

DANAE MATTES

Low Tide, 2013

Clay, Paper, and Pigment on Canvas, 66 x 65 in



COURTESY DOLBY CHADWICK GALLERY

MARGOT DOUAIHY

Water

My days are *all* water, not that 70%-of-the-human-body lie they tell us. Water is the tonic in every atom of sky & earth. The sun? It's actually water: orange floating in a vast black sea, charging the dark like electric eels tied at the tails. We're born liquid—drooling & pooling, dimpled elbows & knees—water sliding us from one world to the next. In the morning I am an envelope licked & sealed shut until I pour water down my throat with my eyes closed. Like bone, water has memory, remembering what dissolved in it, though I will never recall in what lakes I've hid my reflection, or what tears have carved my face. Ocean keeps no record of where we sail, but it sank Atlas in one wet second. Water shocks: an ice-bath keeps greens green after steaming—holds hues in. At night, we swallow each other like water—two streams sweat into one. In the same hour, nameless men are water-boarding someone in a nameless building on a nameless street. Hear that? She's in the bar bathroom splashing cold water on her face to sober up before driving home. The bartender is as uninterested as fog. Water gives, water takes. Frost likes to bite. Ice is quite delighted to burn & dismember. Water hides, water saves. Water loves to tell stories, even in death—like Ötzi the Iceman who emerged as 6,000-year-old snow melted in his narrow valley. Ice peeled back revealing his murder, his crawl to the gnarled tree, his coat of woven bark. Ötzi's shoes of sewn grass & many animal skins let him cross ice & snow, a slow-motion loner. How holy must one be to walk on water? How lonely & free? Maybe God is water; the same water that breathed eons ago lives still—in this glass held by these fingers. In the shower I remembered one line from my dream poem—one single, perfect line. As each drop of water opened each cell like an egg, the line was clear. The moment the water stopped, I forgot.

Margot Douaihy, RYT, MA, PhD Candidate (Lancaster University), is the author of *I Would Ruby If I Could* (Factory Hollow Press, 2013). Her writing and insights have been featured in *The Guardian*, *The Madison Review*, *Philadelphia Stories*, *Mic*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *Belle Rêve Literary Journal*, and *Poets House*. www.margotdouaihy.com