

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## ATTENDANCE: February

Rachel & Rocío · Tuesday, June 14th, 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 Notes

February 2 Loud birds in the bamboo, past daybreak.

That pigeon flock lined up on the same concrete bridge over the arroyo and river channels, ten minutes before sun up when they take flight and bustle and wheel.

February 4 A crow, late morning, flying east overhead. One of its (their?) long pinions is missing from its (their?) wing— I see it rather than hear it— the gap in the left wing makes a startling contrast.

February 10 ASH WEDNESDAY

pigeons roosting or nesting in Hollywood on Sunset, with young new ones.

the wolf dog we see on Colorado in Eagle Rock

the small child in her parent's arms, delighted to see ashes on their forehead which match her own mark

the other children, their half squall half wail kind of crying at the back of the cathedral

February 22 It's Monday and there are two big corvids— ravens? a yard apart on a telephone wire. They are fluffing themselves in the heat, I think it lets the breeze into their underwings. The crows at work have been building a nest in one of the six tall palms like this : : : over my school building. One of the crows likes long, noticeable sticks or stalks, but flies a path designed to throw (who?) off the track. It's dodging and weaving. But the palm is a high exposed place and the location of the nest is obvious.

I know a crow came last spring, came and dashed one of the nests over to eat the hummingbird eggs outside my house.

Later when I walk to and from a night event, I'm happy about the temperature of the night, the quiet on 8th, the people walking and awake. On the way home I'm writing and I see again how the

human bodies are going to be what I write about too.

—Rachel

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A sophomore, February comes in too brash fanfares made of water. The bay laurel trees dry up, they've been dying for three years now, even as the saplings spiral bravely out of the foliage. Every time I hear a helicopter I'm not afraid its some fugitive, loose in the back yards of my neighborhood I'm afraid it's the fire department checking for ready kindling.

I eat the lettuce and kale I grow. I see pill bugs mating on the leaves, earwigs milling around the roots. Who knows what happens in that soil at night, or even under my nose, too small for me to see. Lettuce leaves spiral out of their origin. There is that word again, spiral. That is the direction of nature, splitting cells, clouds of flaming gas, ocean currents that come to kill us all, unfurling ferns.

The echeveria's bloated petals, waiting for the end. They drop off and die and then they release little red veins, probes. The rise up as on feet and look for soil.

Rain, come. Virgins in caves, plumed beauties. The moon rises, angels sing: yes/no/let come the torrent.

February comes in showy, pink peach blossoms on bare branches.

Geraniums get tall like eager ears but they have never bloomed

Tiny ruby-throat perches- little feet curling around the branch

Ese pobre nopal tiene plaga

I clear the crab grass from the ice-plant so as to clarify something to the men hired by my landlady.

\*

Passion flower- how many varieties

How many kinds of suffering are there

Purple blossoms crumpled like wedding tissue.

Jasmine little unlit wicks. The smell is like a strong cab(ernet) deep and swirling like the smoke under Pilar Ternera's arms.

The bad neighbor's voice troubles the trees.

The good neighbor walks his grandchild in the plants.

Bad harvest, bad harvest.

—Rocío



## February Poems

### Again Lent

A sophomore, February comes  
too brash fanfares made of water  
in fire country the bay laurels dry up  
the prayer for rain is a fish's mouth mouthing  
de donde cae la nieve  
de donde viene la tercera hermana  
que aburridos los ojos azules and things like that

Lent is a square surrounded on all sides by sand  
 the mountain of burning shrubs,  
 the devil's wilderness  
 or rivers; Jordan for example.  
 In our mouths, strange legends

\*

### **Leap Day**

On varieties of passion flower:  
 how many kinds of suffering  
 a country slipped away when you weren't looking  
 the peaches of immortality hang from long-bed trucks in front of you  
 In the yard every morning, attendance:  
 jasmine, citruses sneak their green on you.  
 quarreling sparrows, bully mockingbirds  
 the coyote that almost ate your familiar.  
 You can't document it fast enough  
 and then you listen to a song and it all turns to Macondo.  
 Imagine sad waltzes: a klezmer, a pianola  
 or was it the shouting of white men instead?  
 There is nothing sadder than  
 a three/fourths time.

—Rocío

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### **songbirds (2)**

the little birds and big ones who kind of skid/brace their wings to shift shoulders  
 up and feet down, landing or swooping in  
 a fly by, immediate and precise  
 dead bird, warbler, look it up for hours, grey, yellow, markings

\*

### **mourning doves (2)**

[I] stay indoors except the courtyard hallway  
 strip of blue out the window between the beams  
 on and off throughout the day there are the coo hoots of a mourning dove  
 cooler in the courtyard than up on the open roof  
 at dark [I] go out and see that the bear mural has been painted over  
 see again and not for the first time  
 how naked to write about animals  
 missing most of the day  
 I shut in again, reading,  
 hearing the courtyard mourning dove, thinking wildness  
 avoided much outdoor time today  
 Am I living wrong? *Just not living right*

used to see, be among so animals all day and night  
I could distinguish the visitors  
(my visitors / my neighbors. Appear / visit)  
now I can't  
they all seem to visit, with sign and seal  
not every creature is a visitor!  
or in a city every animal is a damascus road, every single one?  
or in the city I'm on that road, appearing and blinding of a piece

\*

**mammal (4)**

her hands and the line of her hair  
making  
I really wanted to kiss you. It felt like I could kiss you.

—Rachel

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