

Biography

Bilen Gimikael is a sophomore who is interested in studying the intersection of environmental racism. Her rhythmic poem details her hometown, Memphis, Tennessee, and current environmental issues.

Artist Statement

As a born-and-raised Memphian, I was deeply concerned about this new xAI Project coming to my neighborhood. Because of my background and knowledge of my city, I felt entitled to write this informative piece. I analyzed the projected benefits and drawbacks of this new facility and considered the city's current environmental and infrastructure conditions. I knew I had to write this piece because I saw no one else doing it at the time.

My poem connects to the theme of Blackness in higher education by assessing how exactly Black spaces are systematically ignored and harmed. As a Black woman in higher education, I use my platform to address these ongoing challenges in my hometown. Memphis, a historically significant and predominantly Black city, frequently suffers from neglect. I wanted this poem to give a voice to Memphis residents who are tired of suffering in silence.