

Caravan

By Gregory JM Kasunich

When the Congress Street Bridge was rebuilt
(we're talking about the one in Austin)

The engineers placed box beams
(one and a quarter inch apart)

An arbitrary decision that led to a proliferation of bats
(in the downtown area)

They - the bats - gathered and roosted
By day hiding from the devouring Texas sun

By night, skittering forth, their vampiric vessels Blooming against the waning light
consuming the farmers pests, mosquitoes, beetles, moths
making love to the filaments of the agave, bananas, mangoes, and guavas

And the natives gathered:

"Kill these glowering harbingers of death and disease!"
- they decried though gnashing teeth
:Rid us of these scuttling totems of rot and ruin!"
- they said in snarling whispers

Afraid and ignorant
of what this unknown omen might bring - They hid their faces
and shut their doors.

And all I can think about is how -

How these fragile free-tail creatures on their journey from Mexico,
fleeing the snuffing frost of a looming winter

Must have thought - how perfectly impossible,
That of all places, here in the dust of Texas
Someone had built an aleatory oasis;
A sanctuary, a harbor, perfectly fit for them.

Doing their work, never seeing but sensing,

the unearned fear
their mere presence struck into the hearts

of their reluctant

hosts.