

Peter Orner (ed). *Underground America: Narratives of Undocumented Lives.* San Francisco, CA: Voice of Witness Series, McSweeney's Books, 2008. Pp. 379. \$16.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-1934781166

Reviewer: Jen Hofer¹

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Read this book. I could easily leave my review of *Underground America* at that—a three-word directive, heartfelt, impassioned, genuine, urgent. Read this book. There is of course much more to say, but in an important sense it is not mine to say. “I am trying to pay attention,” writes Luis Alberto Urrea in the foreword to *Underground America*. “How can we understand the problem if we don’t listen? How can we fix it if we don’t understand it?” (3, 4). Elsewhere, when writing about the work of translation and interpretation, I have repeatedly wondered what else there is to hear, other than that which is most proximately around us. How might we renegotiate our understanding of the world, through genuine and radically open encounters with perspectives very different, very distant, from our own? This book asks a different, yet related question: what might we hear if we were to listen to those most proximately around

¹ **Jen Hofer** is a Los Angeles-based poet, translator, interpreter, teacher, knitter, book-maker, public letter-writer, and urban cyclist. Her most recent books are *Ivory Black*, a translation of *Negro marfil* by Myriam Moscona (Les Fignes Press, 2011); the handmade chapbook *trouble* (Dusie Kollektiv, 2010); a series of anti-war-manifesto poems titled *one* (Palm Press, 2009); *sexoPUROsexoVELOZ* and *Septiembre*, a translation from *Dolores Dorantes* by Dolores Dorantes (Counterpath Press and Kenning Editions, 2008); *The Route*, a collaboration with Patrick Durgin (Atelos, 2008); *lip wolf*, a translation of *lobo de labio* by Laura Solórzano (Action Books, 2007); and *Sin puertas visibles: An Anthology of Contemporary Poetry by Mexican Women* (University of Pittsburgh Press and Ediciones Sin Nombre, 2003). She teaches at CalArts, Goddard College, and Otis College, and works nationally and locally as a social justice interpreter. Address correspondence to: Jen Hofer; e-mail: jen.hofer@goddard.edu.