



"Young woman moves to the big city to "make it" as an artist – it's a classic *Bildungsroman*. *Hollywood Notebook's* narrator worries, in these frantic, disparate journal entries, about rent, overdue library books, joblessness, and the lack of cold running tap water...You can hear the growl of the Metro bus on every page, feel the squeak of the Naugahyde chair, and smell the cigarette smoke. Each tenderly wrought detail evokes the crackling sense of wonder we feel as young adults when the world appears pregnant with possibility and dread.

–LAUREN EGGERT-CROWE, *Los Angeles Review of Books*

TEACHING GUIDE

HOLLYWOOD NOTEBOOK

by Wendy C. Ortiz

978-1-948700-03-0 / 156 pages / \$15.95

Recommended Classes:

- Creative Writing
- Creative Nonfiction & Memoir
- Experimental Writing
- Feminist Literature
- Gender Studies / Women's Studies
- Xicanx & Latinx Studies

Keywords:

Experimental / Memoir / Autobiography / Diary /
Fragmented Narrative / Los Angeles / California /
Olympia / Place / Literary / Latinx / Sexuality /
Gender / Family / Cities / Poetry / Lyricism /

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Hollywood Notebook* is purposefully fragmentary. However, various emotional struggles continue to resurface throughout the work. What are some of these struggles?
2. The work does not follow a strict chronology, choosing instead to skip between different times in the writer's life. What advantages does a fragmentary work have over a more rigid chronological memoir in terms of expressing emotional states?
3. Throughout the book, we meet strangers who act as catalysts in the narrator's journey, from the woman on the corner of Vermont and Barnsdall to the old man who likes to slap the writer's hands on the hiking trail. How do each of these strangers shape the direction of the work?

4. Ortiz writes that “the helicopters are sky piranha.” What are some other examples of place-specific, evocative language?
5. How does referencing specific places—restaurants, clubs, and intersections, for example—contribute to the atmosphere of the book?
6. Occasionally, the sections are written in statements separated by colons, or as recipes, or in other purposefully disjointed language. Do these sections feel faster, slower, or more textured in a way than the more traditional prose sections?
7. What is the role of the desert and of heat generally in this book?
8. Throughout the book, Ortiz describes her interactions with various writers and forms of writing, from screenplays to poetry to “Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas.” How does she link each interaction to her own emotional journey and her understanding of the city?
9. What role does alcohol play in the work?
10. How does the final section both encapsulate the journey that preceded it while opening the door to the one to come?

Possible Assignments:

- Create different psychogeographical maps of the neighborhood you live in or places you frequent.
- Write a description of a familiar place as told through interactions you have with a specific text.
- Write a narrative of a familiar place as told through specific interactions with the “strangers” that frequent that place.