



# **I'm Not the Woman I Used to Be**

**30 Poems by Recent  
Immigrant Women**



A Women's Health in Women's Hands Resource





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These poems are based on the experiences of women who participated in the research projects *Gendered Power: Immigrant Women's Health Promotion and Revisiting "Personal Is Political": Immigrant Women's Health Promotion*

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## Table of Contents

Foreword.....	iv
Introduction.....	vi

**PART 1:**  
**Poems from the research project**  
***Gendered Power: Immigrant Women's***  
***Health Promotion***

New Canadians: Where Are We From?.....	2
Good Test.....	3
On Strength.....	4
Short a Penny.....	6
Holes.....	7
Those Left Behind.....	8
Depression.....	9
Freedom.....	10
It's Not Like Me.....	11
Family Matters.....	13
Alone.....	15
Stuck and Struggling.....	16
A Woman's Energy.....	17
Caring for Ourselves.....	18
My Father.....	19
The Three Worst Things, The Three Best Things.....	21

**PART 2:**  
**Poems from the research project *Revisiting***  
***"Personal is Political": Immigrant Women's***  
***Health Promotion***

The Bridge.....	23
I Was Very Important.....	24
Walking Partners.....	25
Women's Double Price.....	26
I Want to Be Equal.....	28
Others See, Others Don't See, We See.....	29
A Word.....	30
Leaving What We Know.....	32
Our Children: Before and After.....	33
The Weather.....	34
"Lenguaje".....	35
Volunteer Work.....	36
Life and Work.....	37
Big or Small: You Are My Family.....	38

## Foreword

Perhaps no experience can be more humbling in community-based research than realizing that nothing can happen without the collective efforts of the women, their families, and the communities you wish to investigate. If not for the belief in our projects and the willing participation, dedication, and support of all those who participated in two studies carried out in our centre, this project would not have been possible.

Women's Health in Women's Hands, is an anti-racist, pro-choice, and multilingual community health centre for Black Women and Women of Colour located in Toronto, Ontario. To address the issue of accessibility to healthcare, we have created a unique model of service provision that is based on the understanding that women's health issues are personal, cultural, social, racial, and political, as well as medical. This participatory model focuses on enhancing women's sense of well-being in an environment that allows clients to validate each other's definitions and experiences. We understand that women are experts in their own healthcare. In this context, it is only fitting that we believe research and researchers must view women in the same way. Conducting community-based research requires us, as researchers, to think differently about our responsibility to the women we are studying. We must always aim to give something

back to the communities we investigate and to empower women to use research findings to change their position in society. One can only hope that projects produce tangible and practical results that can be used not only to illuminate the experiences of women directly participating in the project, but also to validate the experiences of many other women. It is with great pride that I look at the poems that have emerged from two studies about recent immigrant women's experiences. I think the collection speaks to the depth of these women's experience with immigration, to their knowledge of their world and their situation, and to their desire to effect change within themselves and other women in their communities. It is with this giving spirit that these women's words have flowed into this project, and it is our hope that their willingness to share their experiences on such a profoundly emotional level can be appreciated by all those who read their words.

**Notisha Massaquoi**  
**Program Director**  
**Women's Health in Women's Hands**



# Introduction

## Emotions in Research

Traditionally, people think of research as a serious, controlled, neutral enterprise during which data are collected in an anonymous way. Well, I have news for you. For over a hundred years, another type of research has been employed to study complex phenomena in the way they occur in everyday living. Equally serious and reliable, this qualitative research is especially designed to capture people's cultural and social understandings. Such research allows investigators to approach individuals' or groups' views in a style that resembles their everyday activities (e.g., talks, discussions in groups, doing activities together).

This collection of poems is the result of two research projects undertaken by myself as principal investigator in collaboration with the community health centre Women's Health in Women's Hands. The first part presents poems generated after the exchanges between participants of three focus groups in 2002. Even though I have been undertaking qualitative research for many years, I was not prepared to encounter so much emotion in these meetings with recently-arrived immigrant women. While talking about their experiences, the participants manifested a great deal of emotions: sadness, distress, anger, joy, and pleasure were at the table. Challenged by the participants'

openness and personally touched by their narratives, I decided it was time to share with others beyond the scientific community.

Personally, I believe the average Canadian is not really aware of the challenges immigrants face in Canada. We still believe that people come to Canada to live a much better life in all aspects of it - we commonly forget or are not aware that many immigrants face underemployment and many forms of social exclusion after their arrival. However, these women have a lot to teach us about the immigration process and they do so with emotion. With the help of two nurses who are graduate students at the Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto, Nicky Slovitt and Julie Tjan, I selected parts of the narratives that convey emotion and slightly edited them. The poems are mainly made of the women's own words and story-telling style, even though some sentences were cut, others repeated, and a few words were added to create poems that convey to the general public the emotions (and ideas) we experienced first hand in the groups.

In the first section, the poems are anonymous because I am ethically committed to not associating any data gathered to any individual participant from the research project *Gendered Power: Immigrant Women's Health Promotion*. Yet anonymity is also a powerful form of representation to immigrant women.

By immigrating to Canada many women go through a profound transformation of their identities in a kind of erasure and recreation process. Most immigrant women have to deal with multiple shifts, such as from professional to unemployed, from fluent speaker to someone unable to communicate or with a "thick accent"; from citizen of a country to immigrant. Hence, from a representational perspective, these powerful poems are anonymous because women don't like who they became, because even when they do enjoy the process, they don't recognise themselves anymore, because they are learning to be an immigrant or because each poem speaks about hundreds of individuals' experiences, and no single author can be identified.

In the second part of this booklet, the participants of the study *Revisiting "Personal is Political": Immigrant Women's Health Promotion* took the idea of doing poems into a different direction. Due to the participatory nature of this project, authorship was approached differently. Participants could choose to have their names associated with the poems or not.

Maria Jesús Docando, a study participant, and I worked together to create this section. We asked the participants of the project to list key topics that represented our previous discussions on the process of recent immigration for women. Out of some 15 topics

identified, we used the transcriptions of our meetings to locate people's comments or discussions about these subjects. While Maria Jesús wrote in Spanish a summary of the ideas to produce half of the poems we later translated to English, I kept most of the original texts I had encountered in producing mine.

These poems reflect the participatory nature of this second project. In some, shared ideas are captured in a single poem, while in others multiple voices can be heard, occasionally challenging each other. The poems here presented express a myriad of emotions which reveal the complexity of immigrant women's experiences. The search for inclusion, opportunity, justice, inner and social peace is what they share; being an immigrant should not mean you can't any longer be the woman you used to be.

**Denise Gastaldo, Ph.D.**  
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**Faculty of Nursing**  
**University of Toronto**





**PART 1**

**Poems from the research project**  
***Gendered Power: Immigrant***  
***Women's Health Promotion***

**Spring 2002**

Project funded by the Connaught Research Fund,  
University of Toronto

# **New Canadians: Where Are We from?**

And where are you originally from?

. . . Granada

My name is N., and I'm from Trinidad

My name is G., I come from Uganda

My name is M., I come from St. Vincent

My name is Y., and I'm from Ecuador

I'm L., I'm from Mexico

I'm F., I come from Mali

I'm G., I am from Lithuania

I'm P., I'm from Colombia

I'm N., and I've been here for eight months, more or less

And I'm from Argentina

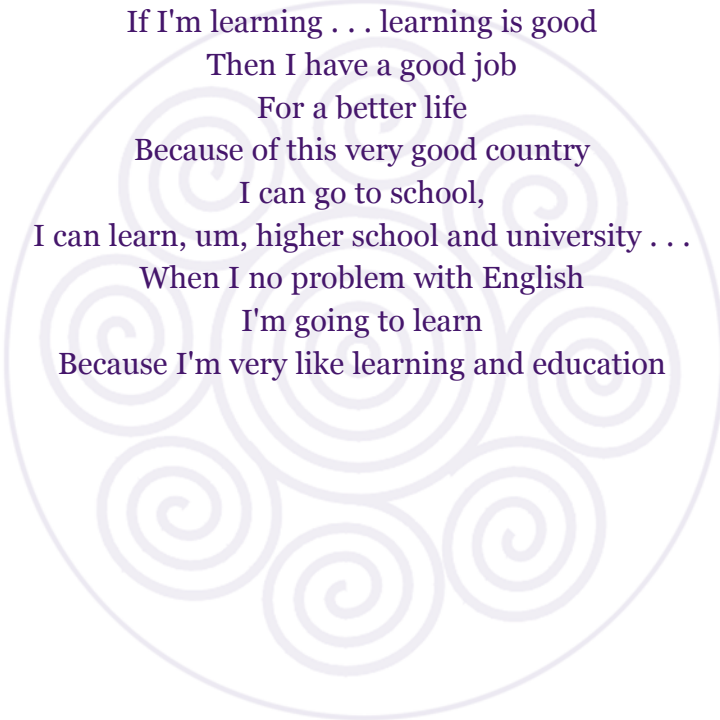
I'm E., and I'm from Iran . . . I'm a refugee

My name is M., ah, I'm from East Africa

I know Jamaicans, Trinidadians . . . staying by themselves

And where are you originally from?

## Good Test



When I'm given a good test,  
I'm very happy  
When I learn English,  
I'm very happy  
If I'm learning . . . learning is good  
Then I have a good job  
For a better life  
Because of this very good country  
I can go to school,  
I can learn, um, higher school and university . . .  
When I no problem with English  
I'm going to learn  
Because I'm very like learning and education

**Context:** This participant struggled to communicate with us in the focus group because of her limited English. Her poem illustrates how important learning English was to her well-being and personal sense of achievement. She told us how proud and happy she felt when she did well on a test. Her hope was to obtain a higher education degree in Canada, and doing well in English was the first step.



## On Strength

I used to be happy, lively,  
But now something has changed  
It's not the same me I used to be at home

Oh no

Not at all

First of all, I'm not doing a job

I feel I should be doing

Willing to start it

Make sure that at least I get a job,

Which will make me happy

So that rules my life

So I want to do something

Which I'll feel good about myself

So I'm no longer myself at all

I'm a different person totally

A different person

Yes, but I try to pretend I am happy, but right now . . .

I'm not

So many changes

So it's not the me . . .

I used to know myself as I am, but . . .

And so it's a big difference

A big difference

The loneliness

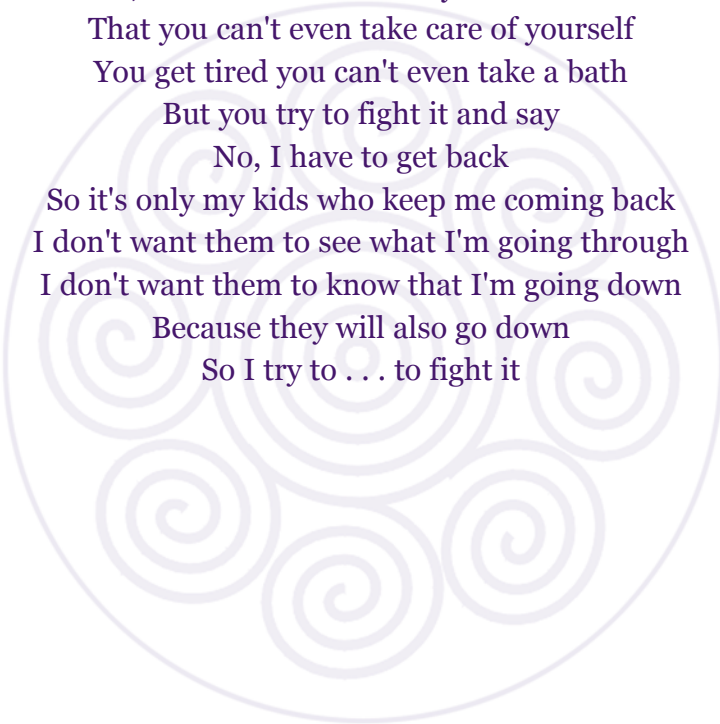
No genuine friend

So many problems

So the family not being around too

Makes you lonely

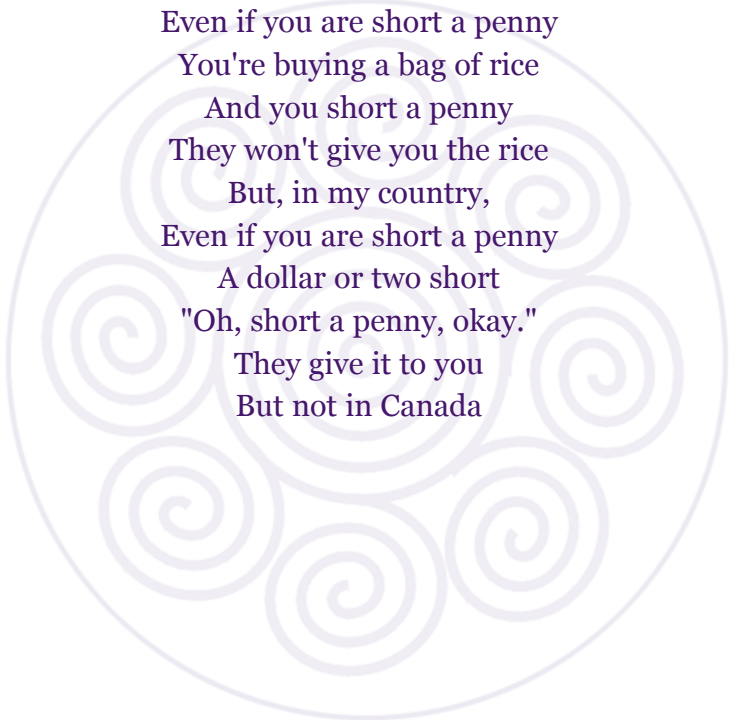
And sometimes you get really depressed



Very, very depressed  
But you fight the depression all the time  
But some moments you really feel like you are going  
really down  
But you try to fight it and come back  
Yeah, there are times when you feel so tired  
That you can't even take care of yourself  
You get tired you can't even take a bath  
But you try to fight it and say  
No, I have to get back  
So it's only my kids who keep me coming back  
I don't want them to see what I'm going through  
I don't want them to know that I'm going down  
Because they will also go down  
So I try to . . . to fight it

**Context:** The focus group facilitator asked the participants to talk about how they felt their lives and health had changed after coming to Canada. This woman felt that she had been a happy person in her own country, but she felt depressed since coming to Canada because she lacked a job, true friendship, and family here. She derived her strength from her children.

