

3-27-2024

The BreakBeat Poets: Translocal Placemaking in the Contemporary Midwestern Lyric

Andy Oler
Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, olers@erau.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.erau.edu/publication>



Part of the [African American Studies Commons](#), [American Popular Culture Commons](#), [Hip Hop Studies Commons](#), [Latina/o Studies Commons](#), and the [Music Performance Commons](#)

Scholarly Commons Citation

Oler, A. (2024). The BreakBeat Poets: Translocal Placemaking from the Windy City. *American Studies*, 62(4). <https://journals.ku.edu/amsj/article/view/18477>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Publications by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact commons@erau.edu.

The BreakBeat Poets: Translocal Placemaking in the Contemporary Midwestern Lyric

Andy Oler

In the introduction to the Haymarket Books collection *The BreakBeat Poets: New American Poetry in the Age of Hip-Hop* (2015), co-editor Kevin Coval asserts that the anthologized poems are not simply influenced by hip-hop; “these poems *are* hip-hop.”¹ The anthology’s focus on a genre, a cultural phenomenon, might seem like an odd fit for a special issue on placemaking. Its national frame might seem too expansive for the study of regionalism (though there is a history, established by James Shortridge, of conflating the Midwest with the nation).² But *The BreakBeat Poets* is also attentive to more precise versions of “the public cultural spaces of hip-hop praxis.”³ Coval exemplifies those spaces through two long-running events in Chicago, a DJ set and an open-mic night, which leads to a discussion of literary events and spaces across the country. At the core of both this book and the series it inaugurates is a relationship between hip-hop and place. The introduction poses it like this: “Hip-hop invited us to write. To do what Gwendolyn Brooks told thousands of young writers in Chicago and everywhere: tell the story that’s in *front* of your nose.”⁴

The BreakBeat Poets has been followed by three volumes in the BreakBeat Poets series: *Black Girl Magic* (2018), *Halal if You Hear Me* (2019), and *LatiNext* (2020). Though the series is international in scope, each volume has multiple Midwestern threads: Haymarket is located in Chicago, each volume has at least one editor who has lived in the Windy City, and many of the poems explore places and experiences throughout

the Midwest. They also represent experiences and scenes that take place in other regions or float above them as concepts and ideas. As a result, none of the volumes can be categorized as simply local, regional, national, or global. This is in part because of the poems' assiduousness, as well as the way they move among and between, both within individual poems and from page to page. Still, the spatial awareness built into the series leads to reviews emphasizing each volume's development of community. Alex Billet recognizes an attempt in *The BreakBeat Poets* to show how hip-hop "culture has sought to bring these fractured pieces of everyday life back together."⁵ In *Black Girl Magic*, according to Sequoia Maner, the collection's "vernacular vibe and womanist energy" becomes the method by which the collection attends to "the continued marginalization of black women from within and outside of their own communities."⁶ Similarly, Mark Eleveld finds that *Halal if You Hear Me* "is a literary home for the Muslim community and a platform for female voices," and Darshita Jain notes that *LatiNext* "immediately establishes a community isn't a monolith."⁷

Because the poets and editors formulate these communities variously as physical or conceptual, and with scopes ranging from the home to the world, I read the BreakBeat Poets series via its crossings. In this article, I approach both the series and the poems within it through the frame of translocality, which anthropologist Clemens Greiner defines as "sets of multidirectional and overlapping networks, constituted by migration, in which the exchange of resources, practices and ideas links and at the same time transforms particular places."⁸ The four volumes of this series display each of these elements: overlapping networks of identity and culture informed by individual and historical migrations, which highlight both personal change and broader transformations due to the anthologies' and specific poems' juxtaposition of multiple experiences, modes, and affects. Building on arguments by Peter Mandaville, Lara Dotson-Renta, and Jahan Ramazani, this article treats translocality as essentially generative, in which the scalar range of translocality produces experiences and identities that are not beholden to a singular space or form.⁹

Similarly, with respect to studies of the Midwest, this article engages with studies of specific places but in the context of circulation. Because of the Chicago connections of Haymarket Books and the series editors, it would be tempting to approach these poems in light of William Cronon's argument that Chicago functions as the central hub through which the region's economic and cultural flows must pass.¹⁰ Though Chicago is one of the localities presented in these poems, I also take a lesson from José Limón's argument that Mexican American migration de-emphasizes urban centers and fixed regional identities in favor of circulation between places.¹¹ As a result, I treat the region more along the lines of the decentralized models proposed by Kristin Hoganson and Shane Hamilton.¹² This article also builds on studies of Midwestern hip-hop, which similarly

focus on the relationship between multiple spatial nodes and identity discourses.¹³ For example, Alex Blue V describes Detroit hip-hop in terms of crossings between white and Black spatial imaginaries. More broadly, Lara Rößig argues that the lack of a defined Midwestern hip-hop scene has resulted in assertions of local difference that rely on both comparison to other regional hip-hop styles and the absorption of national trends.¹⁴

The poems I examine in this article demonstrate their translocality through a similar combination of circulation, relationality, and dynamics of scale. Among the primary objects of analysis, I begin with several poems located in Chicago but gesturing beyond it by linking to experiences in Mexico, memories of the border, and family in the Dominican Republic. The article then moves outside of the Windy City, with poems set on a front porch in Saginaw, Michigan; in a small college in Ohio; and in secondhand memories of Detroit and Cincinnati. I close with a poem that obliquely returns to Chicago but involves migrations all over the United States and is anchored in a memory from a bar in Enid, Oklahoma. Though the first set of poems is drawn from *LatiNext*, I analyze poems from each of the four volumes, surveying many others and building toward synthesis. Therefore, in its clear ties to Chicago, as well as broader regional, national, and global aspirations, the BreakBeat Poets series offers an ideal venue for the expression of translocality. The poems included here balance transnational cultural narratives with the localized placemaking of contemporary lyric poetry. As a result, both the series and many of the poems within it resist explicitly locating themselves in any one place. Centering the collections' Midwestern poems shows how, taken together, they acknowledge the complexities of constructing contemporary identity in a single location—especially when those places have been dotted across a sprawling, amorphous region.

***LatiNext* and Translocal Chicago**

The most recent volume in the BreakBeat Poets series is also the most overtly translocal. The poems in *LatiNext* articulate identities, feelings, and cultural practices that are inflected by different elements of the poets' lives and histories. In the introduction, co-editor Willie Perdomo suggests that the transformative potential of translocality is at the heart of the volume. He writes, "Poets, voluntarily or not, consciously or not, are engaged in a moment of resistance to definitions, monolithic stereotypes, and outmoded ways of looking at the Latinx experience."¹⁵ The introduction is itself translocal, because Perdomo signs it from Exeter, New Hampshire, where he teaches at Phillips Exeter Academy, and recounts the audience's energetic response to a Spanglish poem he read on a portable lift in a plaza in Santiago, Chile. The introduction may not be written from a Midwestern perspective, but the collection—like the rest of the BreakBeat Poets series—has significant Midwestern ties, starting with co-editors

José Olivarez and Felicia Rose Chavez. Olivarez grew up in Calumet City, Illinois, and calls Chicago home. He worked at the Chicago poetry slam competition *Louder Than A Bomb* and served as marketing manager at Young Chicago Authors (YCA), where Chavez worked as program director. Chavez grew up in New Mexico but spent time in Louisville (which, in the name of unsettling Midwests, I'll argue should be considered a Midwestern city) and earned degrees in Iowa and Illinois. Furthermore, in contributor bios, several *LatiNext* poets locate themselves in Chicago, and the city is well represented in the content of the poems.

