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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 an 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.

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.

Collisions at the Immigration Office 2/3

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;

Collisions at the Immigration Office 3/3

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.