BRITISH COUNCIL

TRUST ME

I'M AN IMMIGRANT

ESSAYS FROM
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MARIA GARCIA
KEI MILLER
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Foreword by Dr. Madeleine Albright

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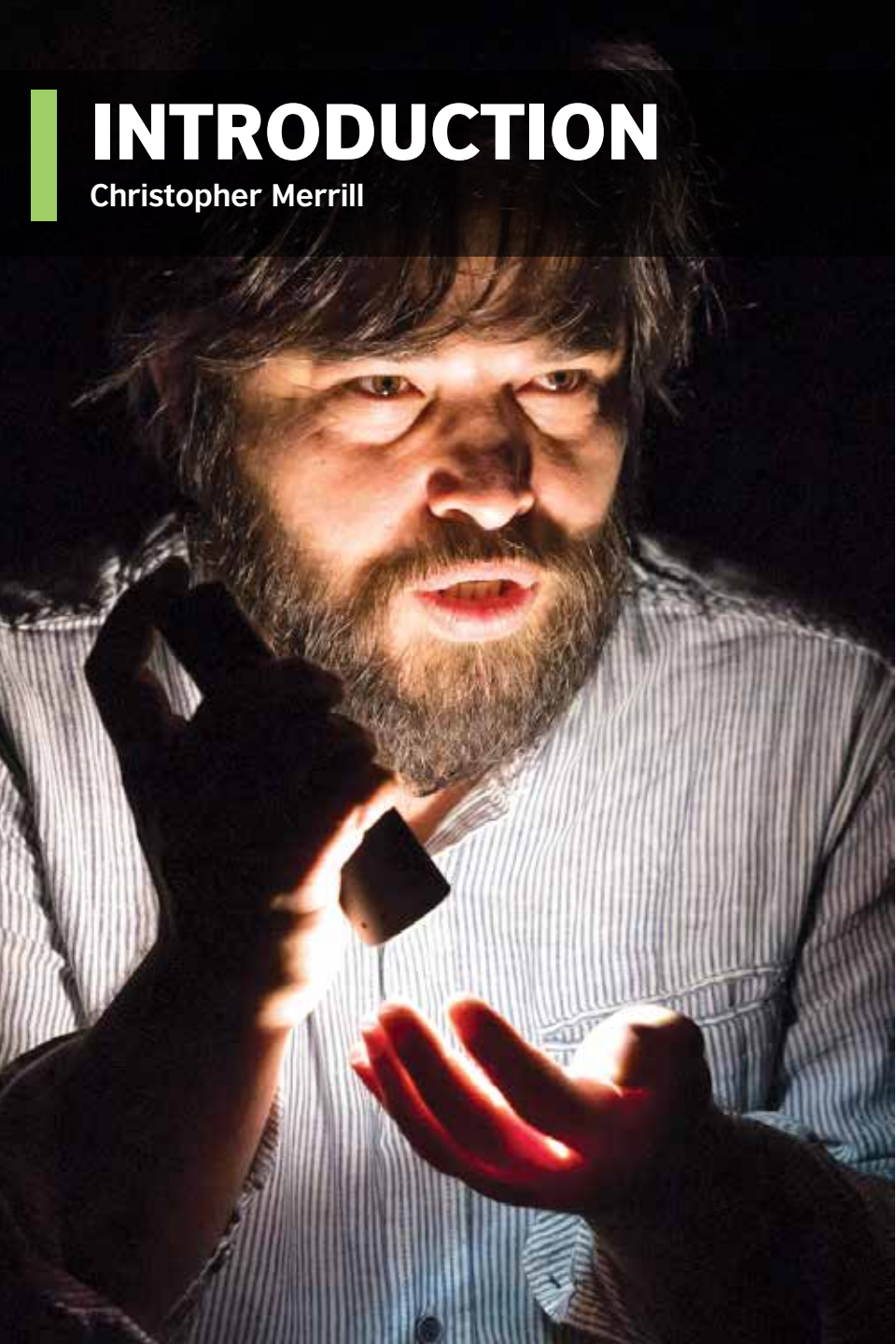
Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Christopher Merrill

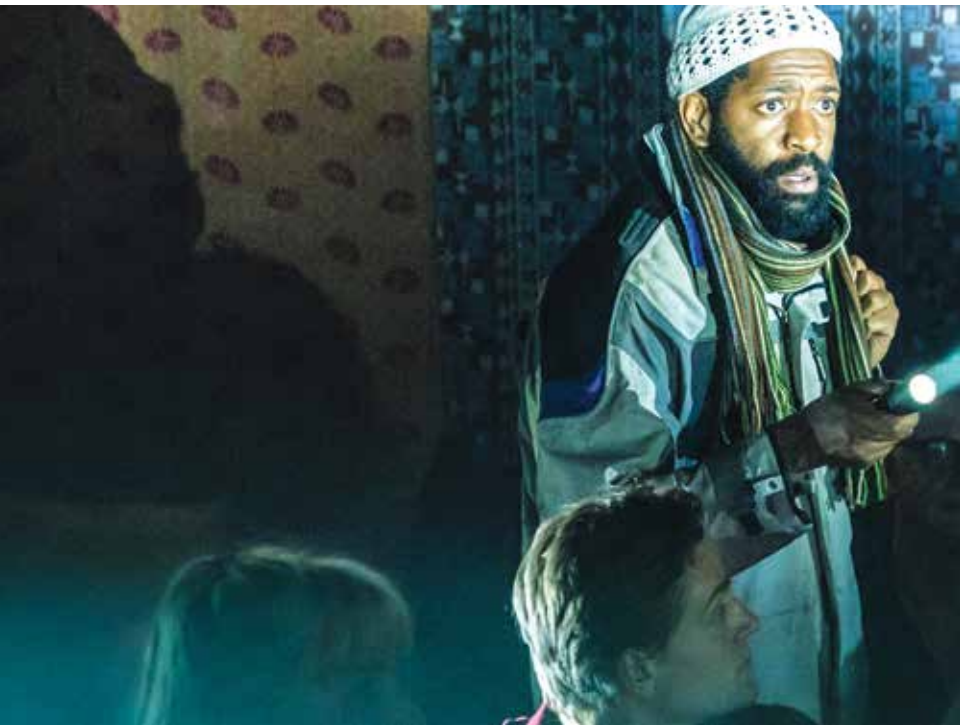


The port city of Calais, in northern France, has been a magnet for merchants and military forces, sailors and smugglers, since at least the twelfth century, when Richard the Lionheart made landfall at the outset of the Third Crusade. The White Cliffs of Dover can be seen on a clear day, and from the start of the European migrant crisis, in 2015, the prospect of crossing the short distance between France and the United Kingdom drew thousands of the dispossessed to Calais—men, women, and children determined to forge new lives far from their poor, oppressive, or war-torn homelands. Makeshift camps sprang up around Calais, including a self-contained village known as the Jungle, where some 6,000 people lived on a former landfill near the entrance to the Channel Tunnel. Joe Murphy and Joe Robertson, recent graduates of Oxford University, established an art center there called the Good Chance Theatre, in a secondhand geodesic dome tent, to offer theater workshops, dance and music performances, even kung fu lessons. Migrants from Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Syria, Sudan, and elsewhere met at the Good Chance Theatre to trade information and stories, to mourn and celebrate, to express themselves. What the English volunteers observed over seven months in the Jungle (a corrupted version of a Pashto word) inspired them to write an immersive drama titled *The Jungle*, which premiered at the Young Vic and now comes to the United States.

