

LAIRD HARRISON

Stop the Fast Motion of My Life

For an establishing shot,
let's show the time
I lowered my baby into the bath with his brother.
Pulling off my shirt,
I knock the soap into the water.

Pan slowly over the faces
in my grandparents' living room.
My grandfather nods into the camera
and doesn't know to smile.

Capture my parents in whispered conversation.
Her laugh sounds red with wine.
Edit out the voice-over
that foreshadows their divorce.

Zoom in on the Mexican jade brooch
blossoming on my grandmother's dress,
until she loses it to a burglar.

Where you reveal the interior of my bedroom,
cut to the detail of my flip-top desk,
the Royal Quiet Deluxe
with a blank page scrolled into its platen
before its keys stick
and I give up my novel.

Linger on my wife's face
in the scene where we meet.
The light glances from her glasses
when she asks my name.
Replay that scene.
Replay it.

I suggest a close-up of her watch,
its black dial framed in gold
on a narrow band.
She forgets it on my bedside table
and I fasten it to my wrist.

I want to restore the scene
with the girl from two doors down.
When we strip in her basement,
we have no pubic hair
or words for what we feel.

Slow down the motion of my baby
turning the doorknob to his dorm room.
End with his face filling the whole frame,
eyes round, lips parted.
Freeze that frame.

Laird Harrison is the author of the novel *Fallen Lake* (Verdant Books, 2012). His journalism has appeared in *TIME*, the *Nation*, *Audubon*, and *Salon*. He has produced audio for KQED and WUNC radio stations and video for *Smithsonian.com*. At the San Francisco Writers' Grotto, he is at work on a novel connecting alternative realities in physics and literature.

PERKY EDGERTON

Blind Date, 2016
Mixed media on canvas, 39 x 45 in

