



## TERRI ROLLAND

*Three Skies, 2015*  
Acrylic and clay paint, 18 x 6 x 3/4 in

COURTESY THE ARTIST

## JUDITH SERIN

### *from Days of Sky*

Two blackbirds on the wire. One opens his beak and calls, rippling his short tail. I heard the mockingbirds all day without seeing them. Until, returning from an appointment, I found one singing on the telephone pole: his chest pumping, his feathers ruffled. He looked golden in the late afternoon light.

Now the bush is all in shadow, though the sky is still light. A helicopter hums, hovers, moves over the hill. A seagull flaps briefly by. Two wisps of clouds: one straight and fish shaped; one curled, followed by a speck at its tail. They don't seem to move but slowly elongate. Clouds in a higher wind than the one I know. The world bigger than I imagine.

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Streaks of white in blue. That cloud world I've wondered about since I was a child. A cold place—high and bright. But today a tropical feeling with the palm tree in front. I remember wanting to bounce on the white piles of clouds I saw from an airplane window. Then the shock of the plane entering the gray damp.

Now I look for something in the sky. A bumblebee. The *Echium*, blooming purple blue, is full of them. A few birds wavering in changing formation: up, down, across the window. The trees, the wires buffeted by the wind. Our potted tree on the patio knocked down again today.

To the east a sliver of bay blocked by the palm. I don't dislike it anymore. It has become a character, a friendly scatterbrained tourist admiring the view. But birds don't nest there. It has no secrets, no hidden heart. The nest in the rosebush beating.

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Seven p.m., not twilight yet though the rosebush and palm are in shadow. The reflections of sunset flare orange in windows. Blackbirds high in the sky drop quickly toward the hill. The flares, small now, going out like candles. I think of how I wait for the Hanukkah candles to be extinguished, releasing their angels of curving smoke. The orange almost gone from the sky. I wait. Faint but still there. Tenacious. A raven flaps, then glides. I wait, impatient for night. Trees on the hill darkening, thicker, almost black. All color gone now? No, some yellow. Will I give up, leave the window? Light still not entirely gone.

**Judith Serin's** collection of poetry *Hiding in the World*, was published by Diane di Prima's Eidolon Editions, and her *Days Without (Sky): A Poem Tarot* was published by Deconstructed Artichoke Press. Her work has appeared in numerous magazines and anthologies, including *Columbia Journal*, *Catamaran Literary Reader*, the *Paterson Literary Review*, *First Intensity*, *Bachy*, *The Ohio Journal*, *Writers' Forum*, the *Nebraska Review*, *Woman's World*, *Colorado Review*, and *Barnabe Mountain Review*. She has been teaching literature and writing at California College of the Arts since 1980 and lives in San Francisco with her husband, Herbert Yee.