

## **For the Quaker Parrots surrounding the trees in the courtyard of Kashmere High School**

By: Deborah Mouton, Houston Poet Laureate

I have never seen you here before  
In the trees that overlook the broken road  
On the grounds that hold the spit of the forgotten  
Such a funny place to choose to inhabit  
With all the sunshine in Houston  
You pick here  
Off the beaten path  
Trailblazers of sky

I heard you once broke free  
From a crate that tried to enslave you  
Flew from the New York Coastline  
Looking for a sanctuary in ward  
Saw the lone star and double downtown  
And decided this was the place you would prove  
That man is still made in the image of God  
You made a home with those  
dedicated to keep close to the underestimated  
and every sun rising  
you spread your feathers over every tables  
As a sign that flying is still possible

Sometimes we need to be reminded  
That we are the Good Samaritan  
That we have hands that open  
That feel freer giving than throwing out  
We have underdogged many a time  
Only hold victory in our cry

In a country that's beginning to say well more than welcome  
Let us not forget that all of us came here once  
That none of our English is pure  
That our differences add depth of flavor to our roux  
Amen  
We are the ones that cannot sink  
the ones who help pull each other from the current  
we are built a city on the edge of a flood  
our streets have drowned  
Only to be rebirthed into prototype  
We are the ones who's boots are different hues  
but my Lord if their heels don't dig in the same  
if we don't flock to the same twang in our throats  
did we all not spread our wings  
not knowing if we would be destined to fall  
or be the pretty green thing in the courtyard  
that reminds us every morning  
that belonging is a state of being  
it is carrying the twig of culture in our mouths  
weaving together a nest to call it home or here or hallelujah or Houston  
and ain't we all a song  
beautiful to sing  
even if we don't understand the words  
we are built from?