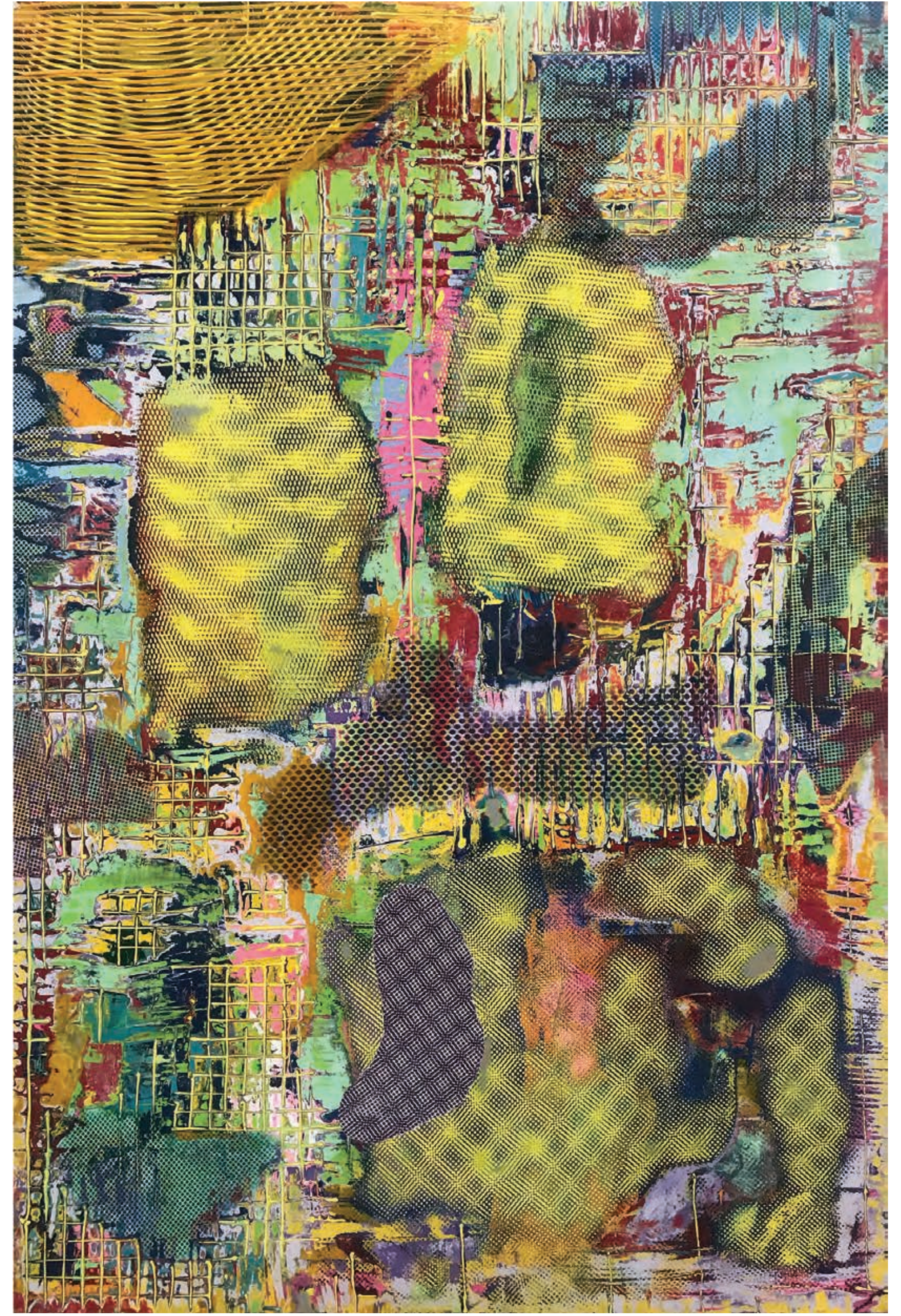
My grandfather smiles for the camera when he is with his bees. He poses by a hive with my grandmother, their fox terrier at their feet. He is in shirtsleeves, or a three-piece suit with a boutonniere and a watch-chain. My grandmother smiles too, as they pose with their beehives. He smiles as he demonstrates his inventions, like the patented removable aluminum honeycomb, or when he brandishes a cigar and performs a hive inspection. I think my grandfather was as happy with his bees as he was with his daughters, and much happier with his bees than he was with most people. I imagine his bees treated him well, that they were kinder to him than people.

