

# MA North American Studies – Application Essay

Admission for Fall/ Winter 2023/24

Please pick one of the following questions and write a 1000-1500 word essay.

I. Describe and discuss the role of emotions in US-American politics.

II. Analyze and interpret the following poem by Karen Solie!

## Bad Landscape

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I can't make it right. Not the shadow lying on the snow,  
not the snow, terrain sloping crudely toward  
the poor outcome of a structure neither representational  
nor abstract, and the sketched-out town beyond  
ill-proportioned, depthless, and basic. There isn't any sense  
of an *origin*, of what Plato called the lower soul,  
to animate what's lacking with the spark of its  
remainder. Better than this were the products of  
by-numbers kits  
hanging on the walls of my grandparents' home —  
bird dogs, game birds —  
that knew what they were, spoke at least of a steady hand  
and subsequent pride in the completion of a task  
for its own sake. Above the roar of the new gas furnace  
installed in the living room, as there was no basement,  
the volume of the brand new color television  
we were warned as children we sat too close to. Blue light  
of the programs on our faces, some of the outside  
was already on the inside, the radiation we were told  
was everywhere — power lines, radios, fluorescent light,  
telephones —  
in all of what emitted that low hum of menace  
we had no other word for.

From: *Liberties*, 3:2 (Winter 2023), p. 73