Octavio Quintanilla

Influx

Too much killing
south of the border, and the heavy rains
make it easier for bodies to disappear.
    And so,
the dead come via waterways from Argentina, El Salvador, and Mexico,
as if looking for a new start.
But we know better.
    Some drift quietly to our porches or get stuck
between the branches of mesquites.
Others find their way into our cars, grin
behind the steering wheel
as if relieved finally to get home.
It’s a common sight and no one really bothers with them.
Their foreheads have a gunshot wound, or a message.
    Eventually, the water will return to where it came
and we’ll see the tops of hills.
We’ll see the clouds sloughing small birds once again.
We’ll even see a small plane lose itself
in the folds of the sky.