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Translator's Preface

Toshiya Kamei

Anthony Seidman lived in Ciudad Juárez while pursuing his MFA at the University of Texas at El Paso. The seed of "Making the Pact Outside Chihuahua" took root during one of his frequent bus trips to Chihuahua, the capital of the state of the same name. The poem originally appeared in Seidman's MFA thesis, which was the basis of his first book, *On Carbon-Dating Hunger* (Bitter Oleander Press, 2000).

In addition to being a poet, Seidman is an accomplished translator, who has worked with young Mexican poets such as Martín Camps and Estrella del Valle. He is also the editor and co-translator of *A Sparrow in the House of Seven Patios* (The Latino Press, 2005), a collection of poems by Peruvian poet Miguel Ángel Zapata. As someone who shares his enthusiasm for contemporary Latin American poetry, I wanted to show my admiration for his work by translating this poem.

Translating this poem presented a challenge. I thought I succeeded in transmitting its message, but I could not find a way to recreate its style and tone in Spanish. Admittedly, my early drafts were more prosaic than the version printed here. Despite my efforts, I was not very successful in keeping the lines short. After some tweaking, I came up with a version I could live with. I am grateful to Anthony Seidman for trusting me with his work. Also, I would like to thank Ilana Luna for her excellent editorial work.

MAKING THE PACT OUTSIDE CHIHUAHUA

It was a bus stop, and past midnight
at a 24 hour diner with smoke
basted on tile walls, and vats of pork
boiled in red chile sauce.

I stepped outside; light sped towards
me from stars and supernovas. A rust-
flavored wind stirred cobalt clouds,
and lightning cracked the night, struck
where sky meets earth, where black
touches black, and becomes neither.

**HACIENDO EL PACTO FUERA DE CHIHUAHUA por Anthony
Seidman**

Traducido por Toshiya Kamei

Era una parada de autobús, y pasada la medianoche
en un restaurante de 24 horas con humo
rociado en paredes de azulejo, y tinas de cerdo
hervido en salsa de chile rojo.

Salí; la luz de estrellas y supernovas
corría hacia mí. Un viento
sabor a óxido movió nubes de cobalto,
y un rayo partió la noche, pegó
donde el cielo encuentra tierra, donde negro
toca negro, y se vuelve ninguno de los dos.