

Tropical Trucks

mufflerless, creep in single files
across the brown breast of Mexico
rising tense and proudly gentle
in the sun between her oceans.

Bunched on mountainsides they
howl and grind along highways
winding, hidden in green, then
flaring to straighten on flatlands
like sympathetic rivers. They
blare through dun-colored
villages crouching, invisible
against the desert soil. They

rumble past midnight dances of
mahogany-glinting faces by lantern
light in wooded mountains, pairs
of sober, barefoot men with
buttoned holsters, naked
children splashing, thick-bodied
women scrubbing on rocks threadbare
cloth, spreading bright colors
across bushes and boulders.

Welded-pipe frames across
headlights, decorated
maize-yellow, cornflower blue,
orange, red, purple, and green
together, bloody families of donkeys
into raw mounds of crimson and gray,
and snarling rows of dogs arrive to
worry warm-smelling openings
in the dying bellies.