

"El Paso"
JUSTIN BENDELL

smoke slinks
through chain link,
under, up & over

geometries of
fence that flank
the Rio Bravo

it ambles

nods to drowsy guards &
passes under cones
of sodium street light

it peregrinates

to the Franklin Mountains
and back again to Juarez,
to the white-washed cross
lit by la migra spotlights

to shacks of tarp and tin and cans
of menudo clustered
up dirt roads where
they can see who's coming

the smoke knows
the vernacular of the border

the shadowed spaces
between river and light

the plazas where
men in flak
jackets eat carnitas

watching the smoke
rise in the reeds,
ghosts with no need
for a passport.

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