

## HENRY HUGHES

# Queen Anne's Lace

Hard to tell Queen Anne's lace from poison hemlock shadowed across a woman's body, black dress snug to her chest, legs in stocking lace. People and plants are so complicated. Undone blonde braid and a fine chin up for anything. Beautiful weed, delicious wild carrot or dizzy collapse. A great date depends on chemistry, what might start or stop our hearts. Her finger sparks a rise, nails claw out roots that kill or keep us going in fearless new shoes, dinner and dancing, or a funeral—what history we remember, a fat queen who loved God, a gaunt philosopher poisoned for impiety. Sun-soaked skin weighs more than heavy shadow. Hot mistakes forgiven in the cool dark earth.

Henry Hughes's poems have appeared in the *Antioch Review*, the *Carolina Quarterly*, *Shenandoah*, *Southern Humanities Review*, the *Seattle Review*, and *Poetry Northwest*. He is the author of four poetry collections, including *Men Holding Eggs*, which received the 2004 Oregon Book Award, and *Moist Meridian*, which was a finalist for the award in 2011. His newest collection, *Bunch of Animals*, was published by Cloudbank Books in 2016. Hughes is also the author of the memoir *Back Seat with Fish: Adventures in Angling and Romance*, and he is the editor of the Everyman's Library anthologies *The Art of Angling: Poems about Fishing* and *Fishing Stories*. His commentary on new poetry appears regularly in *Harvard Review*.

## ROLAND PETERSEN

*American Bathers, 2017*  
Acrylic on canvas, 43.5 x 56.5 in



COURTESY THE STUDIO SHOP