

Tires Stacked in the Hallways of Civilization

By Martín Espada

5 Yes, Your Honor, there are rodents,
said the landlord to the judge,
but I let the tenant
have a cat. Besides,
he stacks his tires
in the hallway.

10 The tenant confessed
in stuttering English:
Yes, Your Honor,
I am from El Salvador,
and I put my tires
in the hallway.

15 The judge puffed up
his robes
like a black bird
shaking off rain:
20 Tires out of the hallway!
You don't live in a jungle
anymore. This
is a civilized country.

25 So the defendant was ordered
to remove his tires
from the hallways of civilization,
and allowed to keep the cat.