

## ROSE MCLARNEY

# “Make Something Out of It”

Everything is past, below the overpass, behind in the speeding view, driving a six-lane, a straight, obliterating black line, interstate that can't be crossed, that cuts off animals car-struck, animals bone-cracked—I was going to say.

But I'd been to see the art of Nellie Mae, her *Pig on the Expressway*, the pig biting his lip yet carrying his old figure forward into the fresh collision of colors. Her sculptures of chewed gum and marbles putting tired materials back into play. The drawings of butterfly dogs, donkey haints, women hens—hybrids adapted, hopes surviving. In purple pen on wallpaper, *Something That Ain't Been Born Yet*, a bushy-tailed, big-mouthed future life. And her letters in crayon command, “Can't turn around now, must get on the right road.”

Litter flies in front of the windshield—a page printed with words. It was a book. It's become a bird, a just-begun breed, by being wind tossed, by being torn to feathers. A right road? The cursive curve flows, somewhere for scrappier forms still to go.

(after Nellie Mae Rowe)

Rose McLarney has published two collections of poems, *Its Day Being Gone* (Penguin Books, 2014)—winner of the National Poetry Series—and *The Always Broken Plates of Mountains* (Four Way Books, 2012). McLarney has been awarded fellowships by the MacDowell Colony, Bread Loaf and Sewanee Writers' Conferences, and Warren Wilson College; was the 2016 Dartmouth poet in residence at the Frost Place and winner of the Chaffin Award at Morehead State; is the 2017 summer poet in residence at University of Mississippi; and has received other prizes such as the Fellowship of Southern Writers' New Writing Award for Poetry. Her work has appeared in publications including the *Kenyon Review*, the *Southern Review*, *New England Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, the *Missouri Review*, and many other journals. McLarney earned her MFA from Warren Wilson's MFA Program for Writers and has taught at that college, among other institutions. Currently, she is assistant professor of creative writing at Auburn University and co-editor-in-chief and poetry editor of *Southern Humanities Review*.

## JUDY MENSCH

*Against the Wall*, 2014  
Photolithograph, 11 x 14 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST