



Source: Isabel Kershner, 'Israel is officially silent on Syrian report it entered airspace', *New York Times* online, 07/09/07.

Tags: [language](#), [water](#), [child/parent](#), [refugees](#)
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While I talk please feel free to take a little sip of water from that bottle you always carry around with you—it won't distract me at all. I watch people do it all the time on the tube and at the bus stop and walking in the rain. I myself am just going to take a sip of the water I've got with me in my ruck sack so that I can speak clearly and better recall the names of everyone I want to tell you about.

Here goes.

My name is X and I was born in X and my parents were called X and X and when I was young the thing that most scared me in the world, the thing that made my face crumple and little choking sounds come out of my throat and tears pour into my pillow at night was the thought that X would never come home. The night before X was taken away, he bought me a blue sugar mouse. It had a tiny tail made from string.

Anyway the good news is that after four years had passed X did come home (by which time I had eaten the blue sugar mouse) and do you know what—he looked different from how he looked when he left. He looked as if something had happened to him, he was quite thin and pale and he carried a little bottle of water around with him at all times. We had to leave my country of birth and cross the equator to another country. I learned the language, and got the right clothes and at school when I

was chosen to read Shakespeare's plays out loud, I said 'Sinful Macduff, they were all struck for thee!' as if it was normal.

I noticed that in my new country called X it went dark in winter at 3pm as if the plug had been pulled out of the sky and everyone spoke to their dogs as if they could talk back. The dogs had names like Patch and Spotty.

My best friend was called X and she was born in X and she had a dog called Clem. We pinned pictures of Marc Bolan on the insides of our desks, and sang RIDE A WHITE SWAN on the number 63 bus home and sprinkled silver glitter on our anoraks. We always got off the bus one stop earlier to buy chips from the man whose bottom teeth were completely rotten. X used to beg him for one more spoonful of sugar in her tea, but he was annoyed because he had already put six in.

You'll be pleased to know I've just taken a little sip of water. That's much better. Sometimes I think we carry bottles of water around with us because we want to make something go away, that we have a sense of foreboding inside us and we are trying to repulse someone or something that worries us. I would say more but I've run out of water.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Deborah Levy.