

THE POETS & THEIR POETRY

Godmother

-Carmen Calatayud

*There's a woman on her front porch
Inhaling her cigarette. She's in love*

*With the slender white stick
Between her fingers.*

*My fingers pretend to play piano
While tapping my left arm.*

*Blue-green vein rises and
I stroke it like a purring cat.*

*It's been four weeks, heroin,
And I need you to feel nothing.*

*There is so much I want to tell you—
I want to thank you for being my godmother*

*For taking me to the church where god doesn't care
And we don't pretend he does.*

*Truth blooms in a way a moon girl can understand
Truth being there is no me.*

*Just velvet junk afterglow that
Streams from stars into my arm.*

*Wish magic alone could blow my heart open
Fill it with a mouth to kiss all the losses.*

*On the sidewalk in front of my feet
A grey feather just landed.*

*The woman lights another cigarette
The smoke smells like her name, Dulce.*

*I pick up the feather and put its point
To my vein, dream of burnt caramel*

*Streaming in, lips smack from fast joy—
The sweet blur gone too quick.*



Carmen Calatayud: Giving voice to myself, and then giving voice to the voiceless are what drew me to poetry. This was a form of otherworldly communication that came from the heart, whether it was wholehearted or brokenhearted. It was all welcome in the world of poetry.

Being part of the *Corazón Collective* has given me the gifts of learning, teaching and sharing in community with writers who support each others' work and offer inspiration. This is crucial for writers, as we primarily create in solitude.

My second poetry collection, *This Tangled Body*, coming in May 2024 from *FlowerSong Press* in conjunction with *Letras Latinas*, is about the journey of struggling to heal the broken parts of self and the world we live in—through surreal and lyrical language, *This Tangled Body* travels through the territory of the body, the legacy of loss and the need to love at the individual, generational and collective levels.

Time

-Jen Yáñez-Alaniz

*it exists
in a sky above my home*

*on one
October night*

*when I didn't step outside
to look*

*yo sé
que en esas horas
las nubes iluminadas
exhalaban*

*Imagino mi hogar
como una madre
dormida*

*como una iglesia
agotada*

cansada del matrimonio

*unraveling herself
from sterling light*

*unraveling herself
from the moon*



Jen Yáñez-Alaniz: Poetry

has become an essential practice for me, offering a way to stay connected to my senses and sources of pleasure during the intense focus required by PhD studies. Writing poetry allows me to express feelings tied to insecurities and melancholy that sometimes overwhelm me. Focusing on themes of eroticism in my poetry grounds me and helps center my energy force. This plays a crucial role in my academic self-reflection and reflexivity work as I continue to grow as a scholar.

Poetry serves as a vital means to examine and understand my developing positionality as a researcher interested in translingual poetics and the inseparableness of embodied language. I have begun experimenting with translingual practices in my poetry as it provides a unique space that tells so much about what I have lost, what has been taken, what I continue to hold, and what I struggle to access.



chrysanthemums

elegy for Gloria E. Anzaldúa

- jo reyes-boitel

*tell me the truth the world has ended in a burst
petals blown away from
a flower's nearly imperceptible eye*

*filmy scales,
fish's skin flecking along billowed cheeks
like stars unraveling,
condensed, churning from center to surface*

*dark matter
heavy iron molten mirrored hematite
then cooling mica iridescent and*

*falling away
into translucent sheets purples and greens rain down
oceanic salt living in these bodies*

*they say
we are built of stardust*

*I want to believe
some part of us took a breath before we were this,
and that this breath continues after us*

*I want to believe
you are here | have left | will return*

*not enough
to say you were beautiful
in those dark rooms*

*I dream you in softness: slip shoes, ivory silk,
and a forest green sweater, its large collar
framing your heart-shaped face*

*I feel like an intruder to your nighttime sky,
watching you while you choose your bracelets,
turn your palms back and forth – they are song birds
in the air, light surrounding you you
watch my eyes follow you
then pull
at still warm amber*

