

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA, DECLARING "THE ORIGIN OF
CERTAIN PLACE NAMES" BY MARISOL BACA THE
OFFICIAL POEM OF FRESNO

WHEREAS, Marisol Baca, Fresno native, and Fresno's 2019 Poet Laureate, is
author of the poem "The Origin of Certain Place Names" which reads as follows:

The Origin of Certain Place Names

[For Fresno named for the abundant ash trees lining the San Joaquin River]

Fresno

I say Fresno,
and the city blows out
of my mouth as an exhale

I say Fresno and ask for her help
in writing this poem

And she answers me
when I give her time to speak
her voice is
chain link fence bouncing
cry of engine and helicopter
wind in a field of wheat
Three ash trees growing in a half circle
on the edge of the bank of the San Joaquin River
like three sisters
born in the valley

First Sister ~ Foothill Ash
Caroline paints the blackbirds that point to the sky
Caroline paints landscapes stolen from her dreams in the night
She says,
*The highway that takes me out of the desert
has become like a wide winged bird
And I am scared of being anything but what I am
And the fields are forever
drinking water that sprays from sprinkler pumps*

1 of 3

Date Adopted:

Date Approved:

Effective Date:

City Attorney Approval: ABE

Resolution No. _____

*This valley, what does it really look like?
The hands of my mother as she combs through my black hair*

Second Sister ~ California Ash

Gao turns the light on to finish her reading

Gao's hands draw a song sparrow in between the lines she is reading

She thinks,

I've spent my life searching for a way to say your name

the intensity of fog in the winter

the grapevines in the early dark

distances shrouded in shapes so familiar they look like foothills smoking

The long legged man running past on my side

I look for him as I drive

I will eat the grapes

skins and all

Third Sister ~ Two Petal Ash

Omé taps her foot and presses record

Omé's feet are clay-colored sparrows

their wings beat to the sound in their hearts

She says,

I am going to dance

I have fallen in love in an almond orchard

I am going to dance

Fresno

is three voices

and many

It is the kind of city that walks with you, takes a short ride to the store with you, stays later at your place than expected, dances with its slow poem arms at your house party, eats tacos al pastor in a booth with you, gets lost in a suburban neighborhood near Sunnyside with you, it may call you in the evening to tell you to walk outside and look at the moon – a moon that somehow seems like a Fresno moon, low hanging, orange in the trees, like a barn owl's heart shaped face looking down from above.

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to recognize this poem as the official poem of Fresno.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Fresno as follows:

City Council hereby declares "The Origin of Certain Place Names" by Marisol Baca the official poem of the City of Fresno.

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF FRESNO) ss.
CITY OF FRESNO)

I, YVONNE SPENCE, City Clerk of the City of Fresno, certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Council of the City of Fresno, at a regular meeting held on the _____ day of _____ 2019.

AYES :
NOES :
ABSENT :
ABSTAIN :

YVONNE SPENCE, MMC CRM
City Clerk

By: _____
Deputy Date

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
DOUGLAS T. SLOAN
City Attorney

By: _____
Laurie Avedisian-Favini Date
Assistant City Attorney