

## LAIRD HARRISON

# Stop the Fast Motion of My Life

For an establishing shot,  
let's show the time  
I lowered my baby into the bath with his brother.  
Pulling off my shirt,  
I knock the soap into the water.

Pan slowly over the faces  
in my grandparents' living room.  
My grandfather nods into the camera  
and doesn't know to smile.

Capture my parents in whispered conversation.  
Her laugh sounds red with wine.  
Edit out the voice-over  
that foreshadows their divorce.

Zoom in on the Mexican jade brooch  
blossoming on my grandmother's dress,  
until she loses it to a burglar.

Where you reveal the interior of my bedroom,  
cut to the detail of my flip-top desk,  
the Royal Quiet Deluxe  
with a blank page scrolled into its platen  
before its keys stick  
and I give up my novel.

Linger on my wife's face  
in the scene where we meet.  
The light glances from her glasses  
when she asks my name.  
Replay that scene.  
Replay it.

I suggest a close-up of her watch,  
its black dial framed in gold  
on a narrow band.  
She forgets it on my bedside table  
and I fasten it to my wrist.

I want to restore the scene  
with the girl from two doors down.  
When we strip in her basement,  
we have no pubic hair  
or words for what we feel.

Slow down the motion of my baby  
turning the doorknob to his dorm room.  
End with his face filling the whole frame,  
eyes round, lips parted.  
Freeze that frame.

**Laird Harrison** is the author of the novel *Fallen Lake* (Verdant Books, 2012). His journalism has appeared in *TIME*, the *Nation*, *Audubon*, and *Salon*. He has produced audio for KQED and WUNC radio stations and video for *Smithsonian.com*. At the San Francisco Writers' Grotto, he is at work on a novel connecting alternative realities in physics and literature.

## PERKY EDGERTON

*Blind Date*, 2016  
Mixed media on canvas, 39 x 45 in

