

Pop Music

Some people who came to Canada as refugees have spoken powerfully about their experiences through pop music, including Shad, whose parents fled the Rwandan genocide, and K'Naan, who left Somalia with his family when he was a young boy. Sharing their music can be a powerful way to open a discussion about refugee experiences or to raise awareness on social media about refugee experiences.

Shad: “Fam Jam”

Listen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1u9JoEYxFnw&noredirect=1>

Lyrics: <http://www.songlyrics.com/shad/fam-jam-lyrics/>

[Verse 1]

(Not bad huh, for some immigrants)

From donated clothes, to caps and gowns

It's a little shout to my black and brown

Folks that know the game, not in class to clown

Had the funny accent, look who's laughing now

See Samir came here to grind, and he slaved at

Every minimum wage job, but he saved that

Brought his sis through on scholarship to make stacks

Working as a surgeon she bought a whip, and payed cash

No time to whine, we just face facts

Let's fit 6 in the back and let's take that

To the best restaurants, make reservations

Since we out here, since they made reservations for

First Nations and they never made reparations

The Natives probably relate more to immigration

So just for y'all too, and I can't forget the Haitians

Here for an education, it's a celebration

[Hook]

(Not bad huh, for some immigrants) [x4]

[Verse 2]

To the guys that draw lines and make the borders real

But then bend the rules when there's more to drill

Don't turn away the stateless, think of the waste
If one in 3 refugees is a Lauryn Hill
Come along way, you can move forward still
From the poorest to up by Lawrence or Forest Hill
But more than that, skrilley banks just chill
Make a home, just build in a zone, less ill
In a place to be safe, few found an escape route
Where we come from, so we grateful to Jesus
And now the top is the next stop, this drop
Oughtta have my Aunts on the guest spot, red hot
I'm talking going from sweatshops to tech stocks
Doctors Without Borders, with dreadlocks
We quoting S.Dot Carter on Otis
Turns out some fresh off the boat kid wrote this
...Not bad

[Hook]

[Verse 3]

Check it out

Now when you're Third World born, but First World formed
Sometimes you feel pride, sometimes you feel torn
See my Mother's tongue is not what they speak where my Mother's from
She moved to London with her husband when their son was 1
And one time after Family Ties, I turned on the news and saw my family die
(Why?) Pops said there's murder in the motherland
Things about colonialism I didn't understand
All the things that shape a man in his mind state;
A community income, and crime rate
If times change, why my people still in dire straits
If it's a big world, show me where's my place
In it, I had to talk to Pops for a minute
He said, "Shad, this world wasn't home to begin with
Just keep defending the oppressed, take steps
And keep rapping, you might just be the best"
Well, yes

[Hook]

K'Naan: "My Old Home"

Listen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucTWCR1VJf8>

Lyrics: <http://genius.com/Knaan-my-old-home-lyrics>

Note: There is some offensive language in this song. You will want to preview it for yourself before sharing it. Nonetheless, it is a powerful account of the transformation of K'Naan's "old home" of Somalia when war broke out. It reminds us that the places that refugees come from were not always war-torn or difficult—refugees' memories about their old homes may be beautiful, as well as painful.

So yea basically a lot of people ask me how life was then... so here it is

My old home smelled of good birth
Boiled red beans, kernel oil, and hand-me-down poetry
Its brick white-washed walls widowed by first paint
The tin rooftops hum in songs of promise while time ends
Locked into demonic rhythm with the leaves
The trees had the wind huggin them, loving them a torturous love
Buggin when it was over and done
The round cemented pot kept the rain drops cool
Neighbours, dwellers spatter in the pool
Kids playing football with sand in a sock
We had what we got and it wasn't a lot
No one knew they were poor we were all innocent to grieve judgment
The country was combusting with life like a long hibernating volcano
With a long tale of success like J-Lo
Farmers, fishers, fighters, even fools had a place in production
The coastal line was the place of seduction
The coral reefs make your days in reflection
And women walked with grace and perfection
And we just knew we were warriors too nothing worried us too
We were glorious
BOOM

[Verse]

And one day it came
Spoiled the parade like rain
Like oil in a flame it pained

The heart attack sudden
Harder than eleven
Harder than a punch in the womb
Harder than the lunch you consume for us
It had a cancerous fume war, lust
Men who made killing hoagies
Sellin powerfully
Like healthy livestock
It made tides rock
With a diligent mock
Confused with the people
Infused in the evil
Profess to reject
Like Jews in the sequel
So when it came in the morning
With a warning and without
The herding was a burden
Only certain was dealt
A mythical tale
No soul knows well
Liberty went to hell
Freedom caught four shells
Fierce was the blow
Keep your to the show
It appears Orwell
Was right in 84
Half-baked brother
Killed mother in a store
But all of us watching
But they don't love her anymore

