

## **My Papa's Waltz**

**B Y THEODORE ROETHKE**

The whiskey on your breath  
Could make a small boy dizzy;  
But I hung on like death:  
Such waltzing was not easy.

We romped until the pans  
Slid from the kitchen shelf;  
My mother's countenance  
Could not unfrown itself.

The hand that held my wrist  
Was battered on one knuckle;  
At every step you missed  
My right ear scraped a buckle.

You beat time on my head  
With a palm caked hard by dirt,  
Then waltzed me off to bed  
Still clinging to your shirt.

## **I Hear America Singing**

**B Y WALT WHITMAN**

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,  
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,  
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,  
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,  
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,  
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,  
The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morning, or at noon intermission or at  
sundown,  
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of the girl sewing or washing,  
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,  
The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,  
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

## A Day Without an Immigrant, Dallas, Texas

BY SHIN YU PAI

At Pearl Street station,  
two brown-skinned men

in painter's pants stand  
out in a sea of white

I am just one more face  
sticking out in a crowd

& it is my privilege

that prevents me from  
understanding why

the workers want to know  
how to buy one-way trips

the automated machine  
sells only one roundtrip fee,

back to where you came from

he isn't asking me for change  
says it clear enough so that

there can be no mistake  
*Sí. Yo sé.*

*But a dollar fifty is a lot of money.*