

Martín Espada

## **Not for Him the Fiery Lake of the False Prophet**

*When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best...They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists.*

*Donald Trump, June 16, 2015*

They woke him up by pissing in his face. He opened his mouth to scream in Spanish, so his mouth became a urinal at the ballpark.

Scott and Steve: the Leader brothers, celebrating a night at Fenway, where the Sox beat the Indians and a rookie named Rodríguez spun the seams on his changeup to hypnotize the Tribe. Later that night, Steve urinated on the door of his cell, and Scott told the cops why they did it: *Donald Trump was right. All these illegals need to be deported.*

He was a Mexican in a sleeping bag outside JFK station on a night in August, so they called him a wetback and emptied their bladders in his hair. In court, the lawyers spoke his name: *Guillermo Rodríguez*, immigrant with papers, crop-picker in the fields, trader of bottles and cans collected in his cart. Two strangers squashed the cartilage in his nose like a can drained of beer. In dreams, he would remember the shoes digging into his ribcage, the pole raked repeatedly across his cheekbones and upraised knuckles, the high-five over his body.

*Donald Trump was right*, said Scott. And Trump said: *The people that are following me are very passionate.* His hands fluttered as he spoke, a demagogue's hands, no blood under the fingernails, no whiff of urine to scrub away. He would orchestrate the chant of *Build that Wall* at rally after rally, bellowing till the blood rushed to his face, red as a demagogue in the grip of masturbatory dreams: a tribute to the new conquistador, the Wall raised up by Mexican hands, Mexican hair and fingernails bristling in the brick, Mexican blood swirling in the cement like raspberry syrup on a vanilla sundae. On the Cinco de Mayo, he leered over a taco bowl at Trump Tower.

Not for him the fiery lake of the false prophet, reddening his ruddy face. Not for him the devils of Puritan imagination,

shrieking in a foreign tongue and climbing in the window  
like the immigrant demons he conjures for the crowd.  
Not even for him ten thousand years of the Leader brothers,  
streaming a fountain of piss in his face as he sputters forever.

For him, Hell is a country where the man in a hard hat  
paving the road to JFK station sees Guillermo and dials 911;  
Hell is a country where EMTs kneel to wrap a blanket around  
the shivering shoulders of Guillermo and wipe his face clean;  
Hell is a country where the nurse at the emergency room  
hangs a morphine drip for Guillermo, so he can go back to sleep.  
Two thousand miles away, someone leaves a trail of water bottles  
in the desert for the border crossing of the next Guillermo.

We smuggle ourselves across the border of a demagogue's dreams:  
Confederate generals on horseback tumble one by one into  
the fiery lake of false prophets; into the fiery lake crumbles  
the demolished Wall. Thousands stand, sledgehammers in hand,  
to await the bullhorns and handcuffs, await the trembling revolvers.  
In the full moon of the flashlight, every face interrogates the interrogator.  
In the full moon of the flashlight, every face is the face of Guillermo.