

If Pope Francis signals the transformation of the Catholic Church, then this book—a powerful story of courage and mercy, of gutsy faith—embodies what Francis so perfectly calls “a poor Church for the poor.” Greg Jordan propels us into the midst of this gripping story of danger and redemption with the tenacity of a seasoned journalist.

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Conversion is a slow and complex process, however fundamental a part of the spiritual life it may be. Read this book: you’ll find yourself immersed in your own spiritual transformation.

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Gregory Jordan tells a moving tale of human dignity, faith, and love in the everyday lives of people struggling to survive in Borderland. Without ignoring the political realities and moral ambiguities, he finds genuine hope in the midst of despair.

◆ **MARK C. TAYLOR**, *Chair, Department of Religion, Columbia University*

Greg Jordan’s *The Saints Are Coming* examines the intricacies and possibilities of the relationship between the faith of the heart and the works of the hand. Like his subjects, the priest and the housekeeper, Jordan exhorts us to go in with our eyes wide open, to learn about lives and worlds that it would be easier to ignore. And he generously and empathetically reminds us that if you can see, you must act.

◆ **KAREN SHEPARD** *author of *The Celestials* and *Don’t I Know You?**

In this gem of a book, Greg Jordan quietly draws the reader right into the scene with three compelling characters as their relationship deepens—a committed missionary priest, his housekeeper, and the parish handyman. They develop a parish community in the face of daunting and deadly challenges in an impoverished Mexican barrio on the border where poverty, drug wars, violence, and exploitation dictate every day. The story is salted with their rich personal reflection. Jordan puts the reader right with them, saints living season by season with hope.

❖ **REV. OTTO HENTZ, SJ**, *Professor of Theology, Georgetown University*

This intense, riveting story grabs hold of you and won't let go. Back in my Hollywood days, this is the kind of eloquent and evocative book that I would have loved to turn into a compelling film. Gregory Jordan's grippingly vivid writing has a real cinematic feel to it as he presents very human, flawed, contemporary saints.

❖ **GERARD THOMAS STRAUB**, *author of*
The Loneliness and Longing of Saint Francis

Greg Jordan's terrific non-fiction account is not just stunning, first-rate reporting on the Catholic response to poverty and violence in Juarez, "the most dangerous place on earth," but an inspiring and fascinatingly intimate look at a Mexican parish from the perspectives of both its John Wayne of a pastor and his wise, resilient housekeeper. In its psychological complexity, richness of detail, and discerning sympathy for its main characters, *The Saints Are Coming* reads like a novel worthy of Graham Greene.

❖ **RON HANSEN**, *author of* *Mariette in Ecstasy, Atticus,*
and A Wild Surge of Guilty Passion

THE SAINTS ARE COMING

GREGORY JORDAN

A rebel priest,
a daring woman
and their years
of living
dangerously

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This book is based upon hundreds of interviews, archival research, letters, and personal journals. Conversations are replicated as precisely as possible according to the recollections of the participants. The internal thoughts and musings of Kevin and Rayna result from hours of reconstruction with the author.

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CONTENTS



| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| PROLOGUE | 1 |
| <hr/> | |
| PART I | 7 |
| <hr/> | |
| Baptism: 2001–2004 | |
| <hr/> | |
| PART II | 107 |
| <hr/> | |
| Communion: 2005–2011 | |
| <hr/> | |
| PART III | 215 |
| <hr/> | |
| Confirmation: 2012–2014 | |
| <hr/> | |
| READING GROUP GUIDE | 286 |
| <hr/> | |

Hic locus est: “Here is the place,” or simply hic, is a refrain that runs through the inscriptions on the early martyrs’ shrines of North Africa. The holy was available in one place, and in each such place it was accessible to one group in a manner in which it could not be accessible to anyone situated elsewhere.

PETER BROWN, *The Cult of the Saints*



They really loved this life; yet they weighed it up. They thought of how much they should love the things eternal if they were capable of such deep love for things that pass away.