## Short a Penny



And one thing bad about Canada  
Is that if you go to the store  
And you are short a penny  
They wouldn't give you what you want  
Even if you are short a penny  
You're buying a bag of rice  
And you short a penny  
They won't give you the rice  
But, in my country,  
Even if you are short a penny  
A dollar or two short  
"Oh, short a penny, okay."  
They give it to you  
But not in Canada

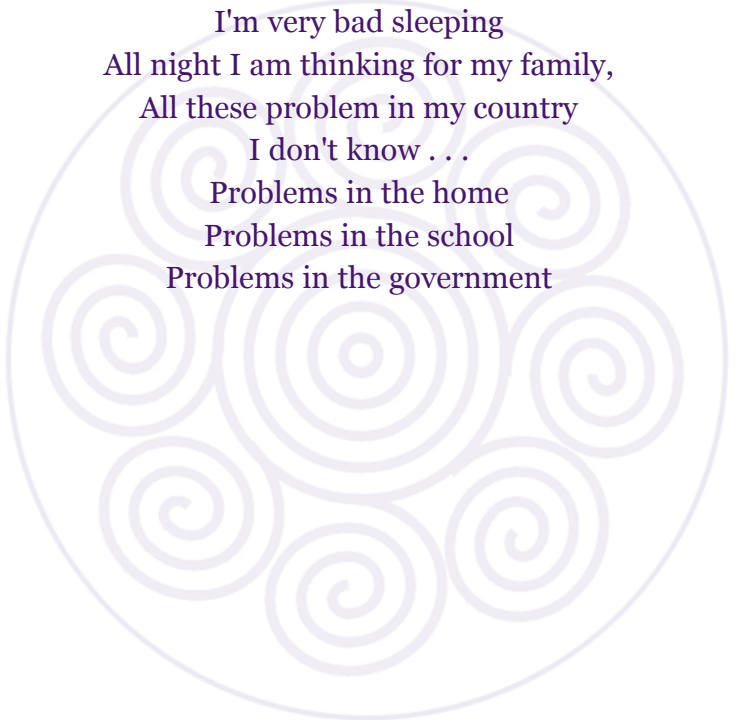
**Context:** Many times immigrants consider it to be inappropriate to be critical about Canada. So, participants were asked to comment on "good" and "bad" things about coming to Canada. This immigrant woman felt there was a lack of friendship and sense of community amongst Canadians.

## Holes

I'm no happy in the home  
All water because of holes . . .  
In the snow coming down  
We share bathroom and washroom,  
All people very dirty  
I have a problem  
Told me one year's wait  
If I'm learning . . . learning  
They give a job . . . better life  
Immigration ask me first . . .  
Why I come in Canada  
Told them for better life  
But now I don't know

**Context:** Initially this woman appeared slightly hesitant to discuss her current housing problems with the other group members. Prompted by group discussion, she complained that her current house was filled with holes and described the people she lived with as dirty. She then discussed her plans to increase her education in order to obtain a better life. Ironically, she recalled a past conversation with an immigration officer in which she said that her primary motivation for immigrating to Canada was to achieve a better life; however, feelings of anxiety and uncertainty surfaced as she deliberated about her present situation.

## Those Left Behind



Now I have problems  
I don't know . . .  
I'm trying for better  
I can't  
I'm very bad sleeping  
All night I am thinking for my family,  
All these problem in my country  
I don't know . . .  
Problems in the home  
Problems in the school  
Problems in the government

**Context:** The woman who said these words laughed nervously at exposing to the group that she has emotional problems because of her concerns for the people she had left behind in her country of origin. She conveyed feelings of sadness and loneliness for the family and country she left behind. These feelings were evoked when the question, “What is it that women do to try to make themselves feel better or healthier?” was asked.

# Depression

It's not only the material stuff like pills  
There's the psychological part too  
If you feel sad, you try,  
You just have to encourage them,  
Relax, and just take one step at a time  
There's only the part of medicine or vitamins  
If your mind is not okay your body isn't going to be okay  
Sometimes when the father is sad, he starts to feel sick  
Then the mother starts,  
Then the whole family starts feeling sick  
They say they could have a "flu"  
But it's not just the "flu"  
It could be more deep  
They are depressed  
They don't understand what's happening  
Not mental problems, insane - no  
You are depressed  
Your body is reacting

**Context:** The group was asked, "Is your well-being interconnected with the well-being of others? If so, how?" In answering, this woman described the special relationship and interconnectedness she experienced with her family in the face of illness and depression.

# Freedom

Good things are...  
My Country you can walk the street late,  
But no light  
Here all over the street is light  
You have freedom up here...  
You walk, you go to work  
You Own!  
You don't have to depend on anybody  
Once you are working,,,  
Yes, you own anything you want  
You don't have to depend on anybody...  
Depend on anybody to have what you want  
People help you a lot up here

**Context:** In responding to the question, "What are the three best things about coming to Canada?" this woman focused on the freedom she experienced living in Canada. She expressed emotions of joy and pride as she commented about being able to work and support an independent lifestyle.

