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Fig. 1. Terrace Park Cemetery, Holtville, California. Photograph by Victoria Hattam, April 1, 2013.

In Holtville, California, the county government buries undocumented migrants who have died crossing the US-Mexico border and places them in paupers' graves. Small cement bricks serve as headstones, each simply inscribed John Doe, Jane Doe, or Baby Doe. A few have proper names. Paupers' graves are located in a separate dirt lot behind the regular cemetery. No grass or flowers here. Holtville is not the only town to bury the undocumented. Eleven miles away, El Centro does the same. No one has a complete count of such graves. No town wants to be known for such cemeteries. When arriving at Terrace Park, the groundskeeper stopped us. He did not want to let us in. "Why are you here? Are you reporters? Are you here to see a loved one?" Yes, we thought, a political loved one. He let us in.

Victoria Hattam is a professor of politics at The New School for Social Research. Hattam has long-standing interests in political economy and identity. She is currently working on two projects: the first explores US-Mexico border politics, and the second examines new forms of manufacturing in Shanghai and New York.