

Between the Lines podcast

Season 2, Episode 1. Refugee Tales – Emma Parsons

<https://www.ids.ac.uk/events/s2-ep-01-refugee-tales-emma-parsons/>

KELLY SHEPHARD: Welcome to Between the Lines. This month, we look at *Refugee Tales* – a series of books that bring together poets and novelists to tell the stories of individuals who have directly experienced Britain’s policy of indefinite immigration detention. Presenting their experiences anonymously, as modern day counterparts to the pilgrim stories in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, the books offer rare intimate glimpses into otherwise untold suffering. The third volume of the book was published in 2019 and launched in parallel to an annual walking event that this year took place in the Sussex countryside that surrounds IDS. Each chapter in the book tells a different person’s story and it’s great to have the author of *The Teacher’s Tale*, Emma Parsons, joining us for today’s episode of Between the Lines. So Emma, welcome to IDS.

EMMA PARSONS: Thank you.

KELLY SHEPHARD: It is an amazing book. It’s very thought provoking. It’s very well-written and it comes from very personal perspectives. I’m intrigued to find out a little bit more about how the book was written, because each chapter is authored by somebody different. So you are the author of one chapter, but writing books isn’t your usual day job is it? So how did you get to be involved in *Refugee Tales* and the whole project?

EMMA PARSONS: Yes, well, you’re quite right. I mean, by day job, really, I’m a teacher and I’ve been a teacher for many, many years working in schools in, initially, in Haringey and Tottenham and then, for many years, in Hackney. That’s really what kickstarted my involvement with people who have been asylum seekers and are refugees. So how did I get involved with *Refugee Tales*? Well, my concern about what happens to asylum seekers and refugees in the UK was first sparked by my involvement with families at the schools that I’ve worked in. And seeing how, basically, how appallingly they are treated. So that was my initial interest in refugees. But I then decided to actually put my action where my mouth was, if you like and I signed up with a charity called Detention Action who are based in London and became a volunteer visitor for them. And I was sent to a detention centre near Heathrow called Harmondsworth, there are two near Heathrow: Harmondsworth and Colnbrook. And I was assigned to visiting a young man there. He was in that detention centre for six months. He was then released on bail from that detention centre and he was out on bail for another six months. He had no idea during that

time that he might be put back into detention. There's always that uncertainty hanging over your head. And one day, he was doing a routine reporting to a Home Office Reporting Centre, I happened to be with him, we were going to have a coffee together after – it's in the tale that I wrote, this this particular episode – and he was randomly picked up again and he was taken to Tinsley House which is a detention centre near Gatwick. So, I was working full time at the school, but by this time this young man had become a friend and he'd become a family friend. He was the age of my grown-up children and there was no way that I wasn't going to go on seeing him. So I started to visit him then in Tinsley House, in the detention centre at Gatwick. And it was there that I came across this charity called the Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group, because they also send visitors into detention centres near Gatwick. And it is the Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group that started *Refugee Tales*.

KELLY SHEPHARD: I see. Because when you talk about it in that way, and it really comes across in the stories, that they're very personal, they're very much about a relationship. Each chapter is written in a different way, but you get that personal element that comes through in those stories. I think, I mean, one of the things that intrigued me in *The Teacher's Tale*, in your chapter, is that you describe quite clearly how you felt that you were sometimes intruding into people's personal spaces. And I'm thinking specifically about when you write about returning to the Walthamstow flat to collect the subject of your story's possessions, whilst they're being detained. To me, it showed how lonely and isolated being detained can be. And also, to some extent, how people are relying on the kindness of strangers. And I wonder if you think that that's a fair comment to make?

EMMA PARSONS: Yes, I think relying on the kindness of strangers is a key element in the life of somebody who has gone through all this loss and trauma. Time and again, its moments of active and positive human connection that are cited as the crucial turning points in these terrible and really epic stories of loss, brutality, trauma and helplessness. And as for the volunteer visitors from Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group, they provide a hand of reliable friendship and support and, importantly, they express unconditional acceptance and they bear witness.

KELLY SHEPHARD: So, when we talk about that sense of isolation and that, perhaps, infringement on that personal space, you write really clearly about going to the detainee's flat. And I wonder if, perhaps, you'd just read that extract for us.

EMMA PARSONS: Sure. "I went to Walthamstow to get your things. The place was empty. The grumpy roommate who never talks to you was out. I let myself in. Your little corner of the room was just as you had left it that morning. It reminded me of entering my brother's room after his sudden death. Your bed was unmade. Lines of socks and underpants draped over the headboard and a T-shirt drying over the back of your only chair. The green T-shirt that had been too small for my son. On the floor, neatly lined up, a cafetière full of green tea, a jar containing your toothpaste, your shaving cream, two huge bags of rice, several brochures from adult education colleges, your Bible, dictionaries, the little souvenir turtle from Turkey and piles and piles of papers Home Office documents annotated in black by you and read by me.

