

LINDA LYNETTE RODRIGUEZ (1947 -)



Linda Rodriguez was born in Fowler, graduated from Manhattan High School, and attended Kansas State University before dropping out to hitch-hike to Haight Ashbury in the 60s. Since 1970, she has lived in Kansas City, where she was director of the University of Missouri-KC Women’s Center. Rodriguez is vice-president of the Latino Writers Collective, and she has published in numerous journals and anthologies, including *Primera Página: Poetry from the Latino Heartland*. Her new collection *Heart’s Migration* won the Elvira Cordero Cisneros Award. She is of Western Cherokee descent.

In “Coyote Invades Your Dreams,” Rodriguez reminds us of how close Kansans are to animal life. Coyotes stalk fringes of cities and pasturelands. The adaptation of these wily beasts is instructive—we humans also learn environments quickly and well. We share animal qualities of stalking, shifting identities, and forming attachments. A coyote lover is a trickster who both attracts and frightens, like change. The coyote encounter leaves its mark.

COYOTE INVADES YOUR DREAMS

**You’re staying clear
of him. Just because
you noticed him once
or twice doesn’t mean you want
anything to do with him.
He’s beneath you—
and above you and inside you
in your dreams. His mouth
drinks you deep, and you come
up empty and gasping
for air and for him. That traitor,
your body, clings to him like a life
raft in this hurricane
you’re dreaming. His face
above yours loses its knowing
smile as he takes you. Again,
this night, you drown
in your own desire. Coyote
marks you as his.
You wake to the memory
of a growl.**

Education: This poet has a B.A in English-Creative Writing/journalism (University of Missouri-Kansas City) and an M.A. in English (University of Missouri-Kansas City).

Career: Former Director of the UMKC Women’s Center; Personal achievement coach; Editor and freelance writer. Poetry books are *Skin Hunger* (Potpourri Publications, 1995, one of Writer’s Digest’s four top poetry chapbooks of the year) and *Heart’s Migration*, (Tia Chucha Press, 2009 Elvira Cordero Cisneros Award).