

the places where they shift and crumble, and where they lift and glide. Every time, I think I am ready to trade the whoosh of discovery for the safety of the known, the intimate. Then I remember, there is no safety in the known, either.

But the heart has a mind of its own, and I've never been able to talk it out of or into anything, not with a whisper, not with a shout. Some things come down from on high: We cannot make it rain; we cannot make it stop raining. We cannot grow the waves or flatten them. Even if we travel 4,000 miles, we may not get what we want; we may stand at the shore and wish for something other than what is. We may have to settle for less, and we may find that sometimes less is enough, that less provides all the giddiness we can handle.

A whisper is a kind of audible scribble, a note you write in sound, though on these hot beaches I am also writing notes to myself in sand, with the tips of pointed shells and branches. And yes, I am whispering to myself, also speaking to myself in whatever voice is between a whisper and a shout, even singing to myself as I walk, as I bob, as I veer into and out of sleep. I am doing anything I can to remind myself to listen and be satisfied.

Frances Lefkowitz (FrancesLefkowitz.net) is the author of *To Have Not*, named one of five Best Memoirs of 2010 by SheKnows.com. She has also published hundreds of articles, essays and stories in national literary and consumer magazines, from *Tin House*, *Glimmer Train*, *New World Writing*, *Fiction*, *Superstition Review*, and *The Sun*, to *Good Housekeeping*, *Natural Health*, *Martha Stewart's Whole Living*, and *National Geographic's Green Guide*. Honors include a Rhode Island State Council on the Arts Literary Fellowship, and special mentions for the Pushcart Prize (twice) and *Best American Essays*. The former Senior Editor of *Body+Soul* and the current Book Reviewer for *Good Housekeeping*, Frances also teaches writing workshops, and blogs about writing, publishing, and footwear at PaperInMyShoe.com.

MICHAEL MOTE

Simmering Silence, 2013
Oil on Canvas, 36 x 48 in



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