The transfer is finally ready to be picked up. The young man behind the counter hands me the tape and a thumb drive with the digital file of the recording, and I feel the blood rush to my face. I walk home with the thumb drive inside my jacket pocket, and rub it like a worry bead.

I boot up my laptop, open the file and hit play. The room fills with orchestral music and a booming male voice that speaks in a classical form of Arabic—*alhamdulillah!* I can make out a few words here and there. Other voices join and mingle with the music. The program is designed to evoke another time and place. I cannot tell which voice belongs to whom, or if my grandfather's voice is among them.









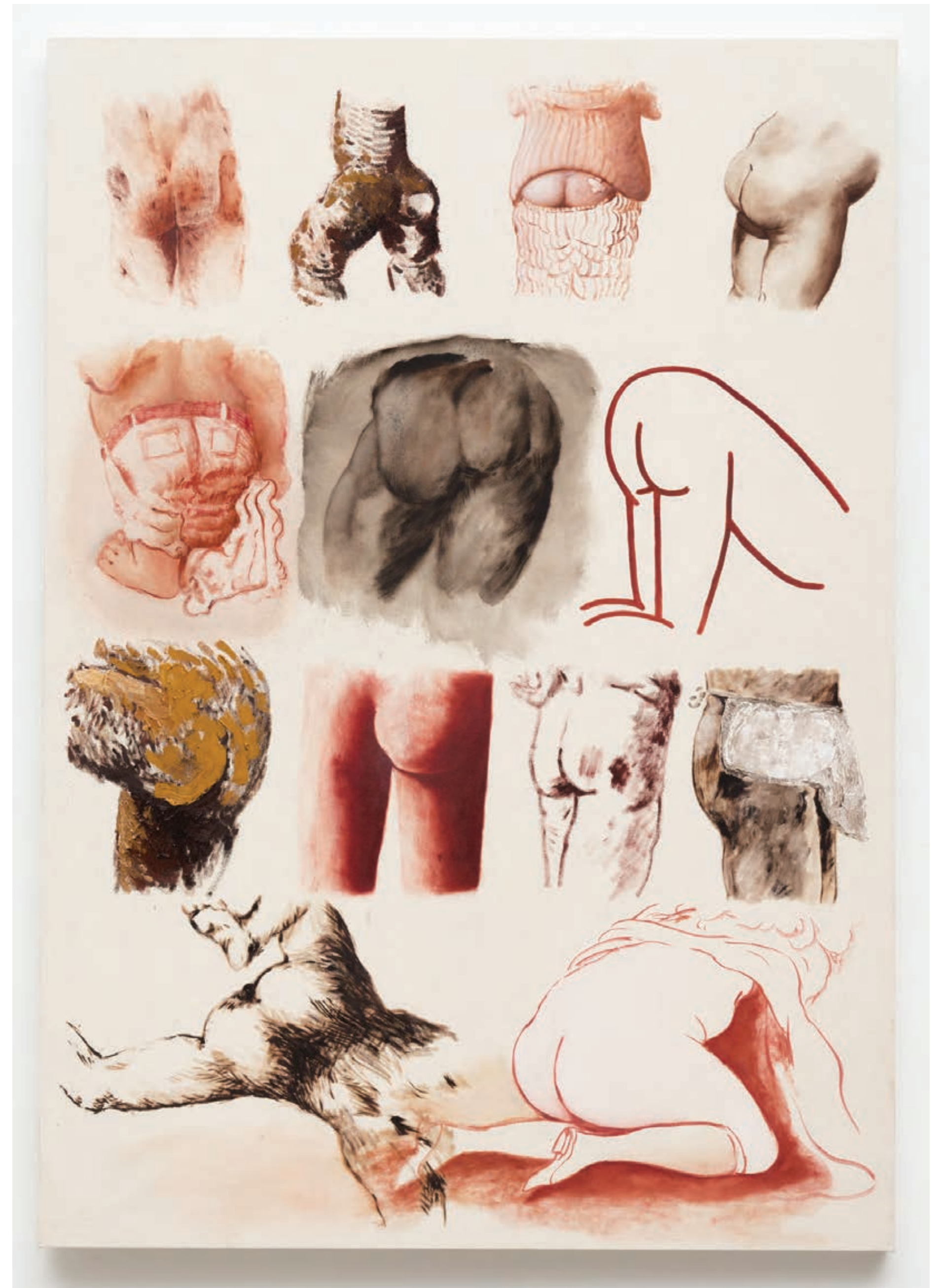


Live Goddess

Ishtar lifts her glorious eyes  
 and says, "come to me, Gilgamesh,  
 and be my bridegroom."  
 He turns her down. He  
 doesn't want her demons of  
 the storm as draft mules.  
 She left her husband Dumuzi  
 in Hell, struck Ishallanu and  
 crippled the Abyssinian roller.  
 Now he sits in the garden  
 all day crying "kappikappi,  
 my wing." One student asks  
 me privately, "Why is this  
 part of our education?"







