

The background is an abstract watercolor painting. It features a warm color palette dominated by shades of orange, yellow, and brown. There are several dark, swirling, and elongated shapes in shades of green, brown, and black that appear to be floating or moving across the lighter background. The overall effect is organic and expressive, with visible brushstrokes and color blending.

TALHA AHMED



Plate 1

THE LANDSCAPE IMAGINED

SCHWARTZ • WAJAHAT



Swat Valley, Pakistan

TALHA AHMED (born 1975, Karachi, Pakistan)

Talha Ahmed's watercolors of imagined landscapes are simultaneously personal and universal. Although these vistas exist only in the mind of the artist, they are somewhat familiar as the vibrant and intense color combinations are true to what we all have witnessed in the landscape at one time or another. Ahmed's works are not a great exaggeration of Mother Nature's brilliant palette, but rather a testament to the awesome variation and grandeur of the meeting of earth and sky. While the artist has traveled repeatedly to the foothills of the Swat Valley in Northwest Pakistan and lives in Karachi on the coast of the Arabian Sea, the sunsets, volcanoes, lakes, hills and valleys all come from his collective memory and imagination rather than specific views or particular locales.

The Swat Valley on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border is an idyllic mountainous enclave peppered with lakes, plains and hills. The various mountain ranges there are offshoots of the Hindu Kush - the 500 mile mountain range that extends from northern Pakistan to central Afghanistan. The snow-capped mountains, clear blue lakes and rivers, and the lush green environs are a major source of inspiration for Ahmed who, in some instances, elaborates on and embellishes on what he has seen, rendering watercolors of great intensity and drama. These works are more definitively representational; with horizon lines that indicate both fore and backgrounds and strong, vibrant color juxtapositions. Colors are heightened, and the insertion of volcanoes or the presence of a slow-burning, all encompassing sun suggest these worlds are on the verge of either coming into being or retreating into myth. However, in other watercolors, Ahmed softens the palette and loosens the brushwork, creating hazy and abstracted compositions. They have dream-like qualities that suggest a feeling, impression or distant memory.

Ahmed's series of watercolors elicit emotions of nostalgia and longing and look to artists from the Romantic period such as J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851) and William Blake (1757-1827). Like the American Modernist Milton Avery (1885-1965), no color is off limits and Ahmed presents images of the landscape in all of its varying representations. Skies are pink, yellow, blue, red and orange - just as they sometimes appear in nature. Ahmed does not confine the viewer to one possible interpretation, but rather asks us to accept these images as nature's vast breadth and scope. In the words of the French symbolist painter Odilon Redon (1840-1916), "My drawings inspire, and are not to be defined. They place us, as does music, in the ambiguous realm of the undetermined."¹ Inevitably connections can be drawn to the work of the great German Expressionist Emil Nolde (1867-1956) who painted flowers and landscapes, often with a loose watery technique and heightened sense of color. Ahmed captures the luminosity of nature using vivid, saturated colors and a lightness and fluidity of touch, so creating a landscape of his own imagining; one where sky blends into the water that, in turn, melts into the land.

Elizabeth Schwartz

New York, 2013

¹ *Artists on Art, From the XIV to the XX Century*. Edited by Robert Goldwater & Marco Treves. Pantheon Books, New York (1945) pp. 360