## **It's not like me...**

I had a bad experience during labour  
That's my big fear I have now . . .  
Fear I have something like that happen to me again

E., she's coming from a country that is very hard  
She likes this country because it's big difference between  
this country and her country

N. is very logical that she has sadness,  
Of not having her children here with her  
She's lucky to be able to speak the language

I see them more brave than I  
They can manage,  
They are able to do things by themselves

It's not like me . . .  
I depend on my husband  
I really don't dare to go out alone

In my country I'm really independent  
Here I feel very . . . very . . . like suffocating  
Because I can't

Because they talk to me sometimes . . .  
I can't say anything,  
I can't say no, because I can't



I have fear . . . terror sometimes . . .  
I really don't . . . don't dare to go out alone,  
To any place on my own

I don't feel well about myself in that sense



**Context:** In this focus group a woman comments on some of the good and bad experiences other group members have voiced during group discussions. She is able to relate to and appreciate common experiences that have elicited emotions of fear, joy and sadness within these women's lives. She discusses her own fears of not speaking English very well and expresses how this barrier negatively affects her interaction with English-speaking individuals. Strong emotions such as fear, distress, doubt and shame are evident as she discusses her compromised independence and loss of self due to language barriers.

## Family Matters

I don't worry about getting shot  
I left the country  
I feel safe even to walk at night  
Kind of safe and good transportation  
Easily accessible  
Free medical treatment  
Free education  
I don't have to worry about money for the kids' schooling  
And even myself  
At least I can find some way, somehow . . .  
To study  
Negative things . . . too much work  
There is always too much work  
You work so hard  
Time is too fast  
Everything is too fast  
You have no time to relax  
It makes you tired  
You don't enjoy even the good things  
It strains your relationship,  
There's no time,  
No family time  
You're always running . . .  
And eventually you find that families break up  
That one makes me sad  
So, what is life all about?  
So there are good things  
But if the family is breaking up  
I get puzzled

And I don't feel happy at all,  
I feel like I hate Canada so much for that



**Context:** Upon answering the same question this woman expresses happiness with the freedom to access medical treatment and education and the safety she feels living in Canada. Similar to the previous woman she also experiences feelings of loneliness and sadness. She contributes these feelings to increased work which takes time away from important things in her life, such as her family.

## Alone

I'm not happy because I miss my family  
I have a friend here but not too many  
It's very difficult to talk to my family  
I feel bored every day  
The only thing that makes me happy is that I have S  
And that I'm able to communicate with my family over  
the phone  
Sometimes once a week, sometimes every day  
My husband was to follow  
But he was refused a visa...  
So I am alone

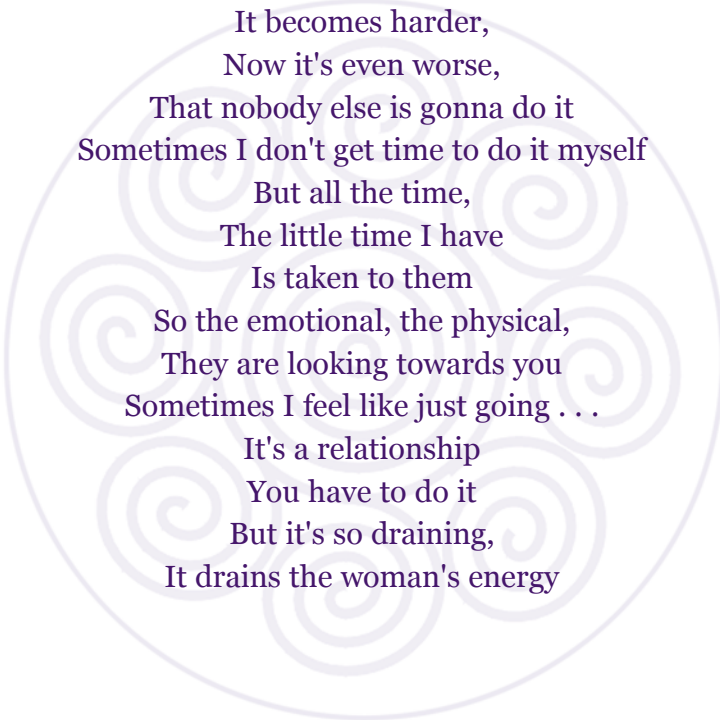
**Context:** In response to the question “What are the differences between your home country and here?” one woman expresses feeling of sadness and loneliness as she describes that immigration broke her family and she has limited contact with people in Canada and those left behind.

## Stuck and Struggling

Her husband was to come  
My husband was here  
He didn't want to be taken as a second citizen in the w  
workplace . . .  
So he decided to leave me  
So I'm here struggling now  
Alone with the kids,  
I'm struggling alone  
The kids are here  
So I'm stuck here  
There are so many forces around me  
I don't know what to do  
He just woke up and said,  
"No, I'm not longer staying here"  
I thought he was joking  
I couldn't believe . . .  
The kids couldn't believe  
We didn't fight, nothing  
I'm sure he got depressed . . .  
It's complicated  
I don't know what to do  
I just pray . . .  
God, you know where I am, I don't know

**Context:** Another woman, in response to the comment expressed in the previous poem, revealed that her husband had actually accompanied her to Canada with their children, however left them to return to their homeland due to issues he encountered within the workplace. Emotions expressed by this women include, frustration, disbelief and sadness.