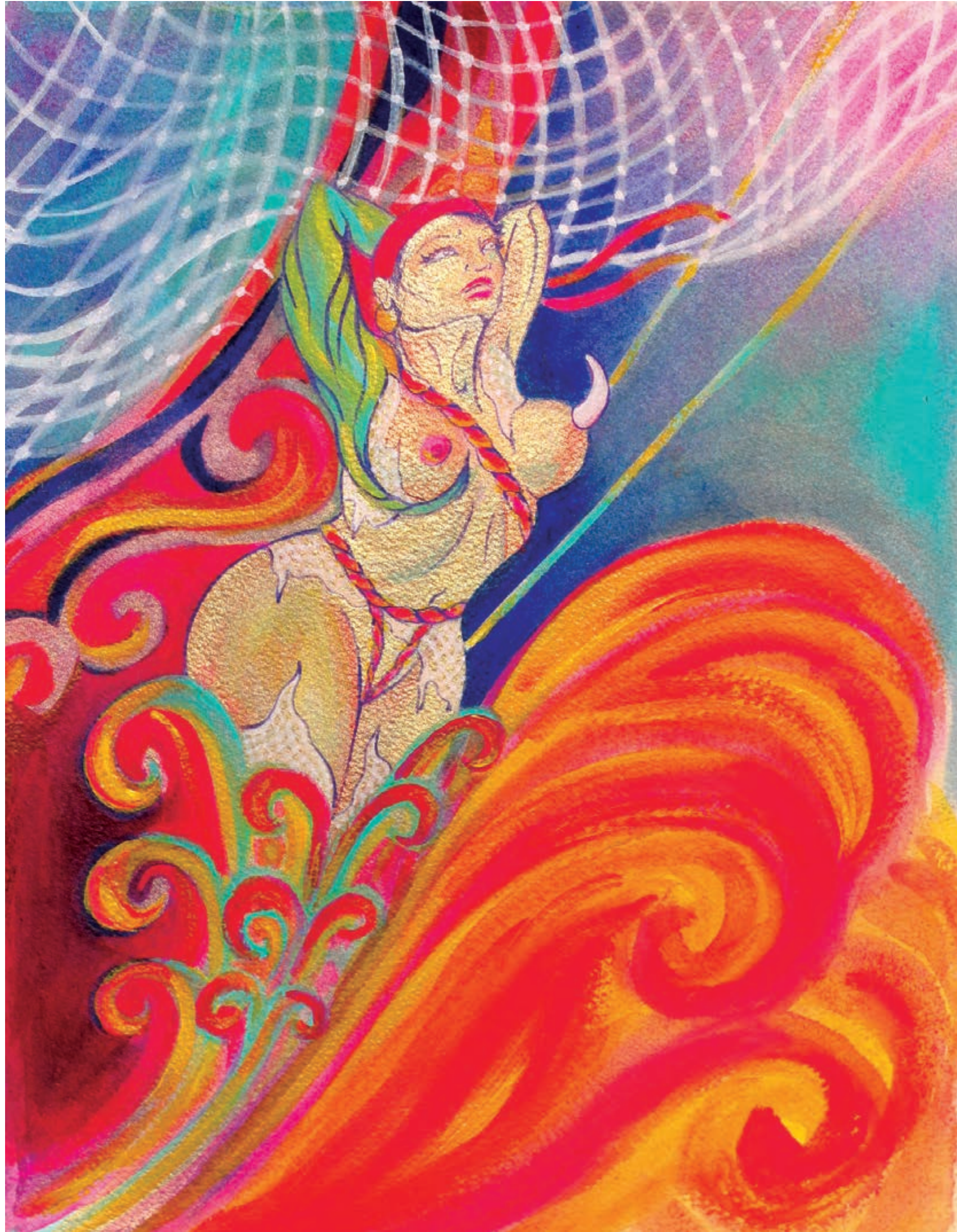


THE PIRATE WOMAN & THE SIAMESE CAMEL  
SONGS OF MY FANTASY, ACT II

In the apocalypse waves  
The last Woman emerges  
Prow of a crumbling ship  
Turns turtle on the damned trick  
Warrior of an ocean of blood  
Heart in cannon against the flood  
Survivor of the miscarriage's legend  
To her erotomania tight and bound  
Cursed nipple with hysterical hook  
Lands on the sand like a fucking crook

Cheating alligator  
Chatting her through the shore  
Crock of shit weeping to the core  
I am here for the Eldorado Senor  
The crew of nasty crabs  
That covers her from blizzard  
Free fight on her anus  
To conquer the Mount of Venus  
Aztec turtles in procession  
Offer cactus and watermelon  
Ready to get circumcised  
Only to bless her eyes

All the creatures of this planet  
Scratch and fall for her racket  
Coz her cameltoe comes from above  
Parades of shrimps sing "mazaltov"  
Paranoid chick from hips to toe  
Aphrodisiac piranhas on the low  
Most compelling in her headspace  
It's all about that little death



Thirsty for that insanity wand  
Leather boots on burned sand  
Delusion of distant animal  
Mirror of watercolor ball  
Fantasy of a predator duo  
One monster two solo show  
The Siamese Camel approaches her breast  