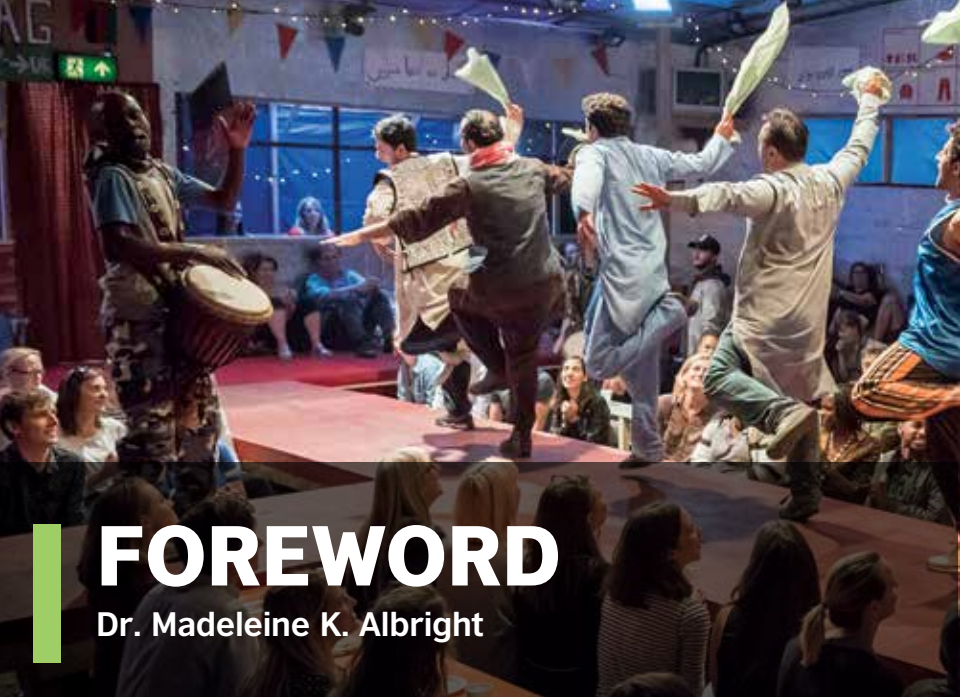
The timing is critical. Between the European migrant crisis, which has shaken the political orders of the United Kingdom and the Continent, and American debates over immigration, which in 2018 led to two of the three government shutdowns,

the question of who belongs where seems to be on the minds of people around the world. Lost in the fevered discussions on cable television and in the opinion pages of newspapers large and small is the profound questioning of assumptions that a work of drama may inspire. Which is why *The Jungle* should have a particular resonance for the citizens of a country founded by immigrants fleeing religious persecution. What the denizens of *The Jungle* seek is not so different than what the Puritans who migrated to the New World in the 1630s hoped to find: a place to live and worship as they pleased.

"I believe that imagining the other is a powerful antidote to fanaticism and hatred," said the Israeli novelist Amos Oz. "I believe that books that make us imagine the other, may turn us more immune to the ploys of the devil, including the inner



devil." The same holds for theater, a communal art that in the case of *The Jungle* invites spectators to enter the lives of some of those faceless souls whose fates so often fall prey to a politician's worst instincts. The migrants brought to life in *The Jungle* are not statistics but individuals whose strengths and weaknesses are revealed in their all-too-human dimensions, offering audiences an opportunity to exercise their imagination and engage with a subject that is prone to sloganeering. To complement the experience of watching the drama unfold, we invited writers, policy makers, and thinkers to reflect in the following pages on the issue of immigration, hoping to spark conversations informed by the perspectives of some who know how hard it is to earn the trust of others. Think of *Trust Me, I'm an Immigrant*, then, as a series of essays on the Other, who, as it turns out, is every one of us.



FOREWORD

Dr. Madeleine K. Albright

As I can testify, the immigrant story has many sides.

In 1939, my parents and I arrived in London. We did so as refugees from the Nazi invasion of our native Czechoslovakia. In the apartment building where we first lived, we met exiles from Poland, Hungary, France and elsewhere across Europe who had comparable stories to tell. We were thankful for the haven we received but prayed for the day when we could go home.

In 1948, my family came to the United States. We did so to escape the post-war Communist takeover of Czechoslovakia. Our new American neighbors did not ask when we were planning to leave; instead they welcomed us and wanted to

know how soon we could complete the naturalization process and become citizens.

In the 1990s, when I served as America's permanent representative to the United Nations and later as Secretary of State, I called for robust action by NATO and the world community to oppose ethnic cleansing and to prevent endangered populations in Bosnia and Kosovo from being forced to flee the villages where their families had lived for generations.

We are now well into the twenty-first century and there are more migrants of one type or another—the "international homeless"—than at any time in the last seventy years. The exodus of people across borders in search of security and the chance for a better life is challenging governments, roiling politics, straining the capacity of international relief agencies, and raising difficult questions of national identity, social cohesion, fairness, safety, morality, and law.

Some blame the present dilemma on refugee policy, but the causes clearly are broader. As in the 1930s, we are failing to stand up to demagogic politicians. As with Communists in the 1940s, we are allowing the democratic process to be subverted by cynical leaders with undemocratic goals. As in the 1990s, we are watching extreme nationalists pit one group against another, poisoning the communal bloodstream with hate toward people who are different—whether in nationality, appearance, or creed.

There are no magic solutions to the refugee crisis but that does not mean that nothing can be done. Most important is for the world to do much more to help people earn a living in places from which many now flee. The assistance of technicians and teachers is more valuable by far than rockets and guns; yet global trouble spots are starved for knowledge and flooded with the instruments of death. One need not be a stable genius to understand that, should families no longer feel compelled to depart their homelands, the border turbulence would end, and countries could cease putting barbwire atop walls and packing desperate people into camps. The remedy to human flight is human development.

