

MAYA ANGELOU AT CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

Poetry Month, 2019

We are Poets for the People
gathered tight
in a City College classroom
in the presence of Maya Angelou
resurrected by memory and love.

We rise
to speak her words
in Tagalog
Portuguese
Urdu
Spanish
French
Chinese

We rise in Hawaiian
in Tigrinya
in Arabic
in Japanese

With drum beat
and guitar strums,
we speak her words,
witness four hundred years
of resistance,
and emerge in silver sequins
like our ancestor the fish,
rising out of the ocean
to start life anew.

Poets for the People,
we seek that maternal
heartbeat of the earth,
holding us close,
then lifting us up.

In these new nights of terror,
what choice do we have?

Poets must do what poets do.
We rise.

Yes, they want to see us broken.
This is nothing new.
They want to shut us down
and shut us up.

But we are Poets for the People,
a black ocean
swelling with truth.

And Maya Angelou
in the Great Beyond?

We have her poem.
And we rise.