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Where We Belong

I walk through the sliding doors and take a step into the airport. The cool air hits my face as I squint. I'm still sweating and it's not the heat this time. It's been about a month since the coup and I'm the last one in my family to leave the country. I'm the only one left. I feel as if my walk is getting slower but my feet knows where to go. I used to fly home from college very often so I know my way around in this airport. I'm on autopilot. But I hadn't realized how cold and grey it was before. Metal surrounds me while a strange women in a uniform checks my bags. I'm not a terrorist. Well not the kind that you are looking for anyway. My uncle is walking beside me. He supports the dictator that wants to lock me in a jail cell. That's right. He is the companion I'm stuck with as I say goodbye to either to my country or to my freedom. I smile and keep chatting about the weather. I need a witness around to let my friends and family know that I've been arrested. "Oh yes uncle, it's very warm." All I feel is the cold sweat running down my back. "Yeah, I'll say hi to mom and dad for you" if I don't get arrested in the next ten minutes.

There is something new in the airport. Police put tables in the middle of the hall and checking passports. Not all passports though. Government employees and their children have special passports that allows us to travel to Europe without visa. Obviously no European country will give a Turkish person a visa after the military coup. Nobody wants a refugee. And those who have a special passport will be prevented from leaving. Who in their right mind would think I'm part of a plot that attempted to take down the government? I can't even schedule a doctor's appointment without my mom. Regardless, government has all the power now. I can't leave my home anymore if they don't let me.

I get in the line in front of the huge flag and the redness of it hurts my eyes. One symbol that supposed to set me free, only traps me more. I'm not wanted here and I remember couple lines from Robert Frost. "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, / they have to take you in." (122-123) It suddenly strikes me that I'm not leaving home but going home. I'm going to my family. I'll lie my way out of here because I have to. Please god let the police be too lazy to check my family background. Otherwise I'm leaving here in handcuffs.

Redness is brighter than ever now. I realize my hands are shaking. They always do when I'm nervous. My turn has come. I can feel my pulse pounding and the buzz in my ears start to fade away with the policeman's first word. "Documents!" I hand the files with my sweaty hands and start to blurt out sentences. "Wow it's hot outside huh?" Is my smile too creepy? No of course not. He seems tired and bored. My mind is everywhere. I need to focus. I rub my wrist with the other hand. Just let me go. "Oh I'm so excited I'm going for an exchange program in Europe for a semester." or maybe ten years. I just keep talking for some reason. "Excuse me, I couldn't hear you very well. Oh yes both my parents are retired for a long time now." I'm getting the hang of this constant lying. Just please don't fact check me. "Oh I'm going to Slovakia. I've heard it's really pretty" Except I'm going to Paris to my parents and if you look at the dates on the paper I just gave you, the program doesn't even start for another three months. He doesn't react to any of my comments and finally stops typing and clicking. "Whatever, you can go." I freeze for a while and he finally looks at me for the first time. I ask "really?" in disbelief. Oh my god why am I so dumb? I just grab my passport from his hand and almost run towards the planes. I can see my uncle texting others that I'm going home. I'm going to see my family in couple hours. The joy of running towards the sky shadows the obscurity of the future. I don't realize that I won't see this place or anyone in it for a very long time again. Warsan Shire says "No one leaves home until home / is a

damp voice in your ear saying / leave, run now, I don't know what / I've become.” (64-67) I’m no longer accepted anywhere except the arms of my parents. They are my home now.

The place I was born in is not exactly welcoming anymore for me. Turns out a home is a luxury. And sometimes, finding out where you belong takes some effort.

Works Cited

Frost, Robert. “The Death of a Hired Man” *North of Boston*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915; Bartleby.com, 1999. www.bartleby.com/118/.

Warsan, Shire. “Home” *The Globe and Mail*. 4 December 2015