



POETRY OF BELONGING

**CREATIVE MIGRANT
VOICES IN (THE) US**



Call for Submissions:

“Poetry of Belonging”

- Creative Migrant Voices in the U.S. -

Deadline: June 10th, 2023

Blank Pages is an organization dedicated to showcasing diverse voices in our global community. We are proud to announce an upcoming e-book and audio-visual TikTok collection titled “Poetry of Belonging” that will feature works from young American writers and artists with immigrant and first- and second-generation backgrounds who reside in or are from the United States.

We seek submissions of up to three short creative writing pieces that explore the themes of ***Self-Identity, Migration, and Dual & Plural Cultural Belonging***. The pieces can be written and/or in audio/visual format. The authors should examine and reflect on everyday and structural adversities they face in the U.S. because of their immigrant or cultural background.

We welcome beginners and professionals, published and unpublished authors, to share poetry, poetic prose, and creative nonfiction with us. We especially encourage young social media artists and writers of immigrant backgrounds to submit their work.

While the language of the collection will be predominantly English, we invite you to experiment with bilingualism and multilingualism. Belonging is a state of multiplicity. Therefore, the language of belonging is multiplicity as well.

We particularly encourage pieces on the following themes:

- ***Call Me by My Name*** - your name’s cultural and personal meaning and position in everyday US socio-cultural dynamics
- ***Dear Diary*** - a poetic fragment in the form of a diary entry narrating a day in your life in the US, real or fictional
- ***Roots, Routes, and Branches*** - a poetic piece describing lost, fractured, and ruptured multiple cultural “roots” we carry within

- ***Double Life(s)*** - a personal self-reflection on the duality of simultaneously juggling “Americanness” and your personal immigrant identity in public and private spheres and spaces
- ***A Letter To*** - a poetic letter to a person, object, concept, or idea that impacted your life either in the US or in your home country/countries

The audio-visual TikTok collection will be animated and edited by Nikola Lero, a Bosnian-born poet and Landecker Democracy Fellow. The “Poetry of Belonging” e-book will be edited by Lero and co-edited by Michal Musialowski, a Polish poet and Blank Pages co-founder, and Anna Ojacaastro Guzon, a St. Louis-based poet and a founder of YourWordsSTL, a non-profit that uses creative writing to amplify the voices of those who are marginalized.

Our goal is honest and transparent: to create an online space where voices from underrepresented communities can be heard.

To submit your work, please email up to three pieces to **lero.nikola1991@gmail.com** or blankpagesglobal@gmail.com until **June 10th**, 2023.

Follow [@poetryofbelonging](https://www.tiktok.com/@poetryofbelonging) on TikTok for updates - <https://rb.gy/ww08j>

We look forward to reading and experiencing your work.



Nikola Lero
Blank Pages co-founder and editor
Landecker Democracy Fellow

About “Blank Pages”

Blank Pages is a space where everybody can share their voices through arts and creative expression in a global context. Our goal is to nourish and promote intercultural connections among people living anywhere in a heterogeneous world and allow us to cross the physical and metaphorical borders surrounding us. *Blank Pages* promote dialogue based on free creative expression not limited to a specific language or medium. We believe in the universality of creative expression and its power to overcome the differences imposed on us by our societies. We believe there is a need for new spaces of dialogue and new perspectives on the future of the world that we want to create together. We commit to fostering new and inclusive approaches, methodologies, and open-source educational materials based on the principles of openness, intercultural dialogue, and cosmopolitanism.

<https://www.blankpagesglobal.com/what-is-blank-pages>

About “YourWordsSTL”

YourWordsSTL uses one-on-one tutoring, creative writing workshops, and collaborative writing projects to amplify the voices of St. Louis youth. We believe we can change St. Louis by empowering young people to tell their stories. Part of our mission is to provide a sense of consistency and security for these students by recruiting passionate, committed tutors and volunteers who are dedicated to attending every weekly session.

<https://www.yourwordsstl.org/about-us/>

About the coordinator:

[Nikola Lero](#) is a poet from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Fulbright Student Scholar at St. Louis University in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Currently, he is a UNESCO Youth Champion of Peace in the United Nations initiative "Social media 4 Peace" which tackles issues of polarization and xenophobia among young people in online spaces.

Nikola’s trajectory as a poet was heavily affected by his life as refugee with mixed ethnic and religious backgrounds during the Bosnian/Yugoslav war. This experience led to the publication of his first book in 2022: *47 poems about love, pain, and Bosnia*.

Nikola is a co-founder of [Blank Pages](#), a cosmopolitan art collective that focuses on the creative work of migrant communities worldwide. In 2021, he co-established *Literary Union*, a publishing house for young authors in SouthEast Europe. toured Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia, Germany, and Czech Republic with his poetry and organized many creative writing workshops focusing on cultural diversity in digital spaces. Currently, he is a [Landecker Democracy fellow](#) focusing on online cultural expression of immigrant communities in the USA.

**YOUR
WORDS** STL

**BLANK
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HUMANITY IN
ACTION

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This project is an independent initiative
by a Landecker Democracy Fellow.