Plate 2

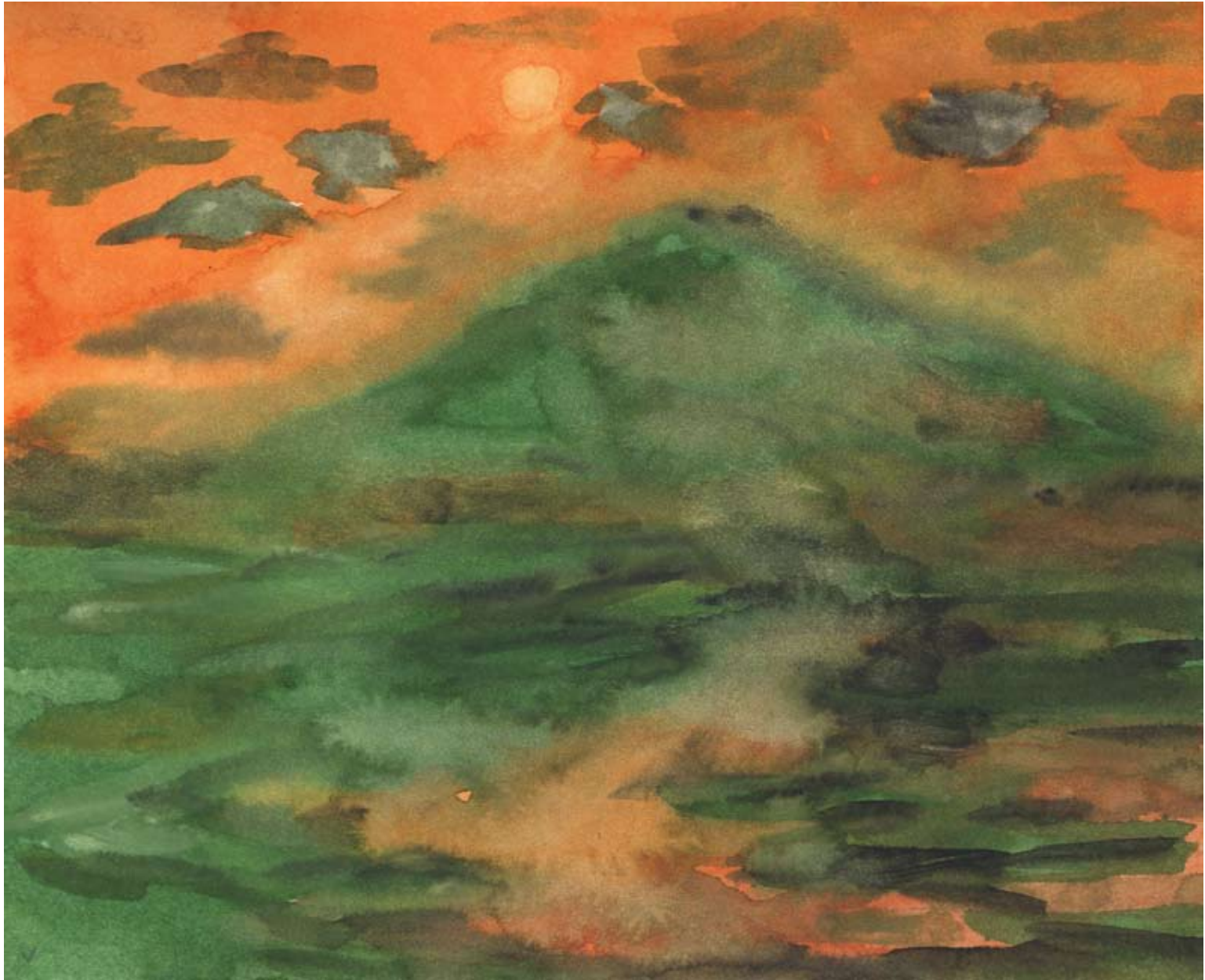


Plate 3

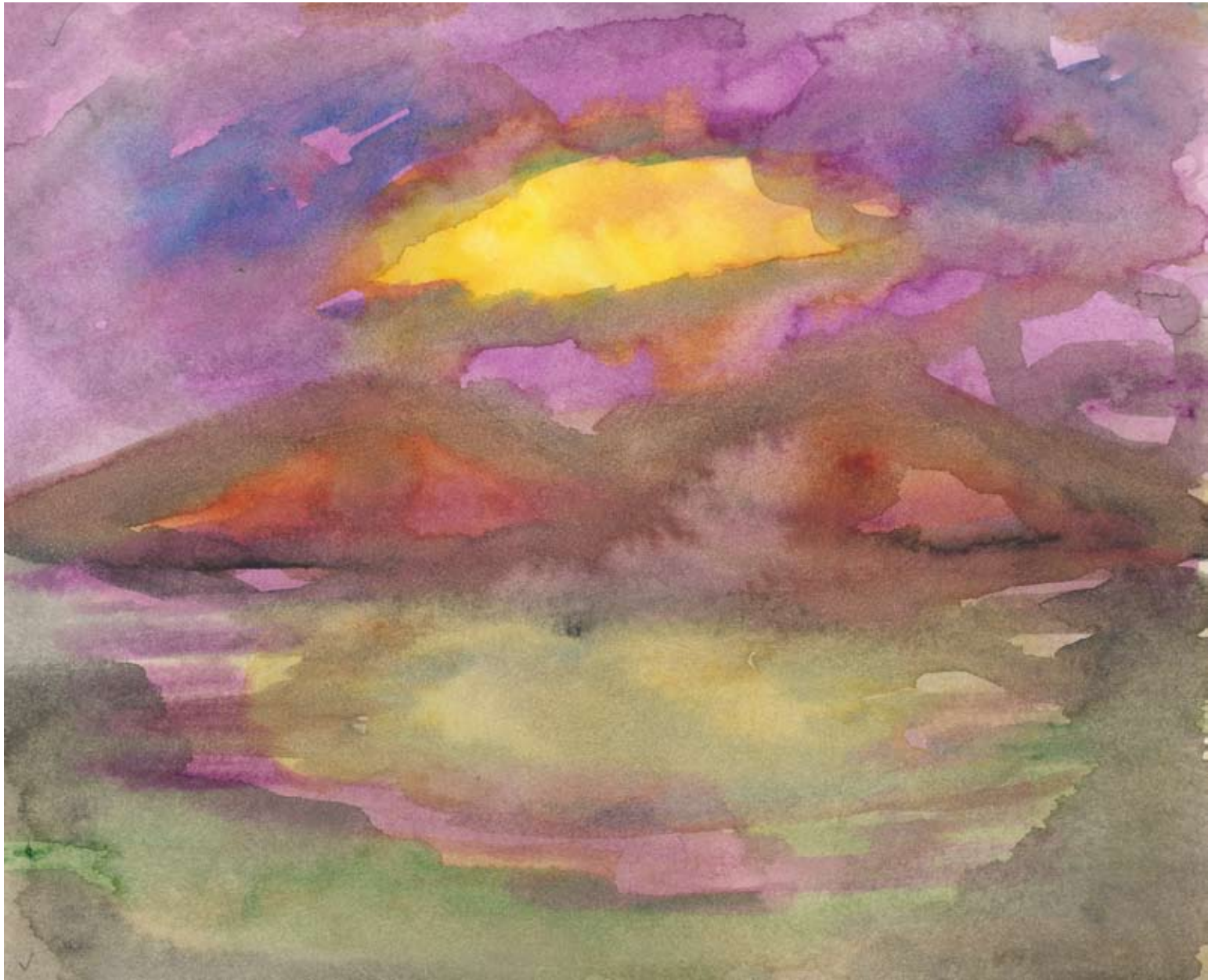


Plate 4



Plate 5



Plate 6



Plate 7



Plate 8



Plate 9



Plate 10

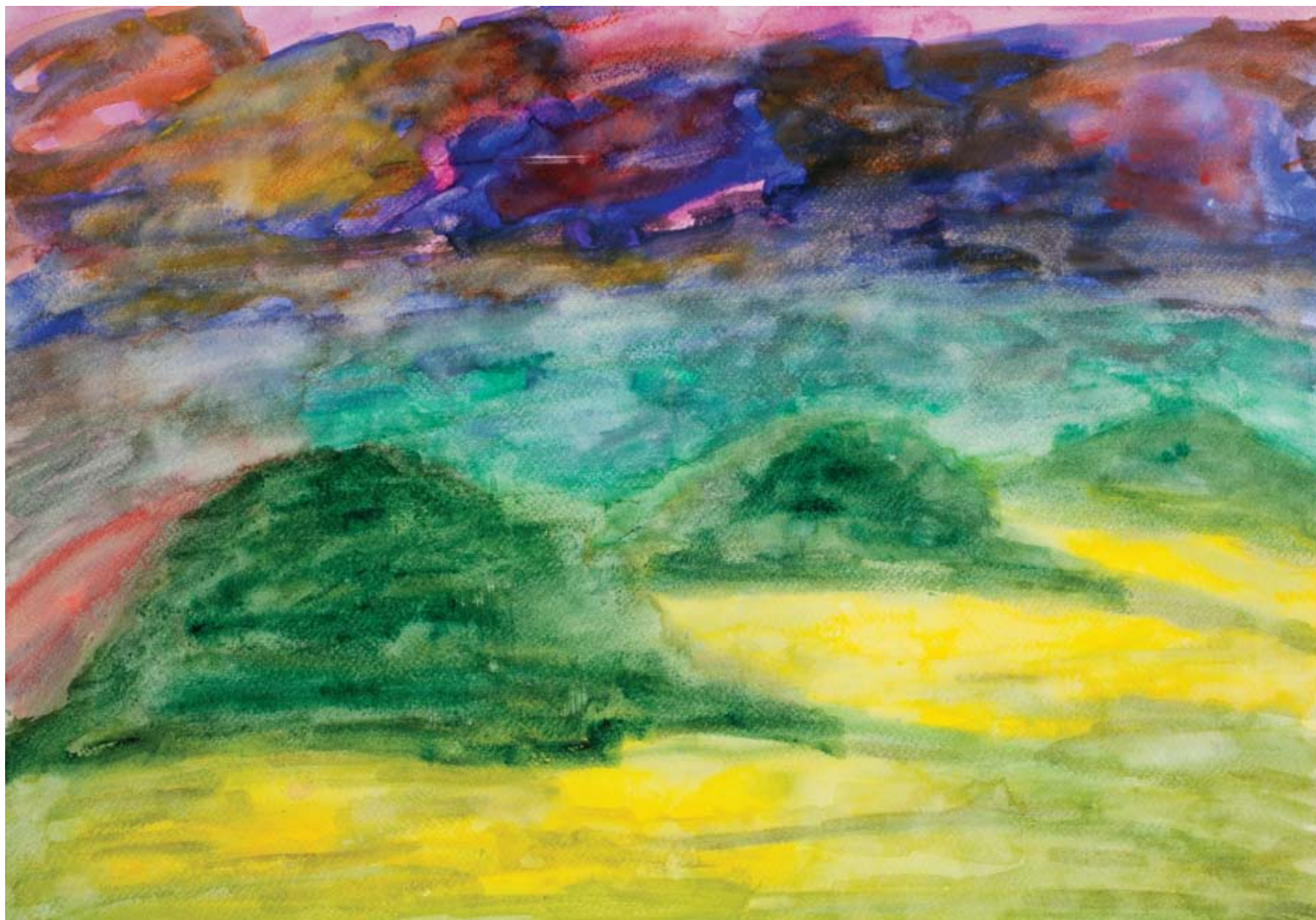


Plate 11



