

# Maryam Parhizkar, Three Books and a Poem

01/04

Having in mind many great publications that, since the pandemic began in March 2020, have not had a chance to circulate in usual ways, I put the following prompt to an array of heavy readers: List three poetry books that stood out. Define “poetry book” as broadly as possible. Define “stand out” not at all. Choose one poem from any of these books and write one hundred words about it – a brief annotation, recommendation, question, observation. Six responded with these soundings. e-flux journal has also reprinted each of the poems the contributors chose to write about. We thank the writers and their publishers for permission to do so.

– Simone White

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Lara Mimosa Montes – *Thresholds* (Coffee House Press, 2020)  
Lucia Estrada – *Katabasis*, translated by Olivia Lott (Eulalia Books, 2021)  
Kevin Latimer – *Zoetrope* (Grieveland, 2020)

## On *Thresholds* by Lara Mimosa Montes

In *Thresholds*, Lara Mimosa Montes writes: “Consciousness floated away. I could not catch up. / o / That’s what makes it narrative.” I am struck by this line, an articulation of what an account of the self can be after loss, losses, in a book that embodies a poetics of uncertainty. If the self has been punctured, seeking an impossible cohesion, what form can articulation take? One of studious gathering, punctuated, literally, by the gaps: accounts, citations, annotations on Bronx artists and their art, memories that cannot be fully written, observations of/from a changing body. Montes again: “Everything we need to live we carry inside; everything we need is already in us to write.”

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Today I spoke to S. not of the eagles, but of experience.

o

How can one speak of the present when one feels abandoned by it?

o

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A paragraph is a time and place, not a syntactic unit. (Lyn Hejinian)

○

I said what I needed was not love, but permission.

○

Carrot, cashew, turmeric;

○

In memory, it transforms.

○

We had arrived at the right street, wrong address.

○

Consciousness floated away. I could not catch up.

○

That's what makes it narrative.

○

It's not that I was breathed into. It was that *I lived*.

○

What we once were, I should never have devalued it.

○

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When does one acquire a language?

○

Is it through repetition, bombardment, or experience?

○

*Whether or not* introduces a condition and its opposite.

○

When I think of the Bronx, I think of language coming apart, always before me, threshing; Undone.

○

Insofar as I was aimless, "I" was stranded between two sentences.

○

It was as if I had been scored somewhere below the surface

○

And subject to the order in which things reveal themselves;

○

Despite the style of their movements, their English a chorus.

○

“Let the energy do its work.” I am trying to listen

○

To a particular kind of music to confirm that I am.

○

And then we exchanged particles. Electrons leapt.

○

Deconstructing the present is and is not an addiction.

○

Without enough sun, the leaves on the lime tree curl.

○

We don't have to come back. We don't have to know who we are.

○

We don't have to see ourselves reflected in the orb.

○

And if I cannot inhabit an idealess world?

○

I can absent myself from the weblike forms;

03/04

○

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○

After I returned, I saw the plants had grown

○

[justify]When I say I had this sensation of S. welding the parts, I am trying to communicate that in me, and in us, something was becoming fused where it had once been torn. When heat was applied along the body's fault lines, plates that were broken began to realign and the beautiful blueness of the world broke through. And S. would remark, “We went somewhere we never went before.”

○

In my arms, the amplification.

○

The fossil self. Its derivatives.

○

To have delivered to you in person that tiger balm.

○

Months had passed. I could think of nothing but love.

○

Months had passed. I could think of nothing but loss.

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Everything we need to live we carry inside;  
everything we need is already in us to write.

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○

So I saw my cruelty as if from the outside,  
and thought of the photographer Dora  
Maar.

○

But remember – whatever the technique, it  
must serve the form as a whole (Maya  
Deren)

○

○

○

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This excerpt appears by permission from *Thresholds* (Coffee House Press, 2022), 67–72. Copyright © by Lara Mimosá Montes.

**Maryam Ivette Parhizkar's** most recent chapbook is *Somewhere Else the Sun is Falling into Someone's Eyes* (Belladonna\*, 2019). She is a poet, scholar, graduate student worker, and member of the US Central American collective Tierra Narrative.

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