

ALBERT GARCIA

Offering

Here, take this palmful of raspberries
as my gift. It isn't much

but we've often said our needs
are simple, some quiet

time alone on the patio
in the cool morning, coffee,

a few words over the newspaper.
I've rinsed these berries

so you can tumble them
right into your cereal, one minute

on the vine, the next in your bowl,
my hand to your mouth.

Let's say my words were as simply
sweet as these berries, chosen

as carefully, plucked and held,
then delivered as perfect

morsels of meaning. Not
what comes from my mouth, not

what you hear, which is never
what I mean to say. Will you take

these berries? Will you feel their weight
on your tongue, taste their tang

as they slide into you, small, bright,
honest: the only gift I have to give?

Albert Garcia is a Northern California poet with three book publications: *Rainshadow* (Copper Beech Press), *Skunk Talk* (Bear Star Press), and *A Meal Like That* (Brick Road Poetry Press). Individual poems have appeared widely in journals such as *Prairie Schooner*, *North American Review*, *Poetry East*, *Yankee*, and *Willow Springs*. His work has been featured in Ted Kooser's *American Life in Poetry* and other online sites and anthologies. Having taught community college English for many years, he now works as an Vice President of Instruction at Sacramento City College.

SQUEAK CARNWATH

Tools for Poetry, 2016–2017
Oil and alkyd on canvas over panel
70 x 70 in

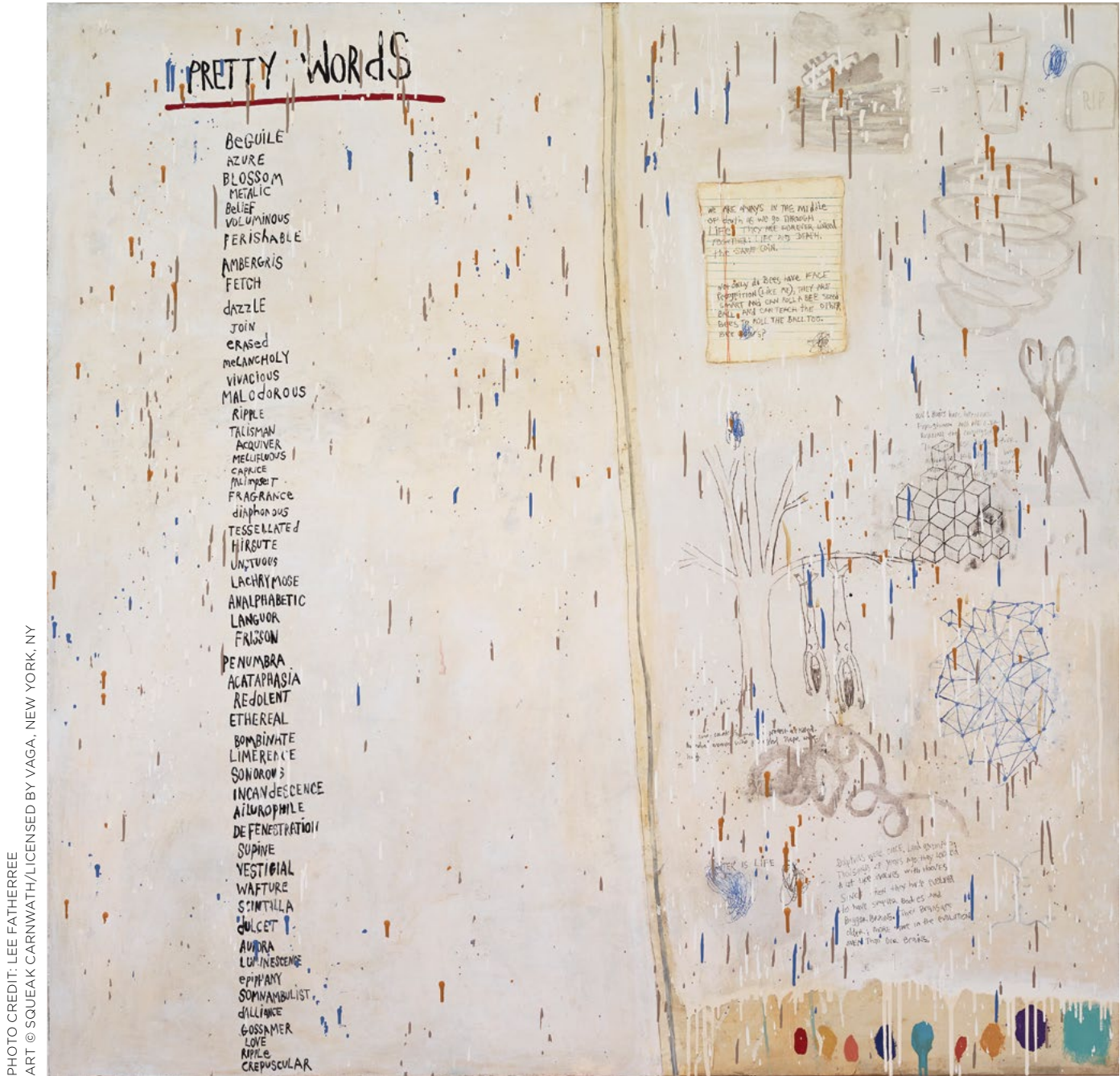


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