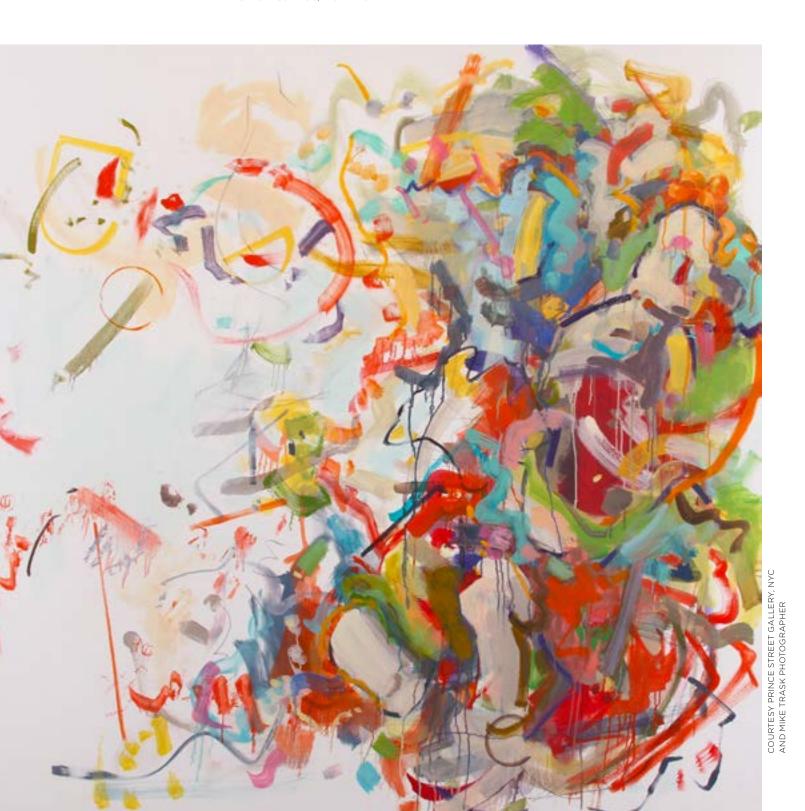
## **GINA WERFEL**

Garden Repose, 2016 Oil on canvas, 48 x 48 in



**CHARLES GOODRICH** 

Birds Dying of Old Age

The sparrow decided eons ago that when her time came

she'd just give up fighting the fleas and ticks and lie down in the duff

and close her eyes and let the little people eat her back to the Earth.

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Just let me get back to Mexico the turkey vulture is thinking

halfway across the gulf his shoulder socket grinding with pain.

Back to my favorite tree with the cow bones scattered underneath

and the beautiful view across the empty chaparral.

The storm petrel was traveling solo, riding a northeasterly off Kamchatka when her heart stopped.

She crumpled into a feathered clump and the wind carried her a few miles farther before dropping her into the North Pacific.

An Anna's hummingbird laps up a nightcap from our feeder then returns to his favorite viburnum.

As darkness descends he latches his claws around a familiar twig and falls asleep and never wakes up.

The scarlet feathers of his gorget fade but for years his desiccated body will remain perched there on the branch.

Charles Goodrich is the author of three books of poetry, A Scripture of Crows; Going to Seed: Dispatches from the Garden; and Insects of South Corvallis, and a collection of essays, The Practice of Home. He has coedited two anthologies, Forest Under Story: Creative Inquiry in an Old-Growth Forest and In the Blast Zone: Catastrophe and Renewal on Mount St. Helens. For many years he supported his poetry habit by working as a professional gardener, and he recently retired from his post as director of the Spring Creek Project for Ideas, Nature, and the Written Word.