

## Frio City Road

On Frio City Road  
Union Pacific Boxcars  
rail down the tracks  
like sepia tinged daguerrero-types  
scarring the fringe of the western barrio  
like and old switchblade gash  
from a backstreet fight

growing up  
no one ever bothered  
to explain  
that harsh translation  
of its rough terrain

hard existences chiseled out  
& crushed along a jagged rip  
of pavement spanning fifty years

At the red-brick Roegelien Meat Packing Company  
minimum wage Mexicans  
pack their sweat & dreams  
into the sausage casings that feed the city

corridor of dilapidated bars  
razed by recessions  
rise in the 90s  
under new management  
to the same old *Yankee Doodle*

empty houses become churches  
that become empty again  
as the flames of revival fade  
year in, year out

At the urban-renewed  
Alazan-Apache projects  
men surround a Coleman ice chest  
drinking away destiny  
as *corridos* from *Los Tigres del Norte*  
fuel their obsession  
toasting to the next  
one hundred years of servitude

tecato and syringe street  
only the Mo-Pac lines

offer escape beyond  
the blood stench  
of the Union Stockyards  
where for decades  
the snarl of bestial death  
was ritual as the knifings  
& shootings beneath  
Old Highway 90 West  
one came to expect  
on certain nights  
when the breath  
of stale *Pearl* beer  
scoured the belly  
of the serpent underneath  
coiling its long, finger grip  
around each  
concrete citizen  
of the streets

this was my geography  
my America

---

*tecato – drug addict*

*Mo-Pac – Missouri Pacific train line*