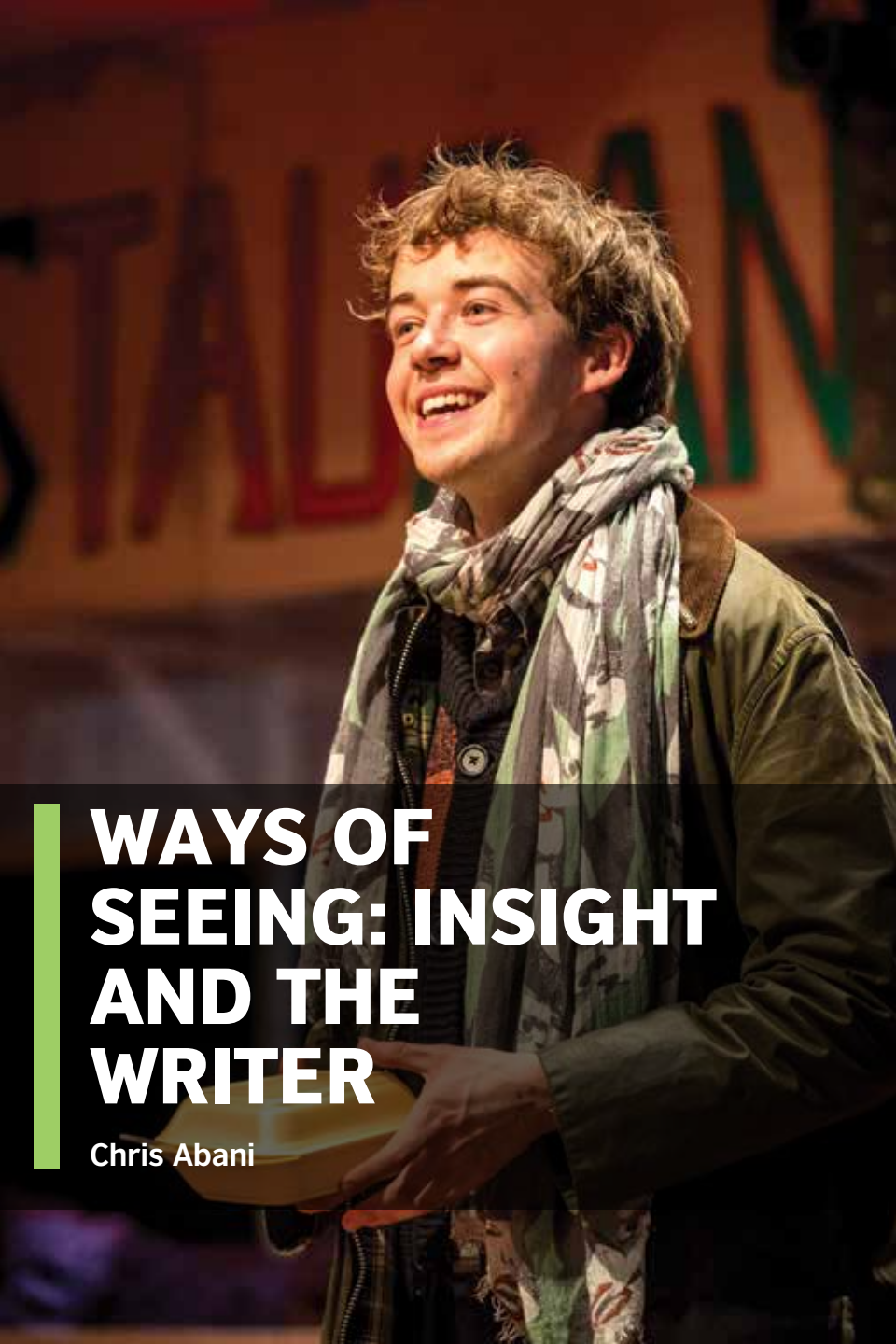
Second, although nations have a duty to protect borders and enforce laws, that is not their sole responsibility. To be just, a law should recognize that, were Fate to decide differently, each of us might find ourselves outside the gates, clamoring to get in. The desire to enter a country illegally is not an entitlement to do so; people often want what they cannot get —that's part of the human condition. But our knowledge that we could be in the shoes of the other should prompt us to ask what we can do to help if not in one way, then through some alternative means.

Several principles strike me as imperative. The opportunity for legal emigration should be more widely available. The right to refugee status of people with a legitimate fear of persecution should be honored. Traffickers who raise the hopes of other migrants by making false promises, then cheating them out of what little they have, should be prosecuted. Women and children must be shielded from abuse. Politicians who seek to advance their careers by unfairly castigating immigrant populations should be exposed. The bottom line: a person who

flees his or her home, for whatever reason, does not shed the right to be treated with dignity and respect. That's why we need leaders who will teach us to master our fears, understand all dimensions of the issue, and recognize how much our societies have been enriched by the past contributions of immigrants and refugees. I include especially the country to which I pledge allegiance—the United States—a nation whose heritage is traceable to virtually every racial and ethnic group on Earth.

Whatever else can be said of this issue, it is not new. Thirty-five years ago, when the United States was besieged with requests for admittance from people fleeing unrest in Cuba, Haiti, and Southeast Asia, President Reagan responded without hesitation: "We shall continue America's tradition as a land that welcomes peoples from other countries. We shall also, with other countries, continue to share in the responsibility of welcoming and resettling those who flee oppression."

Immigration is one of those complex public policy issues for which there is no single immediate and satisfactory answer. The challenge can still be managed, however, without either hardening our hearts or softening our brains. Here, Reagan's doctrine of shared responsibility is essential, a doctrine that can best be realized through the fair representation of diverse interests, informed debate, respect for truth, and the humane implementation of just laws. The eloquent and varied voices heard in *Trust Me, I'm an Immigrant* will not tell anyone exactly how to achieve those outcomes. We hope, however, that they will encourage all who hear them to reflect and learn.



WAYS OF SEEING: INSIGHT AND THE WRITER

Chris Abani

"The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled."

John Berger

We often confuse vision with seeing, the physical act of sight. We see our lives and the world we live in through mythological and psychological filters. It is the only way to live a normal life; not always juggling the dialectic. We believe the world to exist a priori to our stories, but it exists only in language and story. There is a vast literature of research around this but there is no space to go into it here. I will ask you to trust me.

The stories that shape our worlds reflect our social contracts and values. And value is the key word here. We want to believe the world accepts our basic right to exist and even to create, freely, the lives that we want to live. But the truth is, as much as we may chafe at the idea, we are all subject to evaluation; immigrants and citizens alike. Part of the social contract is that we must bring value to the societies we live in. There are varying degrees of privilege—gender, race, sexuality, and citizenship—when it comes to proving value, but again, that too is outside the scope here.