And blaster with his criminal breath:  
"We're down to give you milk for free  
If you deal with that slow & furious journey  
Chérie Chérie  
I take care of your bootylicious needs  
I mean delicious feeds  
Bro brings corny courtesy  
Making sure you get butterfly in belly  
Bully  
Welcome to the chill  
Fall limp into the hill  
Masculine ill  
Press the hump like a buzzer Boo  
Be the boss of the Foo"

By Neptune! What is this Berber bum?  
Swaying her mane of sea scum  
2 in 1 as a shampoo with libido  
This monster will untangle my ego  
The nympho mercenary  
Sister shipwreck's fantasy  
Throws herself like a squid  
And plants her dagger for the fluid  
Kneeling down to drink the semitic cream  
She jumps on that anamorphic dream

Anchor thrown on pathological reverie  
She sets sail toward tropicality  
The moon is burying her horoscope  
As comets clash the pope  
When blood flows every month  
Stars do not count

Heart parenthesis or g-spot  
Drunk beast tips double shot  
Alpha male of an illiterate vessel  
He gives his head or his tail  
To keep her captive the schizophrenic  
Like a cosmos map divides the infinite  
Ass between two mountains  
The pirate streaps with pain  
Figurehead becomes swinger  
An odyssey of anger  
The 3rd eye erotomaniac  
Gets blue in the tarmac

