

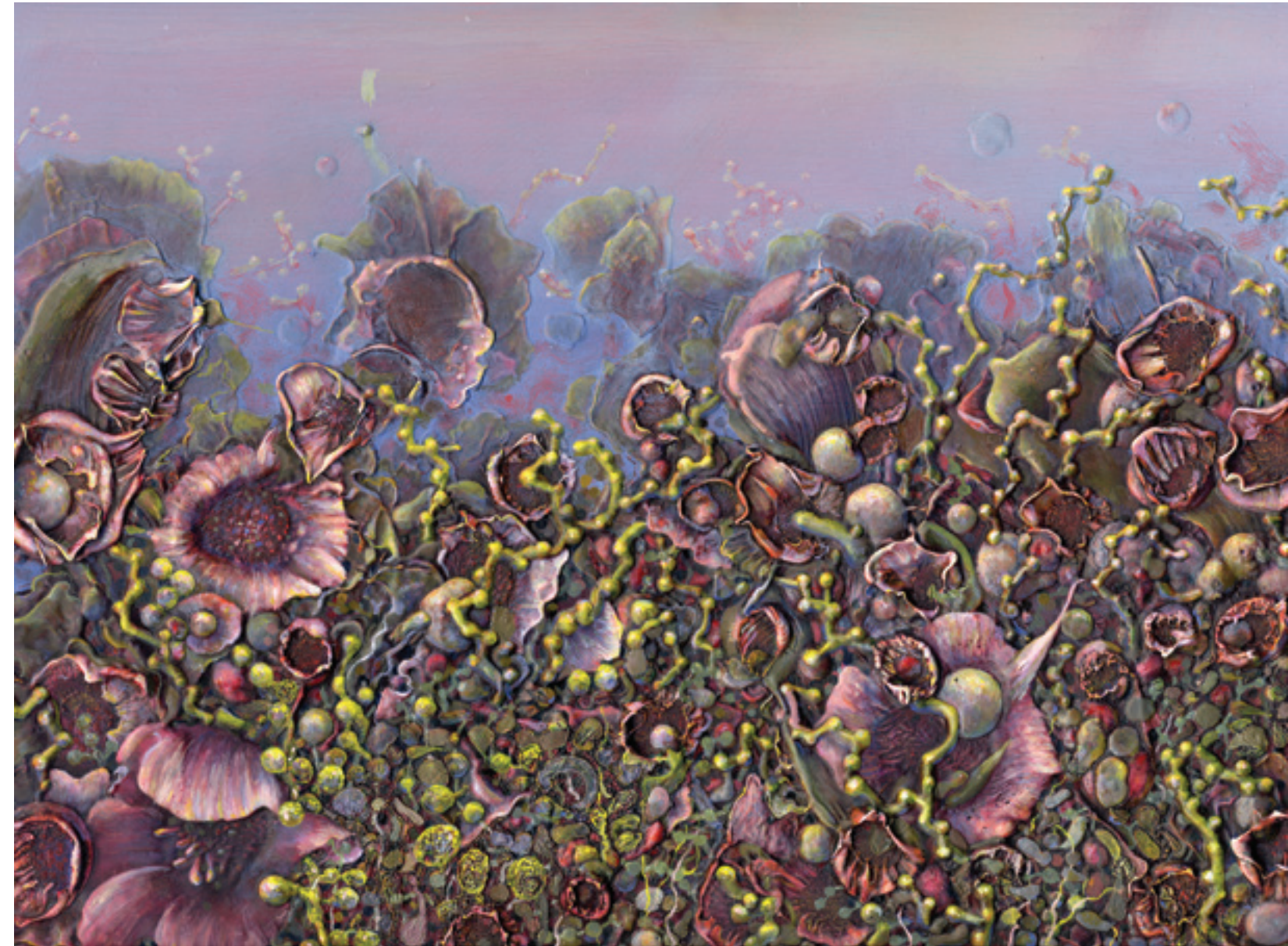
a beautiful crimson color to a flare, glazing the flame to a dazzling yellow. The blaze gave shape to formless emotions.

The high-pitched sounds made by children splashing in the creek brought me back to Earth Day 2015. I was almost done with my journey upwards. I was glad the layout ahead of me was asymmetrical. Nature was free and carefree. Even though a bit overwhelming, I knew my way out the forest like my mother and grandmother before me. At the top of the terrain, I reached the pink silk floss tree. I, too, could handle anything thrown my way. I had my own spikes to quell my thirst during the dry season. I and my tree were one. I collected a few seeds to plant in my garden. There were fewer and fewer messy strings. I put the seeds in my pocket and crossed over the bridge that led to the exit.

Aliete Guerrero is a Brazilian-American writer from Los Angeles. Her assimilation process has been tethered to a loss of cultural heritage, but through her writings she fuses her two worlds in a brand new universe. Her writings also reflect her passion for nature, art, and her struggles with bipolar disorder. Her memoir titled *The Tightrope Walker* is in progress.

MELISSA GWYN

Field, 2011
Oil on Panel, 9 x 12 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST