

# Muni Art Featured Artist: Mara Hernandez

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## WORDS UNFOLD

WORDS UNFOLD is a series of visual poems that looks beyond the meaning of words, and examines their typography. The way in which the words of a poem unfurl across a canvas reveal a layer of meaning beyond the literal. Using acrylic, watercolor, and digital painting each piece explores a visual interpretation of a poem and invites you to explore the unseen. Visit [marahernandez.com](http://marahernandez.com) for more info.

**Artist Thanks:** This would simply have not been possible without my family, friends, and community; thank you for your constant encouragement and support. Thanks to artists, painters, poets, dreamers for resisting and creating a better world through art.





## Traffic

Woman warrior when stuck in traffic  
sings love songs, screams, screeches her wheels  
across the lost metropolis  
puts locks on certain memories  
to survive. She has nothing  
to say to you  
she has everything  
to say to you  
she sees you in the next car—  
forehead pressed to the steering wheel  
stereo blaring  
sweeping your mind with your eyeballs.  
You're a full-blown adult now—  
blind as a hubcap to the unseen world.

**Brynn Saito**

Brynn Saito, "Traffic" from *Power Made Us Swoon*.  
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### Love Poem Three Autumns Later

In East Oakland, in my temporary flat,  
I wash your empty plant pot  
at the kitchen sink.  
In the dirt, loosened from the crevices,  
tiny flecks of sand—the same  
slant of auburn as the pot—  
I gather and carry them to the lake.  
The water is still. The sky  
drifts to the left where memory lives.  
*Forty years a swamp, I say, opening my palm.*

Charif Shanahan

Charif Shanahan, "Love Poem Three Autumns Later."  
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## Thich Nhat Hanh I Step With You

step    breathe  
step        breathe

—peace flickers at the end of the flame  
you sit you speak one word yet the word is impossible

rice brown and eggplant soup green violet  
your mind still        for peace  
decade upon decade bowing speaking lifting the dead  
from your shoulders our hands  
this is how you walk — one step we walk with you  
one step there  
a breath as    you go    as we go

**Juan Felipe Herrera**

Juan Felipe Herrera, “Thich Nhat Hahn I Step With You”  
from *Notes on the Assemblage*.  
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## To a Student

POEMS ARE ANGELS  
come to bring you  
the letter you wdn't  
sign for

earlier, when it was  
delivered  
by yr life

Diane di Prima

Diane di Prima, "To a Student" from *The Poetry Deal*.  
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## Relief

We know it is close  
to something lofty.  
Simply getting over being sick  
or finding lost property  
has in it the leap,  
the purge, the quick humility  
of witnessing a birth—  
how love seeps up  
and retakes the earth.  
There is a dreamy  
wading feeling to your walk  
inside the current  
of restored riches,  
clocks set back,  
disasters averted.

Kay Ryan

Kay Ryan, "Relief" from *The Best of It: New and Selected Poems*.  
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PHOTOGRAPHY

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united for words