The Border¹

Kane Smego²

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the border loves to eat out
don't like to cook for itself
the border gets seconds at the buffet
and thirds
fourths
the border ain't never full

the border loves to talk politics
but never history
the border hates geography
the border claims it's geography

the border is a racist bouncer
is a guillotine disguised as a limbo stick
the border kills anything beneath it
the border shuns anything beneath it
the border spells Colombia with a letter 'u'
the border calls dolphins 'fish'
the border calls Salvadorians 'Mexican'

the border is a wealthy shoplifter
doesn't need to, but wants to
the border is a garden of walls
the border dances naked in the desert
makes minute men hard
riles up the militia

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² **Kane Smego**, is a spoken word poet and hip hop artist.

the border is a military brat
has been moving all its life
but still claims its from here

the border claims immaculate conception
claims it's God
Alpha and Omega
the border impersonates time
claims to have always been

the border is false advertising
don't look like the picture on TV
on the back of the box
in the atlas
in the textbook

the border knows Sasquatch
the Loch Ness monster
the border is Santa and the Reindeer
the lie they tell in school
the border is fairytale
is Never-Never-land
the border is Captain Hook's flag
stars and stripes instead of skull and bones

the border is co-dependent
can't live without a map
the border is jealous and don't always know why
is inventor of division
warden of self-made prison
man-made fault line
the border is a greedy cursive
the conqueror's signature
written in sand

the border is a Mack truck that tailgates
an infantry of high beams and flashlights
the border is a colony of eyes

...

the border watches us as we enter the rental office
announces its presence

Kane Smego

smiles with half its mouth
the border asks my friend for numbers he doesn't have
the border is 9 digits long
is declined applications
inflated security deposits

the border is an artist
painting sirens in rearview mirrors
painting accent walls with fear
the border is "random" traffic stops
is buzzed on top and shaved on the sides
the border always approaches with hand on pistol

the border is a gated community
member of the Homeowner's Association
the border opens the door for businessmen
puts out a welcome mat for money
invites the world to dinner
but says "leave your shoes at the door"
the border don't want your dirt

the border builds alarm systems to repel the neighbors
files restraining orders on old friends
who used to visit

the border makes renovations
the border is urban sprawl
is an oil spill spreading
is a grumpy old man
that was different in its day
back when it needed some help

said "Give me your tired, your poor"
the border preferred Germans to Irish
preferred Irish to Italians
preferred Italians to Jews
preferred Jews to Asians
preferred everyone to Africans
except on plantations
the border branded everyone
now the border only buys vintage

the border didn't want you
the border didn't want you

the border didn't want you
the border didn't want you
the border didn't want you

now the border wants you
and you're all about the border
claim we can't live without the border

'cause the border severs memory
skins humanity alive
the border don't know how to sew
only cut and skive
the border is a sharpened cleaver
humming murder through the skin
of earth

the parted ends curling upward
and away from each other
until they only remember
the space they call

From pedestrian bridge at U.S.-Mexico border, El Paso, Texas
(Photo: Claudia Hoffmann)

Rio Grande, Del Rio, Texas
In Memory of Claudia Gómez González
(Photo: Claudia Hoffmann)