## A Woman's Energy



Stressful  
You feel obliged  
You have to take care of baby  
Now I'm a single parent,  
It becomes harder,  
Now it's even worse,  
That nobody else is gonna do it  
Sometimes I don't get time to do it myself  
But all the time,  
The little time I have  
Is taken to them  
So the emotional, the physical,  
They are looking towards you  
Sometimes I feel like just going . . .  
It's a relationship  
You have to do it  
But it's so draining,  
It drains the woman's energy

**Context:** In group discussion the question “How is the relationship between being a woman, taking care of oneself and taking care of others?” was asked. This woman expresses emotions of anxiety, sadness and isolation as she describes the hardships and time constraints after becoming a single mother due to immigration. She was very open in sharing her feelings with other members of the group which in turn, helped other members to share their personal experiences as well.

## Caring for Ourselves

Men are less interested in their health  
They just live by the day  
Women try to prevent getting sick  
Men don't do as much as a woman  
Women take more care of themselves than men  
Men are less interested in their health  
I take care of myself, my baby and my mum  
For me, my family is very important  
So just only three . . .  
Three family members  
And so we just have to take care of ourselves

**Context:** This participant expressed resentment towards men; she was critical of men's lack of commitment to caring. She discussed how men and women assumed different roles with regard to promoting health, and she observed that women have more responsibilities than men. The participant's words indicated a sense of pride that resulted from her continued self-reliance and independence.

## My Father

In my country,  
I wasn't allowed to go out regularly  
Only school and church  
You didn't have any freedom  
My father was a police officer. . .  
We weren't allowed to do or go anywhere  
I guess he'd forgotten the line between family and his job  
It was difficult, very difficult  
I knew I had to do something about it,  
But I just wanted to finish high school before leaving  
I finished and I went to Sweden first and then  
I came here  
I never really talk to him since  
No good blood between me and my father  
I only knew him for five years . . .  
He just likes to control my life and you didn't have  
anything to do  
You weren't allowed to have any other friends  
So it was very sad.  
In Canada,  
I can do what I want and talk to who I want,  
Have as many friends as I can  
And get close to my family that is here that I  
never really knew



If I go home now,  
He's gonna just take care of my life again  
I wouldn't be able to do what I want  
It doesn't matter how old I am,  
It's just you're back home and what he says goes,  
So, you follow or you're gonna regret it



**Context:** This dialogue ensued after the interviewer asked "How was it before coming to Canada? Did you feel that your life and your health changed when coming to Canada?". This participant described what appeared to be a very patriarchal relationship that existed between her father and herself back in her home country. She expressed frustration, anger, and sadness when she described her limited freedom while living with her father. Upon moving to Canada, this woman found joy and happiness in her increased independence and in her new freedom to be able to meet new friends and family.

## The Three Worst Things The Three Best Things

The three worst things . . .  
To have left my country and my family  
To have lost my independence  
Here I'm refused to work,  
To be able to go out  
And do normal things that a person can do  
The person that can speak the language  
The worst is not being able to speak English  
So I feel that I have lost a little bit of my independence  
The best is I have my children  
I have my husband  
I am able to continue with this pregnancy  
And be able to have the baby  
There are many people that really are concerned about me

**Context:** The participants were asked to describe the three best and the three worst things about coming to Canada. The hardships immigrant women face are illustrated through this woman's words. She experienced frustration and anger at not being able to work or go out and do things that Canadians normally do because of her limited English. Although she experienced feelings of loss and isolation, she found comfort in familial relations.



**PART 2**

Project funded by the  
Canadian Institutes of Health Research

## The Bridge

Immigration is like entering a bridge  
When you get onto a bridge, you know there is an  
entrance and an exit  
My problem is that I got onto the bridge,  
However, I don't know whether I am at  
The beginning, the middle  
Or the end of the bridge  
I also don't know where the bridge will take me  
I feel anxious; I don't know how much longer I have to  
keep going  
I can't tell if I am just at the beginning or if I am almost  
out of the bridge  
My only hope is to reach the end; this is what keeps me  
moving  
But this is such a hard process  
I never thought the bridge was this long.

**Context:** Maria Eugenia explained to the group how she understood her immigration process; she spoke in Spanish and Denise translated. The group really appreciated her use of "the bridge" metaphor.

## I Was Very Important

I remember my country, my last job  
I was very important  
If one day I did not go to work, people would say  
Mrs. Jean Charles, we missed you,  
Mrs. Jean Charles, we needed you yesterday,  
Mrs. Jean Charles, you have to do that today,  
I was really appreciated  
But here I don't have anything like that  
Here I don't feel important  
I can't do the same job  
But in my country, I used to be important.

**Context:** Maggie used to be an accountant in Haiti. After 2 years in Canada, she is now taking a personal support worker course.

## Walking Partners

We walk every evening  
We go out and walk  
Maybe for one hour  
We don't worry about winter  
We know winter

We walk every evening  
We had a dog, but he was 14 and he died  
We continue without dog  
We walk and we speak a lot  
We speak of everything, family, plans,  
We exercise and I hold his arm while we walk  
People see me and my husband and say: hello lovebirds!