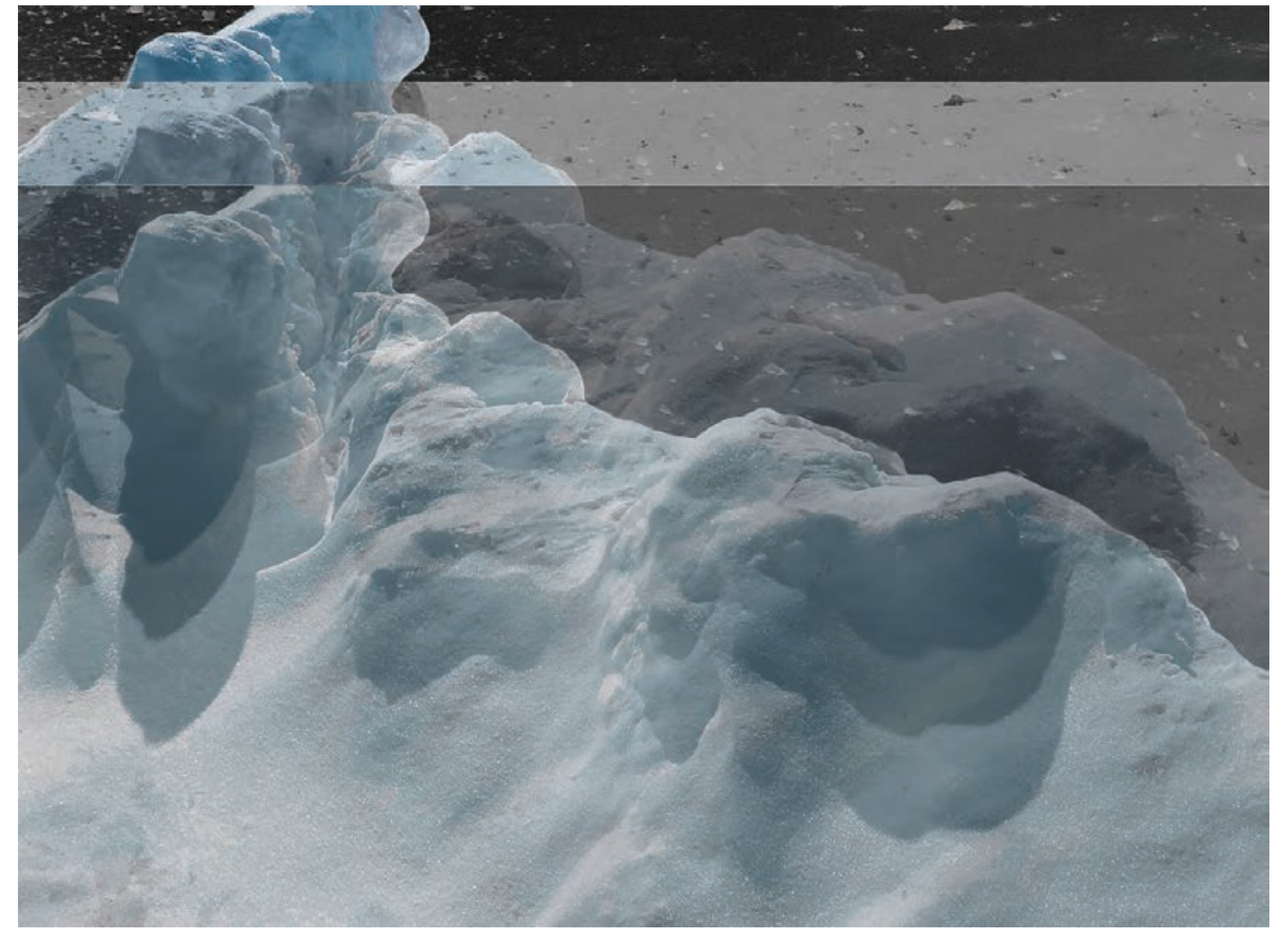
This trilogy in 69  
Attracts the dark genuine  
Fluorescent scorpio  
Senses the memento  
Faithful messenger under opium  
The sign gets down on the podium  
Claws for M.I.C  
Ether for karaoke  
"Mistress or mediterranean mother  
Your abysses are under water!  
This soap opera is out of track  
You never make love with your heart in the black!"