ST. AUGUSTINE



*The saints are coming, the saints are coming
No matter how I try, I realise there's no reply
The saints are coming, the saints are coming*

THE SKIDS, “THE SAINTS ARE COMING”

FATHER KEVIN MULLINS KNEW THEY WOULD COME FOR HIM, BUT HE HAD EXPECTED, EVEN HOPED, THAT THEY WOULD COME WITH LESS CLICHÉ. Not a big truck rumbling outside in the moonlight; not the sounds of machismo echoing off the cinder block shacks; not the knock on the door that he heard now.

Nine years prior, in 2001, when he had started to work in the Rancho Anapra colonia, the dirtiest and poorest pop-up barrio in Juarez, Mexico, he had realized that he would have to deal with some tough customers. But God is a tough customer, he always told himself, tougher than the rest. And they obviously do not realize I am an Aussie, not a Yanqui, he would sometimes mutter under his breath before quickly reminding himself of the Christian virtue of humility.

But as his years passed in Anapra—and big guns attained the stylistic equivalence of male jewelry and grotesque murder the cultural equivalence of fistfights—the tough customers seemed to multiply and expand before his eyes. Puffed-up arms, thicker necks, chunkier bodies...though they still followed the Mexican soccer clubs, the thugs started to look more like the burly lads

from one of Father Kevin's native Australian rugby clubs.

Lately the calls had started to come to priests on Sunday evenings, the day of the big collection. As pastor for the past nine years of the parish of Corpus Christi, the only Catholic church in Anapra, he had given his telephone number out generously from the very beginning. He wanted to be easy to find. Marital quarrels, stillbirths, dinner invitations even to the most hungry homes, drug-addicted sons, disappearing daughters—if they called, he went.

But these days the bad guys were calling priests for money, and they had started to call him because, as any narcotrafficante could surmise, the Sunday collections were growing...solely because the size of his congregation was growing...largely because Anapra was the cheapest place to live in one of global capitalism's poorest boomtowns. But the calls were still just a nuisance, an interruption in what Father Kevin thought of as his perfect poverty at night in his threadbare home alongside all the adobe shacks and concrete hovels in godforsaken Juarez. He would listen, laugh, hang up, and return to the totalitarian quiet—but for the occasional chain reaction of barking dogs—of the Mexican desert that he and his neighbors were occupying.

But tonight, as he sat there afraid—yes, he admitted, finally afraid—he imagined the playing out of the cliché: take the keys off the hook on the wall as they hold a gun to his head; stumble down the dirt road to the church with a gun to his side; unlock the church, fumble with the lock to the sacristy, fumble with the lock to the safe until they push the gun into his neck; finally get the code right, open the safe, step back to show its perfect emptiness; and then either be shot or pistol-whipped in the face or, if they have a sense of irony, beaten repeatedly with the brass chalice that they would then carry off in hope that it might just be gold.

He had taken to hiding the collections—behind pews, under his desk, behind the toilet. Anywhere but the safe.

He stood up and pondered whether he should urinate before opening the door. The increasingly complicated relationship between his prostate and his bladder, he was sure, would worsen with nerves, and better to piss now before all the commotion began. But the next knock was softer, more like the tapping of a child than the banging of a thug, and he grew curious. He could still hear the voices in the street, he could still hear the big car rumbling, but the gentleness of the knock had undermined the cliché. He stood up, put on his robe, and walked to the door. The lock was meek, so he chuckled at the formality of having to open it.

He prepared himself to see the barrel of a gun pointing at his chest, but instead he saw kindly Juan Pablo, the one man he had met in this town who would build you a building without robbing you blind. Juan Pablo had built, almost single-handedly, the extension onto Corpus Christi in 2006 after years of crooked contractors and hard-won donations. He had built it cheaply and well, and when he had completed it, he had given money back to the parish.

The crown of his head only reached to the midpoint of Kevin's barrel chest. Juan Pablo pushed at Kevin's stomach and closed the door, fumbling for the lock.