**Context:** Nataliya explained to other members of the group how she and her husband supported each other through the immigration process.

## Women's Double Price

Men and women are equal  
They work outside  
They do the housework together

Every man is different

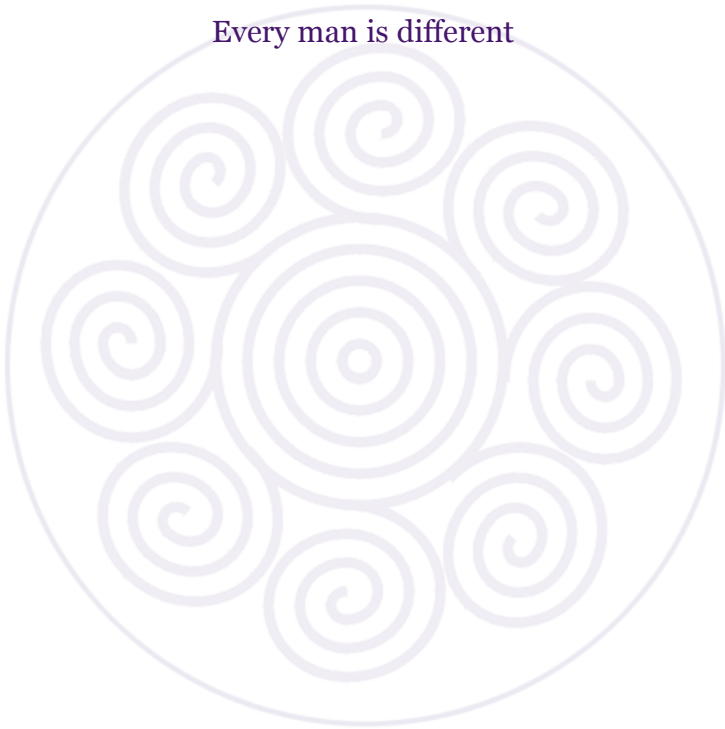
Women and men are equal, but not in all things  
Some men refuse to do the domestic work  
They think they are "the husband"  
They are supposed to relax at home  
They don't understand that you work too  
Men have more rights than women in any house

Every man is different

Are they?

Men can seize advantage more  
Women can't do that  
Back home men find the money  
The lady stays home  
But after immigration everything changes  
Because now I find the money too

So I think women have a double price  
Double price than men  
You must do work and you must do everything for the  
family  
But men just do their work  
Every man is different



**Context:** Hansa, Shirley, Juan, and Musu's conversation about how gender roles changed after migration to Canada.



## I Want to Be Equal

If you have a very happy, very good family, you feel  
important  
I'm a good housekeeper; I do everything for my husband,  
for my daughter  
They don't do anything at home  
But I think I am not a very important person  
If I had a job, I think my husband and I would have an  
equal relationship  
But I don't have a job  
Maybe he does not think,  
But I think I am lower  
Because in China we both had jobs  
Here I try to find a job, although it's part time...  
Parenting is also a full time job; the only thing  
we are not paid  
But I don't think it's a job  
Parenting is not your career  
It's your natural job  
But not your social job  
If after a few years, my English is good and I can have a  
full time job  
I think I will feel better

**Context:** Juan comments on the impact of not having a full-time job on her self-esteem, while Aarti argues that parenting is also important.

## Others See, Others Don't See, We See

When people look at us, they see new immigrants  
We look like new immigrants because of our appearance,  
Our physical features, our accents  
Some think we are competition for jobs  
Others see us as perfect to do the jobs Canadians don't  
want to do  
Also, people don't see what we bring  
Our degree of preparation

We see ourselves as people with many capacities  
People with good training who face challenges in Canada  
We see ourselves as friendly, warm people who can offer  
a lot to this country  
We also see we are not used according to our potential,  
our talents  
Canada is losing big time

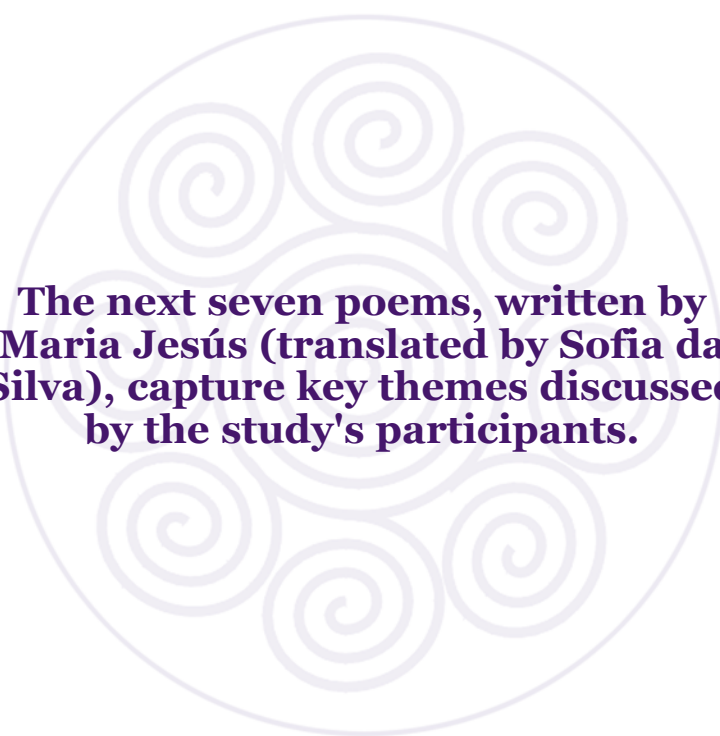
**Context:** Ana has a 5-year university degree, works as a cleaner in homes and does volunteer work. Maria Eugenia who has technical education is currently unemployed, searching for a job and working as a volunteer.

