

LISA HARTZ

Bazille and Monet Leave Paris by the Gare de L'Est, 1864

Lisa Beech Hartz directs Seven Cities Writers Project, bringing writing workshops to underserved communities. She currently guides a workshop for women in a city jail. This poem is from a manuscript selected by Mark Doty for the 2016 Robert Creeley Prize. Lisa's work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Massachusetts Review*, *Blackbird*, *Redivider*, *Poet Lore* and elsewhere. She lives in the Tidewater Region of Virginia with her husband and four sons.

On the train, they watch the Seine weave its way
toward Normandy. I follow their route,

fingertrace the map, see them at Rouen,
standing mute before the Delacroix; its ruby.

Its cerulean. The color of their evening altered,
they circle the cathedral twice before retiring.

At Honfleur, Monet leads Bazille up, up
through the narrow cobbled streets he's known

since childhood. Past the complacent villas and out
into the open air. Their eyes take in the dappled sea,

the rocks and trees. White sails caress the harbor. They love
the sound of their boots shushing among the grasses.
Fresh. Yes. Yes. They love the muscle and pull
of the painting, the effort of it. The will of the body.

This country is paradise, Bazille writes his mother. *Nowhere
could you find more lush fields with more beautiful trees.*

He wants to wrap them in his long arms, carry them
home. This is pure feeling.

They rent two rooms above a bakery. Sugarscent
between them as they sleep.

In the cool blue mornings, they rise through the spangled
air, climb to that repose of rock. They paint

from five in the morning until eight in the evening.
They don't speak; their union in the bloom of color

they press into their canvasses. Bazille has a smile
that invites and turns you away. Monet is always short of money.

Too soon, Bazille's body, duty spent, will lie in a battlefield
for three nights before his father can retrieve him.

Monet will live long enough to enchant, deplete,
and bury Camille; remarry. Grow a white beard. Complain

CHRISTINE HANLON

Pillar Point Pier, 2015
Oil on linen on panel, 5 1/2 x 8 7/8 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST. PHOTO CREDIT: ARCHI DAVENPORT

of rheumatism in the rain. Spot Giverny from a train. But just
then, when it was easy to imagine their azure youth a permanence

like color-hunger, there was only the scudding of the fields,
the apparition of the breeze, and their open eyes in these first days of seeing.