

guess. On top of those papers lie two emails that I printed out, with comments from a. on the latest draft of my play, very daunting comments because they expose the fact that I have gone to great lengths to sabotage my own play. I wonder if all of the draft I wrote last month is even valid, since I wrote it under such stress and distraction.

What was all this for?

I guess this goes to show the lengths I go to in avoiding what I set out to say.

Now I'm too tired to say it.

If I could, if I could, I would just read books and watch movies and eat food for days and days and days, until I just can't take it anymore. Take a real vacation. I'm not sure that the vacation I took in the past week or so really counts, since my heart was still on a string and my mind was still messed up from not knowing what I knew already.

I feel that if I take that much needed time out now, I could really heal, because there are no more bombs to drop, the city has been decontaminated, at least for a little while. Much as it hurts, I can finally breathe. When it stops hurting to breathe, I could work again.

Then I think, no, I have to push on through and keep busy.

Both arguments are valid.

Maybe a middle ground is to ease back into the work. Not plunge into it right away, but ease into it, with a clearer head this time.

What else is my refuge but my work?

Here is the truth of the matter:

I don't know who I am. I've been so many places, played so many parts, that I don't know who I am or where I belong. I have learned so many things, yet I don't feel like I know anything to save my life, to give my life meaning. I want meaning in my life and I don't know where to find it. I think maybe if I started from scratch again, I could find meaning in my life. I think maybe if I got rid of all the materials I have, got rid of all the money I have, and started from scratch, from poverty, and built myself up with a minimum wage job living in a basement bachelor apartment and reached a point where I could say that I bought with money I made these clothes I am wearing, these things I am using, this place I am living it. I think if I did all that, I could find meaning in my life, I could find out who I was. But if I did all that, that still wouldn't change the fact that I was helped to get to this country in the first place. So then what must I do? Go back to Ethiopia? Find a job in a coffee shop? Save the money I earn there until I have made enough to buy a plane ticket to Canada? Even then, I cannot change the fact that I would have no trouble getting into Canada, since I already have landed papers, which I was helped in acquiring. No matter what I do, there is no avoiding the fact that I was helped. Maybe that is my problem, I look at people around me and think that none of them were helped, that they all got to where they are (sometimes not much of a place to be) by the skin of their teeth, and since they were not helped, they will always be better than me. But me, having been helped, whatever I do is meaningless because it is a result of someone having helped me, always. What would happen if I had no help? That's what I would like to know. I think I could find myself if I removed myself from all help, past, present, and future help. I think I could find myself in poverty.

Who do I speak for? Where do I belong? Do I belong with Ethiopians? Do I belong with Canadians? Do I belong with "black people"? What does it mean to be an Ethiopian? Am I one? How do I qualify as one? What am I doing here in Canada? Do I need to be in Canada? Could I find meaning for myself if I travelled somewhere far away, where there is real need and poverty and for once I could think about something or someone other than myself? I think of that too sometimes. Of going where volunteer help is needed, and putting myself in the midst of real misery and need. I think maybe then I could get a clearer perspective on my life, on the world, what I could do in it.

As a writer, I speak from a place of confusion. I don't know if this is a good place to speak from. But that is the only place I know, at this point. Utter confusion. Personal confusion. A