

**Dr. Mariana Graciano, Modern Languages and Cultures (NYC)
Dyson School of Arts and Sciences**

O AR: A Memoir About the Air

In 2016 I became a mother and an orphan almost at the same time. My first child was born in the US and five months later my father died in Argentina. He, who had been a heavy smoker for most of his life, suffered from COPD and ultimately lung cancer. He ran out of air; he did not have enough oxygen in his body. It was then that I began to wonder how/when do we learn to breathe.

O ar is the intersection of two experiences: being a daughter and a mother, taking root and being uprooted. It is a memoir with an epistolary form, the entanglement of two long letters: The first one written by my grandmother CANDELA –born in Argentina in 1930, daughter of Galician immigrants–, addressed to me. The other, written by me –an Argentinian immigrant in the US–, addressed to my daughter, NIA, born in New York in 2018.

O ar reconstructs our affective memory as a legacy for Nia, and others. It is an inventory of everything there is so that nothing is lost: tangos, photos, letters, sayings. It is about migration, economic crises, the struggle of the working class, gender roles, the desire to live, and illness. *O ar* is, above all, a book about the air, that which "infects" us all.