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A File

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A File

Star Angelina Murray, poet

There are days when things turn single file.
March into a room after paying five coyotes.
No more relatives, wife, or kids.
Here I stand with all of you in a country
deskless holding cell,
explain my life succinct
into foreign languages
convince you that my body fits into five boxes.
My potential for death
threat to my family
affiliation
membership
nationality
When my wife last waved goodbye
I imagined my country did not birth a state.
Earth makes my brown body its image
into a bird
granules suspended in air
sand stoned cliffs
bent wheat
forests of Douglas Firs
Awakened, I cross the blue ocean
into new borders
convince you I am not inadmissible
all I am is a file¹

¹ In the summers of 2010 and 2011, I spent time reviewing detainees' I-589 forms at the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington. My experience inspired the writing of this poem.