BETWEEN THE LINES

ODE TO STRETCHING MY LEGS

bless my patient bones,
the tendons tough from time
muscles making their way through the midwest
trains that test our toes for hours
seven, eight, nine. america is in need of a massage,
a backrub, an ice pack. we live in a country
that gets sore, sometimes. all of us ache.
everyone has suffered from sitting too long,
frustrated feet from falling asleep.
praise the palms that press into our necks.
thank the shoulders that are forgiving,
who suffer the traveling day. worship the mothers
who move the kinks out of their children’s backs.
praise the yoga pose practiced after a long trip.
we have earned the right to bend, to expand.
we can take a little pain, if it gives us plains,
windows to point out of, landscapes for our games.
we can be a little sore if it means seeing the world,
rattling before us, bringing us closer
to something we’ve never seen.

NATIONAL YOUTH POET LAUREATE

KARA JACKSON

Becoming a U.S. Poet Laureate is
a big honor that comes with a big
responsibility: to bring poetry to
everyone. Now, thanks to an arts and
writing group called Urban Word,
there’s also a National Youth Poet
Laureate. Kara Jackson, a 19-year-old
from Oak Park, Illinois, is the third
person to be honored with this title.
She’s written us an ode, a poem that
celebrates something—in this case,
the speaker’s body. She starts by
blessing “patient bones,” but then
shifts to a larger, national body. Why
do you think she writes that “america
needs a massage”? There’s not one
simple answer. Sometimes you need
to stretch your legs, and sometimes
you need to stretch your mind.

ILLUSTRATION BY

RAQUEL APARICIO TORINOS