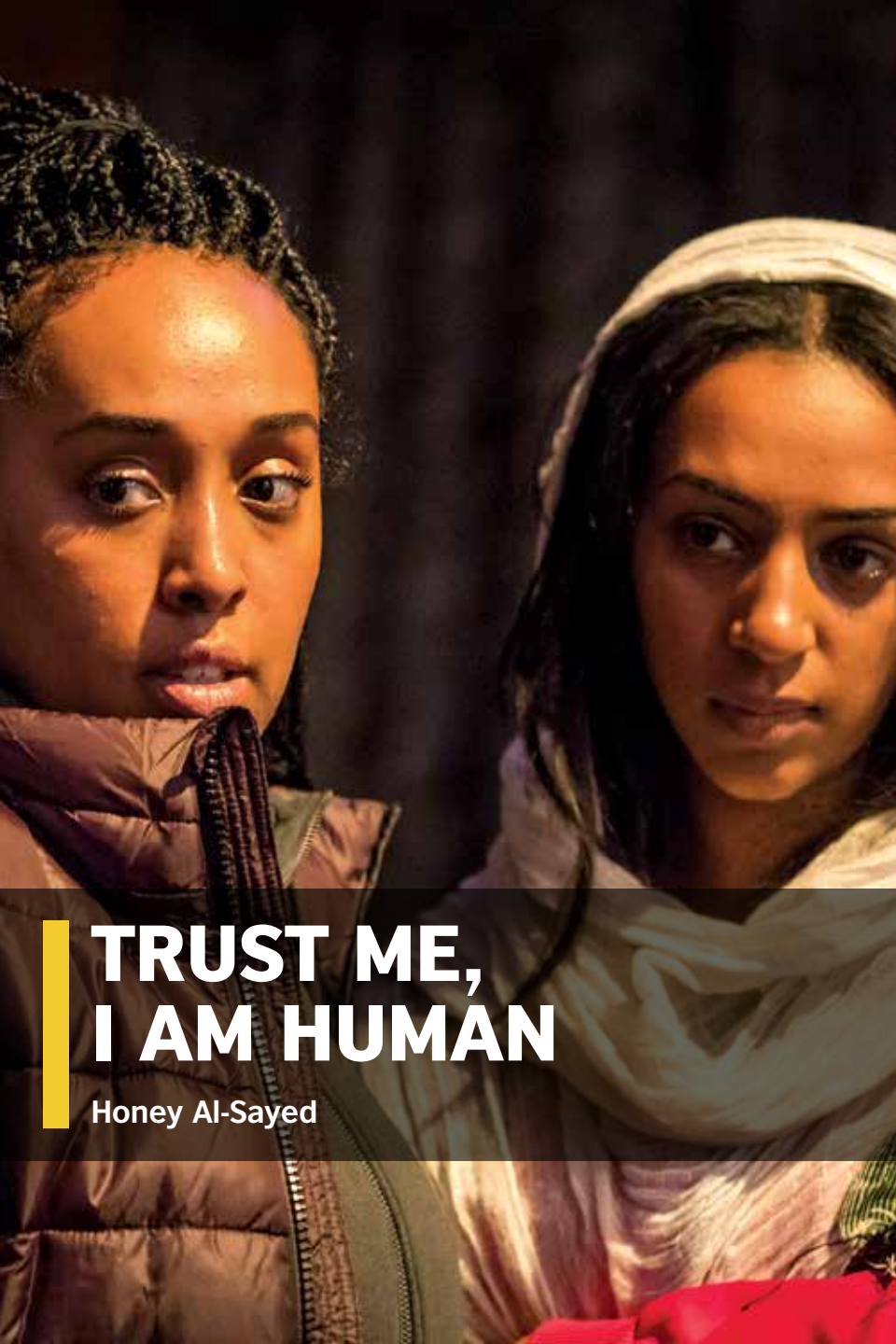
Seeing is complicated since it only occurs inside us. What sees is seen in the seeing. I am trying to talk about the gift of sight, or insight. And it is a gift, to the seer and to the seen. All acts of unsentimental love involve this clear seeing, and of course, acceptance of what is seen. There is a truth to this, and truth is balance, to paraphrase Susan Sontag. I am trying

to reveal meaning, without committing the error of defining it, as Hannah Arendt would say. Difficult, if not impossible. This seeing is tied to the idea of double consciousness theorized by W.E.B. DuBois. This is the idea that members of a non-dominant population are often burdened with the sensations and psychological challenge of seeing themselves through the eyes of the prejudiced dominant culture, measuring their value against the contempt with which they are often seen. This is something that is at the heart of every successive wave of immigrants' urge to become invisible, to assimilate into the dominant culture as quickly as possible. The closer one is to being the same class, caste, race or color of the dominant culture, the easier assimilation becomes. But it is never settled, this seeing, as Berger says, because proximity can sometimes seem like a matter of perspective.

Immigrants develop a keen sense of double, even triple consciousness. One of the markers of this is becoming adept at inflection — not only in terms of accent and language, as they struggle to master it — but also in terms of their ability to read body language, detect inflections in voices and gesture, to parse what is said from what is being implied, because not being able to understand the full context of these situations can prove bodily, and even legally, dangerous to an immigrant.

What, then, the writer and seeing? The artist, Nietzsche said, lives outside of morality. This is not to say that writers are amoral, but rather that writers must strive to see beyond the limited morality of their time. When it was moral and Christian to be a racist in America, Martin Luther King, Jr. could see beyond that limited morality to a world where prejudice and segregation no longer existed. Good writers understand that they occupy a double consciousness, living in culture as

individuals but beyond and outside of it as artists. This allows writers to create powerful interventions, and render us, in all our vulnerability, yet without judgement, allowing us to safely push beyond what the mythologies and psychologies of citizenship to our various countries and in-groups will allow us. An immigrant writer, already in a state of simultaneity, but with the added distance described above, fueled by a love for and desire for acceptance in their new home, can see us not only in our vulnerabilities and limitations, but because they haven't taken citizenship for granted yet, they can also see us in all our potential. The true value and gift of an immigrant writer is the gift of letting us see ourselves in all our darkness and potential light, and lead us to see the true ideal of self and by extension, country. Immigrants, particularly writers, give us the gift to see ourselves unsentimentally and yet in our true beauty. What better love song can there be?



