



Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot, View of Lake Garda, c. 1868



Eugène Louis Boudin, Port of Deauville, 1860

Color Theory

The renovations at the Nelson-Atkins hurled us around and in another way, along a spiral (the end of which is growth at either end, both out and in, that something spring forth from the coil). I Went IN

to the pasteboard chamber off to the left, and felt

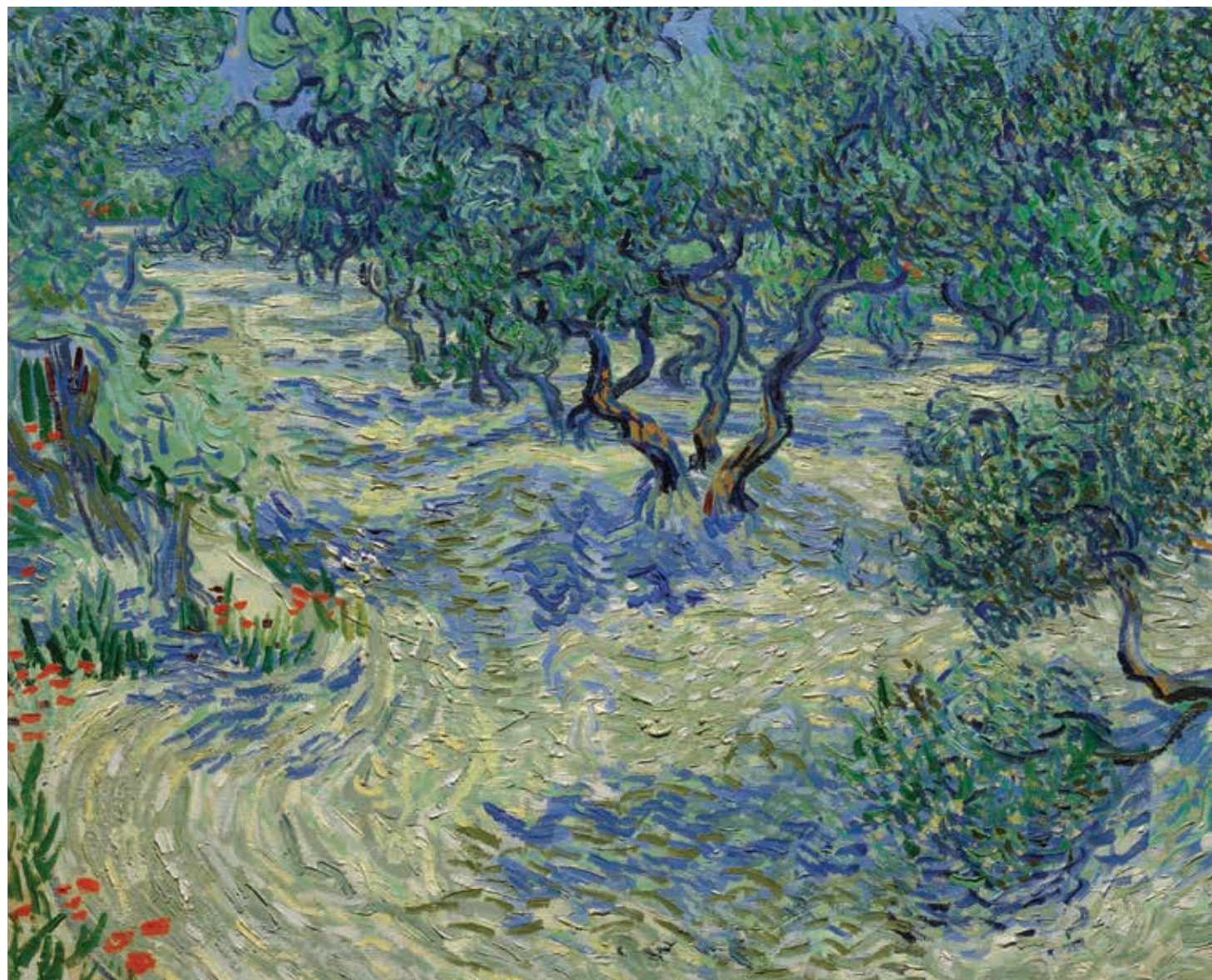
the presence of furious stillnesses, like fires extinguished, albeit eternalized.



I was struck first by Monet's lily strokes, where there was no coincidence: All was intended here; its free-seeming caprice was the feint of its technique: especially the dearth of red: when daubed, the way it smarted all the more for the discretion of the virtuoso.

Corot's smear on a young man's hat in *View of Lake Garda*; Eugène Boudin's drop on a slight sail, and a second on the side of a boat, in his *Port of Deauville*. Van Gogh's *Olive Orchard* swirled all blue-green, it seemed, at first, but no, how wrong I was: Here, there, red kisses burst, burned, brought me in like poppies—no, not like, for weren't They POPPIES?

(continued)



Vincent van Gogh, *Olive Orchard*, 1889

Back at the (largely redless) Water Lilies, the room, like magic, started to Swirl ME around: the Olive Grove, the Harbor. O the PAINT! I could imagine Corot's youth who lazed on the grass, his face not in focus, but his tawny Recumbency, his BEING, loud as the moment of his Red Cap and focus on the lass, off center, to the Left, Loud as LIFE—even for those who might not note The Hat.



I'm grateful for the quietness and ease of days (green, blue, blue-green and brown) of late but sometimes wake up suddenly in bed half-heated by those strokes and swirls and jabs, the dots, the daubs, the drops, flecks, smears and dabs, and wonder if I might not renovate by testing out the Possibilities of RED.

—James B. Nicola

from *Out of Nothing: Poems of Art and Artists* (Shanti Arts, 2018)