



# Offspring

Jessica McClelland

Amy Brakeman Livezey  
After Lunch, 19" x 16"  
mixed media on panel

## Offspring

Cottonwood tree mothers only release their seeds on warm summer afternoons.  
Never at night.  
Any good parent knows not to let your kids out after dark.

They seem to cast off their soft white clouds just before a robust wind and it makes me wonder if they overheard us in the garden going on about the weather forecast. As the breeze begins, so too, the speckled snows, sailing for Nebraska.

It must take great courage to give your children to the uncertain world with nothing but a gentle push towards fate and a whisper of encouragement.

*Try not to land too close to a wych elm, they are nothing but trouble, and if the air current is kind you will go further than any of your siblings who came before.*

If the seed that takes root and thrives is a girl, the mother tree knows someday her daughter will swell with the same hope

that she reads the currents right, and doesn't hold on for too long, or worse yet, not long enough.



Jessica McClelland is the author of the *Killdeer* novels, a murder mystery series set in south-central Montana. She spent a decade digging dinosaur fossils in Johnson county, Wyoming, sang with a guest chorale production at Carnegie Hall in New York, and has explored the Great Dividing Range outside of Brisbane, Australia. She is a librarian and a graduate of the University of Wyoming. She lives and works in Northern Wyoming.



