you ask me how
Khédija Gadhoum

Raise your words, not your voice.
It is rain that grows flowers, not thunder.
Jalāl Ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī

to my Spanish students

your inquisitive minds absorb the world
unscheduled and you keep curling
into my essence as if i were
the final destination of your
commuter line.

Africa away from Africa
and i am still learning
about trains at different speeds
without losing track of the gift of life:
enlightenment.

your education is mine.
we are all facing the same sky.

together we laugh at our own wandering
while you keep riding Cervantes language
Shakespeare keeps soothing my malaise
with his lullabies.

and we laugh.

and we recall our first, second,
and perhaps every school day
when you and i
were dreaming the impossible.

and we still dream.

you ask me how i think
you ask me how
in different languages
you ask me
how i dream and i respond:
it is simply human nature.

Africa sailing away from Africa
without boundaries
your sacred womb
despite all origins.

people define people at face value
but i am not the language you speak
and i am here to decipher
my africanness while welcoming
each one of you on-literacy-board
¡Bienvenidos todos a bordo!
education is a non-stop journey!

you write
i speak
and together we gather
our american experience
with dedication and gratitude.
finally when the bells ring
you
will be longing to leave your desk.

at last
your graduation momentum
carefully crafted by rainbows
of ink and vision. approaching.

at last you reach
the highest summit
of your new self.

and i become a blessed teacher.

Dr. Khédija Gadhoum specializes in contemporary Latin American literature and culture. She teaches Spanish courses on Latin American Film, Hispanic Cultures, Hispanic Literature, and Spanish Conversation and Composition. Dr. Gadhoum is also Spanish Study Abroad Advisor and Portuguese Program Supervisor. In addition, she is a creative writer. Her published work has appeared in national and international journals and anthologies: Afro-Hispanic Review, Negritud: Journal of Afro-Latin American Studies, Ámbitos Feministas, The South Carolina Modern Language Review, Dos Orillas: El Estrecho de Gibraltar, Frontera Literaria, Feministas Unidas, Inc., Humanismo Solidario: Poesía y compromiso en la sociedad contemporánea, Tus Letras Escritas, and Letras como Espada. Her poetry book, Celosías en ceño, was published in Madrid, Ediciones Torremozas, 2013, http://www.torremozas.com/celosias-en-celo. Her new poetry book más allá del mar: bibènes, will be published soon in Madrid, Spain, by Editorial Cuadernos del Laberinto, 2016. She can be reached at kgadhoum@uga.edu