

## Chapter 4

# POEMS FOR IMMIGRANTS

**Y**our own experiences or my words and logic may have convinced you by now that migration is okay. Other people are not as easily convinced by cold, hard reasoning. They would prefer a friendly poem instead of an argument. I like to read cold, hard logic instead of poems, but I also like to listen to music. The words that you hear in songs are really just poems. The best music and songs sell many copies that get played over and over again. Books of poems sell poorly and then sit for years collecting dust after you take them home, if anyone does. Even though my cold, hard logic said that I shouldn't have, I wrote 12 poems and included them in this chapter.

Titles of the poems are:

Not American Yet  
Let Yourself In  
Here in Bangladesh  
Have, Have Not  
Surface of Sphere  
Dr. Chen on Set-Aside Land  
Dred Scott, Afraid Not  
Our State: Stay Out  
Study, then Leave  
We, The People  
Musical Countries  
National Cages  
Global Happiness

Some of these poems just provide philosophy, some describe imagined events, and some describe real people and real events. Dred Scott was a real person who thought that he was free to migrate until the U.S. Supreme Court told him to leave Illinois and go back to slavery. One of my real friends from China, Dr. Chen, helped me to write one of the poems. I may have learned more about the United States from his questions than he learned from my answers during his sabbatical visit to Iowa.

One poem refers to several of my fellow graduate students, their spouses, and their children. The foreign students and I took all the same classes and received the same college degrees. When we graduated, I took one of the jobs listed on the college bulletin board and they took a flight out of the country. That's the law.

The final poem gives some general philosophy that may be worth a try.

The poems are written with verses and choruses so that eventually they could be composed into an album of songs. Right now they are just a chapter of poems. You should skip to the next chapter if you like songs but not poems.

## The Right to Migrate

### Not American Yet

Been studying, been practicing  
Learned the alphabet  
Been hoping, been praying  
But not American yet  
Gonna get there some day  
If it's nice, I will stay  
Who cares if your quotas are met

Citizen east, meet citizen west  
Sit at the feast, meet dozens of guests  
Citizen south, meet citizen north  
Thousands shut out, might fit in this fort

Been scheming, been dreaming  
My move is now planned  
Been packing, been waiting  
Time to cross Rio Grande  
Gonna make things that say  
Made in U. S. of A.  
Til you catch and deport me again

Citizen east, meet citizen west  
Sit at the feast, meet dozens of guests  
Citizen south, meet citizen north  
Thousands shut out, might fit in this fort

Been thinking, been asking  
What is right, who is wrong?  
Been living, been working  
Where I think I belong  
Gonna live life my way  
Where I'm born ain't where I stay  
Earth is small, we can all get along

### Let Yourself In

I love my part of earth  
I earned it by birth.  
You were born in a dump  
So you must clean it up.  
I don't care anymore  
To open my door.  
Keep knocking, I won't let you in.  
Keep dreaming, I won't let you in.

If you come to my country,  
I'll ask you to go.  
If you'd like to get lucky,  
My answer is no.  
Billions of you, what can I do?  
Freedom's nice, but it's not for you.  
Equal rights better not come true.

My country's so great.  
I'm in it, you ain't.  
Your country's nowhere.  
Feel free to stay there.  
You can ask til you're blue.  
I won't answer you.  
Keep asking, I won't let you in.  
Keep trying, I won't let you in.

If you come to my country,  
I'll ask you to go.  
If you'd like to get lucky,  
My answer is no.  
Billions of you, what can I do?  
Freedom's nice, but it's not for you.  
Equal rights better not come true.

Eventually you'll win;  
You'll let yourselves in.  
You'll realize some hour  
That with numbers, there's power.  
Use the new world order:  
Sue to get thru my border.  
Outvote me, and then you'll get in.  
Outvote me, and let yourselves in.

## Chapter 4

### Surface of Sphere

Earth's surface is just the right size  
Each person needs just a nice slice  
Each acre that's spare  
Equals some other's share  
Four times pi R squared

What we have here, is surface of sphere  
Turns once each day, circles sun each year  
Many square miles, some empty some dense  
Few continents, few billion residents

Australians, have very much  
East Asians, hardly enough  
We can't change the land  
We can change our stand  
We'll cross those lines in our sand

All of us here on this surface of sphere  
Turn once each day, circle sun each year  
Few continents, few billion residents  
Turn none away, let's be free not fenced

Longitude deals with time zones  
Latitude distance from poles  
From space, you're a dot  
There's space for a lot  
You decide your best spot

All of us here on this surface of sphere  
Turn once each day, circle sun each year  
Few continents, few billion residents  
Turn none away, let's be free not fenced

### Have, Have Not

Mountains of food, mountains of food  
We'd eat it all  
If we could  
Surplus of land, way too much land  
Export it all  
To Japan

Have, have not. We have, you've not.  
Border guards between us  
Put there by meanness  
A meanness that we have, you've not.