The woman sharply bitten  
See the camel with no fun  
Truth in that poison  
Real is the venom  
That chimera, two men paralyzed  
United to give half of their size  
Polyamorous illusion  
Pipe dream conclusion  
Two opposite headed raft  
At the same spot from the start

Night revolution  
Stars in convulsion  
Betrayal from the planetes  
To female outbreak  
The mad pirate out of revenge  
Now immortal in trance  
Brings out her sword  
To clean-cut her last word  
Deflating the heart's hump  
That joker duo is dumb

Far away, glitters on the sea  
The splendor of a forbidden dynasty  
Silver sirens whisper the future  
"Strong pirate, sweet freedom, divine adventure"  
Our marginal lover of liberty  
Enchanted by the taboo symphony  
Embarks for this deep territory  
The island of Lesbos, surely







## String of Pearls

It was a rainy day in March when we brought her there, when she left me, or did I leave her? The all too familiar sounds of sirens faded as the rain beat fast against the car window. We told her we were bringing her to a resort, a resort with palm trees, sunny skies, beach chairs and muscular life guards. Matilda was quiet and hadn't fussed when my mother, her daughter, Sandra, tucked her into her camel wool coat and I, her granddaughter, accompanied her, cradling her arm into the waiting elevator. I closed my eyes, inhaling the smell of her talcum powder as we descended to the lobby. She clutched her handbag close as I led her to the yellow taxi. She stared out the window as the taxi crossed Malcolm X and Lennox Avenues. When the driver turned left onto Frederick Douglas Blvd, she tapped her daughter's shoulder, "Where are we going, Sandra?"

In this moment, I felt the void and I was suspended between them, like an umbilical cord. "We have to make a stop first, Mom," Sandra said firmly.

My mother looked out the window. My grandmother looked down and folded her hands. I was wedged between them. I felt the shame for both of them; the shame Sandra felt for bringing her mother to the Amsterdam Nursing Home and the shame Matilda carried for being a burden for her daughter. Even though Matilda was mostly unaware of where she was and what was going on around her, there

were moments when it was clear that she knew what had happened to her and what would continue to happen to her.

Alzheimer's had come to my grandmother gradually as we discovered pamphlets for memory loss when we cleaned out the apartment she had inhabited for over 30 years. She had never mentioned memory loss and we didn't suspect that she was losing herself even when she asked Ellen, my older cousin, to balance her check book every month. We thought it was because Ellen was an accounting major and that Matilda's vision made it difficult for her to read the numbers. Matilda wasn't diagnosed with Alzheimer's until she was 75, after several incidents of neighbors calling Sandra to inform her that my grandmother was often confused and disoriented.

We had packed one suitcase for Matilda. That's how we coaxed her into believing the lie. The driver set the battered Samsonite on the curb and he and Sandra haggled over the fare. A man and a woman dressed in green uniforms greeted us. "Hello Matilda", the woman said while the man carried her suitcase away. "We have a room with a view waiting for you."

Sandra held Matilda's hand for a moment. I felt the void disappear. Matilda and Sandra looked at each other and I saw the love between them. In one look

