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"'We Have Always Known': On the Trails of People, Plants, and Humboldt"

Ungar, Paula



Member of the Indigenous Guard in a protest against the Colombian government.

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> After some days of work, the teacher reviewed the assignment and explained that this drawing, full of peculiarities, did not meet the standards of a scientific illustration. He gave me a set of technical pens, and I started again. I then enjoyed the task of reducing what my eyes could distinguish to lines and dots of different thicknesses, to black and white; I dedicated myself to discarding the singular features of this particular branch of this particular oak tree that traveled from the mist of a forest in the Department of Boyacá and ended up pressed in this office of this university. A laborious mental exercise, in which my memory of the touch of the oak in the cold forest and my imagination of the wasp larvae nibbling the leaf had to take refuge in a plane of my mind different from the one dedicated to my training as a scientist. A dividing line was being drawn. (From the article)

This poem was originally published in *Springs: The Rachel Carson Center Review* . *Springs* is an online publication featuring peer-reviewed articles, creative nonfiction, and artistic contributions that showcase the work of the Rachel Carson Center and its community across the world.

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