

# The Contract Says: We'd Like the Conversation to be Bilingual

By Ada Limón

When you come, bring your brown-  
ness so we can be sure to please

the funders. Will you check this  
box; we're applying for a grant.

Do you have any poems that speak  
to troubled teens? Bilingual is best.

Would you like to come to dinner  
with the patrons and sip Patrón?

Will you tell us the stories that make  
us uncomfortable, but not complicit?

Don't read the one where you  
are just like us. Born to a green house,

garden, don't tell us how you picked  
tomatoes and ate them in the dirt

watching vultures pick apart another  
bird's bones in the road. Tell us the one

about your father stealing hubcaps  
after a colleague said that's what his

kind did. Tell us how he came  
to the meeting wearing a poncho

and tried to sell the man his hubcaps  
back. Don't mention your father

was a teacher, spoke English, loved  
making beer, loved baseball, tell us

again about the poncho, the hubcaps,  
how he stole them, how he did the thing

he was trying to prove he didn't do.

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