

SUSAN MOORE

Viola Verde, 2019
Mixed media, 19 x 19 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST

WHITNEY DEVOS

Faire Le Beau

Months after, I dreamt of you standing in the still-morning light.
Sidewalk steaming, taxi not yet radiant. It did not arrive

in the dream. You passed the time explaining the word *beau*
to me. I knew what the word meant; you were discussing nuances.

Perhaps, you said, for example: *un beau jour d'hiver*. A beautiful winter day.
Say the sky breaks into the color of mourning doves. Yet *un beau rhume*,

it means an awful cold. A terrible sickness. Temporary nonetheless.

Like love. As much seeping from the body. This is the irony.
Un beau geste. A gracious gesture. Or one artful, meaningless, futile.

"The first time I kissed you, your neck twisted slightly toward the door."

Se démener comme un beau diable. To struggle like a madman. Man,
here, is a beautiful devil. Maybe you've noticed, then, what *beau* does

to *faire*, to do, make. Like the watercolor I painted.
The sky not quite like mourning doves. Even more cutting, you

said. Yes, I said. Paint dries how it will; paper hardens
like any wound. *Avoir beau faire quelque chose*. To have put significant effort

into doing something. As in, *J'ai beau essayer, je n'y arrive pas*.
No matter how hard I try, I just can't do it. Leave, say.

This last one, then, is for a dog: *faire le beau*. To sit up & beg.

Whitney DeVos is a writer, translator, and scholar. A PhD candidate at the University of California, Santa Cruz, she is currently completing a doctoral dissertation on documentary poetics in the Americas after 1945. Her poems have been published in journals including *Entropy*, *Southeast Review*, *elimaë*, and *The Destroyer*, among others, while her translations have appeared or are forthcoming in *Chicago Review*, *Copper Nickel*, *Latin American Literature Today*, and the *Acentos Review*. She is the author of a chapbook *On Being Blonde* (Slug Docs, 2017), and translator of a prose pamphlet by Sergio Chejfec, forthcoming from Ugly Duckling Presse.