

Lady Rojas Benavente – launch of *Water Star / Estrella de agua*

November 20, 2017 at 6:30 pm, Union des écrivaines et des écrivains québécois, UNEQ, 3492 Laval Avenue, Montreal

Opening Remarks by Cora Siré

Thank you all so much for joining us tonight! Thank you to l'UNEQ for hosting us here in the iconic space that is la Maison des écrivains!

It's an honour for me to be reading with Lady Rojas Benavente as she launches *Water Star*, her new collection of poems in Spanish and English published by Antares.

Lady Rojas is an inspiration to many of us, for her dedication to poetry and her determination to give voice to questions of identity and belonging.

In her opening remarks, Lady Rojas traced the origins of her poetry to her childhood in Peru and her parents' commitment to her physical and spiritual well-being. Music has always been an important part of her life. Her Mama Celita would sing to her all the time – even tangos from Argentina as lullabies – songs that Lady Rojas now sings to her grandchildren, Léonard and Victoria.

The poems in *Water Star* have also been nourished by her encounters with creative souls whose music and poetry have been a source of inspiration – including many of you: her family, friends, colleagues and students. She remains very grateful for your support.

Special thanks are extended to Sophie Lavoie, professor at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, who directed the translation from Spanish to English, and edited the poems in *Water Star*.

We are also deeply grateful to Hugh Hazelton for his presence tonight. Hugh is a distinguished poet and translator, an honoured professor and a long-time colleague of Lady Rojas at Concordia University.

Poems from *Water Star*

“To my lover” (page 7)

“Quebec in Three Movements” (page 26)

“And who is she?” (page 31)

“Sweet little grandma Flora” (page 39)