

NEWS

REYNA GRANDE

IMMIGRATION, MIGRATION AND TRANSITION

Immigration. Most of us have a politically charged idea of the word in our heads and proclaim our opinion of it with confidence over a few beers with friends. Many of us have experienced immigration or have parents who made the sacrifice for us.

When it comes down to it, though, the question about immigration is: Whose stories are you listening to?

On May 6-8, the UO will be hosting the fifth annual CSWS Northwest Women Writers Symposium. This year's theme is "Crossing Borders: Women's Stories of Immigration, Migration and Transition."

The topics at hand brought Reyna Grande to the table. Grande, winner of the American Book Award and author of the memoir *The Distance Between Us* (available in Spanish and English), began writing in middle school after growing up as a child whose parents migrated to the U.S. from Mexico. "If we're not a part of the story," Grande says, "then we get erased."

Grande says she found herself between two worlds when she began to write. On one hand, she struggled with

being a Spanish-speaking woman in the United States, but the more she learned English and assimilated into U.S. culture, the more she was treated like an outsider in Mexico.

Grande's experience is a common one, though the multi-layered stories of immigrants (or children of) are rarely heard. To encourage more balanced, open conversations about immigration, "I try to humanize the issue," she says. "I think it's important to always keep in mind that we're talking about human beings. They need to be talked about."

Joining Grande at CSWS is a handful of other women who share pieces of their own tales of crossing borders. Ana-Maurine Lara, born in the Dominican Republic and raised in East Africa and New York City, has been engaged with LGBT and migrant communities around the U.S. through performance arts and writing. Lara spends time getting to know the area she performs in and opens conversations within that community, and this year, she will be hosting a poetry workshop at CSWS.

Peeling open another layer of border-crossing, Ariel Gore will be on the symposium's lineup with a memoir workshop titled "Traveling Through the Landscape of Our Lives: Going Beyond Gendered Traditions." Gore started *Hip Mama*, a magazine largely credited for sparking maternal feminism and the contemporary mothers' movement.

Novelists Miriam Gershow (*The Local News*) and Chris Scofield (*The Shark Curtain*), along with a handful of other writers, will be hosting their own workshops, and Zapotec hip-hop artist Mare Advertencia Lirika will be performing.

Grande will deliver her keynote talk 6 pm Friday, May 6, at the Eugene Public Library during First Friday ArtWalk downtown and will have a seat in a panel discussion earlier that day at 1 pm in UO's Knight Library Browsing Room. The workshops will be held May 7 and are free, but space will be limited.

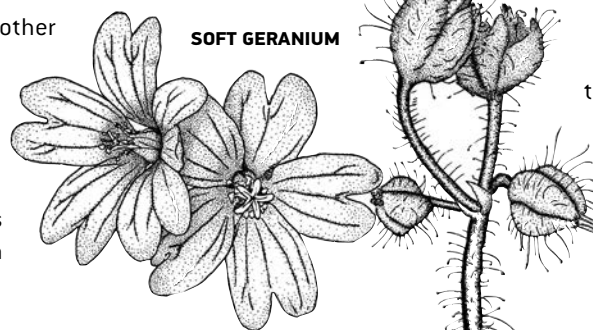
Pre-register for events by calling Eugene Library at 541-682-5450. For event details and the full schedule, visit csws.uoregon.edu/events-2. — Kelsey Anne Rankin

IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER

The leaves of the cottonwood trees are now all expanded. The crown is full and gradually changing shades from a bright spring green to a tough, dark summer green. The heron nests I have been following seem to be doing well. They are now hard to see in the foliage; careful binocular study was necessary to be absolutely sure the four nests are still in place. The leaf cover doesn't allow me to see much activity in the nest. I just have to imagine nestlings having their fish dinners delivered on a proper schedule.

Ducklings and goslings, on the other hand, are now visible and prominent in the Delta Ponds. Watching them swim around, tended by their watchful parents, is a great way to spend a sunny afternoon. It makes me think that Mother's Day in May is a natural celebration of all nature.



SOFT GERANIUM

Mother's Day comes early this year, which means that the following weekend's Wildflower Festival at the Mount Pisgah Arboretum is a little early. The wildflower show is a great place to review one's knowledge about our spring flora. Every wildflower in bloom in Lane County will be on display.

Many of the wildflowers are introduced species brought in by settlers. A recent one at Mount Pisgah is the shining geranium. There has been considerable concern expressed about its sudden invasion. Eradication has to be impossible. We will get used to it as we did the soft geranium, which has been in our gardens for a century.

David Wagner is a botanist who works in Eugene. He teaches moss classes, leads nature walks and makes nature calendars. Contact him directly at fernzen-mosses@me.com.