Happy people, pampered people  
Having it all  
Is legal

Poor foreigners, strange foreigners  
Stay outside all  
Our borders

Have, have not. We have, you've not.  
Border guards between us  
Put there by meanness  
A meanness that we have, you've not.

Our nation's big, our neighbors' trig  
Tells them we all  
Are like pigs

Wipe out your sin, wipe off your chin  
Invite them all  
To come in

Have, have not. We have, you've not.  
Border guards between us  
Put there by meanness  
A meanness that we have, you've not.

## The Right to Migrate

### Here in Bangladesh

*No luck before, no chair no more*

No luxuries before the flood  
Now all we have is mud  
No charity, no more disgrace  
Now we will leave this place

Not much to lose, not much to miss  
Just friends here in Bangladesh.  
We hope to move, we must confess  
From our home here in Bangladesh.

*Where should we be, my family?*

Where should we build our future house:  
Russia, Brazil, or Laos?  
Where should we raise our family:  
Ukraine or Italy?

Not much to lose, not much to miss  
Just friends here in Bangladesh.  
We hope to move, we must confess  
From our home here in Bangladesh.

*My friends just might reverse my plight*

My friends all say, write an essay  
To enter USA  
To whom it may, we'll come to stay  
Migration is okay

My words just might, reverse my plight  
Migration is my right.  
You'll see the light, you'll say all right  
Migration is our right.

Not much to lose, not much to miss  
Just friends here in Bangladesh.  
We hope to move, we must confess  
From our home here in Bangladesh.

### Dr. Chen on Set-Aside Land

Field real flat, what crop that?

Profound question, Professor Chen  
No mouths it feeds, we call it weeds

This farm dumb? His head numb?

His empty plot, earned him a lot  
My taxes went, to pay his rent

Why you waste, such big space?

These fields produce, too much for us  
If no demand, we set aside land

No one here, wrong time year?

Chen, you can see, our land's empty  
But you can't hide, you're set aside

Huge country, here I free?

You can be free, through '83  
You then must go, visa says so

Where you from, wasteful one?

From Europe's shores, my ancestors  
Fought Sioux for farms,  
Their land's now ours

Come your shore, billion more?

Immigrant ships, can't make more trips  
'Cause we control, these fields we stole

Unload boats, then count votes?

Chen I approve, it's time to move  
Malianwa, to Iowa

## Chapter 4

### Dred Scott, Afraid Not

Move this man back to misery  
He's not Dred Scott, his master is me

Haul these Haitians home to Haiti  
Ease back these blacks into slavery

Force these foreigners to flee  
And teach them each why they're not free

We're shocked and stunned  
Slaves must not come  
Straight from their slums to steal freedom  
Step on free land, we'll stop you and  
We'll ship you back, you stupid man  
Dred Scott, afraid not.  
Dred Scott, afraid not.

When will World War II expire?  
Erase these Asians from our empire

Rush these Russians to Red Square  
We have to have more room to spare

Irish isle lacks food this year  
We'll ship some chips, just don't come here

We're shocked and stunned  
They must not come  
Straight from their slums to steal freedom  
Step on free land, we'll stop you and  
We'll ship you back, you stupid man  
Dred Scott, afraid not.  
Dred Scott, afraid not.

Quotas keep our club empty  
No room for humans in this country

Dred's old dream is dangerous thinkin'  
We'll kick you quick off the Land o'Lincoln

Finally find your freedom, boy?  
No sir, master, not in Illinois

### Our State: Stay Out

We can't go to Chicago  
We'll annoy all Illinois

Strict new law restricts Utah  
For the best with border test

Gays and straights from lesser states  
Have been banned from Maryland

Delaware, you're well aware  
Voted for this quota war

Imitate, emulate  
Mighty nations mimic states  
Immigrate, escalate.  
Isn't nativism great?

Our state, stay out. Stay out of our state  
Fifty states, stay out. Stay out of our states

No new work so now New York  
Saves its jobs for native snobs

Tried in vain to hide in Maine  
They all first ask place of birth

Small Vermont has all they want  
Georgian cops yell foreign! stop!

Texas fear ejects us we're  
Just aliens like Mexicans

Imitate, emulate.  
Mighty nations mimic states  
Immigrate, escalate.  
Isn't nativism great?

Our state, stay out. Stay out of our state  
Fifty states, stay out. Stay out of our states

## The Right to Migrate

### Study, then Leave

One from Taiwan, two from Thailand  
Were my good friends,  
went back as planned

One Syrian, two Tunisians  
Were Iowans, now home again

Two from Kenya, four from Brazil  
I gained from you, I got no bill

Born on our soil, but Moms sent back  
To Cairo, Seoul, Brazil, Iraq

In U.S. you'll learn	philosophy
Study to earn	highest degree
No time to burn	school isn't free
When done return	to poverty

Pack up pre-doc, back to Peru  
Why you cry doc? China needs you

Why you wanna, stay and not fly  
To Botswana, to Uruguay?

