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### Los Machetes

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I don't picture  
Jason Voorhees when my blades  
clink *salúd!*—no, I don't think of  
the violence of slasher films  
I love, no, not the finger-  
knives in nightmares  
on Elm Street or  
even machetes  
slung on Friday  
the 13ths. The gore  
I hold unfolds through  
its potential, the power of  
being ten & trusted to not  
just touch but carry them like  
newborns, one lining each of  
our right torsos, another kissing  
our left shoulder blades, butting  
in front of us as we swing them  
forth, uncaging the civil war we  
inhabit. We war our machetes in  
metallic clashes, kick our botas up  
(wars of leather & nail), crash our two  
tools like head & heart, *trink!* under  
the left, *clang!* beneath the right.

We zone out between pasos, machetes resting upon  
us, but the next paso snaps us in quick: *tink!* ahead,

under boots, above & swipe-*clink!*  
*clank!* behind us, agile & swift,

*clank!* like fighting a past we *clink!*  
knowing peligro hits fast from

the back. With dulled weapons, we defend regions  
of ourselves: north, east, south, wrestling heavy air

until we  
must trust each  
other—tossing  
machetes high  
to compañeros  
for our final run,  
prep criss-cross  
clanks then toss  
—so gentle that  
this is when we  
learn we do not wish to hurt  
each other even while our blood  
pumps a silent lament from loud  
legacies of conquest—arteries  
washing away con español rojo.  
We sense none of our history's  
bloodlust as we toss soft, catch  
fast; carnal, our carnage caresses  
the air like bird-song, flirts with  
el aire like bird-baile: águila real  
swooping sky. We may as well  
call this transfer of machetes brutal  
bestowal, brotherly love. We yin &  
yang our swords—I cast mine toward  
Adam, guard him  
with my fragility;  
he protects me as  
he floats machetes,  
eyes on my hands.  
We trade violences  
like culture clashes:  
by song's end, we don't  
know whose weapons,  
whose hurt is whose.