

Recitation 3: **Syrian Refugee Experience – Nour Machlah**

No one leaves home unless
home is the mouth of a shark

you only run for the border
when you see the whole city running as well [...]

you have to understand,
that no one puts their children in a boat
unless the water is safer than the land

This poem, written by Warsan Shire, helps us to understand why Syrians are fleeing in the millions. They do not want to leave their home. They have to.

Nour Machlah, a Syrian refugee, had this to say about his experience.

I was born Syrian and I'm proud to be Syrian, but I didn't choose to be Syrian. But is it my fault to be Syrian? Is it a mistake?

I am not here today to represent Syrians. I came here to tell you about the pain inside of me. I'm here speaking for the millions of people around the world who are searching for peace and a better life — Syrians, Arabs, Muslims, whoever they are.

Syrians share a lot of Europe's values, and we fear for the European Union's future just as much as everyone else does. But Syrians have 'no place to go'. Do you think it's easy for us to cross the ocean and to risk our souls, our families? We lost everything. People are losing their souls.

What did you know about Syria before 2010? Probably nothing. Why are people trying to come to Europe now? They did not try to come before. Why are all those people coming now? It's because there's a war.

Now, Portugal is my new home. The people are amazing and they are always trying to show me that I'm part of them, and that I have a new home here. But my family is scattered across Syria, Turkey, Egypt, the U.K. and the U.S. We lost everything. People are losing their souls.

We refugees are not European, but we are also educated, we have dreams, we have a history, we have lives, and we deserve a chance to live in peace like everyone else.

Word Count: 342