*until it glistens
and promise to embrace me within its walls*

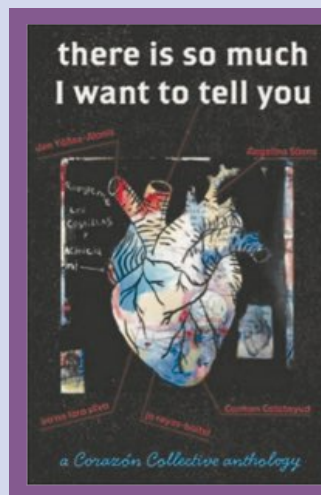
I kiss your palms, find pearls and yellow gold



Gloria Anzaldúa, author of *Borderlands/La Frontera*

jo reyes-boitel: I have inherited exile and non-belonging from my antepasados. I write to honor them and their long journeys to new worlds – despite the potential or actual harm and persecution – to entrust their ideals will take root in me and others to come. Through them I found a talent for writing and artmaking. While I write about my inheritance I also craft my own interpretation of this world and of my own body, especially when it is at odds with how others perceive me. Writing in *nepantla* has given me strength in carrying multiplicities, and comfort in knowing I don't know everything. This in-between space lets me question and doubt as ways toward learning.

Too many times people see the softness in me (the femme, the queer, the fat, the poet, the introvert, the immunocompromised, the working class) and think they can cloak me with their expectations. I have felt silenced – was taught to be silent to save myself – but now use my voice (and my silence) toward ancestral knowledge and tangible memory. In this magnificent *choque* of potentiality there is a collective of truth tellers I strive to be a part of, supporting and supportive.



**Corazón Collective
Chapbook Release**

March 9, 2024 @ 7pm

Esperanza Peace & Justice Center,
922 San Pedro, San Antonio, TX

THEIR POETRY

corazón espinado/nopal

-ire'ne lara silva

*love all the thorned things with me as Nature made them —
thorned and bright and dangerous not tamed not domesticated
not bred for softness —wild things require respect —beautiful
things should require careful handling —there is nothing more
meaningful than to be entrusted with the soul of a thing*

*i can't remember if it was my vision or my brother's but i carry
the image in my heart —all golden and green —radiant and
radiant and radiant —paint god in the shape of nopales —make
the canvas hold the reflection of the sun —make it so that our
eyes can't see all of it at once —so that our eyes can't rest on it
because the face of god would drive us mad*

*love all the thorned things with me because life is beautiful and
terrible —because everything alive carries its death —because
nopales never surrender never cease their rebirthings —because
we live like this —creating fiercely —fierce thorned creatures
carrying our deaths and carrying our medicine*

ire'ne lara silva: I don't know who I would be or what my life would have been without poetry. It doesn't matter whether I'm writing essays or articles or novels or short stories or comic books or social media posts— I've learned that everything is poetry. I go to poetry whenever I need to understand things, whenever I need to feel my way through life, whenever desperation or grief or curiosity or desire needed articulation. I don't know any other way to be. I haven't found any better way to chisel away at the essential questions: What is the spirit? What is the body? What is the world? What is my spirit and my body in this world? What are we to each other?



I believe it is an act of resistance to work towards healing and being whole. An act of resistance to not give into self-destruction. An act of resistance to speak to this way of the heart and spirit. An act of resistance to move through this world consciously. An act of resistance to find others dedicated to these tasks.



On the postcard of Monumento Cervantes

-Angelina Sáenz

*taped to my kitchen cabinet
you can see my lover's window
there on the 19th floor
of the Torre de Madrid building
that towers behind the statue of
Don Quixote and Sancho Panza*

Count to 19

Allí está el

Angelina Sáenz: At the age of 20, I had my first encounter with poetry that spoke to my human experience. I was a student at East Los Angeles College and my mother had just died. Jimmy Santiago Baca's work reached its hand out to me all the way from Albuquerque to an aisle in the East Los Angeles County Library and told me not only that I was not crazy, but that the experiences of injustice and oppression that I had lived were shared experiences and also part of a carefully, politically orchestrated conspiracy to oppress (and destroy) people of color. My life would never be the same. The affirmation and clarity I felt reading Jimmy's work made me want to write poetry that would speak to this shared truth and that would have the same effect on others that Baca's poetry had on me.

