

**How to be the daughter of refugees.
A non-exhaustive list.**

Inherit your mother's hurt like a tumour in your chest.
It's better if she doesn't know you have it.
Never question when your father turns off the news.
Know that genocide reminds him of his boyhood.

Wonder how your father grieves.
You've never seen him cry.
Wonder if your parents ever miss home.
Or if they even consider it that anymore.

Know that your parents don't like to talk about their past.
But it's in everything they say. Everything they do.
Feel bad for wanting to know more.
Feel worse when they tell you.

Wish that they knew how to let go.
Wish that you could help them.
Cry because you can't.
Nobody ever taught you how.

Know that your father,
his wanting to live,
was an act of protest.
Wish you could tell him to exhale.

Try to be everything they're not.
Try to be everything they want you to be.
Even if you don't know what that is.

Know that they just want you to be happy.
Feel so deeply, deeply grateful for life.
And feel so incredibly alone.