## A Word

A gracious word may smoothen the way,  
A joyous word may light the day,  
A timely word may lessen stress,  
A loving word may heal and bless



**Context:** Jaycee wrote this poem to remind the group members about the importance of being positive and taking things as they come.



**The next seven poems, written by Maria Jesús (translated by Sofia da Silva), capture key themes discussed by the study's participants.**

## Leaving What We Know

We miss our homeland...

Customs, foods, friends...

We miss

Celebrations, cultural traditions, music

Our lives, we miss them...

Yet, leaving what we know, what was ours,

We knew how long the road would be

The difficult situations we would have to face

But we decided

Now we have two places in our hearts

One for our country

The other for our new country

It is hard, yes it is, but if we believe,

We are able ... we can keep alive the memories of our  
previous life

And we incorporate the new life,

The new life we have chosen.

## **Our Children: Before and After**

Our children...the product of our love,  
The product of our desire, of our union  
They are our present and our future  
Before, we lived tense, troubled, startled  
Different reasons for this: economic, political problems,  
differences in social  
class, differences of ideas, points of view.  
After we arrive, we live in a secure, stable country.  
Our children live confidently,  
Our children have education,  
Our children have access to culture, to sports,  
Our children practice a religion and  
Our children have health and free access to health care  
They grow healthy and happy  
They share their traditions  
They respect their neighbours and their neighbours  
respect them.  
In one word: they are happy...after.

## The Weather

We come from different parts of the world,  
The sun shines in our homelands, almost year round.

We laugh, we go out, we dance, and we share,  
We cook our favourite foods on the patios, the streets, in  
the open air.

But here, everything is different: the summer flies by  
The brilliance of the sun, the bright days, happiness  
The holidays...don't last long.

The winter is grey, cold and snowy...it's long and  
prolonged...

Affecting our mood,  
We may feel nostalgic  
We may feel depressed and isolated.  
We may come to feel sad, sad and alone.

Our children turn inwards  
In these times, you have to be creative, talkative and  
smile

Smile, although we don't feel happy  
But, in spite of everything...we smile at life.

## “Lenguaje”

We are born in one place  
And we learn our native language.  
Abundantly rich it is: we are able to express what we feel.  
As time goes by, we think about immigrating, for  
A better life....  
And we collide with the barrier of speaking another  
language  
Rich, abundant in adjectives, this other language  
Eloquent in its expressions but...unknown for the  
majority of us  
All of a sudden  
You discover with urgency, you need to learn it  
This new language: "El English."



# Volunteer Work

Starting all over again...how difficult!

New themes

New elements

New interpretations...

New experiences... how difficult!

You come to think if you are able or not

Or worse, if you want to or not...

But then the day arrives ...how difficult!

What lights our way to the horizon?

We think...

the journey was not in vain

the intention was not in vain

the destiny was not in vain

We thank ourselves for going on with strength

We think...

the beginning was hard

deciding took time

the path opened up uncertain!

So that in the end... triumph shared

We honoured the will

Creating for humanity

Working with love

And waiting always for the best!!!

## Life and Work

We face many realizations in life: we are born, we grow,  
we study, we find jobs

We decide to try life in other countries  
Yes, it's time to immigrate: new life, new friends, new  
neighbours

The long and tortuous search for work...

We work to survive...at first,  
As time goes by, work becomes stimulating

Work we can be proud of ...finally.

Long, long road

We have no experience,

We are always new,

We studied abroad

There are no...

No quick fixes, no ways

To show what we do know,

To help with what we know,

To share our experiences,

To give suggestions...

But I know we can.

## Big or Small: You Are My Family

Life goes on, troubled and tense  
We live with our families...but time flies.  
Sometimes weeks pass and...  
How awful! We have dedicated so little time to family.

Work is troubled...  
Life turns at a quick pace, like the arm on a compass  
And family is at its centre  
If we don't have a family life, we live crushed, burdened

And time passes...  
And we see how our children grow...  
Our children get involved with other people and other things  
And when we awake...we yearn to have had more time...with our children as they grew.

It's family, the unity, the cooperation...  
The only way to strengthen us,  
It's family, with their support  
That tells us..."Keep going, don't give up"  
It's that, simply, family.