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Untitled

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By Lauro Vazquez

postville, iowa

"hundreds arrested in

iowa immigration raid:

for aggravated identity theft and fraudulent

use of social security

numbers"

read the headline

in bright, bold accusing letters

that did not reveal

the knives doused in sparkle of blood

and biting at the slick skin

of skinny teenage laborers

weaving their fingers through threads of meat

with the precision of mayan astrologers;

or the marmalade of bones and toil and fingernails

illegal at the kosher meat plant;

or

the liquid measure

of the guatemalteco's winged feet-

the pair of quetzales that carried

his sad sunken weight

from guatemala to iowa;

that sailed across the waters,

through valley of thorns,

through brush of barbed wire, through thicket of iron fence;

through deep volume of gray ash and yellow sky.

or

the silver smiling mouth of steel
manacles clipped
to the wings on his ankles.

or

the cold metal vine that shackled the wrists, the waist and the feet.
the trail of stooped heads and hands
marched off like cattle to the slaughterhouse
of the national cattle congress
to be packaged, sealed and returned
from sun to sun,
from south to south
to hot landscapes of despair.

meanwhile

one more piece of immigrant-stained meat is bruised
and discarded; one more
thing without a name rolls to the desert ground
and evaporates under the sun,
one more
number is caught with a spanish-sounding surname and
thrown to the garbage heap of despair.