Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

ATTENDANCE: September

Rachel & Rocío · Wednesday, December 14th, 2016

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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, May, June, July, August

Rachel

Poems

…flying palomas with us
where it's green and plants and space

[datura]

loose flock swirls
wave motions grey on top and light under
holy holy holy ghost ghost ghost
spirit

[datura]

the next days, last days summer
crow light shine
shines sun back into the eye
bright sun and dark sun
crow light reflects light a different way

[dátura dátura dátura]

dark and cold
you wanted to see
you wanted to hear
gorgeous
(something adorning the throat)

[datura]

the wheel and float
turn and sail
wave and flock
light gorgeous
the young girl called them and a red glow lit quickly on their wings

[datura]

swoop dive into the canopy we do have
bamboo thicket urge to be in a row
to scatter shelter around a fire
to settle into canopy we do and do not have here…

[dátura dátura dátura]

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Notes

(Five years ago I felt visited; now I feel visiting.)

bat-bat on Paloma outside Dennis' house for dinner

How Rocío is writing and how I am feel far apart today, but Wednesday when we were at her house I asked for copal and she lit the charcoal and I felt. Things felt. Ayuh and when I read what she wrote and she read what I wrote and it slipped back, turned in place, we're writing a book. Or something, but I hope a book.

This morning I was greeted so many times by my 8 to 10 yr olds especially, and I had so many to greet. Greeting, like touching. (Sometimes together sometimes apart.) And touching, like greeting.

each time I climb down from my house I walk in the street and there are so many people I don't greet. All year so far I know [to] how to write about each other, humans in bodies, but I'm badly present with my sleeping

neighbors in our street, street we have in common, and so much none [more?]. This failing goes on and on behind this writing and I push it away again. Fuck.

27 September *Yeah I said it / yeah I said it babe*

and the sound, finally, of raven(in)flight, when I can see across their wing, back, and wing the

noise is not the wings beating against the air the sound is the long strong (stiff) (rigid) (?) feathers sliding over and across one another as the (meat) muscles pull and push (contract) into flying; the pinions and pinions; the pinions and (front/back strong/speed feathers) the pinions and the back body feathers

Ohhhmg and did I write to you about seeing goshawk fly through the Forest of Dean on TV?

The birds—not pigeons—not certain but certain but maybe between starling and sparrow I'll figure it out—murmurate. In group which absorb, divide, separate, come back together, and repeat, in different numbers each time, every third rushing sweep. They cut sharply over my head a few times

They land for the night in the bamboo thicket

*****

Rocío

Poems

Aliso

Where hanging bodies turn sepia, courtyards spring up /
around you shades flutter open from dreams of floods.
Deliver, misnamed, the butcher's block,
the arms for lovers to wing from/
cling to riverbanks, that bone that juts from the pelvis,
the clavicle a nest of corvids—
is that the call that springs/
from your throat that calls for return
again, rain, again or fire or flame—
(how tawny and mottled your leaves
curling from thirst)
sore from shouting, your voice, the song of
lovers sighing in the barren valley.
You learned the names of the others
they're tongues not of people, they called you sycamore.

*

Bougainvillea

Ornament being the devil, you bloom under that body:
long arms reach for doors/what use are locks
when the key is in the tongue/or below it
thorny boughs/ *thicket* she said/
come briars through that window
find the fine wrists, the finger pointing to sleep

let us pave the way to hell with other people
this phrase or that in which language and for what
so that we can be there, where mouths open.

***

Notes

You go to the sea, to the smell of the sea and the grasses. Always the sulfur smell, the bright patch of grass and crows over the aluminum buildings shouting at the cooper's hawk.

Tuesday: it feels early, it feels late/ a white sliver of cliché just beyond the crescent leaves of the peach/ an alabaster beast long on the stone path.

A fruit fly in the whiskey.

Is crow/corvidae/ a punished bird?

The ravens come: receive their song of life happening. The good news is the gray morning. But then there is the letter, the phone call. You were okay, you learn to be okay each time but this time is hard. Your arms just became accustomed to his weight, his eyes just learned to find your eyes. How foliage drops, how it lifts in a stray breeze in front of your car. The canopy of Chinese elms on Linda Vista. The hand of the sky.

You are late to your teaching job because your face shows you are human. You are waiting in your car overlooking the Rose Bowl.

You remember how lent ends. You pick gravel from your knees and elbows and go home..

(Your tooth is bleeding for no reason)

Fortnight. Water on the wilderness/ saplings coming along. The little ones out front had a rough summer. Just hang on, little. The spring will make you so big and strong. *Mother's neglect/ what brings the autumn*

*

An ankle (my ankle)

The calico finds you napping. You stay longer to be a pillow for her little neck/ your ankle pulsing.

Bougainvillea in echo park. Make a left at the lotus nursery. And later, the paraiso's yellow flower.

See Traci smile. Bear the thought of her body against her body, her fine bones and easy smile. And then see Jen, her tired smile, her arms without him. You feel needles inside your elbows. Her long warm hug is for you more than for her. We say Paul's name.

Later, in the far corner booth under string lights, everyone laughing. Ana's sleepy look.

Near the flag/ flag adjacent. You write how you were made and brought.

The bougainvillea on the porch. Her long arms reaching for the front door. I want to be where she opens her mouth.

Blood arrives on Thursday, the ache that comes from turning away, so we walk to filled places, to dark rooms and spilled drinks, to the roar of crowds, a whole pack of us, moving from bar to bar in the city of yucatecos on the boulevard of no Alamos. The weight of us, of you.

A love letter to us all/ the table you can't have sex on/ light light

You walked ahead of the boys, she laughed and it made you happy.

*

(I saw the mangled butterfly)

Frank Ocean/ cry in the shower/ what it is to do that in a time of drought/ I'd do anything for you (in the dark)

I saw K today—she is safe but her lip trembles a little and her eyes shift.

An equinox and what has changed

The sea air, mother and father in the desert/ the first time driving that way/my father telling me what the salton sea was/ the palo verde, the alamo and chamizos and the all american canal

(a student asks why that line in Spanish/ the poet answers: the line demanded it)

Late now: so hung over. Out with the cats/ the phrase demands from you. Face your students wearing your glasses. Wash your hands in the green light. You pronounce their language correctly and they are proud of you. You are happy to make them proud.

You can't tell her so you write it here how the calico held the dovelet in her mouth how she was so broken her eyes wide open her chest heaving her neck broken so you held her underwater until she stopped struggling which wasn't long and then you buried her under the peach tree and the geranium.

You went west but not to the sea, though you can smell it. Gather basil. Rub it on your arms/ eat it. Little sparrow, watched. Lemons gathered, washed and sorted.

Somewhere a season wants to turn/ but turn to what.

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