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## Sandra Soli's Poetry Restored

Sandra Soli

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## SANDRA SOLI'S POETRY RESTORED

### SIGNATURE

I fold stillness like curtains  
the heaviest of air  
after misty rain at breakfast. It is  
a desperate day, as the Irish would say.  
A morning to speak to absent fathers,  
for walks near a sea. Not this one  
or that—any sea will do. But a beach,  
a tongue of salt in the wind, the hearing  
of lost voices, for the sculpted identity  
of one's own name carved with a stick.  
Aware of the tide's healing intention . . .  
the filling of a damp signature with foam,  
a bit of water teasing in, the warning  
that this most intimate of moments  
approaches, disappears.

### HARD TRIP

They refused their lives,  
these animals of Mexican provinces,  
Bundles of freight stacked near  
an air hole; they accepted their deaths  
on the Texas rails but went down biting.  
This journey was an economic decision;  
their deaths were economic deaths.

We had imagined no such possibility.  
The indecency of death in boxcars  
now forty-year-old baggage,  
these eighteen will not rate so much  
as a paragraph in the histories.  
They weren't even Jewish.

Once you see the faces,  
the bruised eyes of lost men,  
they stay with you. Your own stigmata.  
You cannot get over it. You give up  
trying to get over it.

Paying, always the paying.  
Good money and fine Catholic sons  
melting at two hundred degrees,  
one of them just seventeen. His father  
says the boy could not have dreamed  
such a thing, this crazy death

for a job washing dishes. But of course  
dreams of sons extend beyond the fathers.

It is a problem, these illegals.  
They knew at the beginning  
this consignment was a dirty business,  
El Paso to Dallas a really hard trip.  
But this one thing. It is not bearable.  
It is not to be borne.

### WEATHER CHANGE

A cold front  
scatters afternoon light;  
southwest skies  
thread needles with fire.  
Past the weather line  
you could burn fingers  
in so much blue.

No place for illusions,  
this porch. The cutting done,  
tubs boil on portable stoves  
away from women.

One twelve-point buck  
comes easily to bone,  
muscle melting, flesh  
A quick memory. Skull worthy of a fair mount,  
decent wood.

Sizzling, the rest of the harvest  
percolates through coal. It's only meat  
now, like any other.

The buck's eye  
watches me,  
asks How's the weather  
up there?  
Seasons change  
and the shape of frost  
but never the kill. ☘

*(SANDRA SOLI, who calls herself an  
English "girl," is a wife and mother in  
Oklahoma City. She is also a graduate  
student at the University of Central  
Oklahoma, and she enjoys writing—as  
her schedule allows time.)*