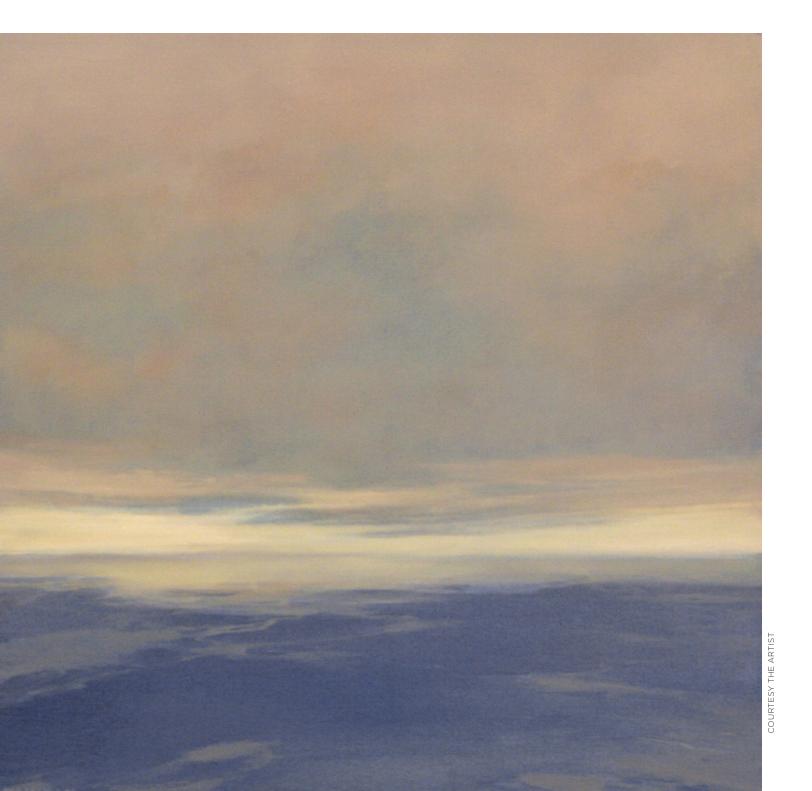
## KATHLEEN GALLIGAN

*Allure*, 2010 Oil on canvas, 12 x 12 in



## **TESS GALLAGHER**

## One Deer at Dusk

The hummingbirds are still fumbling the feeder with occasional dive-bombing to show each other how easy it is to slip a tongue into sweetness while others fight for priorities—who sips first or longest, or who can sit pensive without sipping at all. They know less

about deer, their magnetic noses trained to the young red tips of roses. Yet their tongue-sheath beaks would challenge fiercely if they caught deer mawing the blossoms of their honeysuckle.

The stealth-step of the deer seems wishing not to tear the fabric of this easing down of night, shadow entering shadow. And dusk, which allows us to gaze across the boundary of night's oncoming dream of possessing us entirely, has enabled the deer, in its shuttlecock moment. to let us watch ourselves as a soft muzzle caresses and takes teeth to what we've never tasted, then be ourselves consumed, as if night's unsheathed allover talisman of where we came from

had entered us while a deer and hummingbirds occupied what must have been the night nest of one mind choosing not to close until each step of the barely visible deer has blended with the last whir of hummingbird, vanished

Tess Gallagher is the author of ten volumes of poetry, including Midnight Lantern: New and Selected Poems, Dear Ghosts, and Moon Crossing Bridge. Gallagher has translated two books of poetry by Liliana Ursu, A Path to the Sea and The Sky behind the Forest. She initiated the publication of Raymond Carver's *Beginners* in the Library of America's complete collection of his stories. This poem will appear in her forthcoming book Is, Is Not in May 2019.