

you ask me how Khédija Gadhoum

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

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*

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