Victoria Chavez Peralta claims the Chicago suburbs as home, and their short six-line poem, "When Collin Chanted 'Build the Wall,'" conjures the experience of growing up Xicanx in Berwyn and the surrounding area. The title also serves as the poem's first line, and when Collin taunts the speaker, "the teacher didn't say anything, / and the rio grande started / to drown [their] father again."¹⁶ Unprotected by the teacher, the child is left to fend for themselves, overtaken by the memory of their father's perilous journey crossing the Rio Grande into the United States. At the end of the poem, after their father has been pulled from the river, the speaker has to "swallow him." In this moment, the child suppresses both the memory and their reaction in front of their classmates, an act of self-preservation that reads as both necessary and regrettable. Gabriela Arredondo might argue that the speaker's experience in this classroom is, in one sense, an example of "the forced realization of one's place, one's identity, one's relation to others from Mexico, and how those elements are negotiated in the particular circumstances of the moment."¹⁷ Arredondo contends that Mexican immigrants to Chicago and the United States more broadly share the experience of negotiating their connection to and apparent performance of Mexican identity depending on their immediate context. In this classroom, Collin's racism asserts the speaker's Mexicanness, and the speaker's subsequent suppression of emotion and memory attempts to minimize the immediate effects of that act of labeling. If there is regret in the tone of the poem, it seems linked to the way the child felt the need to remain stoic.

The translocality of "When Collin Chanted 'Build the Wall'" becomes visible in its two settings: an elementary school classroom outside Chicago and the memory of a specific river crossing more than 1,000 miles southwest. Crucially, the memory may not be the speaker's. Though the speaker says, "i had to drag my dad out," the sentence clarifies in the following line that this act happened in the classroom. In this poem, it is an emotional rescue more than a physical one. These lines do not foreclose the possibility that the speaker is reliving an earlier moment in their life—which remains a distinct possibility in the world of the poem. However, Peralta's commentary on the poem implies an autobiographical element; in a newspaper article following the publication of *LatiNext*, they recount

a personal experience of teachers not intervening when other students would chant “build the wall, build the wall.”¹⁸ Later in the same article, Peralta mentions that they were born in Berwyn, indicating that they were not present for their parents’ initial immigration into the United States.

Even so, within the poem, it is possible that the speaker crossed the border with their parents, either for the first time or on successive crossings. Marcela Cerrutti and Douglas Massey find that “most of those crossing the border in any given year are not new but experienced migrants.”¹⁹ Furthermore, in the early twentieth century, Ana Raquel Minian describes Mexican migration to the United States in terms of its “circularity,” though she notes that patterns changed after the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965.²⁰ Alicia Schmidt Camacho similarly marks a pattern of migration and return that is disrupted by the U.S. government, though she examines the effects of the 1994 passage of the North American Free Trade Act and subsequent increases in law enforcement on the border.²¹ Regardless of whether the poem’s speaker was present, both the act of crossing and the dangers of doing so have implications beyond the moment of crossing. Specifically, Peralta explains how immigrant experiences resonate beyond individual lives: “It is hard to carry... When your parents are immigrants and they share their stories with you and share their pain, you have generational trauma.”²² In this reading, both the speaker’s memories and the poem’s translocality become more complex—a memory of place that has been passed from parent to child and then negotiated and made the speaker’s own in the context of xenophobic students in a suburban Chicago elementary school.

Translocality appears in multiple ways in “When Collin Chanted ‘Build the Wall,’” from elucidating personal and family histories to articulating the links between a specific, emplaced moment and broader discourses. Returning to Greiner’s definition, migration enabled the speaker’s translocal experience, and the classroom scene recounted in this poem—in which a child’s racist act provokes a trauma response—demonstrates one way in which translocality “transforms particular places.”²³ Beyond the transformation of the classroom, this poem shows how translocality adds new dimensions to our understanding of the concept of place: “It implies a ‘transgressing’ of locally bounded, fixed understandings of place and at the same time emphasises the importance of places as nodes where flows that transcend spatial scales converge.”²⁴ Peralta’s poem rejects locally bound understandings of place in the way it blends the experience of the classroom with the place-based memory of their father’s river crossing. It also highlights that Berwyn classroom as a place where discourses of immigration, nationalism, white supremacy, and grief converge.

Mandaville highlights translocality’s dynamic sense of scale: “As I understand it, then, the transnational—or, in my preferred terms, the *translocal*—is a space in which new forms of (post)national identity are consti-

tuted, and not simply one in which prior identities assert themselves."²⁵ Mandaville notes the slippage between transnational and translocal, which, in one sense, underlines a difference of scale. In another, he suggests that different transformations may be revealed depending on which part of the population or text you're focusing on—origins or current practices. The family origins of Peralta's speaker establish "When Collin Chanted 'Build the Wall'" as a translocal poem with transnational characteristics. However, focusing on the speaker's moment of public grief amplifies their developing identity and the ways they must suppress both the memory and their emotions, at least partly because of the teacher's inaction and lack of support.

Other Chicago-based poems in *LatiNext* portray similar translocality, as predictable but erratic interactions among different parts of their speakers' lives mean identities must be negotiated, as Arredondo writes, in "the particular circumstances of the moment."²⁶ Julian Randall's "Translation," for example, juxtaposes the speaker's inability to speak Spanish with the deaths of family members in the Dominican Republic. In the moment of the poem, his mother acts as "the translator / of the dying," and the speaker laments his lack of connection to family, especially that "an inventory of my tongue / yields nothing / that looks like my mother."²⁷ In this poem, family members' deaths parallel the speaker's loss of language—which becomes an avenue for self-castigation, because "it just became inconvenient to remember / Who wants a language for the living anyway?" Thus, the language loss enabled by migration turns into grief, becoming a central element of this speaker's identity at the moment of a phone call in his mother's house.

Melissa Castro Almandina articulates translocal grief differently in "Re-generation Spell for the Grieving Soul," which links folklore and symbolism with personal experience and memories of family members. Throughout, objects become the containers for translocal memories: *savila* evokes the speaker's experience with her sister at a "racist stockyard job," and the recipe specifies that you must include "*avocado mascara* from the Mexican grocery."²⁸ Written mainly in English but salted with Spanish phrases, the spell also requires each of the four classical elements; the first of these speeds through associations of lightness to arrive at family mythology: "*Il air: feather; cigarette (faros); las carcajadas of my dead tías / who drank mezcal & fucked different men. the ones who turned into owls.*" In this poem, the spell's ingredients are italicized, and the words in regular type vary between explanation and instruction. Syntactically, in these lines, "air" introduces the list, whereas the rest of the italicized portion represents the element in some form, drawn more firmly into relationship by semicolons than they would have been by commas. Furthermore, each part of the list evokes a more substantial meaning, suggesting that the semicolons are functioning more to link independent clauses than join parts of a serial list

(also, there is no further punctuation within the list, so serial semicolons are not grammatically necessary). In this list—an implied compound-complex sentence—the lightness of feathers leads to Faros, a brand of Mexican cigarettes, which then evokes the laughter of the speaker's dead aunts, who expand from confident social and sexual personae into wise, shapeshifted afterlives.