TRUST ME, I AM HUMAN

Honey Al-Sayed

Where I was born, the nurture and nature I received, the color of my hair, my skin, my eyes, my name, my religion, my country, where I belong—all were choices made for me. From that first breath I took, in Kuwait, as it happens, I began to live a storied life, raised by Syrian parents, who introduced me to a creative and entrepreneurial world—a world of fashion, art curation, advertising, and photography. Growing up in Kuwait was fun. I attended an international American School that celebrated its diverse school body; in that small international bubble we made friends based on 'coolness' and 'age' instead of race, sex, and religion. This did not last. Uncertainty, questions of home, and reinvention have been constant companions since 1990. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait marked my first displacement, when I was sent to Egypt to finish high school. My mother accompanied me to Cairo to find a family for me to live with and a school. I passed an entrance exam for students unable to provide transcripts after fleeing from Kuwait; on that same day my mom found a family to take me in. So I spent my senior year in a new school, in a new country, with a new and caring family.

The sudden changes left me distraught, more so because my family was stuck in Kuwait in the war. But with the support of my new family, new friends, and compassionate teachers I found ways to keep going. My anxiety lessened when the rest of my family escaped from Kuwait, and then my theater class changed my life. I was shy, insecure, and frightened. To stand on stage in front of my classmates and an audience was a true challenge. My theater teacher's opening line to our class was

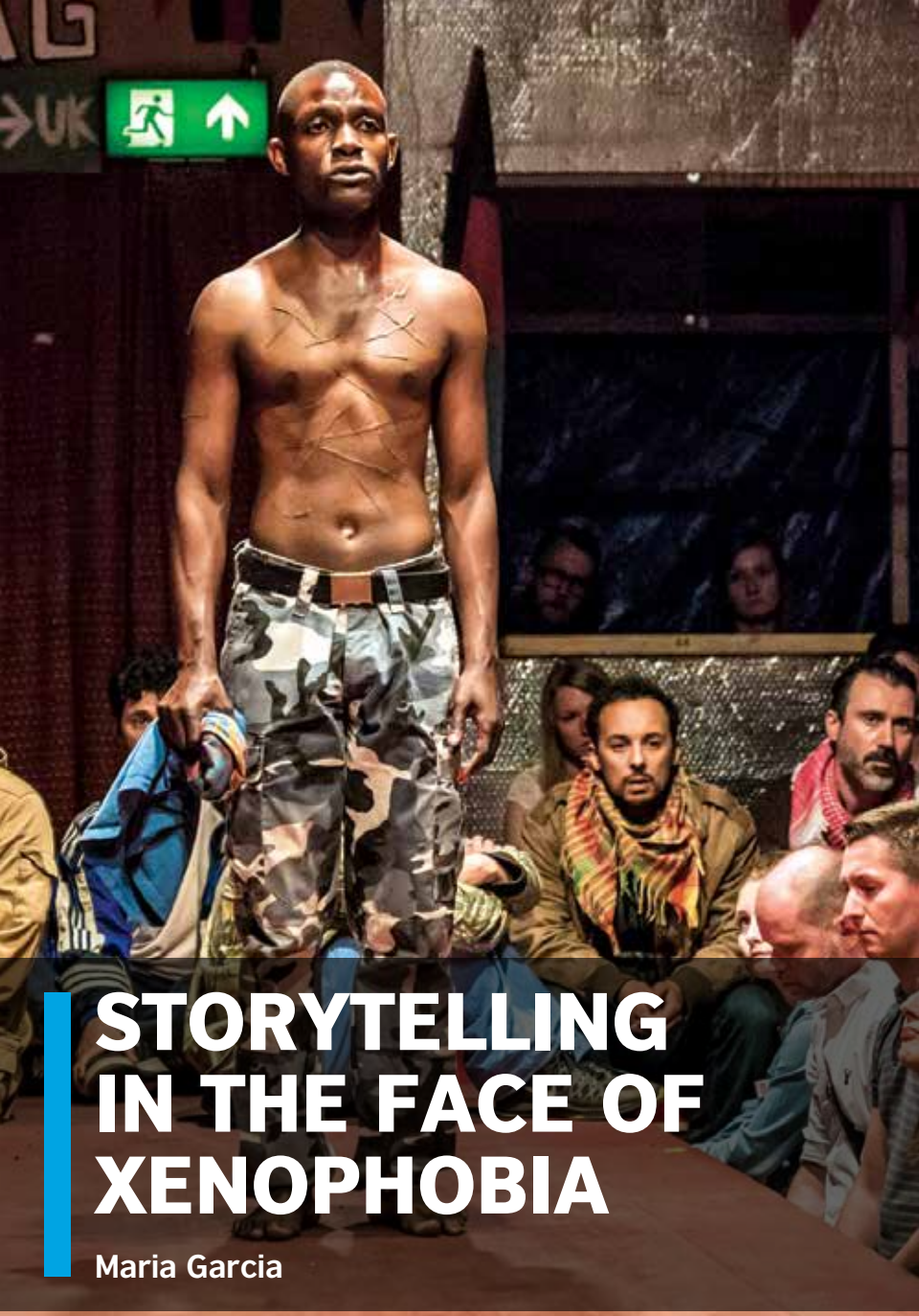
from Shakespeare: “All the world’s a stage.” The stage was set for me.

All I needed to do was to change perspective and delight in the fact that the world is my stage. I had the power to do what I wanted, to reinvent myself, no matter the circumstances, if only I could step on stage. Once I did, I was not alone; there was a shared common good. The stage was not only about acting, it was about a teacher, and collaborating with school friends to build the set, design costumes, learn our lines, and act. A play was never about just actors on stage but a team of creators and collaborators pulling everything together for the pleasure of an audience, serving their emotions with thought-provoking content, visuals, and action. The outcome was uncertain: It could end with a standing ovation or tomatoes thrown at the stage. Playing roles chosen by my professor and myself, I learned about life through theater. Some lessons were hard or embarrassing, some deserved a standing ovation.

After graduation, I moved to post-civil war Lebanon, where I had to adapt to a charged political and religious environment, while earning a degree from Lebanese American University. In 2001, I finally arrived in Syria—my fourth home—where every day for many years I got to say, “Good morning, Syria!” to millions of radio listeners. This live three-hour show, inspired by Robin Williams’ performance in *Good Morning Vietnam*, allowed me to give voice to the voiceless and help empower youth. I knew that people may idolize a radio host, believing whatever information they present—which scared me. And I understood what it meant to self-censor, to tread the red lines imposed by the regime. So I made radio my theater, working inside the system to lay the foundation for change. I traveled often to America to speak about the power of media to

promote socio-cultural reforms. (NPR dubbed me “the Oprah of Syria.”) Then came a revolution, armed conflict, chemical weapons, radical narratives, proxy war, and genocide—which forced me to leave Syria, my family, friends, and career.

