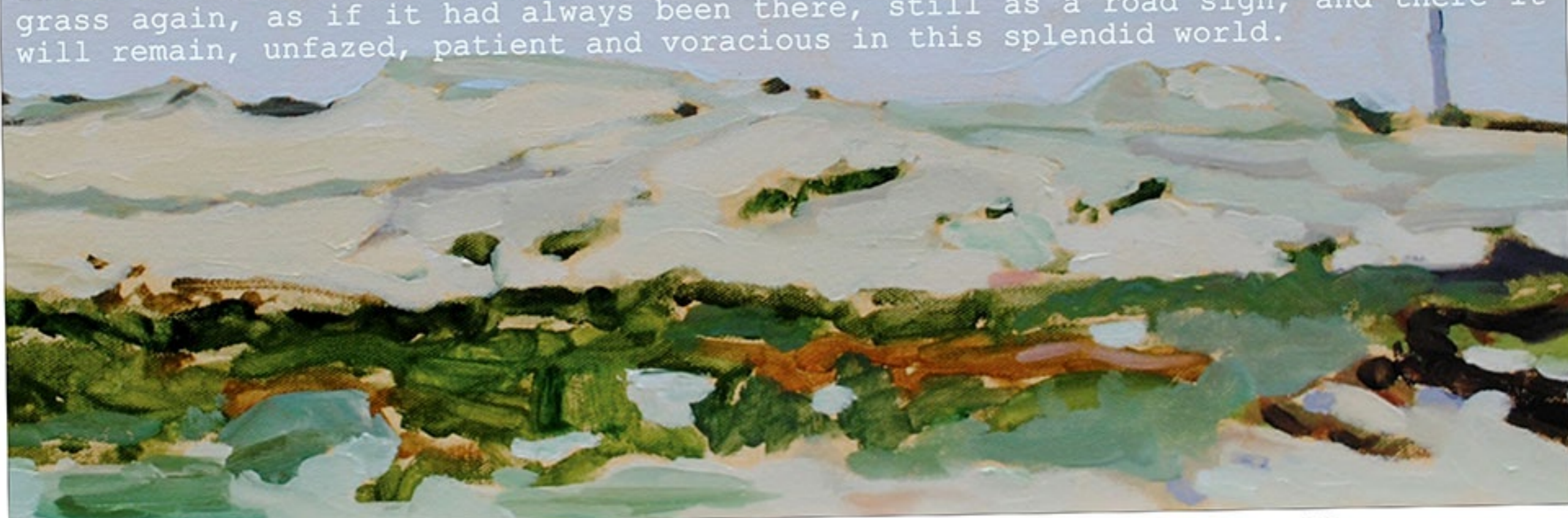


CUSP

If the heron comes in low over the marshes, if it shadows the car as you drive west toward the sea, breakwater holding the lip of the coming tide at bay while the autumn sun casts one gold and pink sheen over the grasses like a spell, like all the secrets you tell yourself while driving; if the heron comes in low, great wings beating the air slowly as a woman beats rugs on a line, having pulled them from the basement readying the house for winter (it is a fine, warm day but she is not fooled, having lived her whole life here she knows what's just beyond the cusp of October); if you stop the car and, getting out, watch the bird hover and dip and disappear below the horizon of the tall grass, wait then, just wait: before the sky loses its light for good, and your hands grow unusually chill in the new air, the head of the heron will bob like a buoy back out of the grass again, as if it had always been there, still as a road sign, and there it will remain, unfazed, patient and voracious in this splendid world.



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poem by Melanie Braverman, art by James Broussard