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Three

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T H R E E

By Sandra Soli

WEATHER CHANGE

A cold front
scatters afternoon light;
southwest skies
thread needles with fire.
Past the weather line
you could burn fingers
in so much blue.

No place for illusions,
this porch. The cutting done,
tubs boil on portable stoves
away from women.

One twelve-point buck
comes easily to bone,
muscle melting, flesh
a quick memory. Skull worthy of a fair
mount,
decent wood.

Sizzling, the rest of the harvest
percolates through coal. It's only meat
now, like any other.

The buck's eye
watches me,
asks How's the weather
up there?
Seasons change

HARD TRIP

They refused their lives,
these animals of Mexican provinces,
Bundles of freight stacked near
an air hole; they accepted their deaths
on the Texas rails but went down biting.
This journey was an economic decision;
their deaths were economic deaths.

We had imagined no such possibility.
The indecency of death in boxcars
now forty-year-old baggage,
these eighteen will rate not so much
as a paragraph in the histories.
They weren't even Jewish.

Once you see the faces,
the bruised eyes of lost men,
they stay with you. Your own stigmata,
such a thing, this crazy death
for a job washing dishes. But of course
dreams of sons extend beyond the fathers.

It is a problem, these illegals,
They knew at the beginning
this consignment was a dirty business,
El Paso to Dallas a really hard trip.
But this thing. It is not bearable.
It is not to be borne.

SIGNATURE

I fold stillness like curtains the heaviest of air after misty rain at breakfast. It is a desperate day, as the Irish would say. A morning to speak to absent fathers, for walks near a sea. Not this one or that—any sea will do. But a beach, a tongue of salt in the wind, the hearing of lost voices, for the sculpted identity of one's own name carved with a stick. Aware of the tide's healing intention... the filling of a damp signature with foam, a bit of water teasing in, the warning that this most intimate of moments approaches, disappears. *

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