Plate 12

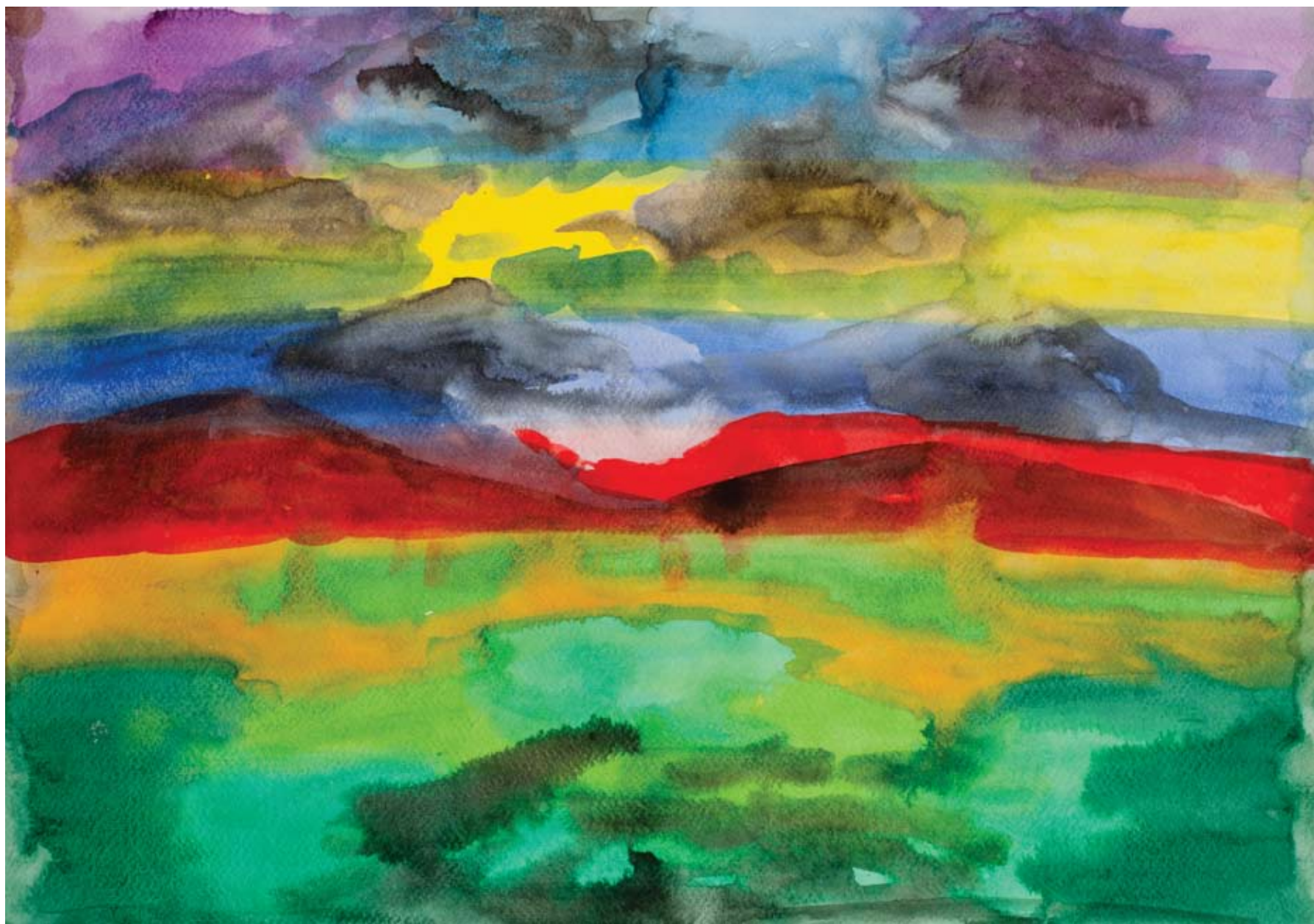


Plate 13



Plate 14



Plate 15



Plate 16

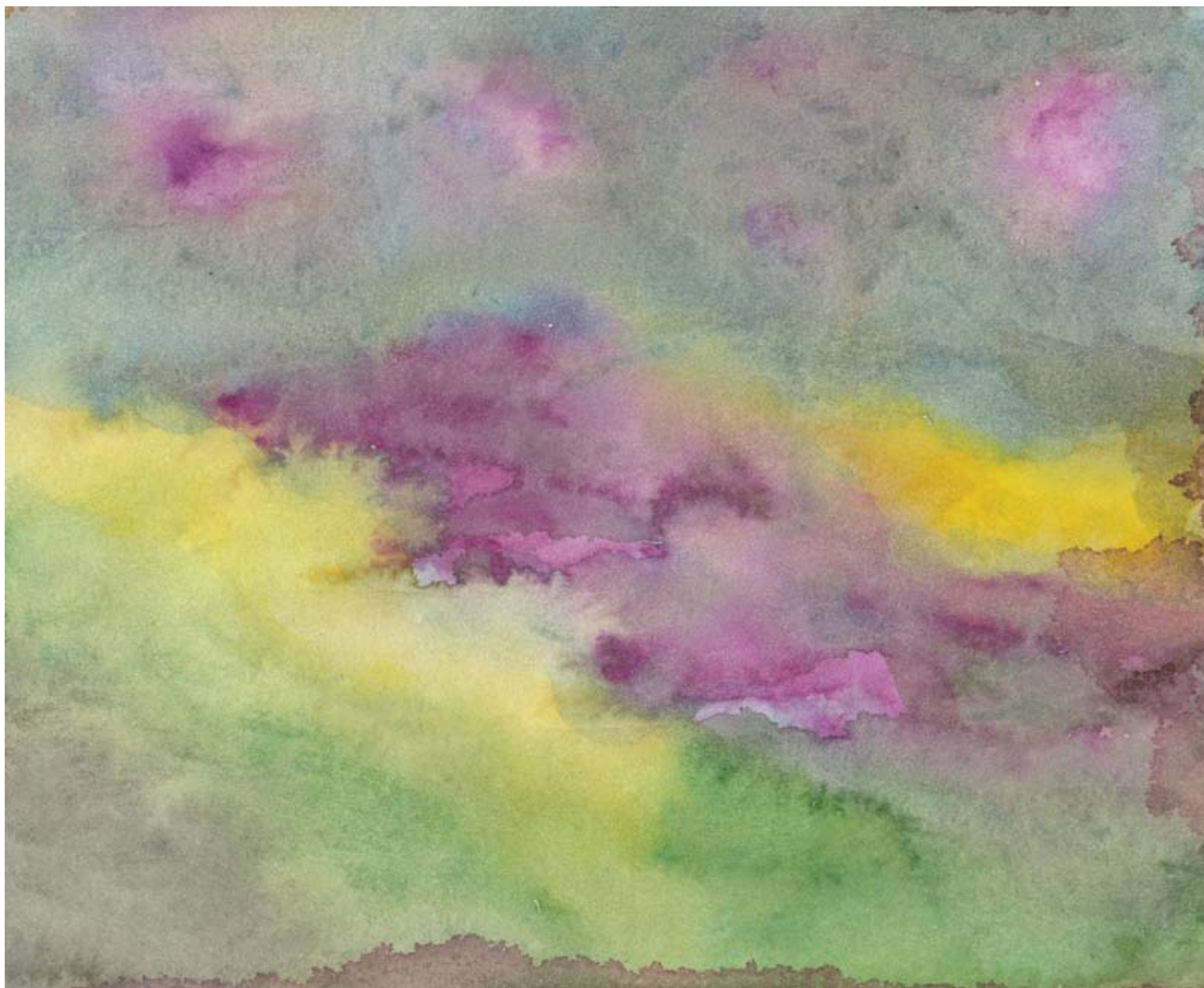


Plate 17



Plate 18



Plate 19



Plate 20



Plate 21

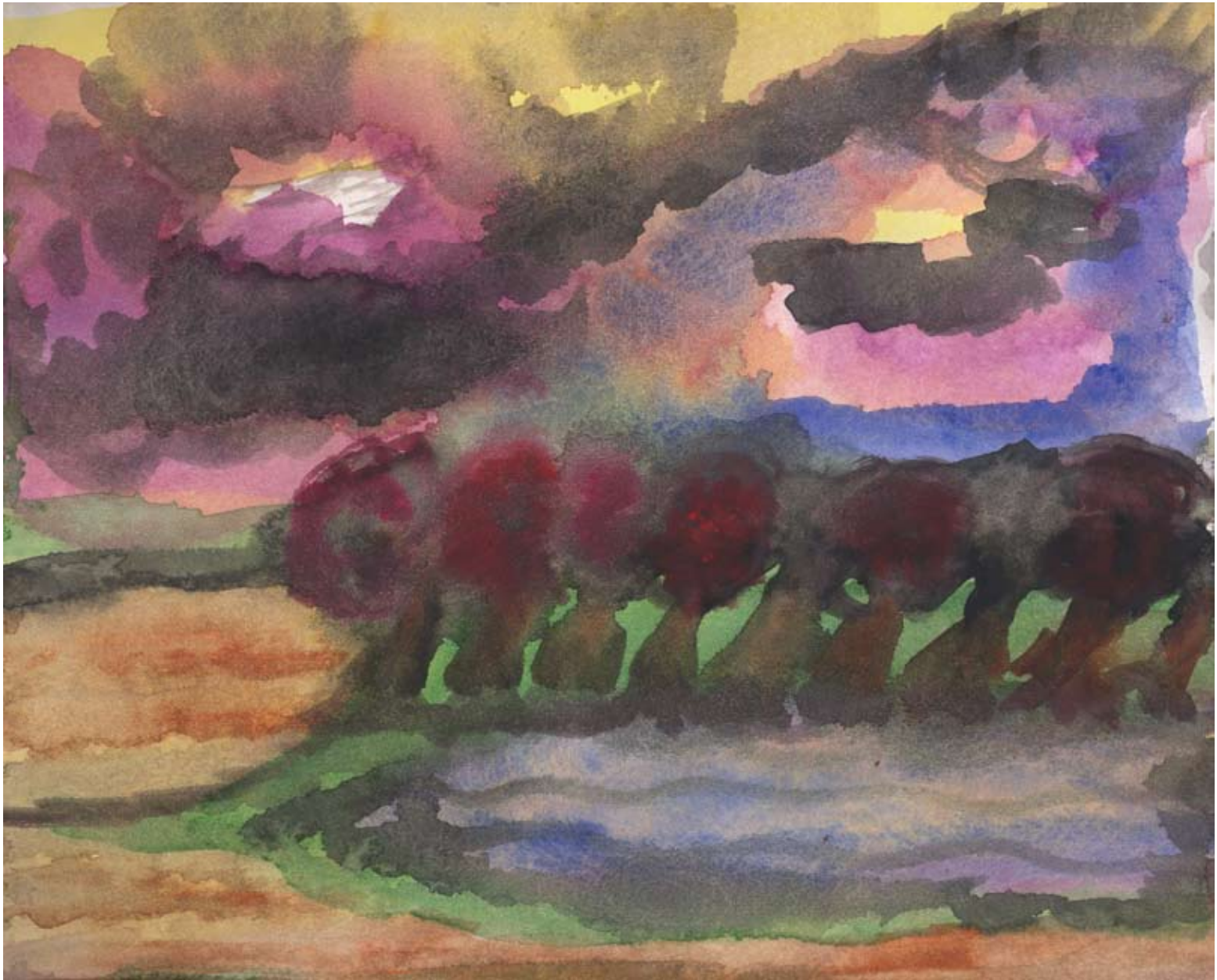


