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## Landed in America

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# Landed in America

**Abstract**

Poem about immigrant parents written by first-generation American.

**Keywords**

vera ekhator, poetry

**Disciplines**

English Language and Literature | Poetry

**Comments**

Runner-up for the 2017 Marion Zulauf Poetry Prize.

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## Landed in America

1.

My parents like to remind me  
that they came to this country  
on a plane and not on a boat.  
They were financially stable.  
Their only desire was to give us every  
opportunity they didn't have growing up  
in West African poverty. So, they came to  
the land flowing with milk and honey  
but what nobody told them is that, here in  
America, the bees are currently going extinct  
and the milk is treated with rBST.

2.

*This is what our country is coming to,*  
You mumbled these words to your table  
giving my mother a sideways glance.  
You didn't like her head wrap.  
She doesn't wear it for religious  
reasons, though, I guess that's  
what you thought.  
But...even if she did, so what?  
She wraps herself with  
the scarf because she's  
slightly insecure about her  
gray hairs yet too demure  
to dye them.  
To me, though,  
they aren't gray but silver  
no...

*platinum.*

Every single one of those  
platinum strands tells a story.  
Like the time a man stole her  
wedding band leaving instead  
a knife's gash in her  
right shoulder.

Or the several nights awake  
by my brother's side

as the doctors told her he  
may not last the night,  
may not win the fight.  
Nights she spent praying  
that my other brother James  
wouldn't live up to his name  
as the supplanter.

Let me tell you what our country  
is coming to,  
it is a place where  
people like you  
fail to wrap their heads  
around the concept that there are those  
who are different.  
A place where you can judge  
a woman by what she wears yet  
know nothing about how  
life's worn her.

The simple truth is that your statement,  
*This is what our country is coming to*  
says more about you than it does us.