

ALICE DERRY

Hunger

beginning with words from
Wallace Stevens

Sunday mornings in childhood, rising early to scant toast and chocolate, she was handed words—two services and an hour of Bible study—to blunt the sharp rise of her hunger until it dulled to a steady hum of want. Her mother, sustained all day, giddy really, on faith, returned to the small pot roast reluctantly, hours later doling it out.

Once the girl left home, Sunday mornings became the late sleep of the weekend's second day—ample breakfasts cooked in the mind of angled light soaking the kitchen, iris and rose of the garden where she idled, pruning and setting the beds straight. Rain days too, looking into the steep canyon, green and light green, colors' dependency.

Why would the call of color be so great if she had nothing of the dance in her, how contrast lifts an image from two dimensions and sets it whirling across a room? She allowed herself expensive colored pencils, boxes of watercolors—or bought them for her daughter, who sighted along a still life and made it live on paper.

Rain now, in fact, in the misty stands of ocean spray, hazelnut, and huckleberry, damping the violet slash of swallows. Seeing and light. But not the hand for them. Along the path, she fingers the sawed edge of a rose leaf, its blood red unfolding gradually into green. She doesn't have to wait.

She can go into the house, start soup, make bread. Eat enough. Listening to rain under lamplight brings words as themselves, rising with their biblical rhythms past the burden of evangelical warning, to sound onto her page, highlighting a person's features, shading the gradient in an early summer landscape.

Alice Derry's fourth collection of poetry is *Tremolo* from Red Hen Press, 2012. In manuscript, *Tremolo* won a Grants for Artist Projects (GAP) award from Washington's Artist Trust. *Strangers to Their Courage* (LSU Press, 2001) was a finalist for the Washington Book Award. Derry has also published three chapbooks, including translations from Rainer Maria Rilke. With Tess Gallagher and others, Derry organized the 2013 Raymond Carver 75th Birthday Celebration and gave the keynote address. She lives and works on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. *Hunger* will be published by MoonPath Press in 2017.

TRAVIS COLLINSON

Interior Conflict of Outward Expression, 2007
Acrylic on canvas, 20 x 18 in



COURTESY ANGLIM GILBERT GALLERY