

Of Form & Gather**Felicia Zamora****Publication Date**

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poems

of



form

&



gather



FELICIA ZAMORA

*of
form
&
gather*

THE ANDRÉS MONTOYA POETRY PRIZE

2004, *Pity the Drowned Horses*, Sheryl Luna
Final Judge: Robert Vasquez

2006, *The Outer Bands*, Gabriel Gomez
Final Judge: Valerie Martínez

2008, *My Kill Adore Him*, Paul Martínez Pompa
Final Judge: Martín Espada

2010, *Tropicalia*, Emma Trelles
Final Judge: Silvia Curbelo

2012, *A Tongue in the Mouth of the Dying*, Laurie Ann Guerrero
Final Judge: Francisco X. Alarcón

2014, *Furious Dusk*, David Campos
Final Judge: Rhina P. Espailat

2016, *Of Form & Gather*, Felicia Zamora
Final Judge: Edwin Torres

The Andrés Montoya Poetry Prize, named after the late California native and author of the award-winning book, *The Iceworker Sings*, supports the publication of a first book by a Latino or Latina poet. Awarded every other year, the prize is administered by Letras Latinas—the literary program of the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame.

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&
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FELICIA ZAMORA

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for Chris . . . as always, you know why

The growing presence of the butterfly in her
Does not fill her with fear. . . .

And this world inside another, larger cocoon.
—Aleš Šteger, *The Book of Things*

All day long I feel created.
—Annie Dillard, *Holy the Firm*

We value that droning inner voice. . . .

—I cannot see.
What ascension
in things? I ask

—Sally Keith, *design*

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The Adirondack Review, “Distinct Separation Felt”

BOMB, “The America Gap”

The Burnside Review, “Sower”

The Cincinnati Review, “In tuck”

Columbia Poetry Review, “In extant” and “This lure”

Cutbank Literary Journal, “In still”

Hotel Amerika, “This tug” and “Of ghosts”

Indiana Review, “Decoy”

Juked, “Book of the Robin in the Bird: II. Primitave Streak”

Meridian, “& in wonder too”

Notre Dame Review, “Same river”

Phoebe, “No Fisher”

Pleiades, “Book of the Robin in the Bird: VI. Allantois dries—
the chick uses her own lungs”

Poetry Northwest, “Continuous Non-Replication”

Salt Hill, “Con-Form”

Third Coast, “In fasten-nation”

TriQuarterly, “In practice” and “Fallible Roundness”

West Branch, “Not not” and “In outline”

Witness, “In middle with other,” “O for Passage,” and
“Peel-Back”

The following poems were first published in a chapbook-length publication in *Verse* as winner of the 2015 Tomaž Šalamun Prize:

“Where you find yourself”

“Physics of where we stand”

“To know little”

“In patterns”

“In the breast of”

“Drift”

“To begin”

“& wings made of matchsticks”

Thank-you to Letras Latinas at the University of Notre Dame’s Institute for Latino Studies for creating and supporting Latinos in poetry with the Andrés Montoya Poetry Prize. Thank-you to the University of Notre Dame Press.

I am forever grateful to Edwin Torres for selecting my manuscript and allowing these poems a chance to speak to the world. I am honored.

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Deepest appreciation to my partner, friend, and confidant, Chris. You hear my poems over and over again with honest patience. Your unwavering advocacy for my poetic life and your love keeps all this alive. You are my person, my love, and my inspiration.

Introduction to the Poems

With its measured and continual revelation, Felicia Zamora has crafted a work that celebrates form as human evolution—the poem’s breath, the poet’s body—passing over time in a landscape thirsty for passage.

In *Of Form & Gather*, poems become choral assemblages to their proximity, tuned into the maker’s spirit as coiled out from unhurried interactions with ancestral zygotes. Where does identity invoke place over silence—intimate implications of nuance, trust in the reader’s ability to move in concert with the writer’s soul? If even a fraction of beyond-space is gleaned by possibility, the maker’s job is done. If one could imagine what awaits between where one could go and why one has remained, would that bring us to a finite completion—a cyclic undercarriage of removal in the language remaining?

