

ONA GRITZ

Speedometer Song

My ex taught our son to angle the rearview,
palm the key as he turns it. Taught him
which pedal makes the Jetta move
when he presses his size-twelve sneaker
against it, which slows and stills it again.
He's exacting, our son tells me,
critical, yelling, *Slow, I said slow*,
so that our boy feels his heart leap
against the tight sash of his restraint.
Now, though, it's just us,
one long-legged guy in gym shorts
and Red Hot Chili Peppers T-shirt,
one mom, jacket tossed in the backseat,
who never learned to drive.
It's evening and this stretch
of wide suburban road
is suddenly ours, not a single car
visible for miles. When he revs it,
I feel it in my ears first, a kind of suction.
Then, in my stomach, a slight thrill.
I should scold him, I know,
insist he stick to the speed limit,
and I will, in a minute.
But let me just take in the joy of it first.
My boy, who is almost a man now,
testing his power, carrying
both our lives the way I once did,
but with none of my fear.

Ona Gritz is the author of the poetry collections *Geode* (Main Street Rag, 2014) and *Left Standing* (Finishing Line Press, 2005). Together with her husband, Daniel Simpson, she is co-author of *Border Songs: A Conversation in Poems* (Finishing Line Press, forthcoming) and coeditor of *More Challenges for the Delusional: Prompts, Poetry, and Prose Celebrating 25 Years of Murphy Writing Workshops* (Diode Editions, forthcoming). Gritz's poems have appeared in *Ploughshares*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Seneca Review*, *Beauty is a Verb: The New Poetry of Disability*, and many other journals and anthologies. She is also an essayist and children's author. Her memoir, *On the Whole: A Story of Mothering and Disability*, is available from Shebooks, an imprint for short ebooks by women, and as an audiobook on Audible.com.

DIXIE SALAZAR

Plunge Blindly Ahead, 1999
Oil on canvas, 66 x 48 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST