

Hands Across America

By Debra Munoz-Bratina

Blessed are the bridge makers
whose calloused hands lift
steel burdens, fasten rivets of
peace, place wood beams
of hope, hammer in nails to build
rebuild storm after human storm

Blessed are the ones whose strength
tie wires the rebar to reinforce
mixes, pours concrete that fortifies foundations
takes cement and mortars oven
fired bricks, in their hands bricks aspire to be more

Blessed be the scarred leathered hands
of the soul weary who show up to pick
pull from the tilled earth itself

the hands across america who gather
fruits and vegetables from vines, from trees,
provide the groceries, the produce, the food stuff
on our tables to nourish these bodies of ours
for they are the anointed ones

I confess to growing fat off
low-hanging fruit of their labor,
I enjoy crisp hotel bedsheets, my toilet
scrubbed by somebody else's
rubber gloved hands

I'm no good at bridge making,
in fact, I'm scout ready
quick to strike a match,
light the fuse,
set the whole goddamn thing
on fire to watch it burn baby

as I warm my hands

What I do is write

but is what I write poetry?

offer words of despair on altars,

ruminations on fence posts,

add prayer to a wall of weathered

padlocks without their shiny keys

Sitting in a corner office,

stationed at a cubicle,

tethered to a work desk

We have grown accustomed,

passive as the wastebasket

gets emptied by somebody else

who believes what once was called

“The American Dream”

Blessed is She or He or They

who still can dream