“Statue of Liberty Dreams of Emma Lazarus, Awakens with Tears on her Cheeks”
By Naomi Shihab Nye

Give me your tired, you poor...
But not too tired, not too poor.
And we will give you the red tape,
the long line, white bread in its wrapper,
forms to fill out, and the looks, the stares
that say you are not where or what you should be,
not quite, not yet, you will never live up to us.

Your huddled masses yearning to be free...
Can keep huddling. Even here. Sorry to say this.
Neighborhoods with poor drainage
Potholes, stunning gunshots...
You’ll teem here too.

You dreamed of a kinder place,
a tree no one would cut, a cabinet to store your clothes.
Simple jobs bringing payment on time.
Someone to stand up for you.
The way I used to do, for everyone.
Holding my torch to get you to your new home in this country stitched of immigrants from the get go...
But you would always be homesick. No one said that.

I was the doorkeeper, concierge, welcome chief,
But rules have changed and I’m bouncer at the big club.
Had no say in it, hear me?
Any chance I could be, again, that one I used to be?

I lift my lamp beside the golden door.
It’s still up high. At night I tuck it into my robe.
And worry.
What will happen to you?
Every taunt, every turn-around, hand it over.
That’s not what you came here for.
I’ll fold it into my rubbing rag.
Bring back a shine.

By Naomi Shihab Nye, 2008 as printed in: