

Matt Daly

SHE ORCHESTRATES HER WAKE



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photo by Barbara Michelman

For Brenda

Hold it on a Thursday when the truck with my favorite tacos de barbacoa parks in the Target parking lot down the street. Get plenty of tacos and be ready to run back for more. You cannot prepare for the quantity we need. The truck changes every Thursday but the tacos are the same. Bring enough containers for each of the salsas. Include my special container for the hottest salsa. It's in the cupboard, mixed up with the others but don't worry, it stands out. Bring your own plastic bags for carrying the tacos. Make sure everyone tries at least one taco with one drop of the hottest salsa. That will give us something to laugh about later in the night. Make sangria and plan to drink a lot. Pick whichever recipe people like. Get supplies for several batches of my margaritas. Follow my recipe to the letter. Don't rely on a paper copy of the recipe. Find the one I laminated. It will help, after a few batches, to have a copy that can get wet. Invite everyone I know. Make a list. Make sure everyone on the list gets a chance to add to it. Yes, I know, it will be a long list. Be sure to invite the old lady next door, who sits on her stoop most afternoons, watching the neighborhood boys. She will not attend. Instead, she will probably call the cops to complain about the noise. Something else to laugh about before sunrise. Don't invite the boys. Don't forget to add me to the list. Receiving the invitation in the mail will help me remember to show up. Make sure no one arrives before sundown. Sunsets remind me of the time that rattlesnake bit my dog, remind me of this nest of snakes untwining in me. I believe, if everyone gathers in the twilight, all the snakes will coil up again in a firm ball, replacing my breast. Help me put on my green dress that hugged my hips, that used to make the men at the taco truck say, "Damn!" when they knew I could hear them. Make sure I have my silver hoop earrings. Make sure my scalp shines. Let me wear the oversized sunglasses I wore when they were still in style, when I still thought looking at the sunset could be beautiful so long as I took precautions. Tell me, again and again, I am beautiful long after dark.

Matt Daly's poetry has been published various journals including *The Cortland Review*, *Pilgrimage*, *Sixfold*, *Clerestory*, and *Split Rock Review*. He was the recipient of the 2015 Neltje Blanchan Award for writing inspired by the natural world. In 2013, he received a creative writing fellowship in poetry from the Wyoming Arts Council. Matt is a resident faculty member at the 2016 Jackson Hole Writers Conference.