He looked up at Father Kevin.

Juan Pablo's face instantly showed that he grasped the absurdity of locks in Juarez. Nevertheless, Father Kevin felt the urge to apologize to him, as if he owed the fellow who had come scurrying down here to risk his life for him at least the courtesy of a proper dead bolt.

The voices outside grew louder, closer, but they still were calling to each other. Were they searching for the right house? Were they that stupid? Maybe they weren't drug cartel guys after all. So who, then? The many shadowy faces of evil in Juarez made the answer less clear-cut than Kevin had used to suppose.

Sure, the narcos kept calling priests for money. But who was to say petty crooks weren't following suit? Then there was Pedro Zaragoza, the oil and milk magnate with whom Kevin had had a few tiffs, and with whom Kevin's colleague, Father Billy, had virtually waged war. Zaragoza wanted to redevelop Anapra to serve his new factory city, but he was too smart, and perhaps even too Catholic, to threaten a priest directly. The junkies, well, that seemed more likely: the collection could buy them all the drugs they would need for weeks. But they would never pull up in a big monstrosity like the one rumbling below. But the old-guard narcos wouldn't either. They were quiet, stealthy. These guys, the garish types, had to be some renegade branch, some uncouth offshoot of one of the cartels.

When he had first come here, the same mission he had begun repeating to himself at age 17, when he entered the Columban order back in Sydney, had stayed intact: "My duty is to praise our Lord by serving others." So clean, so rote. The searing Juárez sun had not bothered him for long, used to it as he was from Australia; the poverty had appalled him, but it also appealed to his urge for simplicity. For the first time in his life, here in this sprawling dump in the desert, his faith and his work and his own needs had merged harmoniously.

But now, over the past year and a half, it was changing. All those devils abounding out there, slaughtering teenage boys and young women, writing messages in blood on their torsos, cutting off their heads or fingers or feet. Ministering was turning into a war against evil itself, against the various faces of Satanás, and he was turning into the brawler he used to be as a boy. Yet no one could ever pin down who the bad guys were. That was the trick, the most devilish thing about Mexico. Nothing, no one, was obvious. He surely had some in his parish, some sons of Satanás, but they would show up to Mass with clean hands and pray and sing and trick everyone into thinking they were normal blokes.

Their name for the devil here sounded even more fearsome than the simple Anglo-Saxon of Satan. Satanás—the word gave him chills, and Satan was having his heyday here. Anger at this devil, not faith, was becoming Kevin's motivator. He lamented that shift some days; other days he relished it. And how appropriate to be brawling with the devil here in devil-may-care Juarez. Some nights, after a rum too many, he half-wanted the devil to come banging through the door.

After both men sat down, Juan Pablo put his hand on Father Kevin's leg and raised his other hand to his lips. He smiled slightly, and Father Kevin smiled back. I knew you were the kind of man one would choose to get blasted to hell with, Father Kevin felt like saying. I knew you were the sort to stay and go down with the ship.

The doors of the car banged shut one by one even though the rapid exchanges in Spanish kept on. An old woman who lived across the dirt road was speaking the most now, and Juan Pablo suddenly let out a laugh that he muffled immediately with his own hand.

"Dice la mujer que eres un borracho y no vales nada," Juan Pablo translated for Father Kevin. She says you are a good-for-nothing drunk.

Father Kevin was momentarily tempted to go rushing outside to defend his reputation. A drunk, that I will accept. But good for nothing? Then he laughed, too, and didn't try to stop himself. He heard other female voices calling at the visitors. The barrio was shielding him, he knew, and he felt a warm, caressing gratitude come over him.

The car grumbled into the distance, but Juan Pablo's hand stayed on Father Kevin's knee for a good while, and suddenly the priest felt again like Juan Pablo was the protector, the minister.

"Hijos de la chingada," Juan Pablo said.

Father Kevin smiled at him. Sons of bitches. But it sound-

ed so much better in Juan Pablo's bitter Spanish. More literally, he knew, it meant "sons of the fucked." Father Kevin wanted to say it back to Juan Pablo in agreement, say it like an old, angry Aussie with a bad prostate: hijos de la chingada. But he caught himself. He would muzzle his own devil inside. He would at least maintain the veil of holiness in front of his flock. But he said the phrase over and over to himself, and it sounded so right in his inner ears that he wanted to go out and shout it down the street through the dust at the knuckleheads as they rumbled off into the dirty Juarez night.

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PART I

Baptism

2001-2004

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CHAPTER ONE



Kevin

ON THE THIRD MONDAY NIGHT IN SEPTEMBER 2001, FATHER KEVIN DECIDED THAT THE WHIRLING SOUND OF THE DUST STORM OUTSIDE WAS THE SOUND HE WOULD CHOOSE TO ACCOMPANY THE APOCALYPSE. He had been sleeping poorly after five weeks working in the heat and dust and noise of Rancho Anapra, and had taken to spending Sunday nights, and even the occasional Monday, across the border in El Paso just to catch up from the week's insomnia. He didn't like that he had to retreat once a week; he admitted it felt like a small concession to defeat. So he soon decided to limit himself to Sunday nights only and to try to pray himself out of his funk. Earlier in the evening, as he had stepped through the door of the house that he had learned only after renting it had recently served as Anapra's most popular brothel, he had felt the sleeplessness stirring inside. Now, he stared at the moonlit concrete walls and saw, repeatedly, just

as he had seen each prior sleepless night, one of three visions.

First, the lush valleys and green, snow-topped peaks of rural Chile, where his mind would race to whenever he dipped into sleep for a few seconds. Now 47, he had spent the past twelve years of his life ministering to the peasant poor in Araucania, the volcanic region of southern Chile where the natural beauty insistently eased, ever so slightly, the pain of the widespread poverty of the indigenous people Kevin served.

Second, the ghosts of the clients and whores who, until recently, got and gave in this room and smaller bedroom adjacent. These images would attack him whenever the sound of the roaring trucks or howling dogs quickly stirred him from his momentary sleep.

Third, the cataracts of the rivers in Chile. This vision was prompted, several times each night, by the hiss and splatter of drunken passersby pissing on the wall the house shared with the main street.

His visions, he quickly realized, all had their auditory triggers within the overarching rage of the storm.

The rare moment of silence—when no truck was passing, no man was pissing, or no dog was barking—would elicit the sweet, almost aromatic, vision of the Chilean countryside. That image would last as long as it could, inevitably jarred by a drunk, a truck, or a bored dog inciting all the other dogs of Anapra.

So he had turned to the Rosary. He remembered his adoptive father's rosary, wrapped around his fingers all evening long after he came home from his work as the local magistrate in the Queensland State Justice Department in northern Australia. Kevin saw him dozing one afternoon, his Saturday Aussie siesta, his father used to call it, and not only was the rosary still in his hand, but he swore his father's fingers were still moving the beads and, what's more, his lips were still moving as he slept. This was the man who said to Kevin, when at age 17 he notified

his father that he wanted to become a Columban priest, "Are you sure they'll take you? Yes? Well, we'll take you back when they confirm their mistake."

As Kevin aged, and served, and saw the range of human suffering in the places he had worked, from Australia to Bolivia to Chicago to Chile, he came to appreciate his father's habit. There was a method to the madness of that chain of beads. So Kevin had taken to getting up, cursing the rude sounds and ruder darkness, pacing the floor saying the Rosary, and then laying down with the rosary in his hands, feeling himself falling asleep after two cycles of saying it, and waking with the still lethal September sun streaming through the tiny window at the top of the concrete wall across from his bed.

This night, he got up, felt for his rosary on the nightstand, and lay back down instantly, the image of his father already pleasing him. He felt his body accepting sleep more quickly tonight as his fingers passed the beads. He felt the storm diminishing and heard the sounds fading, and finally God granted him sleep.