Plate 22

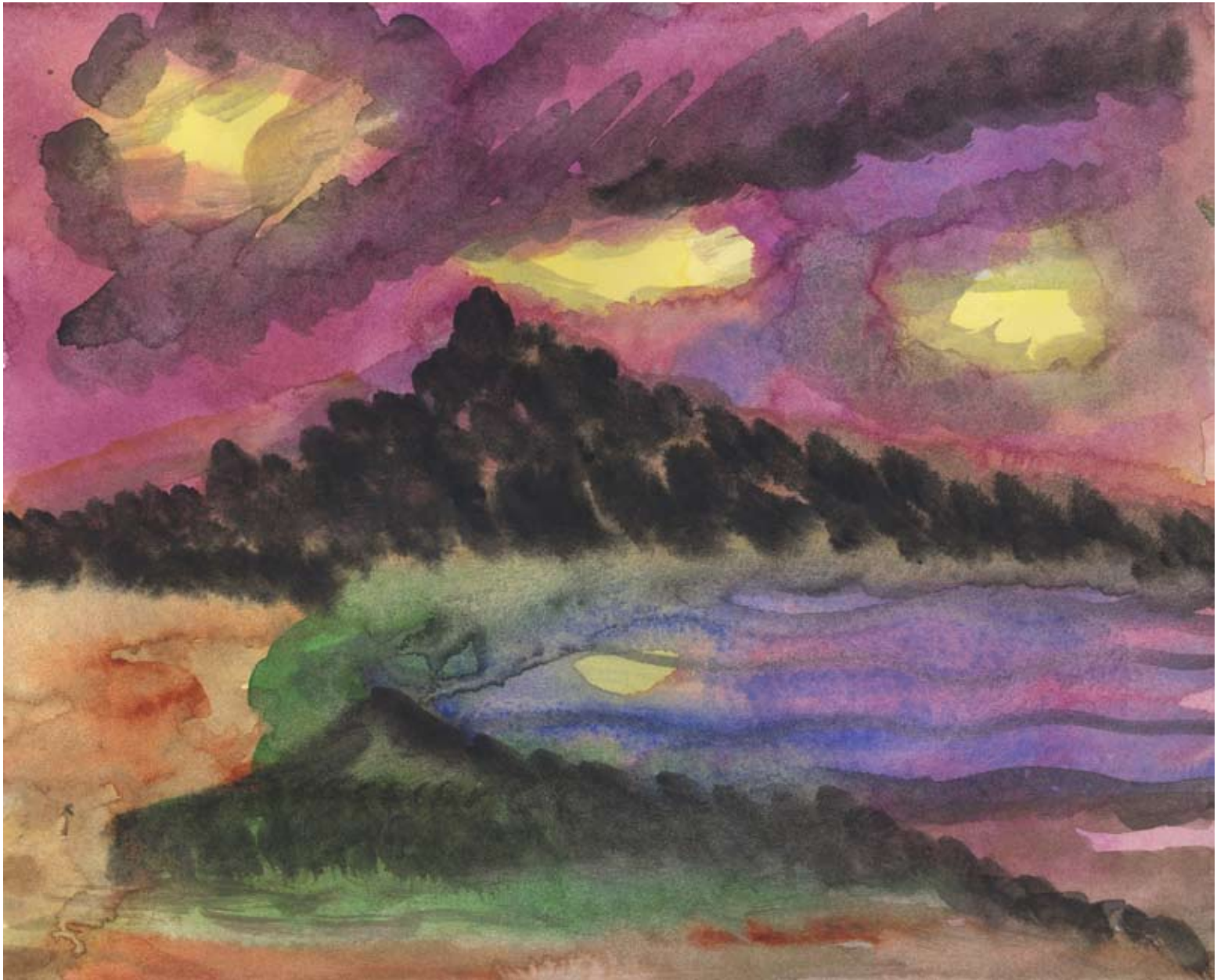


Plate 23

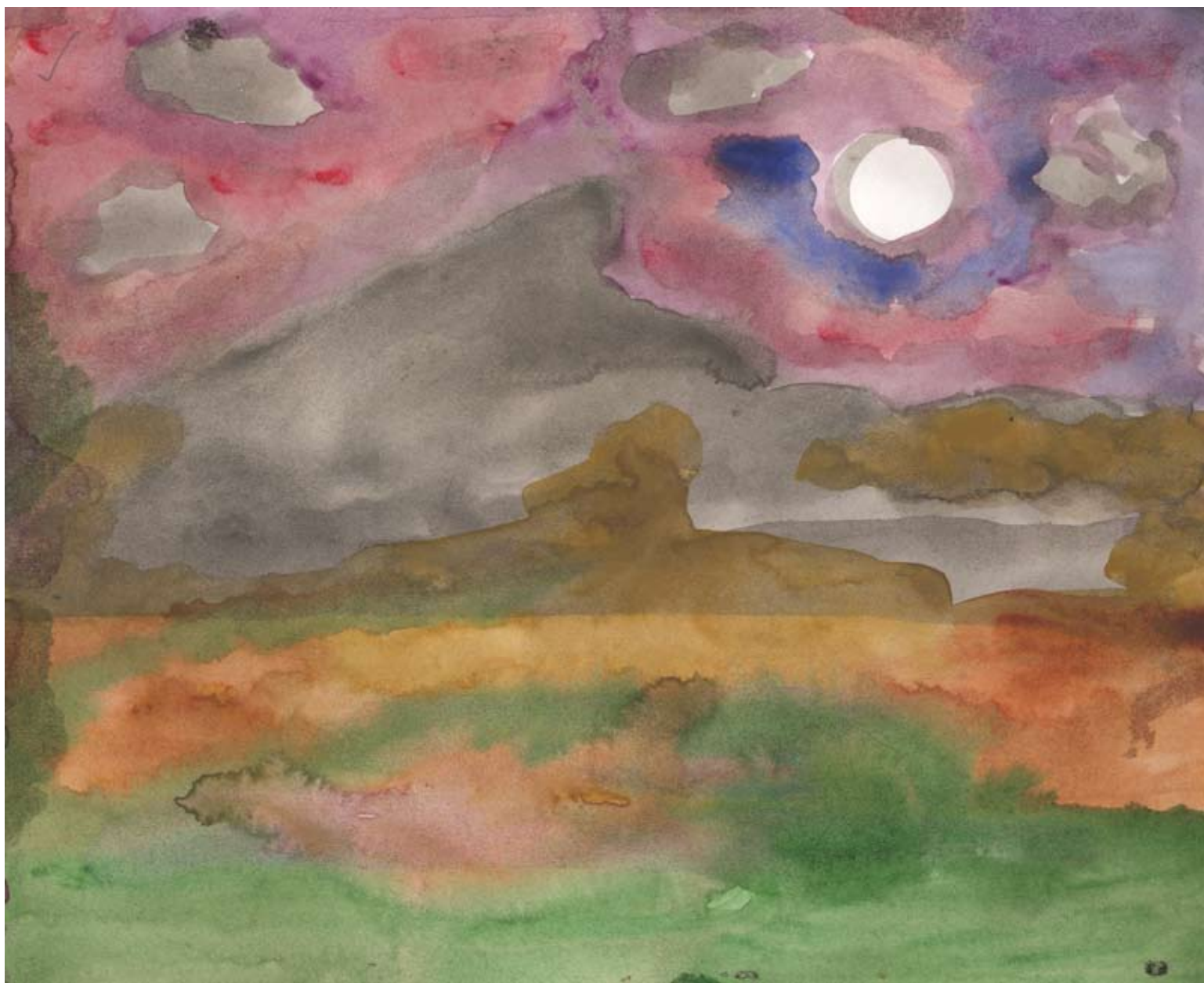


Plate 24



Plate 25

TALHA AHMED: THE LANDSCAPE IMAGINED

SCHWARTZ • WAJAHAT

25 LEONARD STREET • FLOOR 5 • NEW YORK 10013

