

Learning To Feel My Own Wildness

BY LAURA LARRIVA

Featured image: Danila-Neroznak

The crows are constant companions here on fourth street. They love the large New Zealand Christmas Tree in my front yard, as they love the telephone pole and the great Bermuda palm that knows no end to vertical. The family of squirrels that dart up and down in displays of unwavering courage remain indifferent to their raucous crepuscular cawing...their constant crowding and bullying. The Malaysian Figs that line the street of my Los Angeles neighborhood have grown so tall that their branches reach over the black swath of pavement we call a road to touch each other with tenderness. Hummingbirds buzz about the Lemon Bottlebrushes, and last spring I had a long conversation with a Merlin Hawk just around the corner. The first one I'd ever met.

Turns out we're neighbors.

People ask me how it is to live in a city that does not have four seasons...those people have not walked the beach in the fall, when the coastline becomes a global migratory seabird summit. Little tufted gulls and skipping sandpipers dodge engorged pelicans and the occasional jet black raven...all gabbing, and feasting on seaweed and sandflies, fish, and jellies.

They have not been swept away by the utter brilliance of the lilac Jacarandas in full bloom in April, nor, do I imagine, have they stood under them when an offshore wind picks up, to dance in purple-scented flower showers.

They have perhaps not paid attention to the way the light

bends in the winter, diffuse and heavy to the ground, and so entirely unlike the sharp crack of summer's shine.

I love it when the fog comes in at dawn when inland begins to broil. Just a few of us are out then; the dog walkers and the surfers running barefoot towards their beloved, and the Bottlenose dolphins that coast lazily along the shore, visible at times through the great tunnels of water that remind all of us just how untamable the Pacific really is, despite our manicured beaches and imported sand.

Just yesterday a Pygmy Owl, chased by those damn crows again, knocked herself out cold on my window. I wept and sang to her until she roused to touch me with her large yellow eyes. Embarrassed – but not without gratitude, she flew on, and I too felt renewed and alive.

The earth beneath reminds me how to pray. Her rumblings gentle my heart... though it took me awhile to open to the staggering presence of earth here; to stop saving up my awe, and wonder for less inhabited landscapes. I had to learn to let this place into me – the Verbena and the possums, and the little caterpillars that eat my Bougainvillea... just as I have had to learn how to feel my own wildness; to let that one of me touch the world I have created for myself... to let her break my aloneness.

Sometimes at night I wake up hot and tangled and go to window to press my ear against the screen. The Pygmy owl is there, and the possum. The waves crash in the moonlit distance, always louder than I expect. These moments in my stillness and my mess when I just sit and breathe and feel, I know... we're not so different.

Even here – especially here...we belong to each other.

For more self-study, [The Urban Howl](#) recommends [Llewellyn's 2016 Moon Sign Book: Conscious Living by the Cycles of the Moon \(Llewellyn's Moon Sign Books\)](#) .

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