

## ALLYSON LIMA

# Walls

The inside is a fine place where I don't need glasses  
or dictionaries to read the words that form and ripen like  
blackberries fattening in the sun.  
Who planted them? Who asked the thorny umbilical to root?

I don't need to pull up the plant to know  
the taste of blackberries—  
don't need to inspect the roots  
to see where they come from.

But the preacher wants it desperately—  
all knowledge not available to the naked eye—  
only knows the thorns that pierce his fingers,  
can't even guess where the fruit comes from.

So he plays the gardener,  
makes it seem like his idea, his plan  
because he can't bear the not being in charge—  
the gall the rage so bad he had to invent  
god a man and sin a woman.  
He makes strange metaphors to house his emptiness.

Gray clapboard congregation in late-day heat  
Hoarse croaking of hellfire and brimstone.  
Yell all you want—I still say baby Jesus is not in the sky.  
Yell a little louder—play the push-button percussion  
let a rhythm sway your mind  
clap your hands cry hallelujah  
rev it up call it sin Satan salvation.

Humboldt Bay floods the horizon  
Blackberries in late summer—ripe scent rising—  
open window cross-legged on the bed,  
my pen flies I write—a second story,  
seeds bursting, words unfurling.  
In the body words like blind seeds  
Unfurl and grope towards the light.

**Allyson Lima** teaches Spanish at Montgomery College in Rockville, Maryland. She writes poetry in Spanish and translates the poetry of Salvadoran writer Mario Bencastro. She served as NEH Global Humanities Fellow to El Salvador in 2018. Her poem "Birdwoman" appeared in *Catamaran Literary Reader* in 2016. She grew up in Humboldt County, California.

## DOMINIQUE CARON

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Mixed media on canvas, 72 x 60 in



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