Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

ATTENDANCE: April

Rachel & Rocío · Tuesday, June 28th, 2016

Attendance is documentary poetry by Rocío Carlos and Rachel McLeod Kaminer, who are collaborating on a book length manuscript for the duration of one year.

> As we stand in relation to plants and animals—and one another—we are not exempt, but alive as creatures in and of the world. Taking attendance, and attending, alters* our writing, bodies; places—city, land, wilderness; times—past, present, future…
>
> *fucks up / fucks with / plant sex

Previous: January, February, March

April Notes

1 pigeons
2 humans, ones I avoid, ones I seek, ones I miss
3 the small brown bird
4 the *raven* with the missing pinion, wheeling; recognize there are a limited number of birds or—? …outside, mourning doves. The flight paths and Girlpool mix.
13 Cooper's Hawk skimming east along the top of the flood control dam, closing up Hahamongna. an air current, or cushion, skimming at speed.
It's sudden when I notice my huge debt to other women, other books in this work we're doing
After that I scatter. April images, shapes and vectors: The Great Horned Owl. Ravens and Crows. The Great Horned Owl and its owlet.
Looking up the Cooper's Hawk for its "Call, a series of 15-20 *kaks*." A sonogram (shape notes). Accipiter cooperii. [Hand drawing: A sonogram, from Birds of North America, a Golden Field Guide.] Uncommon. Open woodlands and wood margins.
Still, the hawks aren't the ones I see playing in the streams; it's the ravens. Their fingertipped wings constantly calibrating their angles to the wind. Profiles become solids; shapes, bodies.
Hummingbirds come back, but not in color and barely in sound.
We—Rocío and I—talk amor de cuervo. I want to know, to see, crow babies, raven babies.
The owls' large eyes are fixed in their sockets, so the entire head moves as owls shift their gaze. All fly silently. Females are larger.
The corvids at my work have been recognizing me a long time before I realize it by recognizing them—it takes the gap-winged one three times before I see it.
All the crows have nest pieces and food in their mouths; all of them have a direction.

There are hawks and hawks, felt as a power of summoning. Thought—hawk—look—hawk. More than once, and once there's flight I don't look away.

—Rachel

April 1 Fool's day

Along Figueroa, yucatecos in plague season. A spotted grease coats the leaves. The workers are gentle with their tools, as if the yucatecos are extra sensitive. The warm day, the wind that is pulled through the vacuum of the tall buildings. People with lanyards.

[that is a chair/that is a table/that is a miracle that is an ecstasy]

The natural world disappears and there are only people and their extensions: clothing, tote bags, books. Their voices.

(When people talk about the big bang theory, they really want to imagine Los Angeles without Mexicans, without Indians and or their descendants. What silk road what Marco Polo what carnage and slave girls [we must understand anytime we distinguish slaves as slave-girls we are complicit in the access to their smoky thighs their thin wrists in bangles]. **Esclava***: When I am an infant I get a tennis bracelet and hoops in my ears. When I am school age I get bangles and again at thirteen and then fifteen, gold, gold to wear, to show that I am valuable that I am valued)*

Back home: the death of the jasmine, the triumph of the nasturtium

Little Big Horn: how to approach a river; stand in the greasy grass at sundance time, on the bluffs, pretty shield. No white whales for leagues and leagues but they say someone had it coming.

Saturday Chinatown

Night: the rain, an umbrella swinging from my wrist, a good parking spot, a short brisk walk and we see Chiwan. Ana says: "Rachel looks like she's up to no good". We wander the town looking for dinner, avoiding the places with whole carcasses hanging in the window.

April 3rd a wake a graveyard the freeways. Luis Parra from Nayarit. His brother weeping. The plants are made of fabric. I can't look at Malle. She consoles me. I feel like an asshole about it. *Remember when I almost drowned in your pool?* We laugh because I didn't die. *Remember the dismembered crows in your grandma's front yard? Remember the whole block was in Maribel's and Martha's Quinceañera? Remember we were flower girl's in Nena's wedding?*

April 10 *You were writing to me and then you stopped.*

April 12 I think?

