

Esteban Rodríguez  
**Cupio dissolvi**

After weeks of desert,  
you stagger back, follow

the trail of things you dropped:  
wallet, shirt, rosary, rags.

And though you collect them all,  
vow to undo how fruitless

they've become, you forget  
your oath when you find,

amongst mounds of crushed  
water bottles and cans,

your shadow spilling from a torn  
plastic bag. Shriveled, scorched,

it flinches at first touch, squirms  
from jug to jug, burrows itself

beneath the sand, and when  
you snatch it up, squeeze it

with what strength you still have,  
it squeals, writhes, confetties

the ground as you smear it  
on your arms, jam it in your mouth,

and as you hoist what remains  
in the air, wave a piece,

to no one but yourself,  
like a tattered white flag.

Esteban Rodríguez is the author of *(Dis)placement* (Skull + Wind Press), *Dusk & Dust* (Hub City Press), and *Crash Course* (Saddle Road Press). His poetry has appeared in *The Gettysburg Review*, *New England Review*, *Shenandoah*, *TriQuarterly*, *The Rumpus*, and elsewhere. He lives with his family and teaches in Austin, TX. Visit [erodriguezpoet.weebly.com](http://erodriguezpoet.weebly.com).