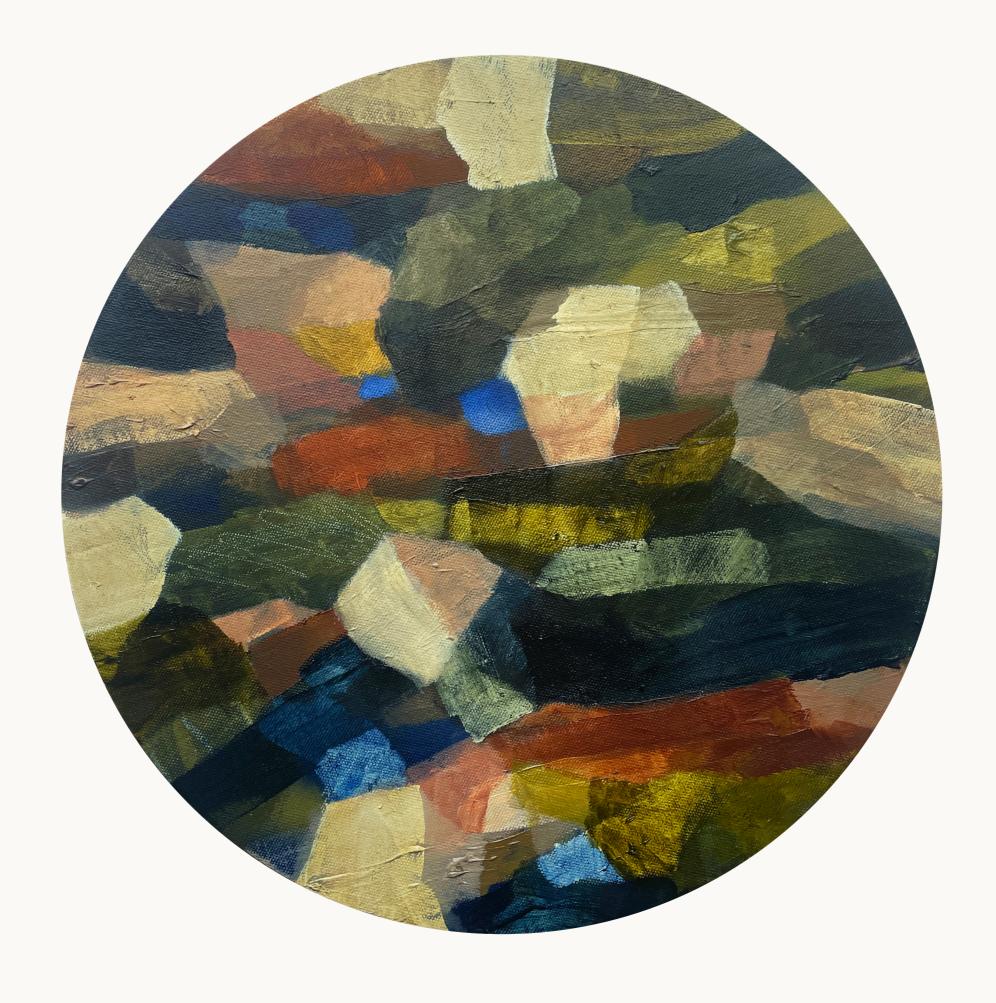


Hannah Fox Undertone



## Undertone Once, grieving, I went to the river. There, among the shimmering gums a flock of cockatoos shrieked overhead plucking the ache from my heart like feathers from a cushion. For a few minutes I could breathe. Another time, a lost duckling, mistook me for its mother, or some mother-like thing and, seeking warmth, hopped onto my lap crawled under my shirt and stayed there, trembling a miracle of softness and trust. Hannah Fox Again, I went there, perhaps you did too

Undertone

I went there, perhaps you did too
in those months, years, when we sheltered in place
delighting in fresh tracks through the undergrowth
rope swings in trees and pawprints
muddying the ground.
The birds, raucous and shrill,
sang us home.

What if I said this conversation started long ago
between the bark and leaves
the soil and our souls.
When we let ourselves quieten, we feel it
the parts of us left to dwell there
invisible things
among the shed bark
and spiderwebs
composting into the soil
into the bones of the place —
whispered in undertones.

Suse Thatcher