Verb lists, exercises, library opening times, plastic bags full of tubes of watercolour paints and brushes. I was embarrassed to intrude on this, your only private space, but who else was going to get your things?”

KELLY SHEPHARD: It’s beautiful. It’s beautifully written. It really is.

EMMA PARSONS: Thank you. But I’ve talked to other people about this and time and again people are taken into detention centres and there’s nobody there to do what I was able to do, to collect their things. So they lose their things and, indeed, in *The Stateless Person’s Tale* by Abdulrazak Gurnah. The man in that, he expresses how he lost all his documents. He doesn’t have any document left that proves who he is or where he comes from. So . . .

KELLY SHEPHARD: You can’t imagine, well, I can’t imagine, having literally just lost all of that, and then so, from the kindness of a potential stranger, or as much a stranger, to just go and do that very practical thing, of, ‘I’m just going to collect up your possessions and here they are.’ How that would make you feel so much more secure. Do you know what I mean?

EMMA PARSONS: Yes.

KELLY SHEPHARD: A very simple act.

EMMA PARSONS: Exactly. And it took some doing to get his keys off the guards at the Home Office Reporting Centre. They wouldn’t let me see him when they picked him up and took him. I was allowed a phone call, so he told me that he thought they were going to detain him again. And I said, ‘Well, could you at least let me have his keys, so that I can go and get his stuff?’ And that took some doing. So, I mean this is a common story. That’s why I’m articulating it.

KELLY SHEPHARD: And the other bit that you write very clearly about is this bit around language and perhaps, as you say, why you were called or involved in *The Teacher’s Tale* is obviously because of your ability with the language. Do you want to just read that passage that describes that?

EMMA PARSONS: Sure. It’s interesting, actually, because a recent review of *Refugee Tales* was in, unexpectedly, in the EFL magazine which is the English as a Foreign Language magazine. And, obviously, the reason they did that is because they picked up my tale, the language aspect of it, and they’ve concentrated on the fact that this young man and I had to navigate this type of Home Office language so. Here’s the extract – we’re in a detention centre now he’s back in the detention centre and I’m visiting him: “Now, all we have time for is another kind of English altogether. Not adult literacy, not ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages; not EFL -English as a Foreign Language; not EAL – English as an additional language. The English we are forced to work on is EDL – English as a Detention Language and it’s no fun. Instead of role plays, going shopping, in a café, at the doctors, we are hunched over esoteric words and exhausting syntax that will determine your life. It’s not just the words: ‘appellant’, ‘respondent’, ‘alleges’, ‘purports’, ‘opportunistic’, ‘not credible’ –

it means they don't believe you – it's the whole structure. A thicket of dashes, dots, colons, colon-dashes, brackets – open and square – initials, acronyms, abbreviations and numbers, reference numbers, clause numbers, sub clause numbers, legal article numbers. And how do you prioritise understanding?"

KELLY SHEPHARD: I think, I mean, what intrigues me about it is, you know, the book really is about simple storytelling. And I can't impress upon people enough that it is really accessible. It's one of those things that you can pick up and just dip in and out of a chapter. And it obviously comes from a timeless tradition of simply connecting people and telling their stories. But it's that . . . the thing that underpins it is that the collection is also a call for action.

EMMA PARSONS: Hmm.

KELLY SHEPHARD: And this whole idea of the UK rule of indefinite detention is potentially something that sounds scary and legal and, you know, would you ever really want to read a book about something about that, on your bedside table? But actually you do and I found myself literally doing that and dipping in. But I wonder if you can perhaps, in simple terms, just explain that rule, the UK rule of indefinite detention? And let us know a little bit about how that compares to other countries because the UK is quite different, right?

EMMA PARSONS: The UK is different and, in a way, one can't even call it a *rule* of indefinite detention, because it is actually *against* the rule of law, indefinite detention. And, you know, I think of detention itself and certainly indefinite detention as the Home Office's big secret. So few people know about it. I certainly didn't know about it before I got involved with *Refugee Tales*. It's basically for administrative convenience, but it's hugely expensive. It costs the taxpayer a fortune. So it's a waste of money, it's a waste of time. Over 50 per cent of people who are put in detention centres are then released back to alternative accommodation, or back into the community if they have a family that they can go back to live with. And the UK is unique within Western Europe in that there is no maximum time limit on immigration detention. People don't know this. I mean, while the maximum time limit for people to be detained in France is 45 days, in the UK it is literally indefinite. People can be, and are, detained for months or even years. *Refugee Tales* knows of somebody who was detained for nine years and they've committed no crime. And you know it's . . .

