



At 14,

I immigrated wide-eyed with wonder  
Fell in love with the art of poetry  
How words can be sculpted into a story  
A chiseled frame  
Within this flimsy body.  
A boom boom on paper  
That, when read aloud, can hush a room.  
And make the silence be a crowd.

The first time I read a poem out loud.  
It was the very first time I felt these legs.  
Felt the caterpillars inside me bloom.  
And felt the butterflies leave an empty tomb.  
I found myself with the courage to be seen.

So after high school,  
Instead of reading books  
I was writing on napkins  
in bars where giants have stood.  
I traveled to places  
and performed in stages  
I would not dream.

Instead of learning how to drive.  
I drove myself.  
Thought myself  
Practice repetition. To remember:  
Hard word. Hard work. Hard work.  
I had a mouthful of poems  
Every day, to remember.  
Hard work. Hard work. Hard work.  
I would spend an hour a day  
Just reciting:  
Hard work. Hard work. Hard work.

But I quickly learned  
That when it came time to pay the bills  
...A poem, this poem is simply not enough.