The next morning, he laughed as it took a few seconds to unwind the chain that by now had twisted around his fingers and hand. He got up, opened the cheap curtain onto a desert street that was incompetently doubling as a city street, and walked out into the brothel's former barroom.

The rat that greeted him was bigger than his size 14 feet, he was certain, because it darted out and immediately sat atop his left foot. He felt it try to nose up his pants leg, but the bugger was too big to squeeze in.

He kicked it, and he would swear from that day forward that the rat paused, looked at him with disdain, then pranced over to a hole in the cabinet under the sink, and disappeared.

Father John Wanaurny, his new housemate who had been put in charge of reviving a tinier chapel a few minutes up the road in Anapra from the more central and larger church that Kevin

was attempting to resurrect, stood laughing at him. He had been watching the whole spectacle, Kevin realized, and looked like he had slept just as poorly as Kevin had. Their superior in the Columban order, based in Ireland, had sent them to Anapra to bolster the work of Father Billy Morton, another Columban missionary who had moved to Anapra in 1996 to build houses for the poor and assist the diocesan priest in the adjacent colonia of San Marcos. Indeed, they had come not so much to reinforce Billy's work but to formalize it. Kevin was to rebuild the parish of Corpus Christi and repopulate it with Anaprans who were being recruited heavily by all sorts of American evangelical churches setting up shop here; John was to rebuild the tiny chapel up the road as part of the comprehensive effort to geographically and spiritually reassert a church that many residents here in Rancho Anapra saw as either too corrupt or too cowardly to minister to them.

Kevin and John stood there shaking their heads at one another. John was in his late 60s, drank tall beers, ate a bowl of ice cream at lunch and at dinner, and, legend had it, still weighed the same as he did when he entered the Columban order forty years prior.

"Bloody hell," Kevin said.

"Indeed," John said, his Chicago guttural, an odd counterpoint to Kevin's Aussie brogue. "Morning has broken. They don't make nooses big enough to get around that bugger's neck."

Kevin went back into his room, nearly lunging for the rosary again to calm his nerves, but then decided, at the last second, on a cigarette instead. Cigarettes in the daytime; rosaries at night.



HE HAD GROWN TO LET HIMSELF LOVE HIS ROOMS, RATHER THAN HIS HOMES. The spaces into which he retreated during his missionary's life had become, for him, a sort of captain's cab-

in, a retreat from the hurly-burly of life above deck. The surrounding structure's location did not matter, nor its exterior architecture, nor its kitchen, living area, or view. But the lighting, mementoes, and the one comfortable chair, that perfect reading chair, became a soothing antidote to his rootlessness.

But here, where? The one chair in his bedroom, straight-backed and made of cheap, creaky wood, prohibited comfortable reading of the *Economist* and the local rag. Pacing his concrete floor, rats and drunken ghosts rambling about, all he could think of was how to find that perfect chair and lamp.

He walked back into the kitchen for more coffee and looked out the window above the sink. There were no sidewalks here. When the trucks and cars rumbled past, he could see their exhaust shoot into the room through the window. Sometimes he felt he could reach into a passing car and pluck someone's Coca-Cola.

He lit a cigarette, having learned long ago that a smoke fostered irony, the key to a missionary's survival. The chair, the chair. He needed to find a flea market or two, sit in a few, find the one chair that would at least make this place adequate to read—maybe even the Bible a bit, too—all the while sucking on a rum. That one luxury of a comfortable chair in which to drink and read.

Then he stopped. What are you doing? You have been awake for half an hour on your whatever-it-is day in the desert, and all you have done is think of yourself, your own needs. A smoke—yes, you're entitled to think of that first thing in the morning, that and its accompanying cup of coffee. But come on, mate, the chair. Forget about the chair for a while. Get on out there and do your work; you'll find a bloody chair soon enough.

There was no one in the streets as he walked to Corpus Christi this morning, only dogs. Indeed, a stray dog had already bitten John in the fanny the day before as it chased him down the street, and he had to get antibiotics or a tetanus shot or whatever

the hell it was the local doctor at the closest clinic had insisted he take. He felt for a moment like the town was playing a trick on him. Then he passed a bodega and saw a group of men gathered around a television, watching the unending coverage of the September 11th terrorist attacks in New York. Kevin paused to watch men watch the footage of the planes again, each man sitting mesmerized in front of the small set. He had decided that the fixation on the attacks around here was best explained by the fact that few Anaprans could conceive of the idea of such suffering across the border.

One of the men suddenly turned to him.

“Buenos días, Padre,” he said.

Kevin never wore a collar—he joked that the last time he wore one was at his ordination—and he liked to simply be called by his first name. So, how this bloke knew he was a priest, and had addressed him as such, perhaps with slight flippancy, peeved him.

“Llámame Kevin, sólo Kevin,” he said. Though he took to “Father” well, at this moment he thought a bit of assumed familiarity might help him break the ice.

Call me Kevin, only Kevin. He walked off, looked back, and realized the men had paid him no heed. He lit another cigarette. I came here to Juarez for the first time two years ago and left running, he thought. I loathed it. And I still do. But I thought there was need here. I came here because I thought I was needed. But I’m not. I’m wandering around here like the village idiot of Anapra. They are laughing about me when I turn my back, these chaps watching the destruction of their favorite neighboring country.

He lit another cigarette and stood in front of Corpus Christi, knowing he would be the only man to enter the church today.



HE HAD SEEN THE MOVIE *CHINATOWN* WHEN IT FIRST CAME OUT BACK IN AUSTRALIA, and realized quickly that the history of water in Anapra put the evil that the liquid had once spawned in Los Angeles to shame. Here, despite Anapra being an inexorable extension of Juarez for the past decade, there was still no running water save for the main street on which he lived. And that was intentional. Back in the early '90s, there were legendary street battles between police and Anapran squatters who marched on downtown in their quest for water. Back then, the city fathers didn't want Anapra to exist. All the maquiladora factories had clustered in the east side of Juarez, and the city wanted immigrants from the interior of Mexico to cluster there, too. The infrastructure was better; transport to work was easier; police patrols were more effective and economical. But the city didn't understand that poor people clustered where it cost the least to live, and that was in Anapra, way out here on the western edge of the desert. Here land was free, and squatting in the Mexican desert legally turned into ownership of that piece of the Mexican desert with little ado.

Father Billy, when he wasn't helping Anaprans repair their self-made shacks or building new ones with the special adobe and straw mix he had perfected, had devoted himself to the challenge of bringing water to Anapra. Kevin loved that about Billy, how he so dexterously weaved his work around an issue at all its levels. He would be downtown one day petitioning the water company, filing charges in court, meeting with urban planners and plumbing experts. Then the next day he would be installing a waterless toilet in a home which, without one, would quickly and literally become a shithole, given the desert sand's inability to hold waste.

One morning in early October, as he walked up the steep hill toward Lomas de Poleo, the southernmost part of Anapra extending into the Chihuahuan desert, Father Kevin still marveled,

as he did every morning he walked the streets, at the women carrying the big water jugs on their shoulders. There were only two water dispensaries in Anapra, and for people in Lomas, the walk to the closest one was still a good mile. How these women lugged the big jugs atop their shoulders and walked steady in the horrific sun baffled him. He followed one of the women up the final, steep hill that led into Lomas, and saw Billy's truck outside her home as she walked up to it.

Billy had masterminded and had almost single-handedly raised the financing for Anapra's waterless toilet project. And he was focusing it on Lomas, the fringe of Rancho Anapra, which itself was the fringe of Juarez. Billy loved the fringes, Kevin thought, and envied the man's single-mindedness. Billy had convinced Kevin to move to Anapra, even though, all during that three-day visit two years ago, all Kevin could think about was getting back to the greenness of the Chilean countryside. Yet Billy, and the people and their need, had haunted him so during those two intervening years that he finally capitulated. And each day now he was regretting it.

