

# JOLLE@UGA<sup>®</sup>

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## you ask me how Khédija Gadhoun

*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 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 celo*, was published in Madrid, Ediciones Torreozas, 2013. <http://www.torreozas.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](mailto:kgadhoum@uga.edu)