Zamora’s reminder is to affect each part of the poem by implementing a profoundly gentle humanity that connects to the shifting external across borders, continuously returning to invention with a charge to the “think,” a dare to the heart, that allows movement in the ubiquity of silence. In a sort of volcanic empathy with spirits invoked by the sling of creation across centuries borrowed and replanted. A poem’s burden is to live inside its creation, where the organized singularity of its gathering is what brings the reader to the reader’s own voice.

We are a culture redefined when we step into the culture that defines us—to expose its incomparable reach with the breath that moves us, with our body’s volumetric rhythms shifting among our human matter. To own that geo-shift, to bring about *other as in*, to affect change by knowing that change needs to happen beneath layers of cognition, underneath our organized paradigms.

This is quietly revolutionary work that throws a gauntlet to the social diaspora. A living palimpsest to newly awaken our social engagement by breathing in a simultaneity of opposing forces—as tectonic plates of hearing that create fissures inside the unfolding kinetic.

If my job is to shepherd the reader through new terrain, let me introduce you to the lungs between the lines—the breathing of an object formed as one continuous vertebration—page to page, word to other. My obligation is to get out of my own way, to allow the work in its bio-syntactic intensity to speak quietly, without introduction or promise.

So I'll leave you with this: the ability to chart your course through your own questions is a human trait that you have the obligation to nurture. To wondrously allow your capacity for travel and enlarge your perception of a world continuously expanding, in whatever direction you choose. Read this work, look about you, and take a breath. We don't often have moments that bore deep and give back. Thank-you, Felicia, for giving us that opening.

—Edwin Torres,
Judge

circles

&

circulations

Where you find yourself

Droplets decorate the pane; what clouds
carry, storm in their chests; disobedient sky
rotates axis into light; east's promise of
dusk & muddles of middle

bide time in our retinas, make us

afford fleeting; strip you of garden, of plot
of ability to *plant* anything; your hands in
wet soil, womb of; say *seed*; say *connection gifts*
you—something heals

in the dark, in knowing the bright departs
& returns, brings lightening you cup your
hands to ears for. One fallen petal ebbs
ina puddle between showers. *Do you feel*
lapping? On your back

you see mirrors above, see mirrors below.

To know little

Behind partitions, where work unfolds you
desire *soul* here, yet frontal lobe pushes the
idea back. How itemized in our colloquial
manner/isms

as if brick and fluorescents remind our

bodies of anything other than *made made
made*. When thunder mystified & rainbows
schemed about us. Our minds patient &
moment laden

swanling deceived: separate from water.
The fowl innately feels flight, takes a mate
& swims with the same bill, same plumage
day after day

to carry a wingspan, folded on the lake.

Distinct Separation Felt

Roots of this cottonwood surface the ground & mimic trunk's stretch to sky; how we all in/out of something; how we all hint *hint hint*; when you say *firmament* you mean *vault of*; & heaven is a semicolon; aren't we all in distinct separation felt between clauses? Insert your mental picture of what lives in your heaven here _____; dash looms so awkward & watchful; it's the *watch* that makes it all so full. & in the full-full we reach for: unbreathable dark behind the blue; in utero first we gulp liquid; we of oxygen, reacquaint; space of us; quickly, we long to press our footprint; the dying stars laugh; the dead stars heavy & silent, long to laugh at the dying; & so this witness goes out & out; think *pebble in pond*; think *no no no*; think *all caterpillars contain a butterfly or moth*; think *you in a ball in float of space*; think *what powers you now*; & what do we really know about makers & un-doers? The caterpillar rolls into a ball; already cocoon & soar sewn inside.

About the Author



Photo by Joe Zamora

Felicia Zamora won the 2015 Tomaž Šalamun Prize from *Verse* and authored the chapbooks *Imbibe {et alia} here* (2016) and *Moby Dick Made Me Do It* (2010). Her published works may be found or forthcoming in *The Adirondack Review*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, *Crazyhorse*, *Hotel Amerika*, *Indiana Review*, *Meridian*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *The New Guard*, *The Normal School*, *North American Review*, *Phoebe*, *Pleiades*, *Poetry Daily*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Tarpaulin Sky Magazine*, *TriQuarterly*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Verse Daily*, *West Branch*, *Witness*, and others. She is an associate poetry editor for the *Colorado Review* and holds an MFA in creative writing from Colorado State University. She lives in Colorado with her partner, Chris, and their two dogs, Howser and Lorca.