Pilgrims

By Jacob Shores-Argüello

Costa Rica

The bus arrives in the orchid heat, in the place where coffee grows like rubies in the valley’s black soil. We disembark, walk in twos so we don’t slip on the genesis mud. The woman next to me carries three cellphones as gifts for cousins and a bucket of chicken to share. How is it that I have come this far with nothing, that I am empty-handed in this country of blessings? A procession of rust-colored macaws glides above us. Their ashy shadows draw crosses onto all of our heads.