

Series Editors' Preface

Of Sara Lupita Olivares's *Migratory Sound*, series judge Roberto Tejada writes:

This is a rare, evocative, and haunting book. For its sparse song of indwelling in landscapes of austerity; for its understanding of description as a function subordinate to wakefulness of mind, for its process of perception that splits the difference between animal and oblivion, habit and habitat, doubt and debt—I found myself returning again and again to its atmospheric method of knowing; to its structure of restraint and elegance.

You will notice the book is full of traces, of the faint vestige of something removed. Whether enacting a bird migration, or the uprooting of people relocating north, or the private movement from sleep to alert vigilance, Olivares's stark poetry concerns the precarious idea of place and its underlying "unplace." She makes evident how every place bears a relationship with an elsewhere, an *over there* sometimes situated underneath: "in the field there is another field chewed down / until motionless. how the private disfigures / the external." Her spare poems unsettle with murmurs, hisses, and chirps.

Olivares offers a poetry resonant with that of the Argentinian poet Alejandra Pizarnik. There is a nebulous weather inside the intellect at work here, heavy with motion, the way clouds shift and churn, an intellect with the ardor for abstraction swiftly cut by the sharp edge of an image, in the manner of an airplane descending through the overcast. As in Pizarnik's work, what burdens these poems into being is the need to communicate with the language of "a broken jaw / reassembled"; the poems in these pages are "giving sun / its gold torn speak."

It is then fitting that *Migratory Sound* begins at night when darkness charges the landscape, recasting what was familiar in the daylight into something more peculiar: "dead animals on / the road begin to change the way color dims / you from a place." Such

estrangements span the length of Olivares's work, whose speaker commands your attention, though not with a loud, formidable voice, but with a hushed timbre that you will find yourself leaning in to hear. Listening itself becomes a mode of travel through the work; the poems assemble into soundscapes wherein the reader encounters many animal noises: "it is not a mistake when the rustling quiets and then stops. the animal remains / hidden." Even the poet's name stays obscured in plain sight: "*lupita* meaning little wolf."

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