

*Daring to Go for Safety* (left) and *Flight, Fight or Freeze* (right), by Monique Belitz

art selection and comment by [Lil Copan](#) in the [June 3, 2021](#) issue



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Poems. That’s what artist Monique Belitz calls them, artworks built by small pieces, marks, colors, spaces, placement, rhythms—what she refers to as “tesserae of texture.” As visual poems, her works offer poignant scenes related to identity, belonging, and the hope for sanctuary. Each image merges human dignity and frailty within immense and unfamiliar landscapes, which are as beautiful as they are severe and threatening.

Born in the Netherlands, Belitz created her series *Refugees* while living in Nebraska. She writes about these works that “landscape functions as a map, a place where my concerns are situated. Contemporary human concerns: The plight of thousands of refugees around the world in need of a helping hand and a place to recover their humanity and dignity.” Within these landscapes—the vast seas, crags, ice, and rough edges—the artist-poet does precisely that.