Writing From Paintings (a meditation on the work of artist Michelle Manley)

by Brian Michael Barbeito

Vignette as Meditation on a Painting (*In the Outskirts 1*, by Michelle Manley)

Green Hue Terrains On The Way To New Worlds

There it was as if we had become a purlieu and all the roads that had gone before had withered out and ended. Now that is where the populace stopped and made sense or notes of their journeying and it was not an untoward sense but it was not a full note either. Now we were in a place where the people thought the world had ended. We knew through some fate or providence that it went on and that we would go on with it and through it. What would be held there and how would it hold us? On our sides were green textured parts of land that seemed to have struggled and sometimes tried to collapse upon themselves. This creates light and dark hues and sometimes rocks and stones or wishes from unknown devas wait in the crevices and folds of such places. Each world there in the green lands a pathway into others places. These places are not for us to venture to save perhaps in the mind, but is that less valid? Is a psychic journey wanton or negligent? No. No, we say, and we go forward in imaginal delight and good danger into new worlds. Clouds overhead and they make noises in our spirits. If child-like we would take fright, and if adult-like possibly feel vexation because the old world has fallen away and anchors us no longer. But we are neither. Since we are heading past the outskirts, we find ourselves with a hidden reserve of valor and ability. What is this ability? It is the way we look now at

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strange new clouds menacing and waiting. It is also the way we head forth into them and their environs. If there is a small road, someone has gone there. If there are unknown skies, they are still part of the cosmic plan. It is strange and unknown at the outskirts to be sure. But we shall continue. We weather storms and our gut self pauses, our spirits thrown back to themselves for a moment at the immense power kept in strong clouds, in skies pregnant with things we don't yet know about. We will go. We are in the outskirts and must go through them to whatever is beyond.