



every breath feels the same ((Aya Aboudou))

Work Poem ((Ava Miller))

After What Work Is by Phillip Levine

Your choker breaks while you're waiting in the Work Award line. It was the one you had gotten at Claire's because you weren't edgy enough and you're expected to reinvent yourself even though you don't have any plans to in the near future. You just like chokers. The cheap clasp just gave out and now the silver heart studded with fake rhinestones is lost in the hard carpet. But you're next to fill out your first W-2, so you can't spend time looking right now. In the future you will go back home and accidentally recognize every local bumpkin as one of your college friends, but this is the opposite. You recognize the one ahead of you from high school. He is your comrade; your brother. You never thought you would see your brother outside of a Midwest football game at dusk. Here he is, and they hand paperwork to you after he leaves. He doesn't notice you and you keep their pen on purpose. You don't have insurance at the moment. Your brother leaves because he has tested into German 232. He gets added to their group chat and he rolls his eyes when he hears Du Hast Den Farbfilm Vergessen at the end of Sonnenallee – again. His new friends are different. Your new friends have hard features and don't ask questions when you tell them that your work award is \$2,700 and must go straight to your tuition. Your brother's friends cover up the last of their youthful acne with Swiss rosehips and sheep placenta. They go into town with their on-campus cars for pizza cooked in a brick oven. Your friends stop at taco trucks and have stickers that read "Buy Local" on their water bottles. His friends can't hear you with their airpods in. Your brother's friends play party games. They laugh as they tell him that he's the most likely to be a moocher. They say that he's the most likely to put cheap vodka in a Grey Goose bottle, and he can only sit there as they shove the card at him because it's true. You got the job. You have to wear tap shoes because you can't afford new ones, but that's okay. You see your brother as you leave your interview in ill-fitting shoes. He refuses to catch your eye.

I dream the country ((Elias Iversen))
I dream of the black rock
And the endless open horizon
I dream a frozen white lake
And the stampeding bison
I dream of the train
Rolling so sure ahead
I dream a golden sway of reeds
And where my life has led
I dream of a prairie
With hope and despair alone
I dream the promise of life
And the endless turning of stone
It's people in fervent loss
I dream the meeting of a river
And a border I can cross
I dream the buckle in the belt
And you at the end of the phone
I dream the open horizon
And a long way home

Searching for Home in Minnesota ((Karen Larinova))

First generation Americans often feel out of place in American culture and our home culture, so we have to create a third culture of our own. I find my own culture in these Minnesota moments that remind me of Eastern Europe.



Rafjorden, A Legends Name ((Elias Iversen))

I know the way this river runs
How it falls down the mountain
And breaks into a million pieces before landing
At the bottom of Rafjorden
Because I am high above the valley floor, peering
Just over the edge
So that I can see this colossal monument
Pouring tirelessly into the ocean
Sourced from endless gray mountains above
And ending in a green bay
With that one tree my mother showed me
(It was a single Salix, the tree of life, a remnant of legend)

Rafjorden is a legends name
A gift I received years ago
That July day was the most blessed day of my life
And I will always remember these two things:
The source of all life
And the way this river runs



Immigration Reminders ((Ana Paulina Morera Quesada))

Privilege card: college scholarship

Active leader: yes

Diversity: yes

Token status: active

Identities: female, brown, immigrant, low-middle class

I am doing the hard work that nobody wants to do
I am the Inclusivity Advocate without the title

I hold dialogue sessions about creating
Inclusive spaces on campus, because

Spaces here are exclusive for the Whiter majority.

Do I plan events out of passion or out of duty?
Are my efforts to include us or to educate you?

Inclusivity here is oblivious
While I complain for being exploited

Others have it worse,
And we do not stop to think about them

We are so focused on being online
Activists that we forget that real people

Need us now.

Do you know the names of the custodians?
Or the names of the people working in the
dishroom?

Do you say thank you? Or good morning?
Or do you just sit at your table and speak to your
white peers?