He came upon Billy on the side of the house, completing the installation of an overhead water tank that would give the woman's pack of children their first baths in a proper tub since they were born.

"Billy, I'm still cursing the day I met you," Kevin said, watching Billy begin to laugh even before he finished his sentence. Indeed, Kevin was increasingly appalled at his own inability to take root here and had begun to wonder if he had succumbed to a sales job. It had become apparent to him that very few people here had any interest at all in returning to the Catholic fold. They wanted help of the practical, not spiritual, sort. He was spending entire days alone at Corpus Christi, as was John at the chapel. They both felt like they had been assigned here in jest, or that Billy had overestimated their talents for anything beyond

leading Masses and communion classes—activities he realized Anaprans considered, he had declared to John the night before, nonessential.

“You see, we’ve lost our sense of the practical,” Billy said, turning on the water and smiling as the children inside the thin wall shouted in glee. “These kids will get hot showers, at least in the summer, and the house won’t smell like feces now that they have a proper toilet, and soon, I promise you, they and others will be knocking down your door on Sundays.”

Billy turned off the water, the kids shouting for more.

“Now help me gather up these tools, and we’ll go next door and get you a few more parishioners,” he said.

Kevin did as he said and, in the meantime, had already gotten what he had wandered up here for. Billy energized him. He energized everyone, the indomitable Billy Morton. And though he didn’t have Billy’s handiness with tools nor his patience for petitions and jurisprudence, Kevin resolved, whenever he was with him, to imitate, at least, the man’s gumption. Today he resolved to stop questioning his coming here, once and for all, at least for a little while. He would give himself a year. If no one came, if the parish hadn’t grown by then, well, then it was God’s will. That was his mother’s favorite expression. He could hear her saying it in her tiny kitchen back in Brisbane now, and he wished right now he shared her sort of fatalistic faith. But being around Billy made him think sometimes a man’s will was almost as strong as God’s, and to succeed in Anapra would require that sort of nearly sacrilegious will.

But neither man could realize yet that Anapra would find itself smack in the middle of a shift in city master planning. The city fathers, and a handful of plugged-in real estate speculators on both sides of the border, would soon spring a plan to build a maquila city out here, in the desert west; they would soon be making offers for this land in Lomas de Poleo that seemingly had

no value whatsoever, and water would soon flow with generosity. Land, not water, would soon become the resource in dispute. And Lomas would get her water but would have the land pulled right out from under her.



HE HAD BOUGHT HIMSELF A SEVERELY USED PICKUP TRUCK AT LEAST TO START LOOKING THE PART OF A PRACTICAL, SETTLED MAN but had a flat on his third day driving it and now another a few days later. This time the wheel started to rattle as he rode down the hill, and he knew the tire was so deflated that the metal disc was touching the road. There were tire repair shops all over the place, more like in Africa than Latin America, he thought. Flats in Chile had been relatively rare, even in the slums of Santiago, where he had ministered for six years prior to moving to Araucania. Despite the gnawing poverty in southern Chile, infrastructure was divine compared to the dirt roads of Anapra. In Chile, there was the regular pothole. Here there were what he could only call pits or desert sinkholes, tire traps that jarred his body whenever a wheel lunged into one and heaved its way out.

He stopped a few shops short of the closest tire shop to his house, steering so hard that he felt like he was dragging the car to the side of the road. He got out, and a boy jumped out in front of him from under a car parked on the side of the road.

The sun was so hot Kevin thought it would set gasoline on fire when he smelled the fumes from burning rubber clogging the air. He watched as the boy popped a tire as tall as he was off a big truck and rolled it with one finger over to the wall where a small barrel sat with steam coming out of it. The boy lit a torch under the barrel, and instantly the smell of burning rubber made Kevin start to cough. He took out his handkerchief to cover his