

## GLASGOW SNOW

By Jackie Kay

You were found in the snow in Glasgow  
Outside the entrance to Central Station.  
Your journey took you from an Ethiopian prison  
To the forests in France where luck and chance  
Showed you not all white men are like the men  
In *Roots* - a film you watched once.  
The people smugglers didn't treat you like Kizzy  
Or Kunta Kinte, brought you food and water by day,  
Offered you shelter in a tent, and it was sanctuary.  
And you breathed deep the forest air, freely.

But when you were sent here, Glasgow,  
In the dead winter: below zero, no place to go,  
You rode the buses to keep warm: *X4M, Toryglen,*  
*Castlemilk, Croftfoot, Carbrain, Easterhouse,*  
*Moodiesburn, Red Road Flats, Springburn,*  
No public fund, no benefit, no home, no sanctum,  
No haven, no safe port, no support,  
No safety net, no sanctuary, no nothing.  
Until a girl found you in the snow, frozen,  
And took you under her wing, singing.

Oh... would that the Home Office show  
The kindness of that stranger in the winter snow!  
Would they grant you asylum, sanctum,  
For your twenty-seventh birthday?  
On March 8th, two thousand and thirteen,  
You could become, not another figure, sum, unseen,  
Another woman sent home to danger, dumb, afraid,  
At the mercy of strangers, no crib, no bed,  
All worry: next meal, getting fed, fetching up dead.  
And at last, this winter, you might lay down your sweet head.



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POEMS