

Leaving the Land (Revised for website)

First published in NoVA Bards 2019; also in Bards Against Hunger, 10th Anniversary Edition

Why might we move?
Dazzling lights; derided farms?
Glamor, grit, or glory?

Threading throngs too many for sidewalks,
buses carry riders on roofs,
hanging from windows,
filling rear platforms – feet within,
swaying outward from the crowd,
one hand holding on.

Who wants to be one grain of sand among millions?

On the sidewalk, a woman lying –
eyes crusted white;
black rags hanging over
bones protruding, barely wrapped in flesh;
two small coins in a cup beside her.
Passers-by step over and around her.

Who cares to be this broken branch or these walkers?

Amid dry and dusty desert dunes,
arriving at the pyramids, a taxi slows.
Many hands slap and stick onto its windows –
hands of teenaged boys:
“Buy mine! Buy mine!”
They surround and breathe on tourists
exiting the taxi.

What sorrow sends young people to hustle school?

Maps of human flows give hints:
migrants pour into cities from cities
as much as from farms.
Movers choose city or oil field

over farm or empty desert.

Why? Does the land lack a living?
Would a drought end it all?
Swollen bellies; mournful eyes –
who wants these?

Why do cities grow and give work,
but land does not?

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Williamsburg, July 2019