Minimum Wage

Lila Downs

Traveled seven hundred miles
Crossed the border to the States
With a plastic bottle running
Cross the desert in a shakeCome to English only country
Hidin' from the minutemen
Come to make this place my home
Run a long, long way from thenStory of a lifetime
For the minimum wageWell, they chased me through the desert
Then the agents strapped me down
Then they ask me why in Spanish
Why you keep on comin' back?When I left my dad in Jersey
And my sister in Des Moines
They've been workin' in this country
Pickin' lettuce, washing floorsStory of a lifetime
For the minimum wageWell, they raised me to eight dollars
'Cause I washed the dishes fast
Well, the boss, he got me workin'
On the porch and in the backThen I wash the dish and rinse it
Then I go home late and sleep
Well, I need to be awake now
'Cause I walk out in my sleepWhen I see that black van comin'
Then I know I'm sure to run
Goddamn them agents caught me
Cuffed me on the spotFor the minimum wageNo one forced the boss to hire me
But it's nearly been fifteen
When I left my baby cryin'
With a promise in my skinOn the outskirts of L.A.
I recite a native poem
Million hands, ten thousand years
It's the season for the cropIt's my people doin' the pickin'
In the valley of the dolls
It's a decent job to work at
Any day I'll take this jobEthiopian, Colombian, Pakistani, Cantonese
Every man that I run into
All the kitchens on the strip
And they're pluggin' in them hours
Smilin' in their dreamsTheyre a long, long way from home now
But they lookin' to be free
California, Alabama and Missouri, Oregon

They been workin' like their fathers were
A long, long time agoFor the minimum wage
For the minimum wage
For the minimum wage
For, for, for, for the minimum wageIt's a bumpy road to ride in
But I'll take it anytime
It's a bumpy road to take
But I'll take it dayIt's a bumpy road to take
But I'll take it anytime
For the minimum wage

Songwriters
Lila Downs;Paul CohenPublished by
CLOUD PEOPLE MUSIC LLC;NARA MUSIC, INC.

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