Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

AWP Poets: Richard Garcia, Cynthia Atkins & David Tomas Martinez

Alexis Rhone Fancher · Thursday, March 24th, 2016

AWP (The Association of Writers & Writing Programs Conference & Book Fair) runs from March 30th through April 2nd, 2016. For the first time it will be held in Los Angeles! Thousands of writers and publishers will invade DTLA. It promises to be four days to remember. There will be readings and performances held in venues throughout the city. *Cultural Weekly's* intrepid Poetry Editor, ALEXIS RHONE FANCHER, will be reading in Venice, alongside poetry luminaries: DORIANNE LAUX, JOSEPH MILLAR, RICHARD GARCIA, CYNTHIA ATKINS, FRANCESCA BELL, MICHELLE BITTING, DAVID TOMAS MARTINEZ, and special guest poet, J. SCOTT BROWNLEE. Over the next 3 weeks, *Cultural Weekly* will be featuring their poems.
Mark Your Calendar, and join them at **Beyond Baroque in Venice on Thursday, March 31st at 8pm** for this Once-In-A-Lifetime Event! **This reading is OPEN TO THE PUBLIC! and Sponsored By *CULTURAL WEEKLY*.**
SEE YOU THERE!

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Richard Garcia won the 2016 Press 53 award for Porridge, which will be published in March of 2016. The Other Odyssey, from Dream Horse Press, and The Chair, from BOA, were both published in 2015. His poems have appeared in many journals, including The Georgia Review and Spillway, and in anthologies such as The Pushcart Prize and Best American Poetry. He lives in Charleston, S.C. He is on the staff of the Antioch Low Residency MFA in Los Angeles.

The Juniper Tree

My two brothers are sparrows in the juniper tree. My two sisters are branches of the juniper tree. Go and find my head, one brother says to me. Go and find my body, says the other brother. My two sisters are silent. Or maybe the leaves of the tree are speaking too loud to the wind. When the wind pauses I hear one sister say, Go and find my birthday cupcake, the one with the single candle that mother gave to me. Go and find my pearl earring, the other sister says, the one I left under my pillow. Now the leaves of the juniper tree are opening and closing—I only hear the Juniper tree. It is laughing at something the wind said.

Richard Garcia

(first appeared in *Wherewithal*, 12/9/14)

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Cynthia Atkins is the author of Psyche's Weathers and In The Event of Full Disclosure. Her poems have appeared in numerous journals, including, *Alaska Quarterly Review, BOMB, Cleaver Magazine, Cultural Weekly, Del Sol Review, Florida Review, Green Mountains Review, Harpur Palate, Hermeneutic Chaos, Le Zaporogue, North American Review, Seneca Review, Tampa Review, Valparaiso Review* and *Verse Daily*, and nominated for a 2015 Pushcart Prize. She is an assistant professor of English at Virginia Western Community College and lives on the Maury River of Rockbridge County, VA with her family.

Montage Obscura

Only your good side shows. You can jostle
a smile around dental work, and little murmurs
heckle you in a hall of mirrors.
It's always the tail-end
of summer in our backyards. Cicadas
and crickets thrum in your throat—
You could almost cough up
your heart—that aching
hand-held device.
Because the past tense lives
in strictest confidence. Slightly
out-of-focus, waiting for the explorers
to come—We're not very photogenic.
We heed to the infant
ones, who croon in the tiniest
of socks. Our sobbing is only
a chemical process. This is an elixir,
our secrets are kept
radiant and illumined—
Not that they meant you any harm,
shadows folded on shadows,
an industry unto themselves.
Now juxtaposed and cross-referenced,
For *brace yourself—*
a kind of happiness!
It's 2011, *Lady Gaga* is a volume
balloon grandfathered in to say,
We were born this way.
The clouds are brass bands. The sky
is bluer than a rumor. Your siblings will be forever
dripping in their swimsuits.
We were happy and wide-open
like hotels where all the people

have now left for home.
We were loved and gathered,
and washed away with the tide.
Your son’s breath smells
of pencil erasers and lavender,
the medicine from your father’s liver.
Your sister’s laugh is filtered
with quivers, cropped to pierce
the heart, high in the pixilated trees.

Cynthia Atkins
(first appeared in *Alaska Quarterly Review*, Spring/Summer 2012, Vol 29, 1)

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David Tomas Martinez’s debut collection of poetry, *Hustle*, was released in 2014 by Sarabande Books, winning the New England Book Festival’s prize in poetry, the Devil’s Kitchen Reading Award, and honorable mention in the Antonio Cisneros Del Moral prize. He has also been a Breadloaf and CantoMundo Fellow. Martinez splits time between Brooklyn and Lubbock, where he is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor in creative writing at Texas Tech University.

The Only Mexican

The only Mexican that ever was Mexican, fought in the revolution
and drank nightly, and like all machos, crawled into work crudo,
letting his breath twirl, then clap and sing before sandpaper
juiced the metal. The only Mexican to never sit in a Catholic pew
was born on Halloween, and ate his lunch wrapped in foil against
the fence with the other Mexicans. They fixed old Fords where my
grandfather worked for years, him and the welder Juan wagered
each year on who would return first to the Yucatan. Neither did.
When my aunts leave, my dad paces the living room and then rests,
like a jaguar who once drank rain off the leaves of Cecropia trees,
but now caged, bends his paw on a speaker to watch crowds pass.
He asks me to watch grandpa, which means, for the day; in town
for two weeks, I have tried my best to avoid this. Many times he will swear,
and many times grandpa will ask to get in and out of bed, want a sweater,
he will ask the time, he will use the toilet, frequently ask for beer,
about dinner, when the Padres play, por que no novelas, about bed.
He will ask about his house, grandma, to sit outside, he will question
while answering, he will smirk, he will invent languages while tucked in bed.
He will bump the table, tap the couch, he will lose his slipper, wedging it in
the wheel of his chair, like a small child trapped in a well, everyone will care.
He will cry without tears – a broken carburetor of sobs. When I speak
Spanish, he shakes his head, and reminds me, he is the only Mexican.

David Tomas Martinez

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