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# NOW IN COLOR

WINNER OF THE 2020 PERUGIA PRESS PRIZE

BY JACQUELINE BALDERRAMA

*Now in Color* explores the multigenerational immigrant experience of Mexican-Americans who have escaped violence, faced pressures to assimilate, and now seek to reconnect to a fragmented past. These poems illuminate the fluidity of language and of perception through both small hypocrisies and real atrocities. One of Balderrama's strategies is to use the development of motion pictures and Technicolor as a lens through which to examine personal and cultural histories and stereotypes. She also considers bilingual expectations through an innovative series of Spanish definition poems. Balderrama documents pieces of her family's oral tradition and draws connections to ongoing injustices experienced by current migrant families, offering a living picture of a present inevitably tied to and colored by its past. Through the poetics of witness, ekphrasis, portraiture, and family mythos, *Now in Color* deepens our understanding of hybrid identities and calls attention to those impacted by tensions along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Poet Laureate of the United States Juan Felipe Herrera says, "For Jacqueline Balderrama, identity is an 'accounted nothingness.' It is an unrecovered reel of the two sides of Rita Hayworth: one, a long-name Hispanic, the other, a silver-screen ether. It is a Mobius double-sided ribbon of family remembrances, borderland maps, suffering treks across the blistering earth, and a text to 'collect what is scattered.' Enter Picasso's circus scenes, Kahlo's ripped chest dangling, Varo's multi-dimensional floating woman, Monet's crumbling fertile bridge, da Vinci's moon ocean. This is the real-to-unreal figure, the lost movie, the outsider's invitation to escape together into her Technicolor vortex of fractured meditations and, most of all, her art of becoming. *Now in Color* is wild and radical in form, iridescent in blood and genre."

Jacqueline Balderrama lives and teaches in Salt Lake City, where she is a doctoral candidate in literature and creative writing at the University of Utah. She is the author of the chapbook *Nectar and Small* (Finishing Line Press, 2019) and a poetry editor for *Iron City Magazine* and *Quarterly West*. Balderrama has been involved in the Letras Latinas literary initiative, the ASU Prison Education Program, and the Wasatch Writers in the Schools.

The Perugia Press Prize is a national award for first or second full-length books of poetry by women. The 2020 winner, *Now in Color*, was chosen from more than 475 submissions.

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