

## Refugee Blues by WH Auden

Say this city has ten million souls,  
Some are living in mansions, some are living in holes:  
Yet there's no place for us, my dear, yet there's no place  
for us.

Once we had a country and we thought it fair,  
Look in the atlas and you'll find it there:  
We cannot go there now, my dear, we cannot go there  
now.

In the village churchyard there grows an old yew,  
Every spring it blossoms anew;  
Old passports can't do that, my dear, old passports can't  
do that.

The consul banged the table and said:  
"If you've got no passport you're officially dead";  
But we are still alive, my dear, but we are still alive.  
Went to a committee; they offered me a chair;  
Asked me politely to return next year:  
But where shall we go today, my dear, but where shall we  
go today?

Came to a public meeting; the speaker got up and said:  
"If we let them in, they will steal our daily bread";  
He was talking of you and me, my dear, he was talking of  
you and me.

Thought I heard the thunder rumbling in the sky;  
It was Hitler over Europe, saying: "They must die";  
We were in his mind, my dear, we were in his mind.

Saw a poodle in a jacket fastened with a pin,

Saw a door opened and a cat let in:

But they weren't German Jews, my dear, but they weren't  
German Jews.

Went down to the harbour and stood upon the quay,

Saw the fish swimming as if they were free:

Only ten feet away, my dear, only ten feet away.

Walked through a wood, saw the birds in the trees;

They had no politicians and sang at their ease:

They weren't the human race, my dear, they weren't the  
human race.

Dreamed I saw a building with a thousand floors,

A thousand windows and a thousand doors;

Not one of them was ours, my dear, not one of them was  
ours.

Stood on a great plain in the falling snow;

Ten thousand soldiers marched to and fro:

Looking for you and me, my dear, looking for you and  
me.

**From Collected Shorter Poems 1927-1957 by WH Auden**