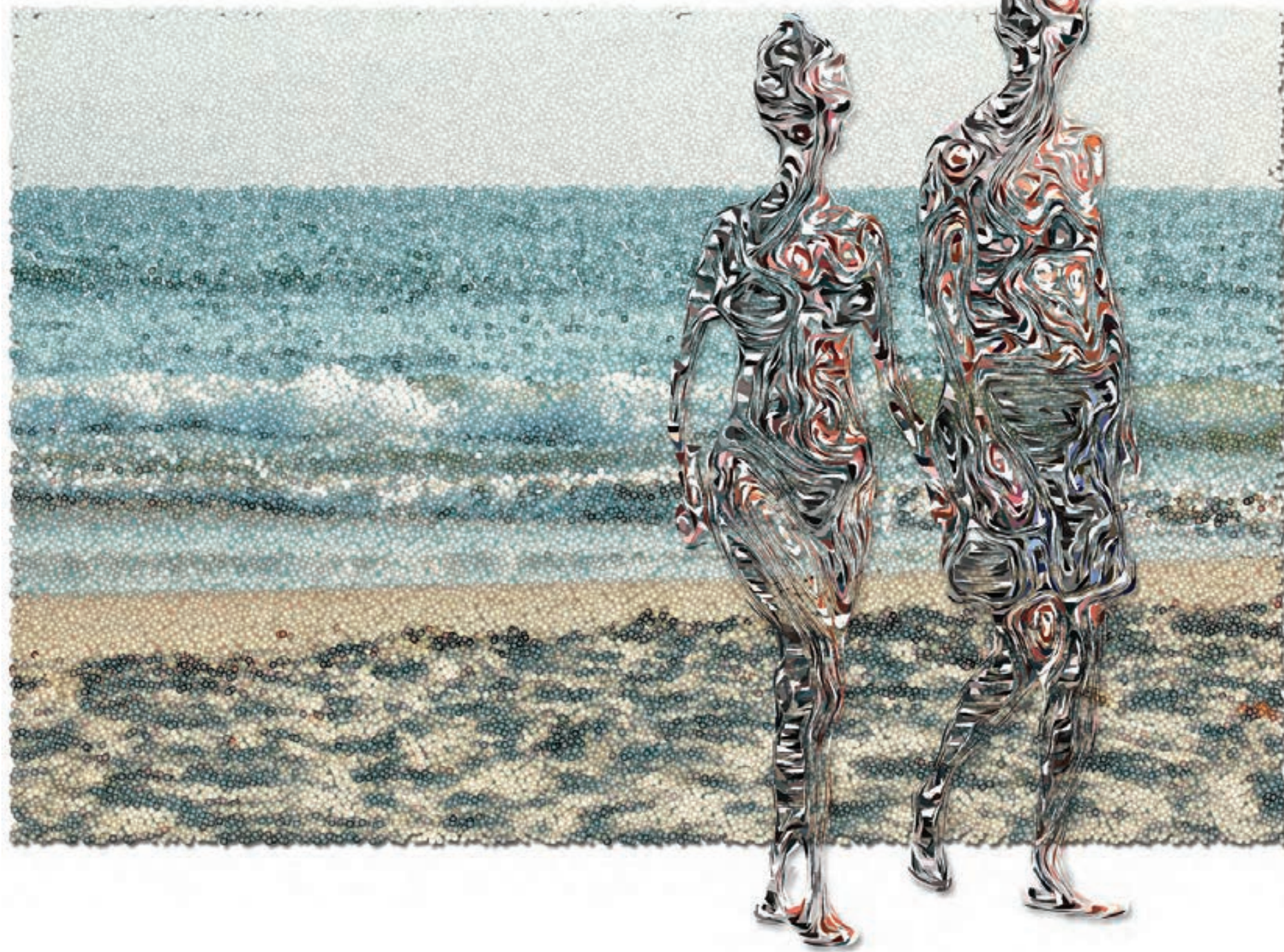
I spied the love of a lifetime between a mother and a child, a child and a mother. Matilda squeezed Sandra's hand.

