

8 IS THE MAGIC NUMBER

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On the TV above the pho counter,
another mother forgives a cop
for killing her son. This one shot

8 bullets into the back of her *baby*.
She says *faith*, America. Her words
become Vietnamese captions

that stream across the screen,
but 8 remains a number. My wife
says *I can't take this shit anymore*.

The evening progresses quickly.
The sky becomes a purplish shroud.
A generation of murdered children sail

beneath it in a vessel that expands
to avoid excessive crowding. For
once, I wish the reporter would cry.

Outside the restaurant a green parrot,
perched on a bike, assures each
passerby that *8 is the magic number*.