[Chorus]

Peep my poem
Mother was my old home
Good will is looted
In my old home
Religions is burnt down
In my old home
Kindness is shackled

In my old home
Justice has been raped
In my old home
Murderers hold post
In my old home
The land vomits ghosts
In my old home

[Verse]

We got pistols with eyes
Corruption and lies
Trust us snakes
And death without breaks
Suspicious newborns
Live in the Horn
We used to the pain
Rack bodies
Not grain
Chop limbs
Not trees
Spend lies
Not wealth
Seek vengeance
Not truth
The craziest youth
Moist pains
Are plans
F--- your plans

[Chorus]

Bandits are leaders now
In my old home
Rumors are law now
In my old home
Sedatives are fake
In my old home
Rapists are praised
In my old home
Demons dress well

In my old home
Infants are nailed
In my old home
Spirits are jailed
In my old home
Grudges grow tails
In my old home

[Bridge]

Our roads have seen electric hate and
Our women labour beneath stubborn faith
Our farms produce guilty grubbin
Our kids depend on shifty luck see
Our news is like "for death is all"
Don't blame me for the truth I've told

[Chorus]

Good will is looted
In my old home
Religions is burnt down
In my old home
Kindness is shackled
In my old home
Justice has been raped
In my old home
Murderers hold post
In my old home
The land vomits ghosts
In my old home.

K'Naan: "Soobax"

Listen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mVY30buW4Q>

Lyrics: <http://www.metrolyrics.com/soobax-lyrics-knaan.html>

Basically I got beef
I wanna talk to you directly
I can't ignore
I can't escape
And that's 'cause you affect me
You crippled me
You shackled me
You shattered my whole future in front of me
This energy is killing me, I gotta let it pour like blood soobax
Dhadkii waa dhinteen nagala soobax
Dhibki waa bateen nagala soobax
Dhiigii waa bateen nagala soobax
Dhulkii waa gubteen nagala soobax
Nagalaa soobax
Nagalaa soobax
Dadki waa dinten nagalaa soobax
Dibki waa butten nagalaa soobax
Deegii waa butten nagalaa soobax
So for real who's to blame
We lose lives over Qabiil's name
Disregard for the soul, we just don't give a fuck no more
Left alone, all alone
Settle yo issues on yo own
What to do, where to go
I gotta be a refugee then soobax
Dhadkii waa dhinteen nagala soobax
Dhibki waa bateen nagala soobax
Dhiigii waa bateen nagala soobax
Dhulkii waa gubteen nagala soobax
Nagalaa soobax
Nagalaa soobax
Dhadkii waa dhinteen nagala soobax
Dhibki waa bateen nagala soobax
Dhiigii waa bateen nagala soobax

Dhulkii waa gubteen nagala soobax
Mogadishu (Yeah) used to be
A place where there world would come to see
Dasiida suuguumta Lida
Wardeegle iyo Madina
Argesa wasasoo Bardere iyo Berbera
My skin need to feel the sand and the sun
I'm tired of the cold god--- soobax
Dadki waa dinten nagalaa soobax
Dibki waa butten nagalaa soobax
Deegii waa butten nagalaa soobax
Duulki waa guubten nagalaa soobax
Nagalaa soobax
Nagalaa soobax
Dadki waa dinten nagalaa soobax
Dibki waa butten nagalaa soobax
Deegii waa butten nagalaa soobax
(Hey hey hey hey hey hey hey, Hey hey hey hey hey hey)
I guess I could use the last part to flow
I'm known as a lyrical rhyme domino
And then they go oh oh now you know
Put a hole in an emcee like cheerio
They don't hear me though
I work for the struggle, I don't work for dough
I mean what I say, I don't do it for show
Somalia needs all gun men right out the door
Dadki waa dinten nagalaa soobax
Dibki waa butten nagalaa soobax
Deegii waa butten nagalaa soobax
Duulki waa guubten nagalaa soobax
Nagalaa soobax
Nagalaa soobax
Dadki waa dinten nagalaa soobax
Dibki waa butten nagalaa soobax
Deegii waa butten nagalaa soobax
Duulki waa guubten nagalaa soobax
Nagalaa soobax
Nagalaa soobax
Dadki waa dinten nagalaa soobax

Dibki waa butten nagalaa soobax
Deegii waa butten nagalaa soobax

Translation:

The people are dying, just come out
The troubles are filled, just come out
The blood has filled up, just come out
The floor is burnt, just come out
Just come out
Just come out.