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## COUNT

VALERIE MARTÍNEZ

*A poetic reckoning with climate change  
and an urgent call to action*

*Count* is a powerful book-length poem that reckons with the heartbreaking reality of climate change. Forty-three sections of myth-gathering, flora and fauna, accounts of climate devastation, personal narratives, witnessing, references to works of eco-art, and evocations of children unfold over the course of the book, creating a deeply nuanced image of the current climate crisis. Central to this vital work of ecopoetry is the idea of counting—counting down to the extinction of a species, counting the wonders of the natural world, counting our way back to the balance that is required to save ourselves from climate destruction. Filled with a sense of grief and sorrow for the current state of the planet, *Count* also offers a glimmering hope that future generations will restore our damaged environment.

With sections that vary between poetry, science, Indigenous storytelling, numerical measurement, and narration, Valerie Martínez's new work results in an epic panorama infused with the timely urgency of facing an apocalyptic future. This beautiful, tragic, and unusual poem is a testimonial, a warning, and a call to action that will captivate lovers of contemporary poetry and ecopoetry, environmentalists, and climate activists alike. *Count* skillfully calls on our collective desire to leave a livable world, filled with the potential for healing, as a legacy to the generations of children that come after us.

VALERIE MARTÍNEZ is the author of six books of poetry, including two from the University of Arizona Press, *Each and Her* and *World to World*. Her award-winning poetry has been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, William Carlos Williams Award, National Book Critics Circle Award, and PEN Open Book Award, and it received an honorable mention in the 2011 International Latino Book Awards.

*"I cannot think of a timelier book than Count. And I wouldn't trust such a book from a poet who's not as attuned as Valerie Martínez to the urgencies of environmental issues and their inextricable bond to social justice. Martínez has shaped a poetics that weaves the ecological with the mythical with the personal."*

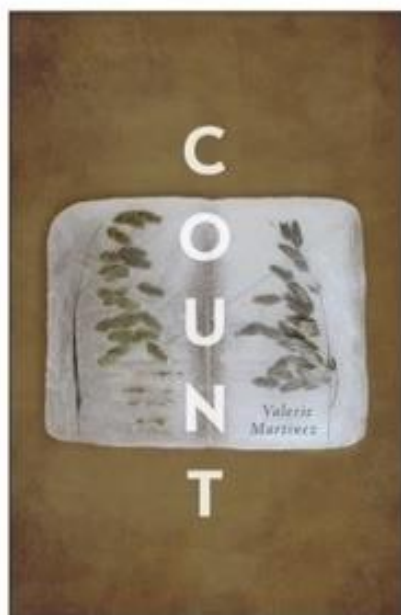
—Rigoberto González, Camino del Sol Series Editor

*"Count is forty-three poems written in couplets, poems full of water and also full of the act of counting. It is also a book that stuns with its attentions and its wisdoms as Valerie Martínez captures so much that is beautiful in this world, as she notices so much that is at risk."*

—Juliana Spahr, author of *That Winter The Wolf Came*

[www.valeriemartinez.net](http://www.valeriemartinez.net)

More praise for  
**COUNT**  
VALERIE MARTÍNEZ



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"Simply put, this breathtaking book-length poem tells 'the story of water'—in all its epochs. It 'hovers in all its forms, a behemoth / pulsing through' us. It is literal: a 'book of mudslides, book of super-//storms,' but also linguistic: 'Times Square lifts a tide of cell phones' or 'a sea of brittle trees bursts wildly into flames.' In other words, it is a cautionary epic that we ignore at our peril, one which urges us to be "reverent and disciplined, to live / on the edge of great balance—the sum of incalculable beauty." —Francisco Aragón, author of *After Rubén*

"After describing several of Earth's spectacular, ordinary creatures—aspens, mice, katydids, Atlas moths—Valerie Martínez asks, 'Have we ever thought to count these out? / I mean, count?' Again and again, her brilliant book-length poem *Count* probes history, mythology, the environmental crisis, asking us to *take account*—to 'be reverent and disciplined, to live / on the edge of great balance—the sum of incalculable beauty.'" —Ann Fisher-Wirth, author of *The Bones of Winter Birds* and *Mississippi*

"Through elegant parataxis and interspersed narratives, Valerie Martínez's eco-poetics blends Indigenous mythos, science, performance and installation art, and the author's keen insights stemming from her own communion with the rest of the natural world. Her book-length poem, like *Pando*—'47,000 aspens / grown from a single seed, a single root system,' enacts this interconnectedness while also asking devastating questions: 'How much does it weigh to be 25 years in the world at this fateful witnessing?' Throughout, Martínez counts: steps down a mountain trail and along a 54-mile endangered river walk, rises in sea levels and Earth's temperature, endangered and extinct species, millions of climate migrants. But as she counts down the days to our extinction, she invites us to walk with those who are learning 'to live on the edge of great balance' and blaze trails to a sustainable future." —Brenda Cardenas, author of *Boomerang*

"In *Count*, Valerie Martínez tethers science, art, memory, myth, and narrative to the exquisite language of poetry. Confronting the devastating effects of climate change, these miraculous poems exude the multiplicity of *Count*'s Spanish-language cognate, *contar*, reminding us that to count is not simply to make a calculation. It is to tell a story, to observe, and, above all, to witness. Martínez's poems bear unflinching and rapturous witness to our natural world in distress and our denial in bloom." —Mia Leonin, author of *Fable of the Pack-Saddle Child*

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