WWW.SCHWARTZWAJAHAT.COM

+ 1 . 212 . 219 . 1817

BY APPOINTMENT

ELIZABETH SCHWARTZ

ELIZABETH@SCHWARTZWAJAHAT.COM



WAQAS WAJAHAT

WAQAS@SCHWARTZWAJAHAT.COM

ALL WORKS, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, COPYRIGHT AND COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND SCHWARTZ • WAJAHAT, NEW YORK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ADAM REICH

FRONT & BACK COVER: UNTITLED, 2010, WATERCOLOR ON PAPER, 10 3/4 x 14 3/4 INCHES

PLATES 1, 10 - 15, 26 : UNTITLED, 2010, WATERCOLOR ON PAPER, 13 3/4 x 19 3/4 INCHES

PLATES 6 - 9 : UNTITLED, 2010, WATERCOLOR ON PAPER, 10 3/4 x 14 3/4 INCHES

PLATES 2 - 5 & 16 - 25 : UNTITLED, 2011, WATERCOLOR ON PAPER, 8 1/2 x 10 1/4 INCHES

ESSAY COPYRIGHT 2013 ELIZABETH SCHWARTZ

PUBLICATION COPYRIGHT 2013 SCHWARTZ • WAJAHAT, NEW YORK

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED



Plate 26



SCHWARTZ • WAJAHAT