

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Erika Ayón: Two Poems

Erika Ayón · Saturday, February 26th, 2022

Pathways

It began with forgetting where you placed your keys.
Then progressed to getting lost while you were
driving. To the point where on one of those drives,
a neighbor found you in the middle of the road,
disoriented, and told you to follow him home.
It ended with you forgetting who we were.

To be honest, I was relieved to have been forgotten.
Our relationship fraught with challenges. I always
thought you saw me as a disappointment,
a failure. The daughter that moved out without
getting married, the black sheep, the weird one.
I didn't mind for once possibly being the favorite,
the responsible, or the *chistosa* daughter.

What I did mind was the anger you felt when we
became strangers. You demanded that your wife
of forty years to leave you alone. You asked her,
who are you? You took swings at her as if being
attacked. You forgot having met many years ago
at a *fiesta* surrounded by pale pink lanterns.

It was good in a way you forgot about the mother
who died in child-birth, whose spirit rests along
a river in Jalisco. About the father with blue eyes
who beat you for no reason, left your body bruised.
About the 7-year-old child you buried in a homemade
casket, a stolen cross from a neighboring grave served
as a pinpoint on a map.

It wasn't good that you forgot about the times we spent
playing checkers as a child. You never let me win.
Our checkers were pennies vs quarters. We would sit on
the porch playing checkers until the sky turned orange,

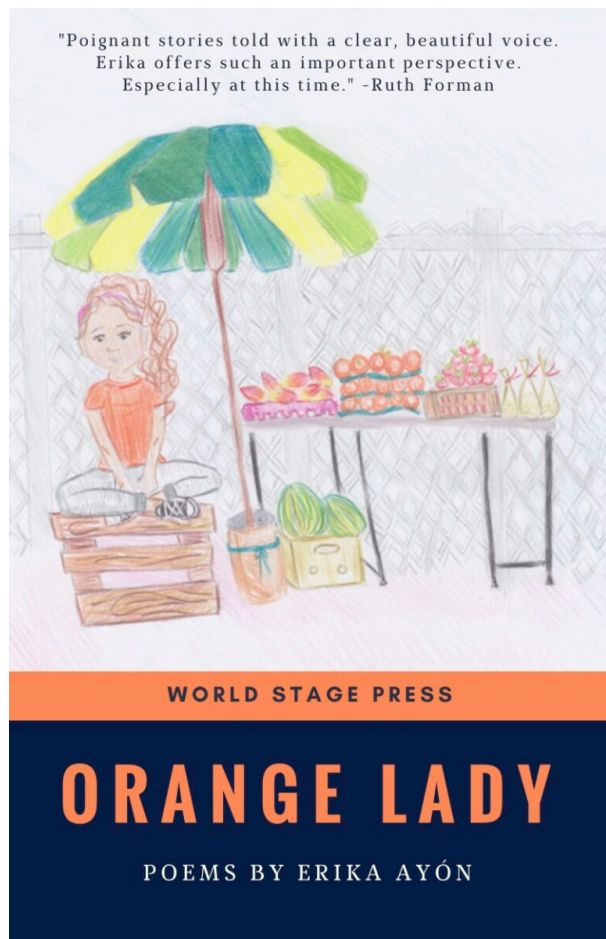
pink, and black. Our hands touching each other's as we moved our pieces, creating pathways.

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Monarchs

*— A monarchs' life span can be from two weeks to nine months.
It might take five generations of monarchs to migrate from
Canada to Mexico and back.*

Last October, we made another trip to Pismo Beach. The first trip there we celebrated our one-year wedding anniversary. We had arrived weeks after the last Monarchs had left but the air was still warm with their presence. This recent trip we brought along our child, born between these two trips. This time we came as clusters formed in the trees, and you could hear the flutter of their wings above. The sound delicate like leaves rustling in the wind. We let our son walk along the dirt paths, leaving his footprints in the ground. The ocean roared behind him. I wondered about the monarchs' life span and how for many this place will be their halfway point, for others their beginning, and for some their ending. In their journey, I reflect on our journey, how we now have a child. It is his beginning, just a fraction of his life. For us, if we are lucky this will be the half-point of our lives. And our endings far away. I want our son to forever remember this moment, not just the beauty but because the butterflies regardless of which stage they were in, knew how to be glorious. They teach us that migrations can take generations. The trip I began at five from Mexico to here, might be completed by my son's children, my grandchildren, since it takes lifetimes to reach a destination, transform, grow wings.



Purchase *Orange Lady* by Erika Ayón

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