

if you are selfless enough to think
that your dreams did not start with you,
you're right.

it started with your ancestors,
with an immigrant boat bobbing through the water
with rough hands
with no college degree, only brains.

it didn't start here
it started in your home country—
no, i mean your home country.
thousands of miles away, a dream was born:
to escape the third world
to create a better life
to have their dreams cross borders
 into a place unknown
 unwanted
 yet necessary

it started with sacrifice
it is painted with blood and lost hours
it is survived between teeth and tongue.

you'll find the reason you started in
the meat of your favorite foods and
the wrinkles of your hands—
the roughness creates grip, it's your ancestors saying
we built you to hold on,
please hold on.

so when you feel like things are tough
and you are not tougher
and the world seems to be saying screw you
and every day seems like a bad day
and it seems like all you can spit out are good poems about bad things

remember

you are built to last,

after all
you are the compilation of the best parts

of your ancestors.
after all
you are their dream.

and you will last.

—remember why (you started and why you must finish)

aka: me answering the application prompt “how have you prepared for this position”