

By Anca Colbert



Marilyn Noad in her garden in a photo by E. Zimmerman

The moon emits just enough light
For imagination to fill the void
And for dreams to take their form
Which in day are disjointed tatters,
For the eyes only see what is there
Not what really matters.

from “Lunaria” (2016)

BY THE LIGHT OF THE OJAI MOON

A fourth-generation Californian, Marilyn Noad is a long-time resident of Ojai. She moved here from Los Angeles with her husband, the classical guitarist Frederick M. Noad.

Together they had lived in the United Kingdom and in Spain and traveled the world to many “quite civilized places — libraries being our main interest — mostly around Europe” but also to a few “wilder places” in Scotland, Corsica and Crete.

“The wildest place I ever visited was Elary estate in Scotland and many of the poems make reference to it. It is a huge wild place on Lochgilphead in the Scottish Highlands that belonged to Freddie’s family for centuries.”

The couple also camped all over California, with Sequoia Na-

tional Park their favorite. In 1994, they found their home in the East End of this “Valley of the Moon,” a house nestled in nature, surrounded by the presence of her sights, sounds and silence. At night, the skies are dark, and the stars shine bright. “These spring days,” says Marilyn “have been wonderful for garden trekking and moon watching.”

Her soft-spoken, genteel manner belies the visionary strength of her artworks and of her poetry. As we visit, her beloved greyhound, Rowen, quietly follows her around the house and the studio. A painter and a poet, Marilyn paints and writes with a sure hand, in bold and free gestures, guided by her intuition, flowing with the language of her unconscious. She navigates with sheer rapture the mysteries of the world, above and beyond the visible. Her large acrylic paintings use strong,

saturated, vibrant colors against black backgrounds. Figurative on the edge of abstraction, there are cosmic forces at play. Her monotypes on paper are small gems, subtle, mostly monochromatic, often incorporating metallic inks. Are these mysterious images of Moonscapes? Underwater reefs? Auras? Tectonic shifts? Cave drawings from prehistoric times? Microscopic views of crystals? Running, bubbling lava?

Whatever the artist sees or the viewer imagines, the works evoke the overwhelming beauty and power of nature. They reflect this artist’s profound connection to her environment, and reveal the cosmological themes at the fiery center of her inspiration. Storms, stones, and stars speak to her. She listens and hears their music. Through her, mystery elegantly floats in and out of these visceral works.

“Lunaria,” her current exhibition, brings together an overview of her creativity: large acrylic canvasses, delicate small-size monotypes, and the just published book of her poetry, “Lunaria — 1994 to 2016,” which will be released on June 11, the opening night of her exhibition at the Porch Gallery. The show runs through July 3.

The artist’s share of proceeds from the show will be donated to the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy and the Ojai Valley Legal Defense Fund. Both nonprofits are devoted to protecting the integrity of the environment and beauty of the Ojai Valley each in their own distinct ways. Both organizations are particularly dear to the artist’s heart. A long-time supporter of their essential work in this valley, Marilyn Noad walks her talk. oQ



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Out of Saturn - Acrylic on Canvas; Ojai Midnight Garden - Acrylic on Canvas; Lunaria #11 - Monotype on paper