I have given up on kindness and settled on
individuality

I feel silly asking questions that no one replies to

“How are you?” [insert answer here] [silence]

I cannot go back home whenever I want to
I cannot expect my parents to solve my issues

I cannot be ungrateful for this opportunity
I cannot leave campus without thinking of
security

I cannot not think of being deported
I cannot afford to get sick

Everyday, questions flood my mind and make
Me question whether this was the right choice

Is my I-20 in order?
Are all signatures in blue ink?

Does this outfit make me look put-together
Or does it make me look suspicious?

Am I dramatic and complaining too much
Or is my silence complicit?

Do I greet the White officers with a smile
Or do I silently pray for my innocence?

An innocence that does not need to be prayed for
Because I will be judged for my passport either
way

How I live is limited by my visa status
As a nonresident alien, everything is

An alien is a person who is not from the United
States
An alien is also a term used to refer to a fictional
being from another world

I am treated as a being from another world
A specimen who gets the job done

Virtual fireworks glamorize the power hierarchy
“Congratulations you were accepted into college!
You are working for your future,
but also for the change needed NOW,
and all for FREE (except for taxes, those you need
to pay)

No, this is not included in the fine print.

Good luck, you young promising immigrant!”

can you read it? ((Aya Aboudou))



a car spins out on a romanian highway ((Ava Miller))

in an instant/a woman stays planted and compacted/her
only willing thought is interrupted by howls/that no one
knows they can make until they experience it in person/it
is some sort of latent animal instinct/a prayer for lenien-
cy/when one is desperate to avoid hunters/who only know
how to poach/to gain the useless potions and cures/after
the animal is already extinct/

but she does not know the ones out there/she was never
ready to be desperate/and besides/it is a thought she has
no time to consider/as her thought is interrupted/by blar-
ing horns and semi trucks/she cannot fathom the obscure
and useless purpose/that her corporeal form serves/the
chaos ends quickly/just like it always does/even though it
was more of a beginning really/and it is afternoon but the
stars are out/in a harsh accusatory red/that invades her
fragile space/she beseeches them/I just want to go home
and sort this all out/and she prays/but they tell her/that
she is their new star/

she has lost face in their eyes/not only has her visage been
lost to time and stardust and shrapnel/but no one knows
where the face is/she is useless in giving clues/she has
pressing issues that she cannot attend to/but the search
continues/until the red lights give up and present big
game/to a small but eager group of consumers/

the new audience she never wanted/sees her in the
moment/in which she was promptly discarded/by an
omnipotent god/a turquoise rosary on her neck/shows
her allegiance to the traditional creator/that wills every-
one and everything and every action into existence/no
matter how evil everything may be/much the same way/
this omnipotent god discarded her/and she is trapped by
the rosary on a car door/like she was a battered toy/that a
child tossed aside/

this god does not belong/to the ones who need a god
the most/the ones who look to the inside/but bypass the
inside that is truly beautiful/they see the sunset-colored
mural strewn across her baby blue shirt/and order eight
perfect roses/to place in between her broken fingers

and before anyone can stop it/the bile that is their love
spreads/to sustain themselves and others like them/or
to burn the throats of the ones that can help/because it
all boils down to biology in the end/the realistic-minded
ones heard that the body is 70% water/and they never
wanted to hear the crunch of the other 30%/

and she is there through it all/she cannot hear what the
others say about her/but she is in there/she will always be
in there/every smile/every tear/every sigh/every laugh/
every heartbreak/

everything she ever had/

cannot be reduced to red pixels/

blurry stages ((Aya Aboudou))



Placing our hope beyond the Mekong River
Now I arrive to a land taken over by westerners

Tsis paub lus hmoob
But I know the stories of my ancestors
They live in my soul as protectors
Protecting the hope

...

That one day we will find a place
To call our own
After leaving a place
(That) We once called home

...

Tsis paub txoj kev twg
Yog txoj kev zoo
Tsuas paub tias kuv yog hmoob
Then I don't need a place to call my own

Vim hais tias
Txoj kev tiag
Yeej yuav nyob
Hauv kuv lub siab

Koj Yog Leej Twg ((WFB))

Koj yog leej twg
Koj yog leej twg
Koj yog leej twg
Kuv yog hmoob zaj
With the blood---
Of rebels
Of wanderers
Of jungle hunters

Who became warriors and soldiers
That became survivors

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