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Landed in America

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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.