

ing tool, supporting single mothers to attend the Allied Media Conference in Detroit this July.

The first track is a declaration of purpose, immediately asking, "Why Do You Speak?" "I speak to live into my skin, to let it breathe, shine," says Adele Nieves, before taking her promise one step further. "I speak to scream," she says. "*Necesito gritar!*" Whether the poets that follow Nieves need to scream, chant, plaintively state their case, or offer praise, they all display strength and pride. Instead of casting these tales as outsider narratives, the artists demand respect and recognition of their centrality.

Aaminah Hernández captures the feeling of being pushed aside in "When I Speak." "When I speak," she begins, "people look afraid/ I already see the panic, the glances/ *How can we shut this down/ Lip service is given/ We value your perspective/ But there's always the smile, the but/ the this is how it works/ It's never forgotten that I have no degrees.*"

In *Speak!* authority is not bestowed based on elite education, class privilege, maleness, or whiteness. Here, a mother is considered a valuable source. The silencing that Hernández resists around education extends to race, religion, and the narrow ways in which world history is often told. Nadia Abou-Karr laments the singular narrative about genocide that is taught in the US. Expressing her deep sadness over the Jewish *Shoah*, she questions the silences around the Armenian and Rwandan genocides, and why that word is not used in reference to her Palestinian family's experience.

Leftist perspectives on current events often get buried in the same way that histories do. One track that aptly challenges this trend is "I Feel Pretty." It is E. Rose Sims' story of an anti-war activist, wet and handcuffed, in the back of a police van. Resisting the culture of repressive punishment, she raises spirits among the arrestees by leading them in an impromptu rendition of the *West Side Story* song.