

A Poem of Gratitude from Oklahoma

The New York Times asked poets laureate from across the country what the people in their states had to be thankful for in this difficult year.

Nov. 26, 2020

We are thankful for *okla-humma*, for *our people*, for *this land*.

for the after-tornado swarm of helping strangers
for those who smell of oil, of diesel, of dirt, of sweat

for poets, musicians, artists, and quilters
for ballerinas, beadworkers, and sculptors

for thirty-nine tribes and the wisdom they share
for those who ran toward a bombed building

for our stubborn refusal to give up or ~~give~~ in
for dust bowl survivors, for those who resist

for the way we have begun to confront
historical acts of hatred and violence

for our desire to embrace one another,
arms linked, songs rising, hearts full

— This poem is a much-shortened version of one written by 123 Oklahomans, then collated and arranged by Jeanetta Calhoun Mish, the poet laureate of Oklahoma