



## RESOURCE SHEET 10

### Push the Week

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by Jackie Kay

If I had cash, I could get some *cassava gari*  
Down Great Western Road, shop in Solly's  
And make some *sukuma wiki*; stretch the  
week.  
But this card don't buy me African food  
Or let me shop in *Marie Curie*  
(although they have nice things in there.)  
Only in the Salvation Army Store.  
(Where the clothes are a bit of a bore.)  
You think just because you're an asylum  
seeker  
You don't care what you wear?  
And from eating the wrong food, my  
stomach's sore.  
If I didn't just have this card to use  
I would buy some maize meal flour,  
avocado, yam.  
If my mother were here she would say:  
*That woman is not my daughter.*  
Even I don't know who I am.  
If I had cash I could buy some *corn pones*,  
*dried fish, beef... curried mung beans...*  
*Kachumbari*, my God, how I wish!  
Expand the chest. My spirits would lift, *eh?*  
Not so worthless, not so angry.  
*Ugali* would make me less depressed!  
Not so homesick. *Nyama choma.*  
But the Home Office never consider  
How it feels to be dispersed to Glasgow.

No cash for cane row, no money for  
Makimo.

No dosh for monthlies. No pounds for  
sweet potato.

The week repeats. We are scattered  
families.

Now it's HIV. No TV. Just CCTV – watching  
me.

Non-stop scrutiny. Anyone shouts *Asylum*  
*Seeker*

Bash them with your saucepan. *Man*  
*stealer!*

(I have yet to see one to write home about!)  
*Cassava!*

In your imagination, you have new friends  
to dinner.

You picture a cooker. A table. You light a  
candle.

You shine some cutlery. You see your face  
in it.

And you say *Stick in till you stick oot*, and  
you say,

*Help yourself. Go ahead. Have some*  
*chapati, mbazi, gari.*

*Here's what we eat in my country. You see.*

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