

I never look for stars here. They pale

next to LA's green unearthly glow spreading sixty miles.

My father, I don't think of him when I think of stars,

distant and cold. *He sang don't let the stars get in your eyes,*

*don't let the moon break your heart,*

then a long Perry Como trope ending with *you're the only one I'll ever love.*

Fast falls the eventide, wind feathers the Artemisia,

silken and murmurous as tropical grammar.

Now darkness moves slowly through him with seasons, occasions,

like Sarabande, that courtly dance of the 17th century—

of Cancer it is written, *a body black and without eyes,*

and of Sarabande, *a grave melody expressing no passion*

*other than ambition.* I don't think of stars here,

that starry night unfurls somewhere further out

on the other side of the Transverse Range, where cancer's barely

visible to the salt-ringed eye, the beehive cluster pulsing,

her weak oil lamps hanging over us all.

# Sarabande ~ Marsha de la O



Marsha de la O's first book of poetry, *Black Hope*, won the New Issues Press Poetry Prize and a Small Press Editor's Choice Award. She is the winner of the dA Poetry Award and the Ventura Poetry Festival Contest. She has published in journals such as *Barrow Street*, *Passages North*, *Solo*, and *Third Coast*. She was a finalist in the Poets & Writers' California Voices competition, and a visiting writer at 'Writers' Week' at the University of California, Riverside. She was raised in the Los Angeles area and now lives in Ventura, California where she is co-editor, with Phil Taggart, of the literary journal, *Askew*.