Displacement was more difficult for me as an adult. When I made America my fifth home, I wondered: how to reinvent myself? How to overcome survivor’s guilt? How best to serve the ideals and values of this country? In 2012, I co-founded an online radio program dedicated to peace journalism, which reaches 500,000 listeners in Syria and the diaspora. Then I started a small business as a creative consultant and producer, and earned an executive master’s degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, writing a thesis on the role of the media and the arts in a conflict. Changing attitudes and behavior is core to peacebuilding, as it is to the media and the arts, which became clear during the Arab Uprisings. Journalists, media presenters, poets, filmmakers, artists, peace activists—all posed threats to authoritarian regimes and warring factions. Which is why they became targets, leading many to go into exile before they were imprisoned, tortured, and killed. My passion for developing powerful creative tools led me to establish an online course on the role of media and arts for peace with the Geneva Centre for Security Policy and the U.S. Institute of Peace—a subject I teach at Georgetown University—and then to found Media and Arts for Peace (MAP). I don’t know what life will next bring, but I do know what I can bring to this stage called life. After all, I am only human.



STORYTELLING IN THE FACE OF XENOPHOBIA

Maria Garcia

Those who choose to immigrate to the United States and those who are forced to flee their homelands due to violence, war, persecution, famine, climate change, and genocide have at least three things in common: resilience, hope, and the imagination to transform their lives.

I am the great-granddaughter of Mexican, Italian, Irish, and French immigrants, and my father's grandparents were Yaqui Native Americans. Like so many others, I grew up listening to stories about the sacrifices my family made so that their children and grandchildren could have better lives. My father's Dad, Tata, milked cows so that he could afford to graduate high school. My grandmother's father, Tony, left Italy at seventeen to find work in a steel factory. My grandfather's brother fought fascism in World War II before his plane was shot down over Normandy. Listening to these stories instilled in me notions about the power of human connection and the role of storytelling in the creation of those bonds.

When I lived and worked in the United Kingdom as a costume designer for theater companies like Cardboard Citizens, which practice the Theatre of the Oppressed methodology, I saw first-hand how storytelling can positively transform communities and the lives of people living on the margins. Theatre of the Oppressed enables individuals to make sense of the world and challenge perceptions and forms of oppression through lived experience. It turns out that when people are given a chance to learn about and from one another doors and windows open onto new perspectives, which can help them to transcend the fear of the other.

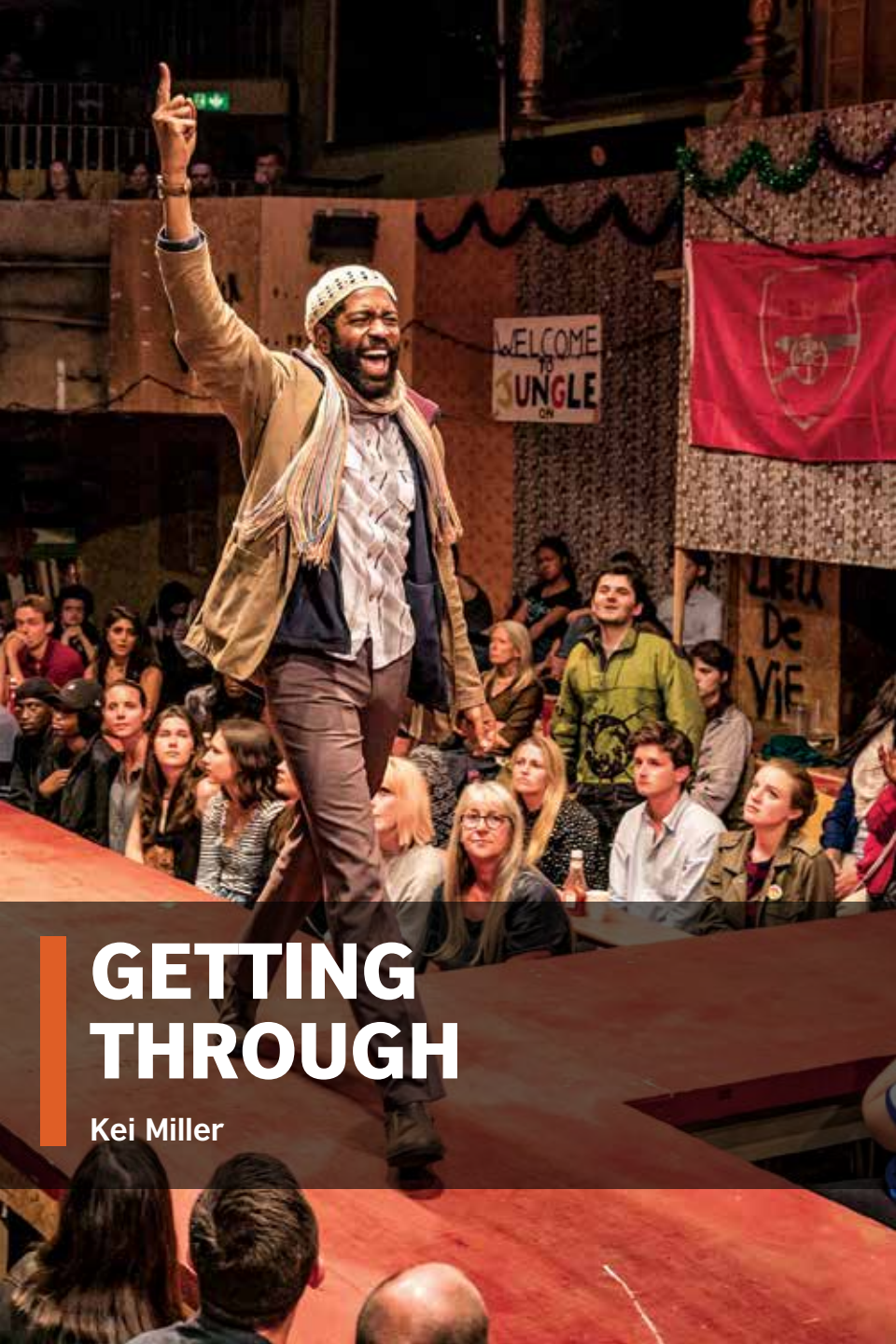
This was a lesson I carried over into my work for FWD.us, which is dedicated to transforming our immigration system into one that reflects the monumental contributions immigrants, refugees, and their children have made to the United States.

