

**Journal/Website/Publisher:** New City Community Press

**Issue:** Equality and Justice: An Engaged Generation, A Troubled World\*. \**Tentatively Titled*

**Type:** Print

**Publishing Date:** Late 2019

**Notable:** This book is a result of the *Twiza Project*, a two-year collaboration of seven universities and three non-government organizations that will build a digital infrastructure to allow participants in Africa, the Middle East, Europe and North America to engage in transnational dialogues about the meaning of civic society and human rights in response to a global rise in extremism and intolerance.

**Work:** Una Promesa que no Llega, Collisions at the Immigration Office, and a Dreamer's Demise

### **Una Promesa que no Llega**

No one wants to cross a fence  
lined with spikes of brutal enforcement.  
No one wants to land  
en las espinas de un nopal que se entierran en tu alma  
y se quedan ahí escondidas debajo de la piel  
de un humilde cuerpo que repite la palabra ayudame.

No one wants to say: ayudame  
until they have to,  
or until they land on the wrong side of the fence.  
No one wants to starve,  
ni comer patriotismo sagrado  
y promesas de un mejor país que no llega.

No one wants to purposely walk into a valley of fire  
knowing you can't go past the checkpoint.  
The rivers can't save us,  
they don't run sideways these days.  
No one wants to burn  
under the same sun they worshipped once.

No one wants to leave a nation behind  
but no one wants to be left behind  
So we leave,  
because we are promised  
that we were no longer going to be invisible  
We leave, only to be seen.

## **Collisions at the Immigration Office**

North and South meet-  
at the immigration office where I left my identity  
glued to the biometrics machine.

My false sense of security was born  
in a place like this, where my appetite for light was  
satisfied, briefly.

North and South meet-  
inside the child of an indigenous worker from Peru  
and a Caucasian doctor from the Americas;

his golden skin celebrates  
the future of not knowing  
green fields full of hard labor and despair.

At the same time,  
it resents the privilege  
that perpetually lives just beneath his skin.

North and South meet at the waiting room  
where documents are only valid if your soul is conceded  
to the masters who rule the stolen lands of our parent's  
parents.

The center of the universe is not in this dark place  
where my broken innocence asks politely  
to be pieced back  
together.

Love does not live here,  
technicality and processes live here,  
along with chaos, fear, and citizenship stamps.

Some of us are imprinted with labels  
to recognize us as good immigrants,  
and some of us are dragged around from mouth of diplomats  
to the short fiery fingers of a president.

North and South meet-  
at the place where we are called aliens,

where we are treated as If we were beings from another world.

We are second class citizens,  
because living undocumented is not real  
but feeling undocumented is everything.

Here at this place where my darkest fear come true,  
my brother sits,  
his legs are shackled;

I found him where North and South met  
and I wish to go back to my mother's womb,  
with him.

I wish to prepare him  
for his time in solitude  
and the deportation that is to follow.

But there are things I can't do anymore,  
because time was stolen from us and  
the only clock that is turning back is this country's.

The man sitting next to me is not my brother,  
he tries to figure out the foreign language in the contract  
where he gives his freedom away,

but his brain can't process it all at a fast,  
at least not fast enough  
for the ice agents;

he looks at me and his eyes ask for help,  
he is somebody's brother, perhaps my own brother,  
or somebody's dad

and I help him figure out  
that there are not enough letters in the English alphabet  
to describe the hopelessness he is feeling.

North and South meet-  
at the place where we separate his Salvadoran family,  
where we cage them,  
because they fled north once we moved south and burned their village.

North and South meet-  
where the pain is caused.

North and South meet-  
inside me  
and I hope to disrupt the turning of the tide,  
to overcome the burning of the sun

and meet myself on the other side.  
Behind the invisible borders  
that separate us all.

Between the north and the south  
and even if we can't see them,  
I know they are coming down.

## **A Dreamer's Demise**

I dreamt of you once.  
In my dream,  
you scolded me  
for not growing up fast enough.

In my dream,  
I promised you I would try to catch up.  
And since then  
I've been rushed and hurried to get here.

I missed so much along the way  
and I don't blame you mother.  
I am a victim of time-  
and they call me a dreamer

but sometimes  
the dreams  
we dream,  
can kill us too...