

*streams of dragonflies**

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An artist friend asks another friend, a writer, to begin the commissioned text for her exhibition with these words: 'We don't know everything about these pieces.'¹

Starting to walk through an unfamiliar landscape with your eyes closed has its risks. But once you know there is no danger, and you can walk barefoot, colors begin to bloom behind your eyelids and scents fill the air. That is how I wrote these lines, by pairing the works of Elena Damiani, Cristina Flores Pescorán, Sandra Gamarra Heshiki, Ximena Garrido Lecca, María José Murillo, Rita Ponce de León, and Elena Tejada-Herrera with fragments from women writers drawn from various literary and academic contexts.

The people who write history are closer than you think. Some will agree to speak with you, and they may carry their own agendas. But a pattern? Perhaps only regarding rhythm: prepositions are delicate things, or rather, points of inflection, the intimacy of "with" instead of the military strategy of "over."²

The day begins to fade, and small candles flicker among the crowd. I step aside to watch a group of female students pass. The slow tempo of their chants, braided with the light of dusk, fills me with a deep sadness mixed with strength, a certainty that this is exactly where I need to be right now.³

The exhilaration and frustration of politics, of engaging with power, can never be reduced to the warm glow of a peaceful nursery.⁴ She resists idealizing or sentimentalizing politics. For her, conflict and struggle are not only inevitable but desirable.⁵

She hated her theory and singing classes. One day she had enough. "I'm not going," she said. "Yes, you are," replied my mother. "No, I'm not." I knew I was courting disaster, but like a dragonfly drawn to a light until it breaks its neck, I couldn't stop myself. My father warned me that if I skipped class, he would tear up all my magazines. I looked at him and said, "Tear them up, 'm not going." He went to my room, emptied the nightstand, and shredded them. Every one. Almost nothing survived. But that day I didn't go to class, and as I glued the pages back together, I felt a strange, exquisite pride. I had said no, and I had won.⁶

To meet someone, and to be truly known, brings with it a dangerous inconvenience: the intrusion of another into your fantasy of a coherent self.⁷

So she told the truth: "I don't really like watching my daughter sew." When she reads, she comes back with flushed cheeks. But when she sews, she falls silent for hours, her lips pressed tightly together, hiding the large incisors that usually sink into the tender heart of fruit. She remains silent, and why not write the word that frightens me? She is thinking.⁸

– Gabriela Zé

* Quotes or paraphrases from: 1) Rita Ponce de León; 2) Lauren Berlant y Kathleen Stewart, *The Hundreds*, 2019; 3) Nadia Lartigue Zaslavsky, *Se me hace que ahí viene la creciente* (I think the tide is coming in.), 2022; 4) Wendy Brown, *Manhood and politics*, 1988; 5) Hannah F. Pitkin commenting on a book by Wendy Brown, 1999; 6) Leila Guerriero, *El no es un peligro vivo* (He is not a living danger), 2005; 7) Erin Maglaque on Lauren Berlant, 2023; 8) Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette, *Earthly Paradise*, 1953. El modelo para la composición de este texto fue *Los Argonautas* (The model for the composition of this text was *The Argonauts.*), de Maggie Nelson, 2015.