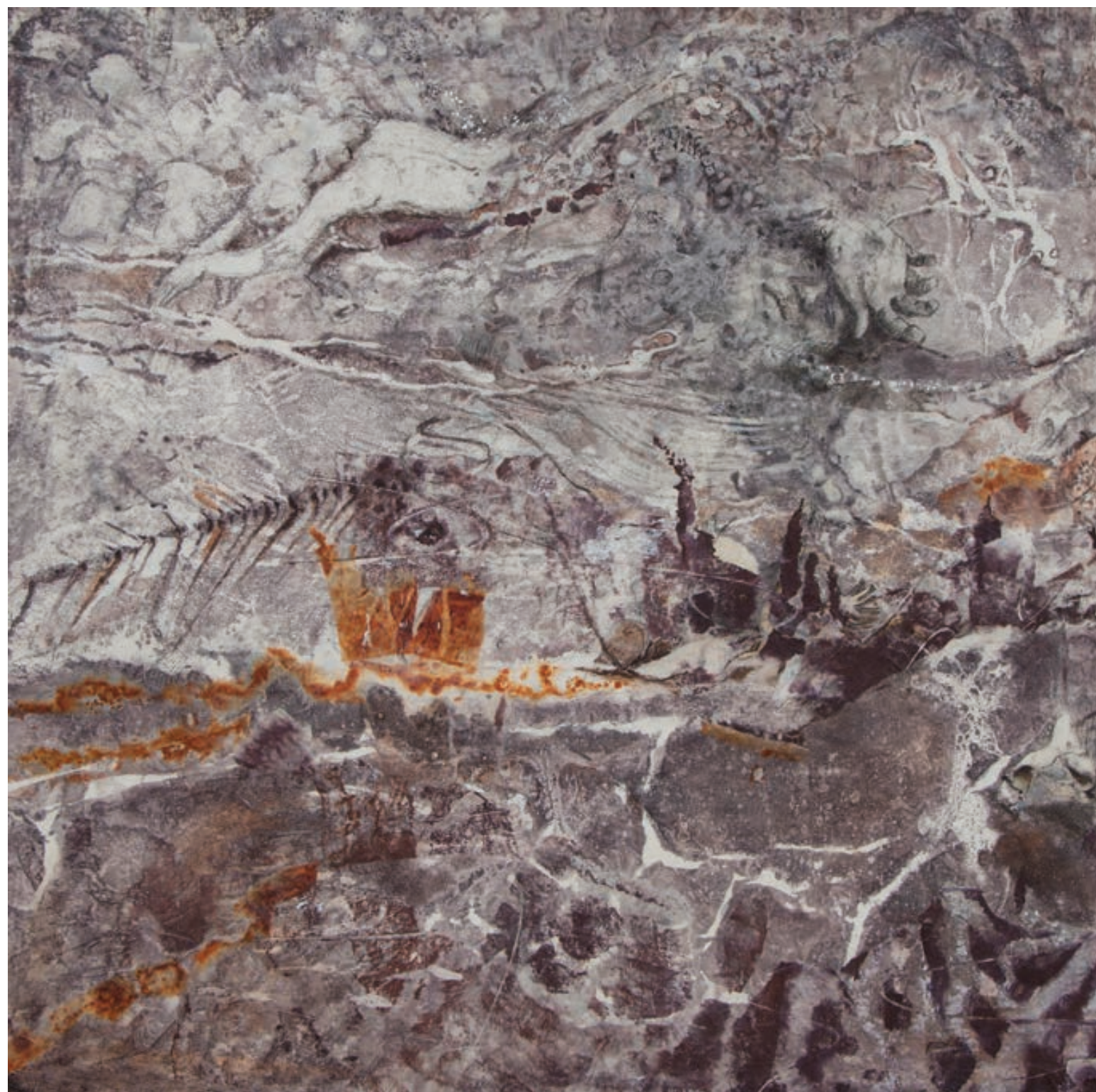
A ray of afternoon light cut through the west facing window as we entered her room. While Sandra and Matilda unpacked and arranged clothes in a dresser, I carefully placed family photos in the plastic frames we had purchased the day before, pictures of me and my cousins, of her daughters, Sandra and Jewel, and a younger Matilda in her fifties.

"Lunch is being served. You must be hungry Matilda," the woman said, as she guided us down the hallway.

"This is a nice hotel, Sandra," Matilda said.

She turned back towards me, grabbed my hand. I felt her drop something into my palm, smooth, firm and round. A memory of her scolding me at her dresser for playing with her string of pearls flashed through my mind. She looked at me, her eyes brimming with tears. I knew we wouldn't see each other again. She knew it too. She had taken me for Sandra for a split second before she saw through me to her daughter. I saw through her to her mother, Masie, my great grandmother. A current of memories flowed through me like a river. I felt suspended in the expansive womb of my ancestors, connected to a multitude of umbilical cords.





### #117 – Woman Forty-Four

As she presses the door open, her body is met with a surge of heat releasing itself from the dark room.

The evening sun is low, but temperatures have risen.

She enters, observes the salt.  
Just days ago,  
transparent crystals shimmered like  
a field of false diamonds.

And now, unexpectedly they  
have disintegrated into a soft, vague snowfall.

The bright white forms crumble at the touch,  
defying her attempts to coax them into a new landscape.







