

Acosta 19XX - 198X

smoking mesquite stumbles slowly
until it stretches your eyes thin
and the burn latches between your septum
gently tugs the sleeves of your nerves
and coils around your veins

behind the slipping pile of his well-worn clothes
cherry wood splinters at the details of
wooden roses stamped gently
and embroidered on his mattress
the only flowers to grace his burning bed

a sting rises above as the springs erupt
oscillating in raging tears and tears
attempting to break the silence of a charred promise

death is always marked by honor

from dried wrinkled soles
to soft newborn feet who swing along breaking sugar canes
tamarind leather boots and loafers crease deeper to lift overhead
shiny black heels and flats lean together
and familiar paws march with eyes shut in their dust cloud
printmaking the orange dirt road made in a pair with the clear teal river
pacing all together

all absent for a son, a brother, an uncle, a cousin, a lover
and for all of the other migrant boys
who shared fallen fruit deep into the endless rows
letting the liquor drown their footsteps
sleeping in shifts like the rabbits hiding underneath the same leaves
to sustain their hunger

holding each other below the deepest roots
where soil hardens over
under cold unbearable weight of empty promises

keeping his hands warm with his quilted palms of blisters
each shaped and molded

to fit the other calloused hands of a boy
who gently cross hatches their names
over their bodies