

Love Poems in the Time of Climate Change

By **CRAIG SANTOS PEREZ**

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Sonnet XVII

I don't love you as if you were rare earth metals, diamonds,
or reserves of crude oil that propagate war:
I love you as one loves most vulnerable things,
urgently, between the habitat and its loss.

I love you as the seed that doesn't sprout but carries
the heritage of our roots, secured, within a vault,
and thanks to your love the organic taste that ripens
from the fruit lives sweetly on my tongue.

I love you without knowing how, or when, the world will end—
I love you naturally without pesticides or pills—
I love you like this because we won't survive any other way,
except in this form in which humans and nature are kin,
so close that your emissions of carbon are mine,
so close that your sea rises with my heat.

Sonnet XII

Global woman, waxy apple, record heat,
thick smell of algae, burnt peat and sunset,

what rich nitrogen opens between your native trees?
What fossil fuels does a man tap with his drill?

Loving is a migration with butterflies and refugees,
with overcrowded boats and no milkweed:
loving is a clash of petro-states,
and two bodies detonated by a single drone strike.

Kiss by kiss I walk across your scarred landscape,
your border walls, your dam, your reservations,
until our little extinctions transform into peak oil

and push through the narrow pipelines of our veins,
until we bloom wide, like water hyacinth, until we are
and we are more than a fracture in geologic time.

Craig Santos Perez is the author of *From Unincorporated Territory [Guma']* (Omnidawn, 2014).