

## MARK SHETABI

*Girl on a Bicycle*, 2013  
Oil on Linen, 20 x 25 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST

## HARRIET SCOTT CHESSMAN

### Halliday's Treasures

**A**t first, Caro thought of the neighbor as a child-like figure, in spite of the fact that his often bare paunch and silvery hair suggested he must have been at least in his fifties. He lived in a tiny bungalow nearby, a fairy-tale house on a blithely untended Palo Alto property, surrounded by larger, newer houses with meticulous gardens. He appeared as unaware of wealth as a garden gnome might be, come to life.

Caro couldn't feel at home in the hush and privacy of the neighborhood, where hedges loomed twenty or thirty feet in the air between houses and outsized rosebushes or agapanthus lined the walks. In her small town in Rhode Island, the boundaries between one property and another were gentler and more diplomatic—a row of forsythia, a few small shrubs. You could see people's houses and children playing in all kinds of weather. Here, you might see a child following a mother inside, from the car, but it was rare to see kids having fun in the pretty gardens.

She had come to California with Henry, so that he could attend the Stanford Graduate School of Business. Each day of their journey in the old Jetta, with their even older dog, Butter, she daydreamed that they might turn around—that Henry would say, "Just kidding. How could you think I'd really go to business school? I'm an artist!" and she would throw her arms around him and vow for the thousandth time to love him always, in sickness and in health, for richer, for poorer. "Yep, poorer!" he'd say. "Peanut butter for dinner, here we come!" Yet Henry and she continued to move forward along the interstates, taking turns at the wheel and stopping at 7-Elevens for chips and big cans of iced tea and at rest areas for Butter to relieve himself on shaking legs. Henry hadn't even brought most of his canvases with him. He'd made two runs to New London to stash paintings and materials in his dad's garage. "I'm free of it, Caro. It feels good," he'd said.

Caro looked for teaching jobs in Silicon Valley elementary schools, but it was already August by the time they arrived, and the harried people in the school offices couldn't help her. She had always said to Henry that never again would she do waitressing, but the only job she'd been able to find so far was as a waitress in a new, upscale restaurant at an outdoor shopping center that sported palm trees and flowers. The tips were good and probably worth the fact that she was run off her feet by healthy people so