Our most powerful tool is storytelling. We help to tell the stories of Dreamers like Evelyn, who came to America at the age of six months and knows no other country as home. Or Alejandra, who was deported to Mexico in August 2018, despite having two American children and a husband who served in Iraq. Or Issa, a Black Mauritanian whose wife and children are U.S. citizens. He was deported in October 2018 to Mauritania, a country where he is stateless, and has the highest rate of slavery in the world. Just before his removal, Issa described what awaited him: "I will be tortured and killed. That is what they do to us."

The global rise of xenophobia and restrictive immigration policies means that more and more we tell stories of suffering, tragedy, and family separation, both in the interior of our country and at our borders. Many of these policies, dressed up as national security and economic concerns, but rooted in hatred and mistrust of strangers, are designed to remove as many immigrants and refugees from the U.S. as possible and to prevent newcomers from arriving at our borders. Thus the Trump Administration has banned people from Muslim-majority nations; capped the entry of refugees at its lowest number in 30 years; repealed DACA; ended Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for more than 300,000 people; increased arrests of undocumented immigrants by 200%; drastically restricted legal immigration; deported Black Mauritanians to slavery; separated families at our southern border; and made plans to detain

children and their parents indefinitely: a litany of horrors antithetical to the majority of Americans' views on immigration.

FWD.us worked through the summer with the Families Belong Together coalition, providing support to reunified families after the Administration had separated them at the border. One of our colleagues, Susie Haslett, testified before Congress about the trauma she and our staff witnessed: "The experiences these individuals endured were extremely painful. One mother compared her experience to a "living hell," telling us that she had lost all hope in humanity." A little girl recalled feeling like Nemo when her father was taken away, while a man said he felt "like an animal being carted ceaselessly from place to place." Such stories dominated headlines, and the world watched in horror. The United Nations Human Rights Council, which the United States withdrew from in June 2018, said the Trump Administration's family separation policy "may amount to torture." Here's what we know: xenophobia fuels violence, traumatizes our children, hurts our economy, and leads us down a dangerous path, where we do horrible things to others. But there is something far more powerful than xenophobia—telling stories that transform our lives for the better.



GETTING THROUGH

Kei Miller

That line had always seemed to me like an echo of something—some terrible history that I didn't always want to contemplate – this line that stretched on, of all roads, Hope Road, which I suppose was the stubborn feeling of everyone queuing. Hope. Despite everything—hope. And yet it seemed such a desperate and desolate thing. The line began in the early hours of the Jamaican morning, before the sun was properly up, hundreds of men and women with their passports in hand and their little slips that confirmed that today they had an appointment at the U.S. Embassy, and so here they were hoping that this time they had filled out the documents correctly, that this time the prayers from church would work, and if not the prayers then the sprinkled oil they had bought from an Obeah man. This time their efforts and the money spent would not be in vain. This time they would get through. That was the hope.

"To get through"—to overcome a great difficulty. In Jamaica the phrase takes on a particular meaning. It is often answer to the question of why you haven't seen so or so for some time: the woman who usually sells roses at the traffic light, the gas attendant with the nice smile, the reporter who was a regular on the nightly news. "Where is so and so?" you ask. "Oh!" comes the answer. "Dem get through!" A regular visitor's visa, a spousal visa, a right of residence visa—it wouldn't matter. The point is, they had left the island. They had become immigrants.

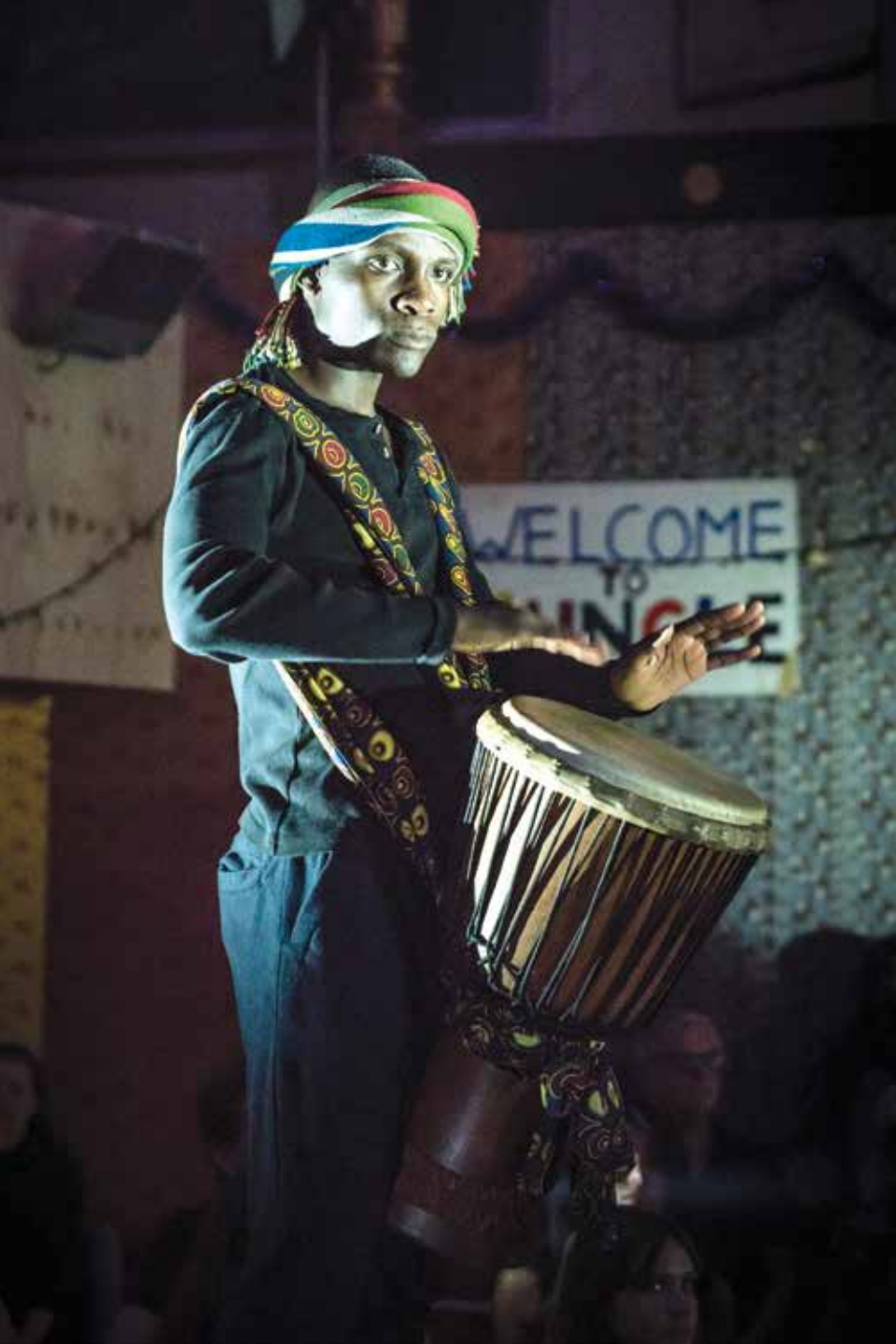
I wondered about the phrase. Was this particular meaning a recent thing in Jamaica? Not that recent. I encounter it in

