1000 USES

I have to do a lot of work. I must
bookkeep
fax orders
check mail
organize paperwork
answer the phone
type orders
prepare coffee
compute staff information
For you all the time.
Every day from 9 to 4,
I have to jump obstacles,
Like the customer’s sense of humor.
Everything has to be on time.
Speak to me in different languages.
A computer freezes.
Oh yes, Sir! Oh yes, Sir!

Rich old Lebanese men
Own the factory of auto parts of cars sold
around the Middle East.
Give me your orders.
Oh yes, Sir! Oh yes, Sir!

But at the end of the week
I receive my pay for my hard work.
Even though for them I am a woman.
Now I must enjoy my life!

The author was a student in Elizabeth Riker’s class at the Center for Immigrant Education and Training, La Guardia Community College in NY. Elizabeth is the author of “So You Want to be an ESL Teacher.” Hillary Gardner is the ESOL Professional Development Coordinator at CUNY Adult Literacy Program in NY.

Your Poem

Title: _____________________________

By: ______________________________

Take it Further

Learn more about Pullman Porters at <www.paulwagnerfilms.com/miles-of-smiles-about-porters>.

For a brief biography of Langston Hughes (pictured right), visit <www.americaslibrary.gov> and go to “Meet Amazing Americans.”