

**PENELOPE  
SCAMBLY SCHOTT**

Earthworms

I love the worms, their pink corrugations  
breaking the dirt to make the earth breathe.

Sometimes I mourn how they stretch in rain,  
lie swollen and bleached over pavement,

a pink and tragic nation of the drowned.  
Consider that loss: an earthworm can live

four to six years. Summers and winters,  
winters and summers. I know a woman

whose newborn took three difficult breaths  
and then he died and nothing on this earth

could bring him back. She dressed him up  
in a nightie and a sweater and a little cap

crocheted by her mother. I have wondered  
whether anyone took a photo, but I don't ask.

Penelope Scambly Schott's most recent books are *Lovesong for Dufur*, poems about the small central Oregon town where she goes to write; and *Lillie Was a Goddess*, *Lillie Was a Whore*, a verse history of prostitution.

**RON MILHOAN**

*Mother Memorial*, 2013  
oil on wood panel, 4 x 6 ft



credit: R.Blitzer Gallery