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# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

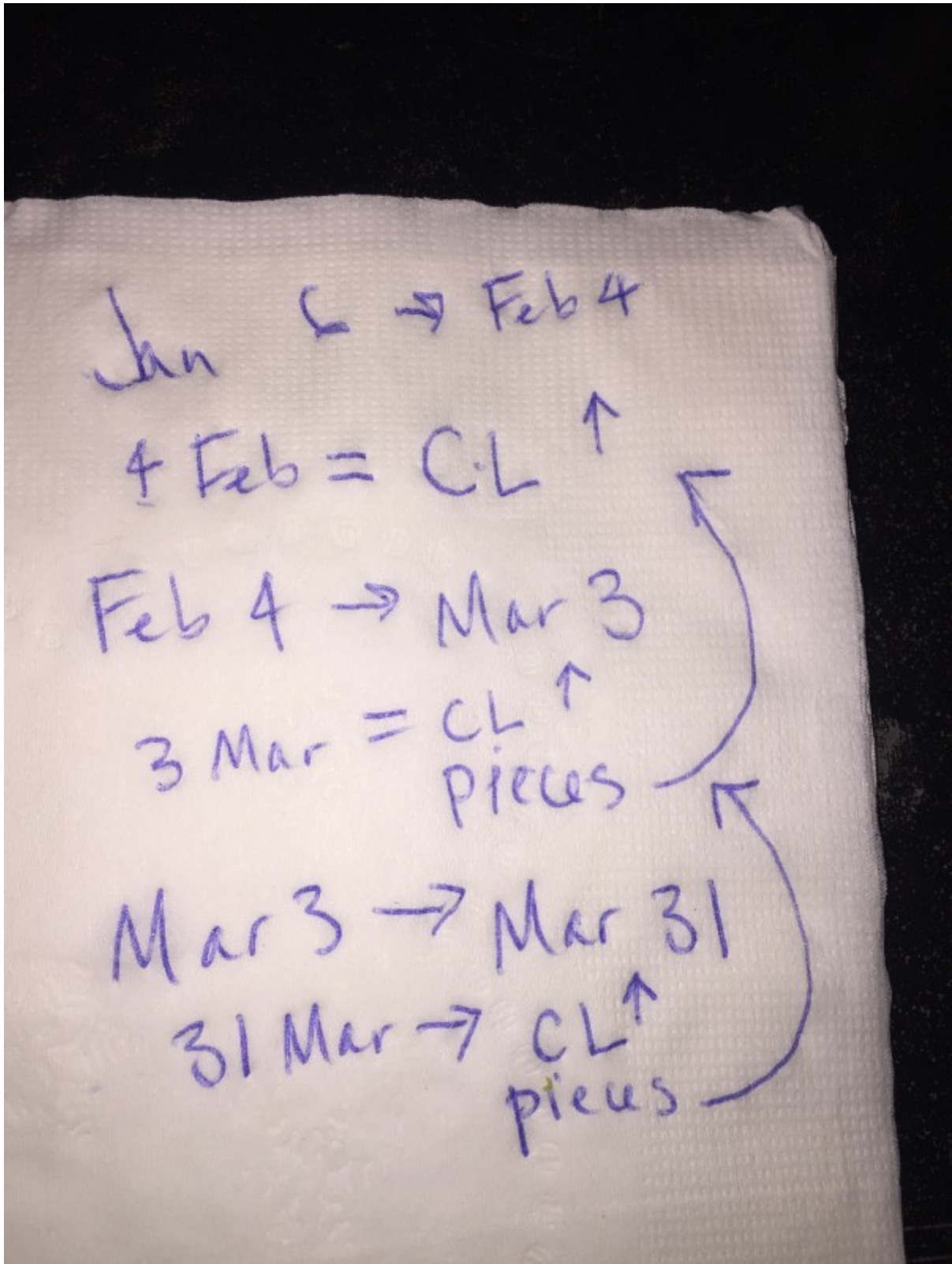
## **ATTENDANCE: January**

Rachel & Rocío · Thursday, June 9th, 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



### January Notes

Epiphany: Porch / face the rain. Rain like bars, cage of water. I was happy, alone and early in the day. I propped up my feet and let my coffee get cold.

Across the street is a piocha, or a paraíso. The city workers cut the canopy flat to avoid the power lines. Now it mimics the willow, the low branches hang down like embarrassed arms.

The gutter is a bed of yellow leaves.

The mint in the tiled pot is drowning.

The rain is horizontal, or L-shaped. It points like angry stingers.

Later, I do a lap, yes, yes everything is watered, the lavender loses its wild oils; I wish I had a pine to marry the lavender to.

The seventh day: No rest for the dirt. Even when it's lying there, it's working. The pumpkin in the compost is melting back into the earth. Everything is silver with water. The clover floats over the dead winter grass. See us, the clover slurs, see our long lemon stalks, our trumpet flower. The clover is a jerk.

Early the hawks screeched then the three circled in thanks.

