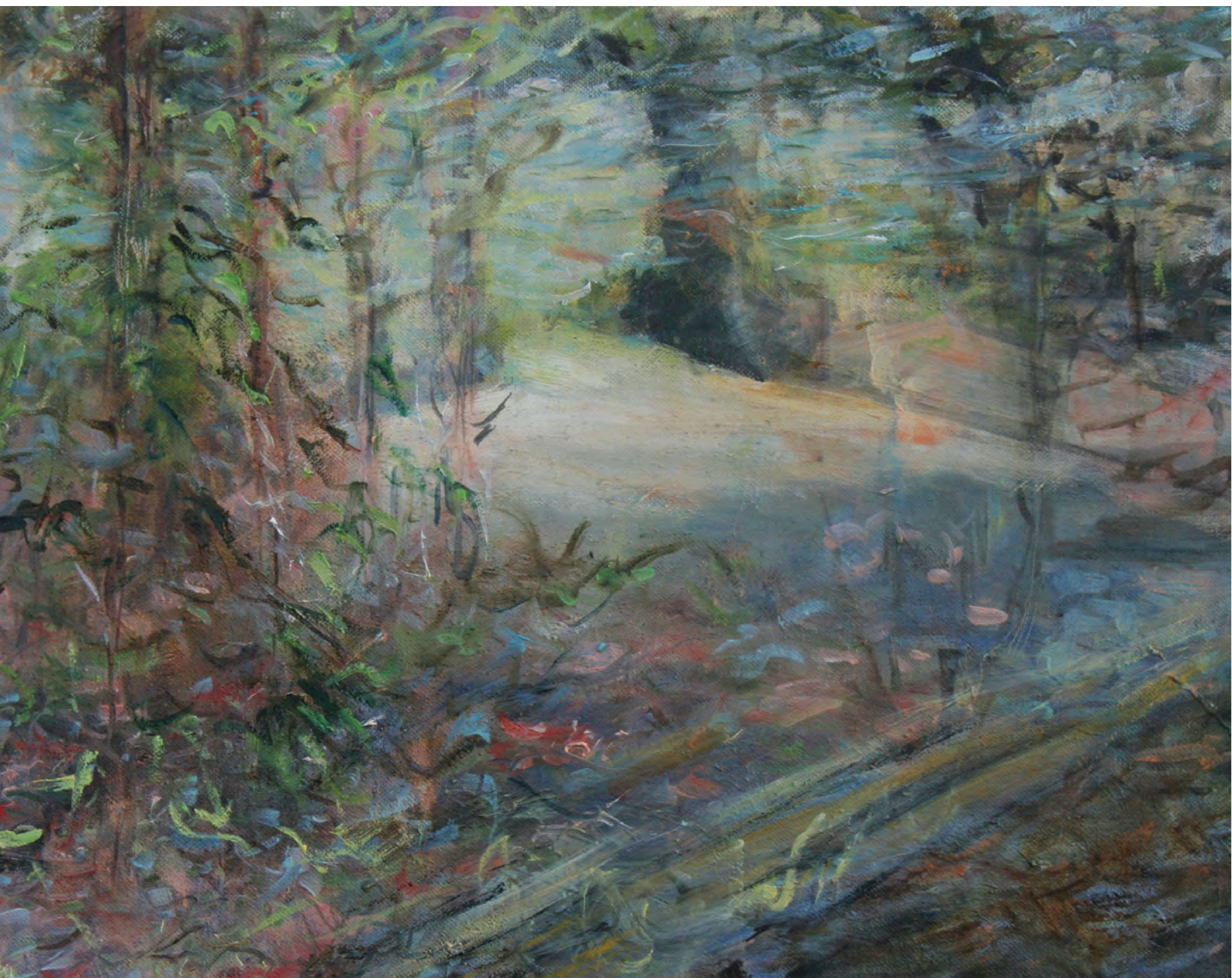


ANDREW PURCHIN

Dream Stage, 2013
oil on canvas, 14 x 11 in



courtesy the artist

ALEIDA RODRÍGUEZ

Memory and the Life of It

for Marie Ponsot

It is a kind of faith
the way that hill,
drenched and stubbled
green with weeks of rain,
remembers green again
after so many dusty seasons,
bearing the sun's brunt on its yellow back.
How else to explain the way it harbors a green dream
against all reason? Or waits, unfazed,
for winter clouds to graze
wet bellies along its flanks, for rain
to kiss jazzy notes on its sleeping face?
Or how its heart, without another thought,
tosses off dark covers and steps out?
On a rainy day like this,
under a grey-wool sky,
a certain green
brings it all back.

Aleida Rodríguez is a poet, essayist, and artist born on a kitchen table in a rural town south of Havana, Cuba. Her first book of poems, *Garden of Exile*, won both the Kathryn A. Morton Prize in Poetry and the PEN Center USA West Literary Award, and was chosen one of the Best Books of the Year by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. She has received many awards, including an NEA fellowship, and lives in a historic house on Red Hill in Los Angeles, where she writes, edits, and translates. This is a section from a longer poem titled "California Pastoral."