

JOHN PECK

Pergo Fields, 2002
Oil on Linen, 8 x 10 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST

WILLIAM DORESKI

The Last of the Argonauts

On the ferry to Crete I clutch
the bag of produce you gave me:
carrots, potatoes, turnips, kale.

I wanted mangoes, lemons, almonds,
but you thought I'd get scurvy
or rickets, thought an earth-taste

would preserve me. A raw little squall
of unseasonable April snow
dances across the deck. The ferry's

huge as a cruise ship. Afraid to fly
after that German pilot's suicide
in the Alps, taking a hundred

and fifty people with him, I stashed
my luggage in a locker, swallowed
the key. The thought of lemons

bitter enough to fell cities,
sweet enough to engender
empires richer than Persia's,

urged me to hike the backlands
of Crete and scout the ruins for clues
to antiquity's most famous nudes.

You waved and pretended to cry
as the ferry lurched out to sea,
carving the Aegean blue

into a thousand random gestures.
Hooting at tiny sailboats
it stifled the crudest sentiments.

So goodbye to you, and thanks
for the vegetables. One by one
I drop them overboard, marking

a sea-trail for you to swim
when you go to Crete to learn
which stones I licked for moisture

the day before I lay in state,
exhausted by views too distant
to focus in both of my eyes.

William Doreski lives in Peterborough, New Hampshire, and teaches at Keene State College. His most recent book of poetry is *The Suburbs of Atlantis* (2013). He has published three critical studies, including *Robert Lowell's Shifting Colors*. His essays, poetry, fiction, and reviews have appeared in many journals.