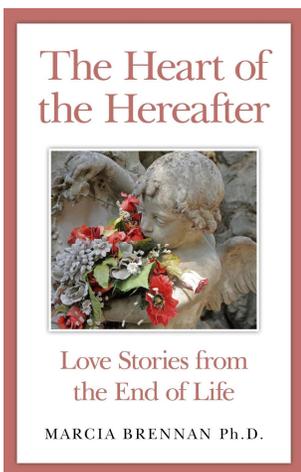


Life at the End of Life: Finding Words Beyond Words (Bristol, U.K.: Intellect Books and the University of Chicago Press, 2017). Based on my direct clinical experiences as an Artist In Residence in the Department of Palliative Medicine at the M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, in this study I explore issues in the visual culture of the medical humanities and creative expressions in end of life care. Drawing on thematically-oriented case studies, the text will engage questions such as: How do we find language to describe states of being for which there is no language? How do we represent the unrepresentable and translate the untranslatable? Notably, these issues are equally pertinent to theoretical discussions of abstract painting's simultaneously dissolving and crystallizing structures, as they are to the contemplation of spiritual experience and mystical ecstasy, as they are to the very real challenges of people facing life at the end of life. Thus building on my previous scholarship, this book examines subjects and situations that repeatedly exceed our capacity to represent them, even as we repeatedly attempt to do so, often through symbolic imagery that conveys

transformational and transcendent visions. This project has been approved by two separate Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) at Rice University (March 2010) and at the M. D. Anderson Cancer Center (September 2010).



The Heart of the Hereafter: Love Stories from the End of Life (Axis Mundi Books, an imprint of John Hunt Publishing, U.K., 2014). The end of life is almost never pretty, but it can be almost overwhelmingly beautiful. *The Heart of the Hereafter* features a moving selection of ten interconnected artworks and narratives that are based on the author's first-hand experiences as an Artist In Residence in palliative medicine at the M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. Emphasizing spiritual experiences, the stories showcase the different types of love that emerge both in life and at the end of life. These expressions range from philanthropy, self-respect (*amour propre*), familial love (*agape* and *storge*), and romantic love (*eros*) to various forms of spiritual love including charity (*caritas*), grace, enlightenment, and transcendence. The book closes with a reflection on philosophy—a love of wisdom that encompasses ethics, metaphysics, and applied aesthetics—and its relation to both the promises and the complications associated with constructing an *ars moriendi*, or guide to the art of dying, in our contemporary world.

Marcia Brennan, Ph.D. is Professor of Art History and Religious Studies at Rice University in Houston, Texas. Her research engages spirituality and comparative mysticism, modern and contemporary art history and museum studies, and the medical humanities. She is the author of several books, including *Curating Consciousness: Mysticism and the Modern Museum* (MIT Press, 2010); *Modernism's Masculine Subjects: Matisse, The New York School, and Post-Painterly Abstraction* (MIT Press, 2004); and *Painting Gender, Constructing Theory: The Alfred Stieglitz Circle and American Formalist Aesthetics* (MIT Press, 2001). She is the winner of the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum Research Center Book Prize, and the recipient of grants from the American Council of Learned Societies, the Office of Research, Rice University, and Rice's Humanities Research Center. She has served as a Fellow at Rice's Center for Teaching Excellence, and in both 2009 and 2010 she was awarded the George R. Brown Award for Superior Teaching. In addition, since early 2009 Marcia Brennan has served as an Artist In Residence in the Department of Palliative Medicine at the M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. Her experiences in this clinical setting represent the subject of her books *The Heart of the Hereafter: Love Stories from the End of Life* (John Hunt Books, U.K., 2014), *Life at the End of Life: Finding Words Beyond Words* (Intellect Books, U.K. and the University of Chicago Press), and her current book project *A Rose From Two Gardens: Saint Thérèse of Lisieux and Images of the End of Life* (forthcoming from the University of California Medical Humanities Press).