Even if they wanted to, the speakers of these poems could not simply replicate their parents' cultures. Because of migration, and the distance between their parents' origins and the speakers' present experiences, they must create, in Mandaville's terms, their own "new forms of (post)national identity."²⁹ In these poems, the child's suppression of shared memory, the lament for cultural and linguistic loss, and the spell turning totems of memory into personal regeneration function as new combinations of the overlapping and multidirectional networks of translocality. As such, they transform experiences of longing, loss, and grief—of being separated from something that matters—into a personal identity structured on the negotiation of multiple place-based discourses, experiences, and memories. Collectively, we might see them in the light of Mike Amezcua's closing argument in *Making Mexican Chicago*: "the story of Latino community formation ... has been the story of the pursuit of sanctuary even when it is far from reach."³⁰ Many of the poems in *LatiNext* follow this pattern, imagining sanctuary alongside their representations of grief, loss, or struggle. For instance, Castro Almandina offers a way to regenerate, to transmute loss into dreams. Randall wonders whether, in his mother's dreams, he is able to speak Spanish. Peralta's other poem in the collection, "Dios te salve, Maria," activates the Virgin Mary as a queer-supporting buddy: "*no problem, pendeja.*"³¹

Translocal Midwest

Though Chicago has been an important nexus for Latinx communities in the region, seeking sanctuary in *LatiNext* is not limited to poets from the Windy City. In "Our Love on the Other Side of This Border," Minneapolis-based Anaïs Deal-Márquez describes the longing of imagining what if a lost relationship had taken place across the border in Mexico, and Monica Rico's "Poem in Consideration of My Death" imagines a near-perfect final day in her hometown of Saginaw, Michigan. In a review essay, Ignacio Carvajal addresses the range of approaches taken by *LatiNext* poets: "The provocations of the poets in the collection can certainly be fruitful in continuing to dislodge homogenous conceptions of what is here termed *LatiNEXT*, hinting at a (perhaps otherwise!) future or futures."³² In terms of the collection's work to expand limited, homogenous views of Latinx cultures and identities, Perdomo's introduction, titled "Breakbeat, Remezcla," amplifies the remix, contending that there is no "singular authority" on the Latinx experience.³³ One aspect of this resistance is the way *LatiNext*

remixes experience and space, unsettling popular understandings of both Midwestern and Latinx communities.

What draws these Midwestern *LatiNext* poems together is the way they link both actual and counterfactual pasts to imagined futures, which has implications for Latinx identity formation, as well as this collection's engagement with space. Taryne Jade Taylor describes the complexities and possible generative aspects of Latinx Futurism, arguing that it "calls into being a science fictional identity category: that of the impossibly diverse yet also unified Latinidad. Recuperating Latinx identity as a unified category that both recognizes and elides the trauma of colonization is impossible in the world we know, but through their music, Latinx Futurist hip-hop artists build a new world."³⁴ Taylor does not define Latinx Futurism according to artists' use of science-fictional tropes. Rather, it is futurism because it projects an identity category that sidesteps actual and historical contradictions. The poems in this collection are not overtly science fictional, but they similarly show the impossibility of Latinx identities that, in Taylor's words, both recognize and elide the effects of colonization.

Such identities may be impossible in the world as it is, and accordingly Taylor asserts that the work of Latinx Futurist hip-hop is to "build a new world." *LatiNext*, which as part of the BreakBeat series specifically labels itself hip-hop poetry, shares the goals of acknowledging a range of experiences and producing hitherto unimagined forms and identities. According to Taylor, the interplay of past and future leads to the spatialization of identity: "in bearing witness to the past and reimagining the present from an interstitial perspective, Latinx Futurists call an alternative future into being."³⁵ Taylor's sense of Latinx hip-hop's interstitial identity creation is useful in considering how *LatiNext* develops a regional imaginary. Specifically, interstitiality suggests the stitching together of two parallel aspects of identity—this is not an intersection, per se, but a linking of conterminous categories. In this way, by building something in spaces between, interstitial identity creation is both bounded and expansive. This seems particularly fitting for a region with unsettled boundaries like the Midwest, where both the central aspects and the interstices are always being negotiated.

LatiNext builds a new world explicitly by engaging with local Midwestern spaces, particularly as translocal experiences stitch them together with other places. Limón argues that such interstitial linkages are a key feature of U.S.–Mexico immigration: "For many Mexican Americans, such specific, though fluid, U.S. trans-localities may turn out to be their central social definition rather than either discrete, fixed regionalisms (south Texas, northern New Mexico, East Los Angeles) or a generalized transnationalism between ancestral home countries and the United States."³⁶ According to Limón, Tejano migrants brought cultural and political experiences from Texas to bear on their lives in the Midwest, and vice versa. Not only does this represent many ways that locality both fits into and influences larger

narratives, but it also indicates how addressing Latinx experiences may cause Midwestern studies to define the region less as an originary space and more in terms of circulation within it and among other regions.

The translocality of Rico's "Poem in Consideration of My Death" becomes clear in the depiction and significance of food. Rico describes herself as "a second-generation Mexican American who grew up in Saginaw, Michigan,"³⁷ and this poem balances the representation of the speaker's family home with the fluidity of translocal identity development. The first line of the poem tells us the speaker will die in Saginaw, and the rest imagines her final day on Earth—a pleasant Sunday with her family. The preparation and consumption of the family meal feature prominently, beginning with the speaker's death after her mother cooks Sunday dinner (enchiladas, rice, a lettuce and tomato garnish), the speaker scraping her plate clean with a tortilla chip. At other points, she acquires ingredients and helps prepare the meal: "I know I am dead as we drive to pick up tortillas, / the last stop every Sunday."³⁸ At the end, clarifying the speaker's postmortem connection to family and place "the salt and sour" of a lemon is her "final taste of this planet."³⁹ These Mexican dishes, purchased and prepared at different spots in a small city in Michigan, exemplify the translocality of Midwestern Latinx family life. As Himanee Gupta-Carlson shows in *Muncie, India(na)*, familiar food and types of cooking are some of the things that draw immigrant communities together in small Midwestern cities.⁴⁰

In the middle of the poem, when the speaker recalls preparing a meal on her grandmother's porch, that family connection becomes readily apparent:

The day will slice itself into a lemon
splay its fingers and clean the salt
from its nails as we roll our tortillas
on Grandma Rico's porch⁴⁰

In this moment, a lemon functions as a symbol for the entire day. On one hand, it's possible to understand the day as transforming itself into a lemon—this personified ingredient as an active participant in the meal they're preparing. On the other hand, the syntax of that act, "the day will slice itself into a lemon," reads more like the day, as in the experience of being with family, is putting itself into the lemon. I interpret the slicing, then, not as separation but as insertion. If the experience has been imbued into the ingredient, the speaker's final taste is of family, of cooking together, of the intimate act of spreading your hand and cleaning your fingernails among people you trust. Regarding this poem, Rico said, "Food is a way for people to communicate with each other.... That's where we get together and do things in harmony."⁴¹ In the same interview, she described her family's privacy, which suggests to me that this poem is about those

unspoken things—the acts a family shares, their experience of the world around them, and their shared histories.

Rico specifically emplaces those experiences and histories in Saginaw, but she is attentive to both the Mexican and the Midwestern aspects of this story. She has said she began writing because “I wanted to write about the experience of a Midwestern Mexican in Michigan growing up around... the decay of the General Motors empire.”⁴² Brett Olmsted argues that Mexican migrants to Michigan historically have engaged in similar cultural negotiation: “Mexicanos certainly integrated U.S. and Michigan cultural norms into their own lives, however, this was not a one-way transmission thrust upon them. Rather, it was a negotiation of cultural retention, assimilation, and appropriation actively fostering the creation of the new cultural identities—identities that would change over time and among generations.”⁴³ Though Olmsted focuses on the mid-twentieth century rather than the turn to the twenty-first century (or thereabouts), as Rico’s poem does, the speaker of “Poem in Consideration of My Death” similarly constructs an identity melding cultural practices retained from her family with the places and activities of life in Michigan. Certainly, the enchiladas prepared by the speaker’s mother and the tortillas she rolls with her grandmother show an aspect of Mexican culture that has migrated to Saginaw. There are also parts of the Saginaw space that seem to predate her family’s arrival, including the “car lot on State Street” that the speaker visits with her dad. Their discussion of the cars’ sparkling red finishes recalls the heyday of Michigan manufacturing, but the feeling is cut by an “abandoned parking lot covered in dandelions.” This reminder of factory closings, coupled with the nostalgia of the speaker and her father’s conversation, demonstrates just one aspect of the shifting negotiations of translocal identities in late-twentieth-century Michigan.

Furthermore, these aspects of the built environment—a used car dealership, grandma’s porch, nature reclaiming a parking lot, the place you pick up tortillas on Sunday—are the stages for translocal experience. Like the lemon, they also become the containers for that experience. Rico thus shows both the depth and the range of Latinx translocal experiences in Midwestern spaces, an exemplar of the project undertaken by *LatiNext*. At the end of the introduction, Perdomo writes, “Welcome to this *somos más* moment.”⁴⁴ Though this is not exclusively a Midwestern project, Perdomo’s claim that *we are more* implies some of the challenges taken up by this volume. In this way, it echoes Sujei Vega’s *Latino Heartland*, which “accounts for the thorny reality of representation and belonging in a midwestern landscape mistakenly imagined as homogenous, English-speaking, and free of political controversy.”⁴⁵ Vega notes that most Latinx people in her study were drawn to places in the Midwest through pre-existing social networks (a term I use in an old-fashioned, predigital sense). Thus, *somos más* might be seen as taking ownership of the spaces and

stories from which Latinx people in the Midwest have been excluded—at least representationally. Reading Rico’s poem in terms of its translocality helps address the family’s belonging in Saginaw and acknowledge the path they took to get there. This mixture of spatial and temporal experiences facilitates both the collection’s and Rico’s futurism. For Rico specifically, it makes possible the picture of a future Saginaw in which the speaker and her family perform the intimate, mundane tasks of life in the Mitten (of course, that future is couched in the speaker’s imagined future death, a complication typifying Vega’s thorny realities).

Such depth of connection is thrown into sharp relief by BreakBeat poems that recount translocal experiences outside their home communities, in which claims on belonging become questions. In *Halal If You Hear Me*, Vol. 3 of the BreakBeat Poets series, Safia Elhillo’s “Ars Poetica” tells of a college classroom in Ohio in which white students and professors laugh at a story about the speaker’s grandfather using the wrong word in a restaurant. The speaker describes her grandfather “retreating in his old age to his first tongue / in which there are no separate words for *like* & *love*,” then repeating to a waitress, “*i love tomato soup*.”⁴⁶ As she is narrating this incident, the audience’s reaction takes her aback:

& the white students & the white professors like my story
they think i mean it

to be comic the room balloons with their delight
they are laughing
at my grandfather & it is my fault for carving tender-
ness from my old life

without context parading to strangers my weak trans-
lations⁴⁶

That there are multiple professors in the room and everyone is described as a stranger suggests that the poem’s speaker is a guest of the college, not an employee there. The speaker’s unease is expressed both in her self-doubt and in the structures of the lines. Throughout the poem, every line except the first and last has at least one gap in the middle of the line. They serve as punctuation—mostly periods and commas, though occasionally a question mark or just a pause. In addition, they might be read as implied line breaks. In this section of the poem, each of the lines is enjambed, with the portion following the gap completing its meaning on the following line. These gaps have the effect of suggesting a possible restructuring of the lines, a structural instability that mirrors the speaker’s uncertainty. It also implies how the story and the event might be refigured—both in the telling and in the format of the event—consistent with

a nonhomogenous Midwest, which links to Taylor's sense that futurism is expressed the construction of a presently impossible identity.

The complications of identity formation wend through *Halal If You Hear Me*, which centers on "writing by Muslims who are women, queer, genderqueer, nonbinary, and/or trans."⁴⁷ Co-edited by Elhillo and Fatimah Asghar, this volume is similar to *LatiNext* in its representation of migrations, both domestic and international, but includes fewer overtly Midwestern poems than the other BreakBeat anthologies. That's not, however, because of a lack of Midwestern connections. Asghar based her Emmy-nominated web series *Brown Girls* in Chicago and lived there while she was "first finding her 'poetic voice.'"⁴⁸ She also worked as a teaching artist at YCA, with which Elhillo has also been affiliated (though, to my knowledge, only temporarily). Elhillo was born in Rockville, Maryland, and has lived and worked across the United States, as well as internationally.⁴⁹ As a result, she says, "I have a very casual relationship to place. I think it's because I spent so long longing for a deeper relationship to a place that I felt like was never going to be accessible to me."⁵⁰

Elhillo's claim of a "casual relationship to place" does not seem to account for the event in "Ars Poetica." The poem's first words, after all, place the scene "in Ohio." That said, the college isn't named, and Ohio functions (both here and in popular discourse) as a stand-in for white America, substantiated by the audience of multiple white professors and the repetition of "white students." Beyond these generalizing functions, this poem recounts a specific experience, which leads to the expression of a specific structure of feeling: of a young Muslim woman, invited as a guest speaker to a college classroom, who is nonetheless othered within that predominately white space. The poem's final lines portray the sinking feeling of both causing the audience's laughter and being a traitor to her own family as she tries to "redirect the laughter to a body not my own / for a moment of quiet inside my traitor's head." In short, because of this experience of difference, she questions her belonging not only in the room but also to her family.

In this poem, the speaker is trying to cope with her discomfort by redirecting both the audience's laughter and her own thoughts. "Ars Poetica" is built around a moment of suppressed emotion in the face of inappropriate white responses to a family memory, similar to the suppressed emotion and evoked memory of "When Collin Chanted 'Build the Wall.'" This develops a picture of the Midwest that highlights racial and cultural difference, encouraging family connections even as it stresses them. Rico, Peralta, Castro Almandina, and Randall, among others, show this duality in *LatiNext*. They're joined in *Halal If You Hear Me* by Elhillo, as well as southeast Michigan's Inam Kang, whose "When You're Brown with a Hand-Me-Down Bike" recounts a bike theft and an older brother teaching forgiveness. Aisha Sharif's "Hot Combs and Hijabs" begins on

the periphery of the Midwest, celebrating the complexity of the speaker's mother who is stylishly navigating the Muslim community in Memphis and balancing travel to "meccas of black Muslims" like Detroit with family trips to the St. Louis area.⁵¹

These poems may imagine sanctuary, but that safe space is not the Midwest, though it may be in the Midwest. Furthermore, they do not always find it in the moment of the poem. Sometimes it is implied after the work is done, upon proper reflection, at the end of a road trip, or in an undated future once the contradictions have been resolved. This blend of promise (of sanctuary) and lack (of resolution) has been articulated in studies of translocality in hip-hop. Dotson-Renta argues that global hip-hop songs "create a kind of translocal cipher, a generative space in which the local medium of hip-hop is deployed globally to rhyme and beatbox the way to fresh designations of community and enunciation, creating a grounding for the landless that deploys routes to devise new roots."⁵² Translocality offers a way to encode and decode both text and experience, and according to Dotson-Renta, there is specific promise in transplanting forms into new places. Thus, Elhillo's, Peralta's, and Randall's speakers feel disconnected—landless and unsettled—but *LatiNext* and *Halal If You Hear Me* present such feelings as part of the generative process. Rico, Castro Almandina, and Sharif have started to resolve some of those problems of landlessness by finding methods to connect and to enunciate communities and ways of belonging.

Translocal BreakBeat

By enunciating translocal Black and brown Midwesterns, the BreakBeat Poets anthologies challenge the stereotype of a homogenous white Midwest. In so doing, they present a regionally specific version of H. Samy Alim's claim that "translocal style communities" form around hip-hop fashion and culture.⁵³ *LatiNext* and *Halal If You Hear Me* foreground migration as a key characteristic of translocal communities and experiences, but the series' first two volumes approach the matter differently, as they demonstrate most clearly Marcyliena Morgan and Dionne Bennett's understanding of hip-hop as a translocal form.⁵⁴ This argument is adapted and amplified through the study of lyric poetry, which Ramazani contends can be "translocally redirected, remade to address proximate circumstances."⁵⁵ *The BreakBeat Poets* and *Black Girl Magic*, each featuring several poems built around hyperlocality, code-switching, and transhistorical imaginaries, show how focus on the geographically proximate can also have translocal resonances. As a result, they exemplify Ramazani's assertion that attending to the translocality of lyric poetry resists the instantiation of "monolithic cultural blocs,"⁵⁶ which echoes Perdomo's introduction to *LatiNext* and suggests how poems in all four volumes join together to offer a complex picture of the vast network of contemporary lyric poetry.

Black Girl Magic, co-edited by Mahogany L. Browne, Idrissa Simmonds, and Jamila Woods, filters its attention to place through the representations and experiences of Black women. According to Woods, the title phrase offers “permission to be expansive, to contain multitudes, to embrace contradictions and juxtaposition within myself and among my sisters.”⁵⁷ This volume was conceived when Browne performed a rough draft of the poem, “Black Girl Magic,” at an event in Chicago and then pitched the collection to Coval.⁵⁸ Browne is based in New York City, which Simmonds also claims, along with Vancouver, Haiti, and Jamaica. Beyond the origin story and its publication by Haymarket, *Black Girl Magic*’s Midwestern bona fides—at least on the editorial level—come from Woods, a poet and singer-songwriter from Chicago who has released two critically acclaimed albums, *HEAVN* (2016) and *Legacy! Legacy!* (2019). She has also been associate artistic director for YCA and an organizer for Chicago poetry slam competition Louder Than A Bomb. Woods’s poem, “N,” describes the speaker learning to code-switch among different aspects of Black communities, demonstrating the kind of precise local migration that white people in her life have not been forced to undergo. Like “N,” other poems focus on the work of Black mothers and grandmothers, including “Boxes of Andromeda,” by northeast Ohio’s Athena Dixon, and “Poet Imagines Creating a House in Rockwell Gardens,” by Chicago’s Ciara Miller. In these, the speakers’ depictions of mothers become the vehicle for them to consider their own positions in the labor of maintaining family and creating community, the details of body and home anchoring the poems not only in a place but also in a moment.

“Pulling Teeth and Answers Before Dying,” by Michigan native Ajanae Dawkins, combines the valorization of Black womanhood with family stories about intraregional migration. Dawkins’s poem is structured as a conversation with the speaker’s grandmother, interspersed with personal—and presumably unstated—reflections about the connection between the speaker’s and her grandmother’s experiences. The poem’s translocality becomes visible in the grandmother’s move from one Midwestern city to another, prompted by the drunken, irresponsible behavior of her husband:

probably wouldn’t be you
and your six girls in Detroit.
A house you bought
with yo dime.

*Because of her, I sovereign
myself. Cobblestone tongue
build the road I walk on.*

Probably still be Cincinnati. Still
 be one bedrooms and
 Girls who flinch at the front door⁵⁹

Just before these lines, the speaker tries to reframe her grandmother's move away from her husband as a positive development resulting in social and financial independence. In the italicized internal monologue, it becomes clear that the grandmother leaving has influenced the speaker's own development. Structured as a realization in response to the grandmother's story, the speaker claims, "*I sovereign / myself.*" The grammar works in two ways—with a dropped "am," sovereign functioning as an adjective describing the speaker's autonomy, or with sovereign as a verb, highlighting the speaker's development of her independence. Both indicate how the grandmother's actions have influenced later generations, with the granddaughter developing a translocal identity based on specific family histories.

In this sense, the speaker's personal identity is bound up with the grandmother's acts, as well as the locations—cities, apartments, and streets—where those acts took place, which each have complex historical and social considerations. José Alvergúe shows how such multilayered experiences shift between personal and social scales. Building on geographer Katherine McKittrick's claim that bigotry has spatial implications resulting in "disempowerment and dispossession," he argues that "decolonizing acts, including speech acts, [become] multiscalar in their scope of de-monstrating spatial-personal binds as having to do with ownership—here included, an ownership of the very voice through which demands extrapolate public space, and, perhaps most importantly, the objectivity of what is called *now*."⁶⁰ Alvergúe's argument is itself multiscalar, playing on the Latin roots of "demonstrate." By inserting the hyphen, the verb works in its standard meaning (etymologically derived from *demonstrare*, to show entirely) but is undercut by decoupling the prefix *de-*, which can also form a negative (etymologically *de-monstrar*, to move away from pointing out).⁶¹ The shift in meaning suggests that in Dawkins's poem, the grandmother leaving her husband—which might be seen as a decolonizing act—both explains and does not explain how extricating from spatial and personal entanglements can lead to some level of autonomy. In the final stanza, after reflecting on her grandmother's struggle, the speaker asks, "Grandma, you don't think that a gift?"⁶² Dawkins thus suggests that the grandmother's prior acts gesture toward ownership, toward independence, but that autonomy cannot be fully articulated until a translocal identity is negotiated among a later generation. Conversely, the poem also narrates the speaker's slow realization, which does not take place until after the grandmother has left an abusive situation, created the conditions for her daughters' and granddaughter's independent lives, and then filled in the

gaps through this deathbed conversation.

Such complex and contingent spatial and temporal intersections are featured throughout the series, and they were anticipated by several poems in *The BreakBeat Poets*. Nate Marshall's "on caskets" is a multiscalar poem extending from the south side of Chicago to Mississippi, from the Neanderthals to slavery to the present, combining all into an expansive, yet precisely located, form of—in Alvergue's words—"what is called *now*."⁶³ Though some poems like this one are explicitly translocal, the anthology's interest in migration, racial difference, and family stories often manifests in a kind of transhyperlocality. For instance, Woods structures "Deep in the Homeroom of Doom" as a choose-your-own adventure of interacting with white classmates (and their popped collars) from the north side of Chicago, and Kush Thompson's "this, here" explores the differences between growing up Black in different Chicago neighborhoods.

The BreakBeat Poets collection thus shows its interest in borders and limits, how they're created at different scales, and how they may be transgressed. It is the most Chicago-focused volume of the series, and its co-editors—Coval, Marshall, and Quraysh Ali Lansana—have deep connections to the city. Fittingly, the series is published by Haymarket Books, portrayed locally as "Chicago's foremost progressive publisher."⁶⁴ The press describes its approach to publishing via an 1886 labor protest at Haymarket Square on the Near West Side of Chicago, at which several protesters and police were killed by a dynamite bomb: "We take inspiration and courage from our namesakes, the Haymarket Martyrs, who gave their lives fighting for a better world."⁶⁵ *The BreakBeat Poets* picks up there, as Coval argues in the introduction that "the work is to make a fresher, more equitable world for all. And the work don't stop."⁶⁶ Coval, who grew up in the Chicago suburbs, is the cofounder of Louder Than A Bomb and the former artistic director of YCA, a position from which he was removed in 2021 after he did not properly address allegations of sexual assault within the organization (more on this later).⁶⁷ Marshall grew up on the south side of Chicago and won Louder Than A Bomb in 2008, also starring in the award-winning 2010 documentary about the competition. He has lived throughout the Midwest and is now a professor at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Lansana grew up in Enid, Oklahoma, and then studied in Chicago and was mentored by Brooks.⁶⁸ He has taught at multiple institutions in Chicago and Oklahoma; was recently the director of the Center for Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation at Oklahoma State University in Tulsa; and serves as a curriculum auditor for Tulsa Public Schools.

Lansana's poem "mascot," structured in five numbered sections, demonstrates a kind of multiscalar translocality that draws together family migrations, personal experience, and national politics. The first section tells a family story that begins in "the black mountain foothills / near the tennessee-mississippi border" and culminates with an attack on the family

by the Ku Klux Klan.⁶⁹ The poem's translocality becomes apparent after the family defends their livelihood, at which point they "left / red cotton to feed brittle soil, then scattered in four directions."⁷⁰ The family spreads to Florida and California for a time, ending up together in Oklahoma. The second section comes forward in time to Lansana's experience. The section begins, "i am an okie,"⁷¹ and closes with local racism and colorism, prompted by a friend's time as the high school's Native American mascot. The third section explores other possible racist mascots, expanding to a national scope that ranges from Southern California ("the riverside peckerwoods") to the Midwest ("the chicago police department") and Washington, DC ("the washington senators").⁷² The fourth section contains only a quotation from Jeb Bush, then-governor of Florida, decrying the political correctness of National Collegiate Athletic Association regulations on Native American mascots.

The final section of "mascot" returns to Lansana's life, displaying the poem's translocality in its geographical specificity and incorporation of national political discourses. The section centers on two moments. In the first, Brooks encourages him to return to college. In the second, in a bar in Enid, Oklahoma, with some white friends from high school, Lansana is made to feel like the titular mascot: "i was cultural diversity at the table."⁷³

one man, maybe
my closest oklahomey in the bar, assured me
the residuals of chattel slavery no longer existed,
while leaning against the door of a 100-year-old
family business. i enrolled in african american
studies two months later.⁷⁴

In lyric poetry, translocality is expressed in the juxtaposition of multiple, emplaced personal experiences of larger spatial and temporal trends. A white family sustains a small-town bar for a century, whereas Lansana's family cannot do something similar because they were attacked by white supremacists and chased from their land, a reverberation that is amplified when the friend erases it in this specific bar in 1994. Lansana links the friend's argument to their teenage years, when he was told that his "blackness was a liability" to the friend's dating life,⁷⁵ and then juxtaposes this moment and feeling with Brooks's encouragement and his pursuit of education in African American studies. The friend does not (or cannot) understand what he is saying and cannot see the links among his treatment of Lansana, the enduring business, and Lansana's family's experience. On the part of the friend, Lansana represents an ignorance—perhaps willful—that is not available to the poem's speaker because he has been minoritized in this space.

Lansana makes those connections in part because he has experi-

enced a translocal incitement to education that helps him develop a more thorough, multilayered perspective. At least in the world of the poem, the white friend does not share that translocality or his perspective. Lansana writes that “what triggered the movement”⁷⁶ to Chicago and his education was that bar conversation, in which his experience was subsumed and denied within his white friends’ understanding of the world. As a result, he seeks out a new experience and community. Eric Kit-wai Ma underscores some of the reasons people seek connection outside majoritarian spaces like the predominately white Enid honky-tonk: “subcultural spaces, connected by compatible beliefs and practices, can be considered as space capable of translocal solidarity.”⁷⁷ With Brooks’s encouragement, Lansana re-enrolls in college, pursuing poetry and African American studies, both of which might be defined as subcultural communities. The poem “mascot” suggests that he found solidarity in a mentor and by implication in the field more broadly. We might read *The BreakBeat Poets* in the same way—as the articulation of a subcultural community that offers solidarity across time and space. Similarly, both “mascot” and the collection exemplify how “demands extrapolate public space”⁷⁸ as they link history, experience, and environment to see the present with clear eyes and the future with new ones.

However, “mascot” does not represent Lansana achieving local solidarity (though it may have felt that way to his white friends). His demands for, and thereby creation of, public space happen later, via translocal subcultural communities. In this poem, translocality offers solidarity, but it does not resolve local problems. This is also a concern with *The BreakBeat Poets* and perhaps the series as a whole. As noted earlier, Coval was ousted from his position at YCA after being, along with executive director Rebecca Hunter (who retired early), “accused of not acting firmly enough in response to some of the allegations that have over the years been leveled against YCA personnel.”⁷⁹ The organization lost at least one major funder, and Chicago Public Schools suspended its partnership with YCA, launching an investigation into whether students had been harmed.⁸⁰ YCA also rebranded and relaunched Louder Than A Bomb as “Rooted & Radical Youth Poetry Festival.”⁸¹ The allegations that led to Coval’s ousting were against two former YCA employees, Roger Bonair-Agard and Malcolm London, who were both contributors to *The BreakBeat Poets*. In the *Chicago Reader*, Coval was portrayed as indifferent to community concerns: “Coval ‘showed disinterest’ and was ‘dismissive’ when presented with concerns about Bonair-Agard’s inclusion in Coval’s 2015 *The BreakBeat Poets* anthology.”⁸²

The feeling of community—and the development of solidarity—promised by translocality is not a cure-all. Translocal lyric poems do not repair relationships, eradicate grief, or absolve personal wrongdoing. Many of the poems in these anthologies dwell in contradiction and uncertainty. They

represent loss, trauma, and grief for the poems' speakers, as well as for their families and communities. But some of them also begin to transmute those losses, build new worlds, and develop community outside their immediate horizons. Though I have mostly focused on these anthologies' Midwestern connections, this claim is not limited to poetry located within or linked to the region. Likewise, the BreakBeat Poets series is not exclusively a Midwestern project. Even so, the Midwest is broadly implicated in the series through the content of the poems, the contributors' and editors' biographies and work lives, and the publisher's location and history. Chicago, in particular, functions as a place of known history, a cultural hub that facilitates translocality. So when the BreakBeat Poets series makes a demand for public space and creates the conditions for subcultural solidarity, it may offer the tools to overcome local, institutional, and organizational failures—in Chicago and beyond. That is at least partly because poems in each of the four volumes perform what Vytis Čiubrinskis calls the "hard creative work" of belonging, of transforming lives, places, and cultures.⁸³ In this collective labor, they offer a way to read not just individual poems but the BreakBeat Poets series more generally: as translocal placemaking in which lyric poetry provides the means to build community by entwining individual experiences with broader cultural narratives.

Notes

1. Kevin Coval, "Introduction," in *The BreakBeat Poets: New American Poetry in the Age of Hip-Hop*, ed. Kevin Coval, Quraysh Ali Lansana, and Nate Marshall (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015), xix. Such generic blurring earned BreakBeat poetry a snarky dismissal from the *Times Literary Supplement*; see James Campbell, "Blue Pencil Blues," *Times Literary Supplement*, 1 May 2015, 32. More often, reviewers laud the collection for its diversity of voices and groundbreaking definitiveness; for example, see Mark Eleveld, review of *The BreakBeat Poets: New American Poetry in the Age of Hip-Hop*, *Booklist* 111, no. 14 (2015): 38, and Josh Cook, review of *The BreakBeat Poets: New American Poetry in the Age of Hip-Hop*, *ForeWord*, May 1, 2015, <https://www.forewordreviews.com/reviews/the-breakbeat-poets/>.

2. James R. Shortridge, *The Middle West: Its Meaning in American Culture* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989).

3. Coval, "Introduction," xvi.

4. Coval, "Introduction," xviii.

5. Alex Billet, "The New Planet Rock," review of *The BreakBeat Poets: New American Poetry in the Age of Hip-Hop*, *International Socialist Review* 98 (2015), <https://isreview.org/issue/98/new-planet-rock/index.html>.

6. Sequoia Maner, review of *The BreakBeat Poets, Vol. 2: Black Girl Magic*, *The Langston Hughes Review* 25, no. 2 (2019): 225.

7. Mark Eleveld, review of *The BreakBeat Poets, Vol. 3: Halal If You*

Hear Me, Booklist 115, no. 15 (2019): 11, and Darshita Jain, "Witnessing a LatiNEXT Moment," review of *The BreakBeat Poets, Vol. 4: LatiNext*, *Newcity*, July 13, 2020, <https://lit.newcity.com/2020/07/13/witnessing-a-latinext-moment-a-review-of-the-breakbeat-poets-volume-4-latinext/>.

8. Clemens Greiner, "Patterns of Translocality: Migration, Livelihoods and Identities in Northwest Namibia," *Sociologus* 60, no. 2 (2010): 137.

9. Peter Mandaville, "Reading the State from Elsewhere: Towards an Anthropology of the Postnational," *Review of International Studies* 28, no. 1 (2002): 199–207; Lara Dotson-Renta, "Somos Sur: Translocal Hip-Hop and the Routes of Empire," *The Muslim World* 111, no. 3 (2021): 376–96; and Jahan Ramazani, *Poetry in a Global Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).

10. William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: Norton, 1991).

11. José E. Limón, "Al Norte toward Home: Texas, the Midwest, and Mexican American Critical Regionalism," in *The Latina/o Midwest Reader*, ed. Omar S. Valerio-Jiménez, Santiago R. Vaquera-Vásquez, and Claire F. Fox (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 40–56.

12. Kristin L. Hoganson, *The Heartland: An American History* (New York: Penguin, 2019), and Shane Hamilton, *Trucking Country: The Road to America's Wal-Mart Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

13. See, for example, the intersections of Muslim, hip-hop, and regional influences in Su'ad Abdul Khabeer, *Muslim Cool: Race, Religion, and Hip Hop in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 2016). Consider also how the concept of "situational authenticity" emphasizes the relationship of class- and place-based notions of authenticity in the Chicago hip-hop scene in Geoff Harkness, "True School: Situational Authenticity in Chicago's Hip-Hop Underground," *Cultural Sociology* 6, no. 3 (2012): 283–394.

14. Alex Blue V, "'You're Only Ever a Block From the 'Hood': Hip-Hop and Spatial Reorientation in Detroit, Michigan," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 33, no. 4 (2021): 152–70, and Lara Röbig, "A Musical Mosaic Regional Identity and Midwestern Hip Hop," *Lied und Populäre Kultur* 66 (2021): 125–43.

15. Willie Perdomo, "Breakbeat, Remezcla," in *The BreakBeat Poets, Vol. 4: LatiNext*, ed. Felicia Chavez, José Olivarez, and Willie Perdomo (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2020), 2.

16. Victoria Chavez Peralta, "When Collin Chanted 'Build the Wall,'" in *The BreakBeat Poets, Vol. 4: LatiNext*, ed. Felicia Chavez, José Olivarez, and Willie Perdomo (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2020), 128.

17. Gabriela F. Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago: Race, Identity, and Nation, 1916–39* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 1.

18. Quoted in Dyana Daniels, "Politics and Religion: Student Poems Published in Anthology Series," *Columbia Chronicle*, May 29, 2020, <https://columbiachronicle.com/politics-and-religion-student-poems-published-in-anthology-series>.
19. Marcela Cerrutti and Douglas S. Massey, "Trends in Mexican Migration to the United States, 1965 to 1995," in *Crossing the Border: Research from the Mexican Migration Project*, ed. Jorge Durand and Douglas S. Massey (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2004), 36.
20. Ana Raquel Minian, *Undocumented Lives: The Untold Story of Mexican Migration* (Harvard University Press, 2018).
21. Alicia R. Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S.–Mexico Borderlands* (New York: New York University Press, 2008).
22. Quoted in Daniels, "Politics."
23. Greiner, "Patterns of Translocality," 137.
24. Clemens Greiner and Patrick Sakdapolrak, "Translocality: Concepts, Applications and Emerging Research Perspectives," *Geography Compass* 7, no. 5 (2013): 377.
25. Mandaville, "Reading the State from Elsewhere," 204.
26. Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago*, 1.
27. Julian Randall, "Translation," in *The BreakBeat Poets, Vol. 4: LatiNext*, ed. Felicia Chavez, José Olivarez, and Willie Perdomo (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2020), 137.
28. Melissa Castro Almandina, "Regeneration Spell for the Grieving Soul: Ingredients and Tools w/ Instructions," in *The BreakBeat Poets, Vol. 4: LatiNext*, ed. Felicia Chavez, José Olivarez, and Willie Perdomo (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2020), 144.
29. Mandaville, "Reading the State from Elsewhere," 204.
30. Mike Amezcua, *Making Mexican Chicago: From Postwar Settlement to the Age of Gentrification* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022), 248.
31. Victoria Chavez Peralta, "Dios te salve, Maria," in *The BreakBeat Poets, Vol. 4: LatiNext*, ed. Felicia Chavez, José Olivarez, and Willie Perdomo (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2020), 229.
32. Ignacio Carvajal, review of *The BreakBeat Poets Vol. 4: LatiNext*, *American Studies* 60, no. 2 (2021): 33.
33. Perdomo, "Breakbeat, Remezcla," 2.
34. Taryne Jade Taylor, "Latinxs Unidos: Futurism and Latinidad in United States Latinx Hip-Hop," *Extrapolation* 61, no. 1 (2020): 46.
35. Taylor, "Latinxs Unidos," 46.
36. Limón, "Al Norte toward Home," 54.
37. Felicia Chavez, José Olivarez, and Willie Perdomo, eds., *The BreakBeat Poets, Vol. 4: LatiNext*, (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2020), 321.

38. Monica Rico, "Poem in Consideration of My Death," in *The BreakBeat Poets, Vol. 4: LatiNext*, ed. Felicia Chavez, José Olivarez, and Willie Perdomo (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2020), 48.

39. Rico, "Poem in Consideration of My Death," 48.

40. Himanee Gupta-Carlson, *Muncie, India(na): Middletown and Asian America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2018).

41. Monica Rico, interview by Andrew Hamilton, *Good Hart Artist Residency*, January 7, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UgrCJnRABM0>.

42. Rico, interview.

43. Brett Thomas Olmsted, "Los Mexicanos de Michigan: Claiming Space and Creating Community through Leisure and Labor, 1920–1970" (PhD diss., University of Houston, 2017), 6.

44. Perdomo, "Breakbeat, Remezcla," 2.

45. Sujei Vega, *Latino Heartland: Of Borders and Belonging in the Midwest* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 5–6.

46. Safia Elhillo, "Ars Poetica," in *The BreakBeat Poets, Vol. 3: Halal If You Hear Me*, ed. Fatimah Asghar and Safia Elhillo (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2019), 92.

47. Fatimah Asghar and Safia Elhillo, eds., *The BreakBeat Poets, Vol. 3: Halal If You Hear Me*, (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2019).

48. "Khidr Features: Fatimah Asghar," Khidr Collective, accessed August 14, 2022, <https://www.khidrcollective.co.uk/khidr-features-fatimah-asghar>.

49. "The Life and Times of a Published NYU Poet: An Interview with Safia Elhillo," NYU Local, 2012, accessed August 14, 2022, <https://nyulocal.com/the-life-and-times-of-a-published-nyu-poet-an-interview-with-safia-elhillo-b95d5664e875>.

50. Quoted in Ray Levy Uyeda, "Meet Safia Elhillo: A Stegner Fellow Brings Lyrical Force to the Page and to Our Ears," *Stanford Magazine*, December 2021, <https://stanfordmag.org/contents/meet-safia-elhillo>.

51. Aisha Sharif, "Hot Combs and Hijabs," in *The BreakBeat Poets, Vol. 3: Halal If You Hear Me*, ed. Fatimah Asghar and Safia Elhillo (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2019), 54.

52. Dotson-Renta, "Somos Sur," 396.

53. H. Samy Alim, "Translocal Style Communities: Hip Hop Youth as Cultural Theorists of Style, Language, and Globalization," *Pragmatics* 19, no. 1 (2009).

54. Marcyliena Morgan and Dionne Bennett, "Hip-Hop & the Global Imprint of a Black Cultural Form," *Daedalus* 140, no. 2 (Spring 2011).

55. Ramazani, *Poetry in a Global Age*, 245.

56. Ramazani, *Poetry in a Global Age*, 246.

57. Jamila Woods, "on blk girl magic, hip-hop, & other methods of sight," in *The BreakBeat Poets, Vol. 2: Black Girl Magic*, ed. Mahogany

L. Browne, Idrissa Simmonds, and Jamila Woods (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2019), xxviii.

58. Jordannah Elizabeth, "Mahogany L. Browne Describes the Making of *The BreakBeat Poets Volume 2: Black Girl Magic*," *Chicago Reader*, March 13, 2018, <https://chicagoreader.com/arts-culture/mahogany-l-browne-describes-the-making-of-the-breakbeat-poets-volume-2-black-girl-magic/>. The poem "Black Girl Magic" does not appear in *The BreakBeat Poets* anthology but has been published as an illustrated, standalone book: Mahogany L. Browne and Jess X. Snow, *Black Girl Magic: A Poem* (New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2018).

59. Ajanæ Dawkins, "Pulling Teeth and Answers Before Dying," in *The BreakBeat Poets, Vol. 2: Black Girl Magic*, ed. Mahogany L. Browne, Idrissa Simmonds, and Jamila Woods (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2019), 100–1.

60. José Felipe Alvergue, "Lyric Redress: The Racial Politics of Voice and American Personhood," *Criticism* 60, no. 2 (Spring 2018): 35.

61. *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

62. Dawkins, "Pulling Teeth and Answers Before Dying," 101.

63. Alvergue, "Lyric Redress," 35.

64. Rebecca Stoner, "Haymarket Books Publishes Reading Material for Radicals," *Chicago Reader*, February 21, 2019, <https://chicagoreader.com/arts-culture/haymarket-books-publishes-reading-material-for-radicals/>.

65. "About," Haymarket Books, accessed August 24, 2022, <https://www.haymarketbooks.org/pg/about>.

66. Coval, "Introduction," xxii.

67. Taylor Moore, "A Silence Louder than Words," *Chicago Reader*, July 21, 2021, <https://chicagoreader.com/news-politics/a-silence-louder-than-words/>.

68. Quraysh Ali Lansana, "Art, Artifice, & Artifact," in *The BreakBeat Poets: New American Poetry in the Age of Hip-Hop*, ed. Kevin Coval, Quraysh Ali Lansana, and Nate Marshall (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015), 301–5.

69. Quraysh Ali Lansana, "mascot," in *The BreakBeat Poets: New American Poetry in the Age of Hip-Hop*, ed. Kevin Coval, Quraysh Ali Lansana, and Nate Marshall (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015), 12.

70. Lansana, "mascot," 12.

71. Lansana, "mascot," 12.

72. Lansana, "mascot," 13.

73. Lansana, "mascot," 14.

74. Lansana, "mascot," 14.

75. Lansana, "mascot," 14.

76. Lansana, "mascot," 14.

77. Eric Kit-wai Ma, "Translocal Spatiality," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 5, no. 2 (2002): 141.

78. Alvergue, "Lyric Redress," 35.

79. Rick Kogan, "Coval Out at YCA, Amid Controversy over Handling of Sex Assault Allegations," *Chicago Tribune*, March 8, 2021, 1.

80. Doug George, "Amid Sexual Assault Allegations, Logan Foundation Will No Longer Fund YCA," *Chicago Tribune*, March 13, 2021; Doug George, "Assault Allegations Put Festival on Hold," *Chicago Tribune*, March 11, 2021; and Madeline Kenney and Nader Issa, "CPS Suspends Partnership with Young Chicago Authors after Group Accused of Doing Little about Sexual Assault Allegations," *Chicago Sun-Times*, March 5, 2021, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2021/3/5/22315800/cps-schools-inspector-general-young-chicago-authors-sexual-assault-rebecca-hunter-kevin-coval>.

81. "Rooted & Radical Youth Poetry Festival," Young Chicago Authors, 2022, <https://youngchicagoauthors.org/rnr>.

82. Moore, "A Silence Louder than Words."

83. Vytis Čiubrinskas, "Transnational Chicago: The Local and Translocal Networks and Loyalties of Post-Socialist Lithuanian Immigrants," *Diogenes* (English ed.) 63, no. 3-4 (2018): 100–10.