

## APPENDIX

### **Conversations about Home (at the Deportation Center) by Warsan Shire**

Well, I think home spat me out, the blackouts and curfews like tongue against loose tooth. God, do you know how difficult it is to talk about the day your own city dragged you by the hair, past the old prison, past the school gates, past the burning torsos erected on poles like flags? When I meet others like me, I recognise the longing, the missing, the memory of ash on their faces. No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark. I've been carrying the old anthem in my mouth for so long that there's no space for another song, another tongue, or another language. I know a shame that shrouds, totally engulfs. I tore up and ate my own passport in an airport hotel. I'm bloated with language I can't afford to forget.

\*

They ask me, How did you get here? Can't you see it on my body? The Libyan Desert red with immigrant bodies, the Gulf of Aden bloated, the city of Rome with no jacket. I hope the journey meant more than miles, because all my children are in the water. I thought the sea was safer than the land. I want to make love, but my hair smells of war and running and running. I want to lie down, but these countries are like uncles who touch you when you're young and asleep. Look at all these borders foaming at the mouth with bodies broken and desperate. I'm the color of hot sun on my face; my mother's remains were never buried. I spent days and nights in the stomach of the truck; I did not come out the same. Sometimes, it feels like someone else is wearing my body.

\*

I know a few things to be true. I do not know where I am going, where I have come from is disappearing, I am unwelcome and my beauty is not beauty here. My body is burning with the shame of not belonging; my body is longing. I am the sin of memory and the absence of memory. I watch the news, and my mouth becomes a sink full of blood. The lines, the forms, the people at the desks, the calling cards, the immigration officer, the looks on the street, the cold settling deep into my bones, the English classes at night, the distance I am from home. But Alhamdulillah, all of this is better than the scent of a woman completely on fire; or a truckload of men who look like my father, pulling out my teeth and nails; or fourteen men between my legs; or a gun; or a promise; or a lie; or his name; or his manhood in my mouth.

\*

I hear them say, go home; I hear them say, fucking immigrants, fucking refugees. Are they really this arrogant? Do they not know that stability is like a lover with a sweet mouth on your body one second and the next you are a tremor lying on the floor covered in rubble and old currency waiting for its return. All I can say is, I was once like you, the apathy, the pity, the ungrateful placement; and now my home is the mouth of a shark, now my home is the barrel of a gun. I'll see you on the other side.

## Backwards by Warsan Shire

The poem can start with him walking backwards into a room.

He takes off his jacket and sits down for the rest of his life;  
that's how we bring Dad back.

I can make the blood run back up my nose, ants rushing into a hole.

We grow into smaller bodies, my breasts disappear,  
your cheeks soften, teeth sink back into gums.

I can make us loved, just say the word.

Give them stumps for hands if even once they touched us without consent,

I can write the poem and make it disappear.

Step-Dad spits liquor back into glass,

Mum's body rolls back up the stairs, the bone pops back into place,  
maybe she keeps the baby.

Maybe we're okay kid?

I'll rewrite this whole life and this time there'll be so much love,  
you won't be able to see beyond it.

You won't be able to see beyond it,

I'll rewrite this whole life and this time there'll be so much love.

Maybe we're okay kid,

maybe she keeps the baby.

Mum's body rolls back up the stairs, the bone pops back into place,

Step-Dad spits liquor back into glass.

I can write the poem and make it disappear,

give them stumps for hands if even once they touched us without consent,

I can make us loved, just say the word.

Your cheeks soften, teeth sink back into gums

we grow into smaller bodies, my breasts disappear.

I can make the blood run back up my nose, ants rushing into a hole,

that's how we bring Dad back.

He takes off his jacket and sits down for the rest of his life.

The poem can start with him walking backwards into a room.

## **Biography of Warsan Shire**

Warsan Shire was born in Kenya in 1988. She is a Somali-British writer based in London. She is the author of *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth* (flipped eye, 2011), *Her Blue Body* (flipped eye, 2015), and *Our Men Do Not Belong to Us* (Slapering Hol Press and Poetry Foundation, 2015), all of which are books collection of her poems. Her work has been published in various magazines and anthologies such as *Poetry Review*, *Wasafiri*, and *SableLitMag*; *the Salt Book of Younger Poets* (2011), *Long Journeys: African Migrants on the Road* (2013), and *Poems That Make Grown Women Cry* (2016). Shire's poem is adapted from singer Beyonce, album *Lemonade* in 2016. Shire is a poetry editor for *Spook Magazine* and guest editor for *YoungSableLitMag*. She has worked internationally at events in South Africa, Italy, Germany, and the United States. In 2013 she received the first African Poetry Award from Brunel University. In 2014, she was named the First Young Poet in London and the Winner of Poets in Queensland, Australia. [Madden, 2021].

She also wrote the short film *Brave Girl Rising*, which depicts the lives of Somali girls living in one of Africa's largest refugee camps. She currently lives in Los Angeles with her husband. Among many themes, her poems often discuss the experience of migration and refugees, especially in the context of family and romance. Her work also frequently depicts women experiencing abuse and struggling to leave unhealthy relationships. One day in London around 2013, Shire turned on her recorder while her uncle was talking about her growing up in Somalia, living as a refugee. Many of her poems focus on the experience of immigrant women. But in recent years, she has been more interested in the inner workings of men in her family. Shire is a generation of young poets who have fascinated a large audience by first publishing her poems online—first popularized through her Tumblr. For now, she has become a famous poet and has eighty thousand followers on Twitter and more than sixty-three thousand followers on Instagram. [Okeowo, 2022].



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## PENGESAHAN REVISI

Judul Skripsi : Stylistic Analysis of Warran Shire's Selected Poems:  
"Conversation About Home (at the Deportation Center) and  
"Backwards"  
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