

BARRY MASTELLER

Milestone, 2013

Mixed Media and Oil on Canvas, 58 x 50 in



COURTESY WINFIELD GALLERY

MELISSA REESER POULIN

Freshman Biology

Mr. Miller, all gesture
and mnemonic device, shouts
mighty mighty mitochondria!
and I'm awake,
but barely,
my notes in an inky tangle
of flowers and eyelashes,
while Greg the quarterback
snaps his gum, tries
to unhook my overalls
from one seat back.

Tortillas! Mr. Miller insists,
pointing to the overhead screen.
I nod blankly at the drawing of border
and nucleus, the immutable
order of the textbook universe.

Here in the present,
we fill in the blanks for all futures,
all pasts under the sun—photosynthesis,
mitosis, meiosis—while outside
the faceless trees are moving
perfectly toward rebirth.

We sleep through it, the answers
sewn in our skin. We don't know
we've been locked,
each with his skeleton and clock,
into the private classroom
of the body.

Melissa Reeser Poulin teaches English and creative writing in Portland. She completed her MFA at Seattle Pacific University, and is currently editing *Winged*, an anthology of new literature on humans and honey bees.