revista
PERIFERIAS

Antofagasta | Migrants

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| Colombia |

translated by Nicole Froio

Antofagasta
the newcomers' camp

"we have to suffer a little, there's no alternative"

The houses were built
in a desert of cold night.
Their broken windows condemned
in the howling wind
struggling to barge in

The rest of the city, asleep,
ignores this part of the outskirts
Each morning they march
loads of workers,
caked,
heading to the copper mines

And they leave behind
dozens of gloomy chipboard houses
clinging to hills
like mussels to coral

The land is dry and they live in hope,
each one with a small amount of memories
and a number on their uniform pocket,
always going through the same disgrace,
men with new faces each time.

Migrants

The unforgotten footprint settles in the dust of tomorrow
Manuel Zapata Olivella

And not only them. Not only
the family, the parents,
the kids, not only the hairdresser
whose scissors arrive with another language
and the cook who converts her taste
into a room of memories.

Not only the woman who dances,
drums at her feet,
so that hours flow by
scaring away shadows of sadness.

Not only the voices, the bustle
in the market square
without a passport given by the wind

Against the Pacific, hands
not only fishermen
pushing cast nets
like blind birds
while a row of dogs
expect a trace of hunger.

And in a quiet corner
a teacher opens a book
where the imaginary inhabitants of a town
that was born without heaven wait.

Not only that someone
who caulks ships at the dock
so that time starts walking
in the sails of ships.

Not only women who,
tearing pieces of childhood,
braid their hair spreading
sun seeds.

They feel their way back with their words,
what once was,
next to the river of the night that crosses
their fear.

Poems dedicated to
Colombian migrants in Chile