**Miguel M. Morales**

**This Is a Migrant Poem**

This is a migrant poem

a farmworking poem, a poem that covers itself

in long sleeves to avoid the burning sun.

That drinks enough water to avoid

dehydration but not enough to get water sickness.

This poem carries a machete, a hoe, a spade,

a knife, shears, and a file for filo.

This poem walks irrigated rows collecting mud

on its boots that add five pounds to each foot.

This poem guards the cornfield where his sister,

his mother, and his cousins, squat to pee.

This poem ducks down hitting the dirt to avoid the

echoing crop duster spraying anti-poem toxins that

burn our eyes and throats.

This poem is egg and chorizo burritos in aluminum foil,

steamed shut by the heat waiting for you at lunch

in a foam cooler in the trunk at the end of rows of soybean. This poem.

This poem smells of blood—and meat.

This poem flows from carcasses into open drains

of slaughter houses, on kill floors, in chilled freezers

with knives cutting, cutting, cutting, cutting—always cutting.

They duct tape knives into this poem's hands

to cut even when its cut hands can cut no longer.

This poem is a gift of a strong back, of sturdy legs,

of silence, of patience.

And a never-ending work ethic

 a never ending work ethic

 a never ending work of ethics.

This poem shows you the bigger picture.

This poem is pragmatic, strategic, and erratic.

This poem reaches as it climbs ladders, as it stoops over,

as it pulls from branches, vines, as it unearths other poems

and tosses them into buckets and sacks slung across its stanzas.

This poem is paid by the word, by the piece,

by the hour, by the day, by the acre.

This poem has no benefits, no days off,

no health insurance, no childcare.

This poem is child labor. This poem is sexual assault.

This poem is deportation. This poem is missing wages,

broken vehicles, sunstroke.

This poem avoids irrigation ditches where

La Llorona hopes to drown it.

This poem knows she commands water and sends waves

of humidity and tempting mirages of cool rippling lakes.

This poem wears a rosary and a scapular and prays to St. Francis of Assisi

to protect them from snakes and rats that live in the fields

and to St. Michael the archangel to protect them from the farmer's son

who watches his sisters

 who follows his sisters

 who pulls at his sisters.

This poem wakes up early, works all damn day, sweats all damn day.

This poem always needs a shower to wash off the dirt, to wash out the dirt,

to wash away the dirt.

This poem goes to bed early to do it all again

 tomorrow.

This Poem is a Migrant Poem.

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**About the Poet**

**Miguel M. Morales** grew up in Texas working as a migrant/seasonal farmworker and child laborer. He is a Lambda Literary Fellow and an alumnus of VONA/Voices and of the Macondo Writers’ Workshop.

Miguel is co-editor of the forthcoming anthology, *Pulse/Pulso*, honoring victims and survivors of the Orlando shooting.

**About Green Mountains Review**

*Green Mountains Review*, based at Johnson State College in Vermont, is an award-winning literary magazine publishing poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, literary essays, interviews, and book reviews by both well-known writers and promising newcomers. For the past quarter-century GMR has produced issues of international scope with work regularly selected or cited in the *Best American Poetry, Best American Short Stories, Best American Essays, Best American Fantasy* and *Pushcart Prize* series; *The Boston Globe* recently cited GMR as one of the top ten literary magazines in New England. In 2012, U.S. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey selected *GMR* as one of the seven literary magazines she would promote at the U.S. Library of Congress during her tenure.