

The Contract Says: We'd Like the Conversation to be Bilingual by Ada Limón

Introduction: In the poem “The Contract Says: We'd Like the Conversation to be Bilingual” by Ada Limón, the speaker, presumably somebody looking to hire a poet for a speaking engagement, discusses her requests for the event with the poet. The poet (presumably Ada Limón herself) is someone of Mexican descent, and does not have a speaking role in this piece, as the conversation simply focuses on the requests of the contractor regarding the specifics of the speaking engagement. The requests, however, essentially suggest that the poet must sacrifice, omit, or refrain from speaking about parts of her history and heritage to appease the higher-ups in positions of power, and to make it seem as if they are more racially inclusive than they actually are.

These requests, obviously, are problematic with the speaker/poet, hence the creation of this poem.

Today, we are going to mockingly acquiesce to such ridiculous requests in the form of a letter, one that will be presented to funders and other groups who have a stake in this company's success.

Directions: Follow the steps provided below:

1. Read through “[The Contract Says: We'd Like the Conversation to be Bilingual](#)” by Ada Limón, paying particular attention to any of the poetic techniques or elements that contribute to the offensiveness of the contractor's request of the poet.
2. Write a letter (in prose) to the supposed funders/groups who have a stake in this company's success, people who would profit off of being attached to an organization that seems racially inclusive and diverse. Remember, this letter is supposed to be “tongue-in-cheek.” You're not actually thanking them for the opportunity to speak; you're condemning them for asking you to highlight your race and heritage in order for them to appear more racially inclusive. **Your letter should be no less than 400 words.**
3. After you've completed your letter, use the highlight function to highlight certain parts of your letter, discussing why you chose to include those words/details and how the poem inspired you to include them.

When you're creating these annotations, keep the following in mind:

- The purpose of the annotations is to show your understanding of the poem and its offensiveness. So, make sure that you include specific textual evidence from the poem to support your point.
- The evidence from the poem does not have to focus solely on the content; you have free reign to analyze the stylistic techniques, like the syntax, diction, etc., as well.
- You need to have at least FOUR annotations. And each of your annotations must be at least two complete sentences in length.

An example (an excerpt from the first part of a sample mock letter) has been provided for you below.

Example:
Dear _____, <i>Thank you so much for having me tonight. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to speak in front of you, especially considering all the hard work and money that you've been putting in to make this such a racially inclusive space! Years ago, I never dreamed that a poor brown girl like me selling pinatas filled with tacos in Tijuana, Mexico would ever be speaking English in front of a crowd of such esteemed and respected white people like yourselves. I hope that my presence alone has brought you joy and inspire you to keep giving money to organizations like this one that save people from destitution, much like myself.</i>

Your Letter:
<i>*Must be no less than 400 words and include 4 annotations that speak to the inspiration behind your ideas.</i>