Write for Me

It was in the golf club smoking lounge (where no smoking is allowed) that I overheard a conversation between two literary elites.

I was trying to mind my own, with a roll of paper towels under one arm and glass cleaner in my other hand, but it was hard to ignore the cerebral electricity.

*I have such a penchant, said one man, for the exploration of the existential being.* I kept wiping tabletops, but nearly split my face with a grin.

*Ah! Yes! said the other. I did come across one piece the other day I found particularly intriguing. I’ve got the copy here. Shall I read it aloud?*

Oh, please do! I said in my head.

The man cleared his throat and began: *Vagrant waste stretched taut with fury silence in the stills—evening: wafer thin razors over bars that bind the rats.*

I waited, but that was it.

*Profound, said the first man. I can feel it here.* He points to the center of his chest. I’m not sure if he means his heart or a bad case of acid reflux.

I move on to the mantle, bringing my feather duster with me. The reading man mentions another piece, something about goats and windchimes—

but I’m no longer listening. I’m thinking if I was an editor, I’d be looking for poems that actually speak to people like me.
Or, if I was a writer, I’d write something like this:

black and white—the color of my uniform,
the color of my duties,
the color of my life

no one asks me what colors I like; it doesn’t matter as long as I do my job
and don’t complain

my stockings are too tight and my legs ache
with the weight of my body and the world
on my shoulders

I carry me; I carry my daughter, the one
whose father disappeared in the night
six years ago

speak English, they say, and I do, except
when I’m alone at night and I call out
Dios me salve—God save me.

The men leave the smoking room
(where no one can smoke)
and I pick up their empty cups,
their candy wrappers,
and the copy of the poem for which
the one man had such a penchant—
and throw them all in the trash.

Bio:

I have been married for 20 years and have five children. I teach English Composition for Clark State College. I’ve been published in numerous presses including Poetry Quarterly, Inwood Indiana, 50 Haikus, Contemporary Haibun Online, and Drifting Sands Haibun. I also won the Rebecca Lard award for best poem in the Spring 2020 issue of Poetry Quarterly. What I love most about writing is the ability to make people feel something. Due to life experiences and troubled family members, I often find myself writing about the grittier side of life: addiction, homelessness, abuse, mental illness, and loss. For me, poetry is never about rising to the heights of literary genius but about being down in the trenches with ordinary people who will say, “She gets me.”