

CARTON 3:29

WILD TREES PRESS

MENDEZ, CHARLOTTE

1985-1986

PHOTOGRAPHS

WALKER, CHARLOTTE ZOE

2017/193  
c



photo by Roland Greefkes

THIS PAPER  
MANUFACTURED  
BY KODAK



photo by Roland Greefkes



photo by Roland Greefkes



Photo by Roland Greefkes



Photo by

Roland Greefkes

Aesthetica

1601 Guilford Ave.

Baltimore, MD 21202



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Roland Greefkes  
Aesthetica  
1601 Guilford Ave.  
Baltimore, MD 21202



ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

State University of New York ♦ College at Oneonta

Oneonta, New York 13820-1361

January 16, 1986

Dear Robert,

I hope all is going beautifully ~~and~~ (growing beautifully) at Wild Trees. In the garden, at the press, and everywhere!

*ie, poetic.*  
Enclosed is a black and white print which felt to me like just the right mood for the back cover of the book, so I didn't have any others done after this group. I hope it will seem right to you also.

As a back-up, I'm enclosing another photo I like, which happens to be in color. The photo processor for the local newspaper (whom I just discovered) says that she can make a decent black-and-white print from the color negative, and I hope to have that available by the middle of next week. Let me know if you'd prefer it, or for any reason might like to have a black and white print of it on hand for future use.

THE COLOR PURPLE still hasn't made it to anywhere nearer than two hours from here. But one of my students told me that he and a friend had to stand in line for three different nights before they could get in, near Queens!

Did someone at the new journal BELLE LETTRES send you the beautiful review of A PIECE OF MINE? If not, I'll send you a copy. It's an exciting review--conveys all the excitement of the book's being, with such a lovely appreciative attitude on the part of the reviewer.

Thanks so much for waiting for the photo. I do hope this one seems right. If not, of course please let me know by phone and I'll arrange something else quickly.

My very best regards to you and to Alice--

*Charlotte*

*P.S. I did get photo & statement off to Library Journal in time. Did you receive Rachel's new print of painting OK?*

*Charlotte Menden*

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT 630032

State University College

Oneonta, New York 13820-1361



Robert Allen  
Wild Trees Press  
P.O. Box 378  
Navarro, CA 95463





# FISH

by  
Charlotte  
Mendez

Drawings by  
Elizabeth Nields



Serpent & Eagle 1984

for Alice and Robert

with deepest and  
most joyous thanks!

Love and blessings  
in the new year!

Charlotte  
Christmas, 1985

Her beloved hesitated a moment just as she was near the tumbling waterfall, the cataract. He thought, perhaps, that she had already gone over, while she in turn hoped that he would keep the torrent roiling just that moment longer, that she might be flung far, far, farther than ever before in the glittering, foaming waters. In that moment of hesitation she felt their separateness, she felt the sadness, she felt the lowering of water tables throughout the world.

But before she could murmur a word to him, before he could tenderly inquire of her, a great fish leapt out of the waters and swooped down upon them. She saw the forward-placed silver-rainbow eyes rush toward her, the pink mouth open swiftly and scoop her into it. Down she slipped into the rosy chamber, where she fit just snugly, the momentum pushing her arms against her naked sides. Since the fish had swallowed her head-first, she was traveling feet first now, at great speed. She wondered briefly if this might be some new kind of coming—a sort of going—but the speeding fish was too purposeful, like a very fast commuter train as it carried her along; there was no sense of abandon, of rapture—though perhaps a little feeling of rescue. But if the fish swam purposefully, they must have some destination. Bits of foam were refreshing the soles of her feet, tapping at them in little irregular bursts, or splashes. Some destination. A quiet pool in which to digest her, perhaps? Strangely, the thought didn't trouble her; such discomfort seemed remote. For now she enjoyed the speed and the flow. After all, only moments ago she had felt waters receding all over the planet, had felt herself about to be beached, apologetic, lonely, next to her beloved.

Was he frantic? Had he rushed to call the rescue boats? Or had he not yet noticed her absence, was he sleeping peacefully?

She opened her eyes. It was not all darkness within, as she'd expected. The fish seemed to be made of glass, of deep blue and soft nasturtium colors, flowing into one another. Through its translucent sides she could see bubbles and waves rushing past, could glimpse the shadowy forms of other fishes.

These looked in at the naked form of a woman, arms at her sides, toes tipped upwards while her feet caught the inflowing spray, her body's undulations more intricately elaborating the curves of the fish. Her tender surfaces caressed by the withinness of the fish, her own soft nasturtium colors echoing the color of the fish's sides, its blue fins keeping them both in the spirit, the colors, of the waters.

Becoming part of the fish in some way—perhaps its prisoner, perhaps its luxuriant passenger, perhaps itself, perhaps its lover—she lay in bewilderment in the midst of the colors and speed. Did she not have fins? Did the fish not have arms?

It grew darker. They entered a violet, indigo-violet deep sea twilight. Silver glints still indicated bubbles swirling past them. But it grew too dark for the shadows of other creatures to be seen where she lay. A slowing now, deep into the violet. No more glints of silver. They hung in the dark clear waters, in the indigo half-light, the silence. The mouth of the fish had shut firmly long minutes ago. Its sides seemed to press in against her, to push at her, so that suddenly the bright foaminess of the air was gone. She could barely breathe, and yet she did not panic. Her breath simply suspended in the silence.

There was an unexpected bliss in being so pressed in upon from all sides. She relaxed into it and felt herself going forth into some rapture of closeness, of being held, of being loved sufficiently and wholly. The pressure squeezed up her thighs and over her belly, pushed down on her breasts and in at her waist and the small of her back, oh so deliciously! and moved in a wave up her shoulders, down her arms, around her face, into her hair even, electrifying it. And then back again, the wave began at the soles of her feet, a little slap, and then a push and warm against her knees, her thighs again, and she found herself oh yes, most exquisitely coming, that rapture spreading everywhere now, the bursting forth, the bursting through!

Suddenly she was free. Her neck rolled back in the dark waters, her wet hair dragging and cooling her scalp. She spun over onto her belly; her legs, her arms reaching out freely. Still in rapture, still in abandon she floated.

The fish, her mother, swam round and came back to her while still aimlessly she floated in the water, trying her arms a bit, breathing from somewhere within, she knew not how. The fish came around again, sliding its belly across the small of her back, then nudging and spinning her slowly about. She reached out both palms to caress the fish as it glided over her once and yet again it came by, and softly the woman reached out her hand and felt the great side of the fish slide along her palm caressingly, to the final tickle of the crisp tail fin. Come, it seemed to say as it flicked against her palm, and like a baby dolphin she began to swim after, her arms flung forward, her feet fluttering.

What will it be, this new life I am in? She remembered her beloved, whom she had never even known, who had never known her. Did he remember her? Was he still sleeping?

She remembered the desire which had brought them together, the rich consciousness of one another in which they had basked and hungered and fed. How rich and thrilling it had been then; how dry and frictive compared to this. She was swimming now in a brighter part of the ocean. Others swam by her now, some swiftly, some more slowly. Their silent, active presence filled her with a new desire. She longed to be back inside the fish that she might be enclosed in that glassy blue and nasturtium coloring, worthy of the magentas, the scarlets, the silvers, that flashed around her. But the great fish was gone. And she in her pale skin had no ornament but the curving of her body's form, the moderate fling and spreading of her hair. Oh form, what is it you contain? she asked each shape which came to her. She asked that variety of fins, filmy and wavy and many-colored, stiff and pleated and translucent; that variety of eyes on stalks and eyes placed here and there alluringly, and mouths of sweetly various erotic forms. There was no answer, but only the continued invitation to dance among them, gliding near and passing, then passing again as the small bubbles rose in straight lines, and all else was undulant and silent and constantly changing.



COLOPHON

Fish was printed by Jo Mish  
at Serpent & Eagle Press in an  
edition of 150 softcover copies.

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first proposed at

Set in Bogotá, Colombia, **Condor and Hummingbird** is a richly textured story of growth and bonding between three women. Laura, a North American, visits Bogotá with her Colombian husband, Andrés. While there she gradually realizes how little she knows him—and she meets and comes to love his “mad” sister, Francisca. When Francisca and Laura try to save Carmen, a “lost child” who has been trapped in servitude, something new is born as the three women struggle to free themselves and build new lives. Written with a movingly lyrical, sometimes mythical, quality, **Condor and Hummingbird** is a story of the human spirit made resilient by faith in the ancestors and love for one’s sisters.

“I enjoyed reading this compelling tale.”  
—Susan Griffin

Charlotte Méndez has been writing since childhood. She has published short stories in *Ms. magazine*, *North American Review*, *Woman’s World*, *Mss.*, and other journals, and is at work on a second novel. She teaches creative writing and literature at the State University of New York College at Oneonta, where she has been coordinator of the women’s studies program. The mother of three grown children whom she raised alone, Charlotte wrote **Condor and Hummingbird** “for the lost children of the world—not just of Colombia.” She lives in an old rundown farmhouse, among trees both wild and tame, in a beautiful valley in New York’s dairy country.

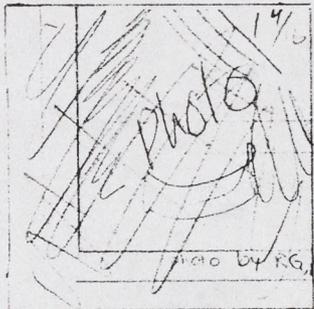


photo by Roland Greefkes. Aesthetica

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Méndez

CONDOR and HUMMINGBIRD

Wild Trees Press

# CONDOR and HUMMINGBIRD

A NOVEL BY  
Charlotte Méndez

Dear Ms. Walker + Mr. Allen,

Here are some prints of a new painting which I think is suitable for the cover. I am much more satisfied w/ it than I was w/ the other or with attempts I made which remain unseen. The prints, unfortunately, did not turn out well. My camera, old + cheap as it is, can no longer produce well, and I needed a tripod. So, if you would like me to send you another print or 2 of this I will. Even if I don't hear from you immediately I will seek to take ~~also~~ a picture which more accurately captures the painting. Sorry to once again miss the mark, but I do feel pleased with the actual painting.

Thank for your patience -

Yours Sincerely,

Rachel Mendez

617-864-2507

Cover Art



ALICE WALKER + ROBERT ALLEN  
WILD TREES PRESS  
PO BOX 378  
NAVARRO, CA 95463

RACHEL MONDREZ  
2 POTTER PARK  
CAMBRIDGE MA  
02138

Dore Gehris  
5/15

Monday March 3, 1986

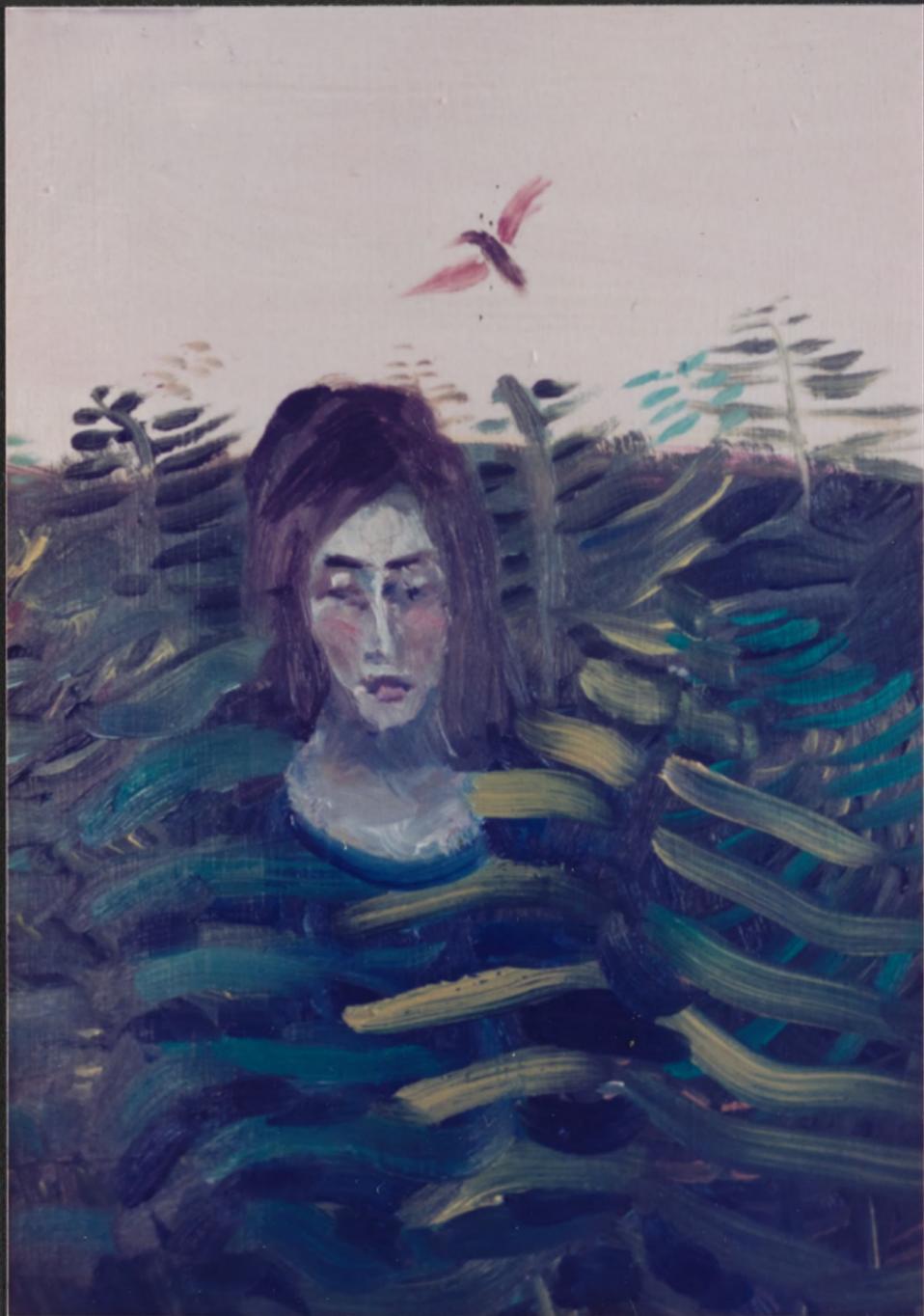
Dear Mr. Allen,

Sorry these negatives took so long to reach you but my mother was unable to reach me until yesterday! I hope it is not too late for these to be of use. I hope all's well and the weather encouraging.

Best regards,

Rachel

Merdez



Art selected

19117161

2 POTTER PARK  
CAMBRIDGE MA  
02138

Dear Ms. Walker + Mr. Allen,

Well, here it is. I hope it reached you in fair condition. I waited 2 days I should not have in order that a wet section might dry - which it did not, plus the whole time I wanted to change it but didn't dare put any more paint on.

I've never worked under a deadline before and I guess this ~~is~~ is not one of my strongest products, but it might help if you look at it for awhile. People find they like my stuff better w/ time. Plus it'll look much better when miniaturized. At any rate - whatever is best for Condor AND Hummingbird is dandy with me. Well, I must rush this off to the Parcel People.

Best to you

— RACHael MENDEZ

Kvachel  
607  
884-2507  
Bird design?

RACHEL MENDEZ  
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