

**ALEIDA
RODRÍGUEZ**

Elysian
Twilight

Thirty seconds later, head bowed to sudsy water,
and I would've missed it.
The pale mauve stain that seeps up from the hem of the hill
like spilled rosé would have evaporated
and I would've seen only evening's indigo dress rent with stars.
But something makes me look up from twenty-seven years
at the same sink and catch daytime's ordinary pine
shedding its quotidian pretense,
entering left with a dark cloak and serrated eyebrows.
At right, the ineptly pruned cottonwood's few emergent leaves
fill into a gown in the fading light
and it glides in, holding up a gloved hand.
Twilight, the dance these trees have begun between them,
hovers at the edge of taking form—or losing form?—
becoming the evanescent portrait between the vases.
The serpentine jewels of the Baxter Stairs
dangle from its darkening throat.
A shadow mockingbird streaks to the highest spot to release its song.

Aleida Rodríguez is a poet, essayist, and artist born on a kitchen table in a rural town south of Havana, Cuba. Her first book of poems, *Garden of Exile*, won both the Kathryn A. Morton Prize in Poetry and the PEN Center USA Literary Award, and was also chosen one of the Best Books of the Year by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. She has received an NEA fellowship and lives in a historic house on Red Hill in Los Angeles, where she conducts workshops.

MARI KLOEPPEL

Kingfisher, 2012
Oil on Linen, 14 x 14 in



courtesy: the artist