Sunny but fucking cold.

And then we walked to Sonny's.

January 8, Friday: I followed the calico. She waddled determined, she always brushes under the Rosemary. Rosemary = sea spray. Rocío Marino.

Colibrís swing high then low, ululating. They are waiting for a bloom.

And then, the new year blurs: The bougainvillea pays court to the porch

I plant California poppies

The amapolas that make Ana giddy with laughter

Sweet peas for height, little circus banners

Nasturtium to ramble in orange and yellow

Lobelias for purple

And three lavenders for the smell I want to die eaten by such a plant

The cleaning, and clearing. The leaves, all the tiny veins

Oh stay scrub jay don't go, the allow salutes us, little salmon-colored parasols. Here come colibrí again. Huitz?l. Colibrí, throat bright as a wound. Trill trill trill.

I see you.

—Rocío

\*

6 Jan: hawk, hummingbird. The hawk on a lightpole over the Arroyo Parkway; the hummingbird on a wire tiny and in a small rain

27 Jan: south/down/bound/on the Arroyo: A hawk shape turning out to be a crow standing up tall, almost leaning back. That was in the afternoon. In the morning, colors: grey yellows, winter sky with silhouettes—not all stick figure trees—palms of both kinds, bare sycamores, pines. Cell towers too.

28 Jan: daybreak at 5:26, the almanac said, so that was my alarm. When I went out to my car at 6 it was barely first light. I didn't realize there was such a length in between. So far, the crow caw, the skunk smell, the crow shape poking at itself, dried horse manure, hen squawk, bird call I don't know, parrot flap.

To write about myself as a creature, or [about] someone I regard with desire and attraction— that's one thing(?). It's different (is it?) those other regards. No? Yet to see people as people is...

29 Jan: dark up to work. Birdsong there, another new one. The human adolescents I work with all day, funny and sweet and original and aggressive and needy and just, if I'm a creature they are creatures too, in a way that is comforting. Last night Rocío and I had drinks and she told me about the amazing creature who hunts as an orchid...

On Orange Grove, headed for the intersection back to the Arroyo, I drive under a hummingbird. It's stopped/hovering in place so as to appear still, exactly over my lane up at the height of the trees and palms. I see it ahead of me and can't believe it hasn't moved by the time I drive underneath. Mistletoe, I think. It was hung there for me. Or someone else? Or it was holding up for us invisible mistletoe. Stopped in flight

30 Jan: a seagull, the ones with white headfeathers and grey on their wings, on top of an SRO on the NE side of Seventh Street between Kohler and San Pedro.

31 Jan: no creatures so far. It's raining, not even many dogs out for walk. Reading H is for Hawk. On the drive back from King Taco with Eva, a crow, on a lightpole, before the Seventh Street bridge.

—Rachel



## January Poems

### paloma (1)

pigeons rising up past the edge of the freeway

where the Arroyo Seco drains into the river channel  
 pigeons in a flock again, the same flock rising over the same confluence  
 shifting matrix pulling their flight vectors in unknown directions  
 sine curves in three dimensions  
 I don't see if the pigeons are rising from the channel confluences  
 on the way across the conjunction  
 no flocking pigeons but instead a lined up squadron  
 all on the concrete rail with imitation balustrades  
 the same cloud of pigeons over the aqueducts;  
 realize I pass by almost without exception two minutes before sunrise  
 flock of pigeons wheeling  
 and in a kind of ascending and descending figure 8 at angles  
 as when a coin is spinning and is close to stopping flat  
 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  
 not dark but not sunrise, more in between than usual  
 and the pigeons aren't there on the balustrade nor wheeling in their weird flight

\*

### **parrots (1)**

ill ease in flight out in the open  
 hahamongna  
 in a flock  
 frantic sounds  
 their shapes in air  
 flap; feeling of flailing

\*

### **mourning doves (1)**

on wires strung along the telephone poles, two  
 each to their own section  
 hooting above my inner courtyard  
 echoing and from above  
 sing some while later about their howling

—Rachel

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### **Paraíso**

From here, the paradise mimics the willow  
 low branches hang down like embarrassed arms.  
 Between the paradise and you: no man's land  
 pregnancy a purgatory an eden graves  
 grey clouds muted sounds echoes sighs and murmurs  
 the flames here and there on a dry landscape



the fine down of a body that suffers cold  
the harvest of hearts a line in the dirt the door.  
You wish for a wall to keep you away but  
the thing about a wall is : who is going to pay for it?

\*

### **The Seventh Day**

No ides come in January  
so we are spared the middles of things  
we grit our teeth as ambulances pass  
and wake up at the end of the month  
buds push up from soil even as famous people begin dying  
everything is silver with water  
the gutter a bed of yellow leaves  
the arroyo brown with runoff  
a scrubjay shakes and sings in the stone bowl  
we are relieved when there are no phone calls,  
when the jasmine keeps climbing  
but we understand  
January has come but not gone.

—Rocío

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