For Rachel: a heron, a pigeon, a skunk. Not all of these alive.

April 13th- Wednesday.

5 am wake up

6 am begin to drift off

6:30 the calico want breakfast

6:45 the calico wants come back into the bed

6:55 you just fucking get up

Fig leaves, big enough to cover shame.

Are you afraid to have me in your house?

[Mental note: don't fuck this up]

April what.

6:30 am a slight chill. The datura is ancient/ dead branches like deer antlers. Baby birds somewhere. The jacaranda on the corner.

I am constantly aware of my lack of hunger because it is unlike me and it is alarming.

Thursday

when am I NOT tired. When are you NOT anxious. You said *what were we thinking was going to happen*. I didn't think that. I didn't think. I didn't.

—Rocío

April Poems

Enta/On'tas
The restless mind along Figueroa
yucatecos in plague season: a spotted grease coats the leaves
workers are gentle with their tools, the warm day bringing the death of shears anyway
tall buildings draw a wind, warm breath
through the narrow vacuum, the yucatecos play coy
what coyness is learned: a shudder, an uneven shoulder
cover, withhold, flutter, wink
inside the buildings a black magic muted
you walk with skin on fire (a restless mind) seeking heat
speaking canine prayers: *chair= miracle, table=ecstasy*
flush at the sight of people and their extensions: clothing, tote bags, books
lanyards in the place of mouths.

*

Nightshade and what (Enta Fen)
Three thirty in some haze of reason not yours
a boy you love, full of glass and concrete
what wails if not sirens if not women's mouths
what keening and lulling; a clouding gentle heather of sleep
to close the flesh is a needle point of devotion
a stitch in time, they say, saves no one
all this talk of youths is revolting in the slight chill
the datura sheds branches like deer antlers
baby birds somewhere / the jacaranda on the corner.
I am constantly aware of my lack of hunger.

—Rocío

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Gastropods
Late, dark, on the walk from Eva's to tacos, and back, and then again leaving, her front porch and steps have so many snails. Big ones, meaty. I am warned too late and squish the first one. Twinge across my lower back at the sound and knowledge.
As I leave I forget to look out for them, I step right on top of a big one. Underneath the arch of my left foot, a round shatter-crunch and soft give.
The feeling of it stays under my foot all the way home and I don't rub it away in a foot bath before I get into bed. The wrongness is physical.

*

Bees and (2) / April

Not lemons anymore. Jasmine. But it’s not filling, not heavy, not weighting us back into bodies. Like gasoline fumes never strong enough to satisfy. No color in the jacaranda. It might as well be wisteria purple, for all that it doesn’t shock, make real

*

f*rom* **Bolsa Chica**

The jellyfish at Colorado Lagoon—the one without its tendrils; away from the others.
The black rail, sleek underwater like a streak of swimming dolphin.
The small stingrays, one tail chopped off, in flagrante delicto we guess—

> the great black and white rays 50 meters down to the bottom silt in clear still ocean behind the break just west of Mazunte, and
>
> the cold fire of adrenaline determination, persisting through each upheaval of giant heavy wave, almost out, then turning to see E caught, not going to make it, her panic; instinct somehow turning me toward her and not away. [Still loving my friend from far away and still wondering if that night had come later what might be.] Breathing the one gasp the set of waves would give us together; diving as far as we could below their roil; timing the surfacing for the one breath, diving again. [Fleeing.] I don’t remember how we touched—hands? torso? [Lips. Fingers.]—only the connection, only the distance to the beach, only the point at which I had to choose for us beach or open water for safety, splitting the distance between the two. The way I decided. My force of will for her taking my survival out of question and into certainty, bodily yes. Stark beaching knowledge and terror that yes I had saved her life, which meant she was drowning,
>
> which meant she could have died—surfista that she was—
>
> which meant I could have not saved her. Was that real?
>
> The surreal southern light beauty—brute force sunset glory—that night. Clinging afterwards to the utter calm of the before. Those rays, that bottom ocean floor.

—Rachel

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