Eddie Baugh's poem "Nigger Sweat" and the epigraph for the poem explains its beginning as somewhere in 1973. An awful sign had then been posted on the wall of the U.S. Embassy. "Please have your passport and all documents out and ready for your interview. Kindly keep them dry." The persona of the poem is heartbreakingly polite in the face of such bizarre offensiveness. "No disrespect mi boss/ just honest nigger sweat." He shuffles forward in the line, hoping that all his nervousness and fear won't translate into perspiration and that his documents will remain dry. Still, he ends with a promise, "and a promise you, boss,/ if I get through I gone,/ gone from this bruk-spirit, kiss-me-arse place."

"To get through"—to overcome a great difficulty: the difficulty of a line; the difficulty of the visa process; the difficulty of the visa officer asking difficult questions; the difficulty of an entire island.

Is it strange that I thought all of these thoughts, and about this particular phrase, because I had enquired about a dog? To be fair, it was quite a literary dog—a regular attendee of the Calabash Literary Festival in Jamaica. I don't know if it had an owner—stray dogs are quite common on the island. It was this particular dog's habit to trot up on stage during readings, to sit in the corner as if listening. He was a discriminating dog to boot. Or maybe elitist. That depends on your politics. I don't remember him ever going on stage for the open mic sessions, but if it was Derek Walcott, or Salman Rushdie, or any other high profile writer on stage, there he was sitting in the corner. Still, I hadn't seen the dog for the past few editions of Calabash and so I had asked about him. 'The dog get through!' was the surprising answer.

I thought at first it was a joke. It wasn't. Some tourist had fallen in love with the literary canine; papers had been filed and processed; the dog had boarded a plane; he was now living overseas. I wondered if there was any jealousy from the other dogs of the village, or from the villagers themselves—that this dog had so easily become this thing they tried so desperately to become—an immigrant. It is not a term I always embrace. I left Jamaica to teach at a university in the UK and I know that if it had happened the other way around I would have been an expat and not an immigrant. Perhaps there is little difference between the two in terms of process, except the balance of gratitude. Immigrants are expected to show gratitude to the country that receives them, while expats expect to be shown gratitude. But today—just for today—I feel some sort of kinship with the dog that got through, my fellow literary Jamaican traversing a whole new landscape, a whole new soundscape. Today I choose to identify with him. I too am an immigrant.


WELCOME

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Chris Abani is an acclaimed novelist and poet, whose most recent books are *The Secret History of Las Vegas*, *The Face: A Memoir*, and *Sanctificum*. He has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, the PEN/Hemingway Award, an Edgar Prize, a Ford USA Artists Fellowship, the PEN Beyond the Margins Award, a Prince Claus Award, the Hurston Wright Legacy Award, and a Lannan Literary Fellowship, among many honors. Born in Nigeria and living now in Chicago, he is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a Board of Trustees Professor of English and Comparative Literary Studies at Northwestern University. More information about him may be found at www.chrisabani.com.

Madeleine K. Albright

Madeleine K. Albright is a professor, author, diplomat and businesswoman who served as the 64th Secretary of State of the United States. In 1997, she was named the first female Secretary of State and became, at that time, the highest-ranking woman in the history of the U.S. government. From 1993 to 1997, Dr. Albright served as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations and was a member of the President's Cabinet. Dr. Albright is Chair of Albright Stonebridge Group, a global strategy firm, and Chair of Albright Capital Management LLC, an investment advisory firm focused on emerging markets. In 2012, she received the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, in recognition of her contributions to international peace and democracy. Dr. Albright's latest book, *Fascism: A Warning*, debuted at #1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list.

Honey Al-Sayed

Honey Al-Sayed is an award-winning independent media expert and entrepreneur, who broke new ground in Syria's media scene with the #1 rated morning show, "Good Morning Syria" before co-founding an online radio called SouriaLi that reached 500,000 listeners in Syria and the diaspora. She went on to found a boutique creative consultancy firm called Honey& and then Media and Arts for Peace; lectures in the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service; and has appeared at the United Nations General Assembly, United Nations Foundation, GCSP, U.S. National Press Corps, Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Institute of Peace. She is an Associate Fellow at the GCSP and holds an M.A. in International Affairs from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

Maria Garcia

Maria Garcia serves as the Research Director for FWD.us, a bipartisan political organization that believes America's families, communities, and economy thrive when more individuals are able to achieve their full potential. Before joining FWD.us, the California native designed for Theatre of the Oppressed and other forum theater companies in the UK, and collaborated with Mamoru Iriguchi. Her costume and performance play draws on her background in devised theater and carnival arts; her interdisciplinary investigations, which often center on migration, "liveness," and womanism, feature kinetic costumes, projection, noise, and movement. And her most recent work, *Impart: Scenes of Abjection*, premiered at Highways Performance Space in 2017.

Christopher Merrill

Christopher Merrill (editor) has published six collections of poetry, including *Watch Fire*, for which he received the Lavan Younger Poets Award from the Academy of American Poets; many edited volumes and translations; and six books of nonfiction, among them, *Only the Nails Remain: Scenes from the Balkan Wars* and *Self-Portrait with Dogwood*. His writings have been translated into nearly forty languages, and his honors include a Chevalier from the French government in the Order of Arts and Letters. As director of the University of Iowa's International Writing Program, Merrill has conducted cultural diplomacy missions to more than fifty countries. He serves on the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO and the National Council on the Humanities.

Kei Miller

Originally from Kingston, Jamaica, Kei Miller is an acclaimed author and professor of Creative Writing now living in Exeter. His first book, *Fear of Stones and Other Stories* (2006) was shortlisted for a Commonwealth Writers Prize (Caribbean and Canada Region, Best First Book). His poetry collections include *Kingdom of Empty Bellies*, *There is an Anger That Moves*, Forward prize-winner *The Cartographer Tries to Map A Way to Zion*, and *A Light Song of Light* which was shortlisted for the John Llewellyn-Rhys Memorial Prize. Novels include *The Same Earth*, *The Last Warner Woman*, and *Augustown* which was a 2018 Pen Open Book Award finalist. He was a Vera Rubin Fellow at Yaddo and an International Writing Fellow at the University of Iowa.

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