

PREFACE

The great bracero

two pairs of brown eyes lock & bloom light across a shared iris
both helix photons in chainlinks up the backs of their retinas

one once a boy from yucatán who drank up sunrises on the gulf of
méxico
as a child he slurps up paletas and coughs sweetly from too much
cinnamon in the rice milk

he would spend summers near the altepetl from which la malinche
was ripped away
he would frequent the banks of the coatzacoalcos once navigated by
jade serpent gods

across the border the boy would then pick grapes with calloused
hands threading vines
his nostrils caked with desert sands wafting down from the
stratosphere like snow

their iris a mirror etched from pale diaphanous glass, a portal with
another
hand anchored on its burnished surface. the hand, same hue, pushes

away. a way forward as a bracero of a different variety, with a different
path
the other arm of the alien body that crossed the pacific. his ilocano
hands grasp

and tug roots. he cradled the volcanic soils of pineapple plantations.
in the before,
his life was on islands mischievously skipping on the cobblestones of
vigan. life was

lazy afternoons in the arms of his father swinging in hemp-hewn
hammocks. he would pray
novenas on his knees for fiesta days to san isidro, patron saint of labor.

& now the boys of the iris live at both ends of the same grapevine
lassoing a big world.
their lives entwine in fields of central california. filipino mexico
fluoresces like an aurora

across once opaque oceans made clear. rough hands clasp both arms
of the greater bracero.
they meet in a tender embrace. sunburnt bodies kiss enfolding and
collapsing into each other.

Dos X

