

Crossing Rio Grande

by [Tricia Gates Brown](#) in the [January 15, 2020](#) issue

No time for modesty when they say
take off your clothes. And here
you dress in the dark, keep eyes
closed making love with your wife.

Every stitch, they say, even the pregnant ones,
even kids. Other side, tack-cloth jeans
shimmied over wet skin faster than a glance.
No tell-tale river trail. This

land full of promise, promise, and naked
you enter. Your life of merit just hen-scratch
in the sand. No longer straight As,

boyhood entrepreneur, leader, *niño*. From here,
you build on this crime, on chaos and concealment
of your sad, inevitable gift. What can they even know

of such dignity, the reaching and pulling,
the leaping into air as thin as bliss?
What do they see of love's wild resolve
or the looping, malignant chain of need?