

From southern spheres

With putrid gauze,
he lays in fear,
trembling, alone,
with no one near.

Guatemala and Mexico,
he traveled far,
guided by the beam
the Northern Star.

Snow and ice,
foreign to his flesh,
a limb its price,
putting courage to its test.

After the knife,
it would be finished,
but what kind of life?
Amputated and diminished.

Better to refuse
the men in green,
die with pride,
than treat gangrene?

On the gurney
he'd ask his Maker's pardon,
where he's from,
campesinos can only garden.

Forsake the life he'd been given,
cruel and short it had been,
At heaven's gate he'd be forgiven,
absolved of mortal sin.

No disability acts,
from whence he came,
irrespective of the facts,
he'd carry the blame.

Like the cripples and *viejitos*,
shunned with broken gait,
he, too, exiled
beyond the village gate.

A chair, however,
would not suffice,
this young man
deserved a device.

A life broken
ruptured into pieces,
could artfully be made whole
gifted by a prosthesis.

Undocumented and poor,
two wheels would be enough,
'cause people like you,
just come here for our stuff.

In a city like ours,
he asked for parity,
nothing more
than a dollop of charity.

Amidst the limos
and the glitter,
how could he not
be the least bit bitter?

Walk he would,
medics did not doubt,
but he would need some help,
to get about.

Valiant docs took a stand,
so he could too,
their righteous cause,
a collective glue.

With help he walked again
advocacy led to a happier end,
but what of those,
who can't defend?

Far from home,
uprooted but for pride,
they pray the just
will take their side.

A veil of ignorance,
not of neglect,
lest we forget
an obligation to protect.

Bienvenido
to the tired and poor,
welcome to this Medina,
from foreign shore.

—Joseph J. Fins, MD, MACP, FRCP