

America there's a lot that I don't know, and I know that's what you'd want me to say.  
The weight of any education I get only seems to matter if it makes money for someone who  
doesn't need any more of it  
But you're playing a losing game  
You can teach the rules but you can't immunize from a feeling  
From understanding that violence does not belong to you and that I do not consent to be  
governed  
I ask you who is consenting here  
America, home of the brave, land of the free to join or starve.  
America, where eviction didn't kill a woman in Portland, hypothermia did.  
America where the military industrial complex didn't kill cousin John, ISIS did  
America where the police didn't shoot Jocques Clemmens, but his own recklessness somehow did.  
In the 1970s, academics in the US predicted the end of incarceration in the criminal justice  
system –  
That imprisonment and solitary confinement are not in fact effective as a means of rehabilitation  
and that someday we would employ alternatives to incarceration, even for the much fussed-over  
"violent criminal".  
But now you wouldn't know it, because nowhere else in the world houses more criminals, is more  
efficient at shuffling people around at the margins and at shrugging their shoulders and then  
claiming to be apolitical. Like politics is a career path that they just happen to have a lot of  
airtime for on television.  
You trap us once in physical boxes, America, only to release them into the next box, this one  
now on paper, probably to be passed back and forth a few times before something finally breaks.  
You keep these prisons in depressed ex-manufacturing towns. Why, America? Because you took  
away their mining jobs? That wasn't us, that was the environment people.  
You ask the question "Have you ever been charged with or convicted of a felony?" Check the  
box yes. Don't get a call back. Ah well flipping 99c burgers shipped in from South America  
doesn't pay the bills anyway, but crack cocaine does.  
"Law and Order"? Sounds great, they say, mugshots of melanated men flashing across their  
television screens, coded in plain sight. Michael Dukakis wanted to send rapists and murderers  
out into your communities, thank god we saw it coming. Thank god we always see those  
immigrants coming.

Hey America, I think the people are the job creators  
Where there are *people* there is work. Just think a little harder America, I know you can do it, I  
know how you've always got the best in the industry, the highest IQs.  
People need community spaces, people need good nourishing food. They need to be unalienated  
from each other, to speak the language of their neighbors and teach those neighbors their own.  
America, where a lack of healthcare didn't kill our uncle, cancer did.  
America where, well, I'm socially liberal, but fiscally conservative. Ah, the free-thinking  
independent: free from the guilt that your leaders would see someone fired for being gay, free to  
ignore the violence of poverty.  
America, just tell us, what is your plan? Are you really leaving us at the mercy of Melinda Gates  
to get our IUDs and family planning services? If not her, who? Warren Buffet? Is Tim Cook the  
man we look to for protection from a surveillance state? Are they making an app for that?  
You talk democracy but Tuesdays are work days. Remember, America?

And you pit people saving for their hospital bills against those who are fighting for their ancestral lands against those who are trying to move their business to god knows where else that the taxes are lower.

America when you say free, I hear irresponsible. I hear violence. I hear, "everything is fine". America you've gotten so good at turning exploitation into marginalization and making that sound like we've won something. And I see you, coasting on the pretense of normalcy, of a quiet life, of aloof contentment, talking profit margins and untapped markets with whoever else can afford that bullshit game.