

## DANUSHA LAMÉRIS

# Painting

—for Eduardo Carrillo

Eggs clustered in an African basket. The purple spikes of onion flowers sticking out of pale-blue bottles, lined at the windowsill. My own face reflected in the splotted mirror as I traced my profile with the tip of a boar's hair brush.

Sometimes, a man or woman would walk in, as if on cue, take off all their clothes, then lie down on a podium and lounge for hours.

Now and then, he'd walk over—Ed—stroke his beard, squint over the arc of his thumb, and mutter something about the light,

then drift into talk of Madrid. *We had to mix our own pigments from powder*, he said. *Make brushes out of hair cut from the hind legs of a wild dog.*

We never knew whether he was telling the truth straight or slant. But we didn't care.

Kurt Cobain echoed off the steel rafters, flies buzzed in and out of the open doors. Cows grazed in the field nearby, lowing softly to their young.

And always the sharp smell of turpentine, the oils: alizarin crimson, cadmium yellow, titanium white. Colors we squeezed from their aluminum tubes onto our palettes.

Up the hill, scientists bent over petri dishes, examining the outlines of injured cells. Singers practiced scales, climbing up and down the steep ladders of their vocal cords.

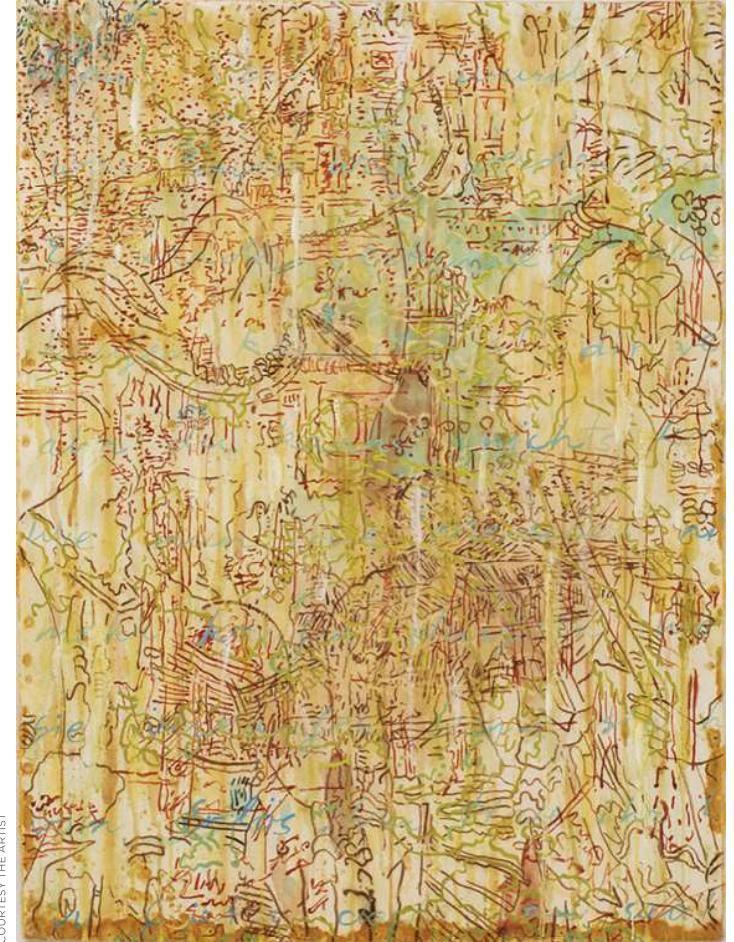
Somewhere across the globe, our country's bombs fell on villages, the choke of dust and smoke.

What privilege, unearned—at least by us—to toil, for that brief season, beneath our teacher's watchful gaze, studying the exact way the light shuddered through the dirty windowpane onto the tender bodies of things, casting its bruised shadows over the given world.

Some of **Danusha Laméris'** poems have been published in *The Best American Poetry 2017*, *The New York Times*, *The American Poetry Review*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *Ploughshares*, and *Tin House*. Her second book, *Bonfire Opera*, is forthcoming from the University of Pittsburgh Press in spring 2020. She teaches poetry independently, and is the current Poet Laureate of Santa Cruz County, California.

## HANNA HANNAH

*Untitled ("Verboten wurd . . ."), 2019*  
Casein on Arches watercolor paper, 30 x 22.5 in



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