

AURORA LEVINS MORALES

OFFERINGS

2014-2015

READINGS & LECTURES

Dr. Levins Morales speaks on a wide range of topics, often combining selections from her poetry and prose writing with lectures and audience interaction. While she is deeply knowledgeable on specific subjects, what she brings to any topic she speaks on is her unique and empowering perspective: her rich blend of historical depth and global reach, sharply radical insight and intimately personal storytelling. Below are some of the issues she's currently thinking and writing about, followed by specific bodies of writing she is currently reading from. She also available for keynotes and lectures on topics not mentioned here, so feel free to contact her.

LECTURE/DISCUSSIONS

VEHICLE FOR CHANGE: ENVIRONMENTAL ILLNESS, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DESIGN

Growing reactivity to environmental toxins forced Aurora Levins Morales in homelessness, so she began designing a non-toxic, sustainable mobile home as a shelter, means of safe travel and organizing tool. Arguing that accessibility and sustainability are inextricably linked, Aurora Levins Morales talks about her Vehicle for Change project and the realities that require real universal design to be planetary design.

THE NATURE OF JUSTICE: ECOLOGY, DISABILITY AND HEALTH

The story of our bodies is also the story of our planet: destruction of ecosystems, the poisoning of water, air and soil, the release into our atmosphere of tens of thousands of new molecules our immune systems weren't made to handle, all contribute to a public health crisis of terminal and chronic illnesses. But we're told that our risk factors for cancer have to do with genetics and lifestyle, not pesticides,

military bases and factories. Moving between the personal and the global, Dr. Levins Morales challenges the separation of individual and planetary health, connecting chemical warfare and epilepsy, colonialism and cancer, deforestation and Lyme disease, racism and diabetes, and calling for a unified, social justice based approach to global health.

21ST CENTURY FEMINISM: A TOOLKIT

“I’ve been an active feminist since I joined the Chicago Women’s Liberation Union at 15, have participated in many movements, and fought many battles. I bring my perspectives as a Latin American colonial subject, a US Puerto Rican woman, an immigrant, an artist, a single mother, someone who is queer, disabled, chronically ill, ecologically minded, historically conscious and an internationalist from the heart. I have a lot to say.”

HISTERIMONIA: ENDING SEXUAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL VIOLENCE

In a personal and global act of witnessing, Aurora Levins Morales talks about her own experience as a sexually trafficked child, linking her story to that of her country, Puerto Rico, sexual and environmental violence as tools of domination and the power of an ecological ethical code to repair the torn web of universal kinship.

POETRY AND POLITICS

Aurora Levins Morales speaks about the importance of art and story telling in social justice organizing, and shares stories and writings from her forty-five years as an activist artist.

TRAUMA AND LIBERATION: A SOCIAL JUSTICE PERSPECTIVE ON HEALING

Dr. Levins Morales has been writing about trauma and social justice for decades. Her 1998 book *Medicine Stories* has inspired several generations of activists and is a foundational text of the healing justice movement. Herself a survivor of childhood sexual trafficking she speaks powerfully and movingly about the connections between individual and collective violence, trauma and healing.

READINGS

KINDLING: WRITINGS ON THE BODY

This new collection of poetry and prose explores the body as a site of pleasure, pain and political struggle. Disabled and chronically ill writer, historian and activist Aurora Levins Morales writes about epilepsy and stroke, the social control of dark skinned women's sexuality and the erotics of chronic fatigue, epigenetics and healing justice, community based science and what it's like to get health care in Cuba.

"Aurora's writing is itself a kind of alchemy, balancing emotional nuance with rich historical context, simultaneously speaking in an intimate, personal voice and for a collective we. She offers us vulnerable, power-filled lyricism that moves the audience to new understandings of their own lives, as she claims her body's pleasure and pain." Patty Berne, Co-founder and Artistic Director, *Sins Invalid*

COSECHA AND OTHER STORIES/ GETTING HOME ALIVE: A 45 YEAR MOTHER-DAUGHTER COLLABORATION

When *Getting Home Alive* was published in 1986, there were only a handful of books about US Puerto Rican women. The book broke new ground in its content, its form and the identities of its authors, a US born mother and her island born daughter. "We mixed poetry, prose poems and memoir in a creative disorder, a collage of genres. We rejected simplistic nationalism, embracing the complexity of loving and criticizing two countries. We celebrated the identity and culture of the diaspora at the same time that we spoke out against the racism that saturates everything, against the pressures of assimilation and the almost impenetrable cold of the cult of individualism. We celebrated our love for the island of our roots, with nostalgia but without romanticism, speaking out also against virulent sexism, against all that colonialism has done to us, against the mythology of the Boricua paradise, cultivated from afar." *Cosecha*, available in May, 2014, is the long awaited sequel to *Getting Home Alive*, a collection of stories, fictional and factual, about love, loss, radicalism, identity, and renewal.

REMEDIOS: A POETIC HISTORY OF PUERTO RICAN WOMAN AND OUR KIN

Published in 1998, *Remedios* is a unique and richly woven account of the history of the Atlantic world, told through the lives of Puerto Rican women, beginning with our ancestors in Africa, the Americas, Europe and the Middle East. In short vignettes in a myriad of human voices mingle with those of medicinal plants, charting a course of resistance and healing across the centuries. Anthropologist Ruth Behar writes, "There is no other book like Remedios. It is history, anthropology, poetry and myth; it is a song and a prayer."

POET ON ASSIGNMENT: ANTIWAR POETRY

On September 11, 2001, Aurora Levins Morales was at the Norcroft women's writing retreat in northern Minnesota. When she heard the news, she wrote a 2500 word poem called "Shema." She read it on Pacifica radio and it quickly spread by Internet and word of mouth, to be read at numerous antiwar rallies in dozens of cities. As a result, she was hired to write poetry commentaries on the news for Pacifica's Flashpoints news and analysis program. Her job title, "poet on assignment," is also the title of her forthcoming collection of radio poems, written and broadcast during the years immediately following 9/11, and including more recent activist poetry.

NEW WORKS

Aurora Levins Morales talks about her process as a writer and reads new and mostly unpublished poetry and prose.