

Who Am I?
Abukar Adan

Part I:

I am the product of martyred dreams, and of inshallahs
And of parents who boarded the plane with wings
that knifed through everything they ever knew,
Of parents whose firm faith was the
tourniquet that kept us together
I am the son of a woman whose honeyed interior
Radiates through the crinkle in her smile and
Of a man whose calloused and blistered
Bluecollared
fingers never forgot what
Tenderness was
I am the immigrant child with sunken eyes and swollen
shoulders heavy from the weight of expectations
and guilt and shame and fury that rages hot
as the fumes from grandma's kettle

Part II

Caught in the crossfires of
conflicting cultures and social classes,
I breathe in adversity, opportunity,
privilege and prejudice sometimes
in
the same breath
My Cushitic tongue, which dances
to the Semitic sounds of my father's
calls to prayer, sometimes slip ups and
swallows these Anglo words I
am
never American enough.
But ask my father, who sees less
and less of himself in me, with each
passing day and
he would tell you
otherwise. "Do forget your heritage,
son!" he reminds me.
I am muslim but not muslim enough.
Black but still trying to figure out
where I fit in the American context.
Poor in capital but indulge in social

and cultural privileges.
I am a set of contradictions always
Conflicted

Part III

My gender is the standard, the baseline,
the center of all the stories we tell ourselves about
ourselves; about gods and prophets, kings
and the conquerors, victors and
losers...

...And all the stories of our collective imagination
See as a man, my human rights matter more we
are not equals. I am the inheritor of land,
the first to get an education and the head
of the household. I am the politician,
the priest and the producer
I am the patriarchy

Part IV

But even the wings of the patriarchy are clipped by White
supremacy, which occupies our lands and our language,
seeps into our conscientiousness, crawls the contours
of our thighs, hips, chest, until like a cancer, it
consumes the entire body

It makes us hate our hue, plunders our people and buries
our histories beneath blizzards of anguish and apathy
until it is forgotten like footsteps in the dead of winter.

But I dig, with frozen fingers, I must dig,
unearthing what I will