

Rurrenbaque, Bolivia

Huge trucks pass
packed with people in scarves and jackets
with a chicken under each arm and a lone goat in the aisle.
Headed to market, to trade for lentils, rice, and
if three dimes are left, then maybe a little flour for baking.

Dust fills my sandals,
a jacket would be too warm for me.
Motor bikes bounce by
carrying three, four, and if they're lucky, five people,
all riding to town to fill their day with learning or laboring.
Not a wheel passed without
a faint howl at my fair skin
echoing above the worn motor.

Kilometer 13 I finally see.
Mangos tumble from my shirt.
Six sets of hands quickly sort the prizes.
Enano's toothless smile asks if they can eat now.
You'll spoil your supper I reply.
But with a quick wink and a soft smile,
I throw my Swiss his direction.

I sink into my tattered chair,
realizing the uncomplicated pleasure these boys have.
Gratefully slicing and salting their fruit,
they don't notice that a TV isn't blaring in the background,
or if I am on the phone.
For all the things we think they are deprived,
Maybe they have more of what we truly yearn.

Francesca Costerisan