Two found true luck, I watched marry  
U.S. to Dutch, U.S. - Chile

Once in awhile, we let you stay  
Mostly we smile, just go away

In U.S. you'll learn	philosophy
Study to earn	highest degree
No time to burn	school isn't free
When done return	to poverty

### We, The People of Earth

Beware when your rules limit life for me  
Be careful, it's cruel to crush liberty  
Men cherish pursuit of happiness  
Declare this old truth self-evident

Hear ye. Hear ye. Here is our call  
We pledge liberty and justice for all  
From third world to first  
Every person on earth  
Hears that dream from the past  
We'll be free, free at last

We do best we can, we obey golden rule  
We soon hope to end segregation, it's cruel  
But you may not enter,  
we take who we choose  
Exclusion again, immigration refused

Hear ye. Hear ye. Here is our call  
We pledge liberty and justice for all  
From third world to first  
We, the people of earth  
Have a right to move  
Cast your vote. It's approved

We're told that a wealthy minority  
Controls the world's working majority  
We know we can earn equality  
Be bold, demand world democracy

Hear ye. Hear ye. Here is our call  
We pledge liberty and justice for all  
From south pole to north  
We, the people of earth  
Seek more perfect union  
A new birth of freedom  
E pluribus pluribus unum

## Chapter 4

### Musical Countries

Round and round, glued to globe  
Gravity won't let go  
Change the law, let us roam  
Which nation should be home?  
Which country should you call home?

Take life slow, leave Tokyo  
Maybe go try Mexico

Hate success and high-tech stress?  
Start afresh in Bangladesh

Flee Great Wall, fly to St. Paul  
Head to mall, and have it all

Round and round, legally  
Disregarding gravity  
No more wait, your mass is free  
Go find opportunity  
Greater opportunity

City's full, you're sick of Seoul?  
Instead you'll love Istanbul

Stupid plan to pick Sudan  
Pack again for Pakistan

Mozambique's no easy hike  
Can Mom make Bombay by bike?

Round and round, a steady pace  
Lots of time and tons of space  
Plot your course, win your race  
Cross our line with happy face  
Cross our line, or smile in place

### Musical Countries

(continued...)

Like less toil? Let's live from oil!  
Rich and royal, on Saudi soil

Can't grow grain in dry Bahrain?  
Catch a plane, remain in Spain

Farm near Perth or work Fort Worth  
Find pay dirt on foreign earth

Round and round, you and me  
Census count makes us see  
Tons of space in some countries  
People waiting patiently  
People going to be free

Friendly Canada now plans  
No more ban on fellow man

Tensions ease, we cross the seas  
No more seized as enemies

Universe for you to search  
Foreigners, at home on earth

Round and round, it's bound to be  
Brave new world where all are free  
Bring me to reality  
Really do let all be free  
Really do let my friends be

## The Right to Migrate

### National Cages

In national cages the people keep still  
They exercise daily with little free will  
The zookeepers watch for a fight, for a thrill  
The fence is so strong it is wrong  
The border is, too, it's strong and it's wrong  
A nation so strong must be wrong

Who said zoos were fair?  
Who'd choose to bed there?  
To move is forbidden, instead you just stare  
Through bars and closed borders at lands that look spare  
So lucky do some nations' natives appear  
We're locked in our zoo once again one more year

In national cages we sit like an ape  
Not happy to stay, just scared to escape  
Afraid if we break out we'll miss our inmates  
The animals snooze and they lose  
Those caught in the zoo, they snooze and they lose  
The humans, they snooze and they lose

Who said zoos were fair?  
Who'd choose to bed there?  
To move is forbidden, instead you just stare  
Through bars and closed borders at lands that look spare  
How stunted do some nations' natives appear  
We're stuck in our zoo once again one more year

From national cages we finally escape  
We notice our neighbors are humans, not apes  
The guards in the way just open the gates  
The animals see us go free  
The humans do too, they know we'll be free  
The humans, yes we, will go free

## Chapter 4

### Global Happiness

How are you world? Heard you were blue  
Have you been harmed? Who would hurt you?

Humans were sad, but they had no excuse  
How to be happy? Here is a clue

Have you been told of this wonderful plan  
The highest of goals, the sum over man?

Youngsters and mothers, aliens too  
Do unto others as they should to you

Measure earth's happiness, treasure her sum  
Make sure earth has enuf, for everyone  
Smiles for the masses, geysers of fun  
Square miles of laughter, pleasure by the ton

Make sure we have, a heavenly time  
No telling how tall our total could climb  
Make sure we have, a heavenly climb  
No rush to run up the rungs, we have time

His, hers, mine, yours  
Increase the total, including your own

His plus hers plus mine plus yours  
Think of the total, instead of your own

Multiplication makes the sum grow  
Lots of locations creation can go

Add to earth's total, subtract what is owed  
Maximize happiness over this globe

Measure earth's happiness, treasure her sum  
Make sure earth has enuf, for everyone  
Smiles for the masses, geysers of fun  
Square miles of laughter, pleasure by the ton

Make sure we have, a heavenly time  
No telling how tall our total could climb  
Make sure we have, a heavenly climb  
No rush to run up the rungs, we have time

## **The Right to Migrate**