

A C T U A L I T I E S :
T H E C O L L A B O R A T I O N

N O R M A C O L E : In a sense, we've been collaborating for 30 years. Ever since we first met, in San Francisco, we were concerned not just with each other's finished work, but in the way we work, the actual coming into being. For this book, before we thought of it as a book, I sent Marina some of the poems, as I often do. She was sending me photos of paintings, sequences that kept pouring into newer sequences. Her colors are always startling, the flat areas drawn, drawn together as only she can. And I knew she would lay out the visuals in such a way that the drawings and paintings and the poems would startle each other, make a new form.

M A R I N A A D A M S : When Norma started sending me the poems, what I saw first was the spareness, the breath, and the sensuality. Her work, her words, have a way of being, just Be-ing, that is very satisfying. I decided to make drawings using just a pencil—and just one line. Although I was planning on color, some of these lines felt like enough, spare but full, just as the poems were. It was when I sat down to put the finished bodies of work together, the visual and the verbal, the lines of pencil alongside the lines of language, that I saw the magic. It was clear neither of us had “illustrated” the other. Instead we had allowed our individual ways of working, seeing and communicating to have expression. All the time, trusting that the ‘conversation’ would be interesting, that one form would reveal the other.