

LINDA RAVENSWOOD

poetry

WORDS IN AUBADE FROM THE MOUTH OF A CHILD PRAIRIE UTAH

up broken thorns he limps home.
papa had a dinner, date, & dance.

sun comes up Prairie Utah
& papa rolls dusty & drunk.
Pike's Peak somewhere out & to the right.

on dawn egg shells papa lifts songs from the Baja
& our Meg will laugh. he throws his poncho on her
cracking jokes we don't get & doing a high *gabacho* yip
a used car slender boy again when Nutmeg laughs.
she ready & pink & don't look afraid even though
papa shakes & sweats to do morning.

next night we go in the Chevy from *Calexico*
already 2 days from home. we splash a.m. fishing
with dad & his *primos* on the *Golfo de California*.
we are free & tan in the eyes of the sun & we understand
here is what it means to be Mexican & other navigations
for kids who could give a shit about makeup or whiteness.
we go wading & wet & covered in stars
mama would hate this so papa's phone stays in the truck
we're brown & red & wet for dry
eyes bulging & fingers holy salt skinned
& it isn't even noon.

when its time to cross the border papa says
fuck man din'they remember no one want
Ramon to go by hiself pinche whatever because now he's alone
at the sentri. tio drawls to the left & puts the car in neutral
& Meg cries. we hear the brothers saying *hasta luego*
but they left so quick we didn't get to say see you next summer.
papa belts north & we finger trail mix in the plastic bag
sharing Cactus Cooler back & forth *man did tio say*
if he ever got that connection
for insurance to do mall Santa in SD
we could maybe see him up there
if he got the papers (we don't remember)

mama for sure would let us go
San Diego isn't TJ know what I mean

the seasonal work of the hired hand is something
 for tios y primos *even you could see the land so least there's that.*
they calling us up even to Walla Walla for guzberry
 we heard tio saying how he said sorry
 for killing someone's brother with the fork lift
 we heard mama say why she ever get with a laborer she doesn't know
 we heard papa say to tio even that first night in county when you barely
 remember & your legs on the gurney in chains
she pulling through she just a little kid
 in & out with visions from the trailer

Dark as well water a girl slipping back
 got clocked so hard dark as well water a burndark woman
 red as well water such blood dark as a well good night
 dark as well water goes dark as well water the rope at the hands
 dark as well water a dank rope dark as well water the night she left for good
 dark as well-rough fruit in winter darkwater slipped
 blue fingers on cement a dark well well well you again
 & so much black fruit to carry *where we peeing today* home is the back of a truck
 & later *how you feeling kid you fitting in alright* the foreman said to me