KELLY SHEPHARD: Nine years?

EMMA PARSONS: Yes. Nine years. We're not talking about a few days or a couple of months. Many people are detained for years and re-detained. I think, you know, that's, that's the horror. Well, the whole thing is ghastly, but to have the fear of being re-detained. And, you know, it's an interesting thing, if you're a terror suspect, for example, there is a time limit. So . . . now, detention centres are officially called Immigration Removal Centres – IRCs – as their stated purpose is to hold people who the government intends to deport from the UK. Now, around half of people in

immigration detention are asylum seekers and many, actually, have family ties in the UK. So I think there's about 27,000 migrants are detained in the UK every year.

KELLY SHEPHARD: Wow.

EMMA PARSONS: Yeah. At present there are 10 Detention Immigration Removal Centres in the UK, they are run by private security firms. The ones near Gatwick are run by G4S, which you may have heard of because they . . .

KELLY SHEPHARD: Yeah, yeah.

EMMA PARSONS: . . . they run other things.

KELLY SHEPHARD: Big security firms.

EMMA PARSONS: Yeah exactly. People in detention centres have very limited freedom of movement, they're often locked in at night and during lunchtimes. In fact, there was a *Panorama* programme in 2018 which was about an undercover whistleblower a young chap who'd signed up to be a G4S guard. And it's a chilling watch. And as a result of it, people have been . . . guards have been suspended in that detention centre, because of their treatment of the people who are detained there.

KELLY SHEPHARD: So I'm thinking as you're saying it, I'm wondering what the justification is. That's the word that is coming into my head: if someone's detained for nine years, how . . . how can that be?

EMMA PARSONS: Yes.

KELLY SHEPHARD: If you're not accused of something, if you've done, essentially, nothing wrong or there's no crime that's involved, I'm wondering how it gets justified?

EMMA PARSONS: How can that be?

KELLY SHEPHARD: Yeah.

EMMA PARSONS: Yeah, exactly.

KELLY SHEPHARD: And that may sound like a really naive question, or a naive point but . . . I don't know?

EMMA PARSONS: Well, like so many things the policies and the rhetoric belie the reality. So, I think if I were somebody from the Home Office sitting here, I wouldn't be saying that people are detained for as long as nine years. I would be saying, you know, immigration detention is only used for a short period of time before people are deported et cetera, that sort of thing. But immigration detention should be a last

resort. It should only be used when a person can *shortly* be lawfully removed from the UK, when detention is *strictly* necessary to facilitate that removal and is proportionate. No, your question is the million dollar question and it's a Kafkaesque world. It's a world bogged down in Byzantine bureaucracy. It's a world of what David Constantine and his tale, *The Orphan's Tale* calls 'idle cruelty.' It's a world of a broken system.

KELLY SHEPHARD: That language is very evocative. You know, these chapters aren't just written as dry testimonies of people. They're very creatively written. There's one bit, which is in one of the chapters, *The Erased Person's Tale*, which I think was written by Jonathan Wittenberg – and I hope I'm saying his name right. He said that in interviewing and writing that *Erased Person's Tale* that he became a companion in defiance against silence. And, again, that comes . . . it really struck me, because it's the idea of a companion, you know, it's not someone saying, 'I'm an expert,' but, 'I'm here, I'm alongside you in the defiance against silence.' Can you perhaps elaborate a bit more about why you think these personal tales need to be told? And I suppose it comes back to the kind of advocacy and the activism bit of it, of what you think the books are hoping to achieve?

EMMA PARSONS: Well, I think that notion of a companion in defiance against silence runs throughout the tales themselves and the collaborative process between the writer, who is retelling the story of somebody who has experienced attention. It also runs through the whole remit of Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group visiting system. That companionship and being alongside somebody. But I think what's important about the tales is that the people whose tales are told, they are not voiceless. Of course they're not, but they have had, they have had their voices taken away from them. They've been forced by the system to be voiceless, to be in a systemic and social no man's land, if you like, and that makes me think of a colleague of yours actually, I believe, here, Michael Collyer who works . . .

KELLY SHEPHARD: Hmm, at the University of Sussex.

EMMA PARSONS: Yes. Now, on the last *Refugee Tales* walk, which was in July and took place near here in Sussex, we had talks every lunchtime. And the talks always have a theme and this year the theme was 'borders'. And Michael Collyer gave a talk on borders and he made me think differently about borders. And he said that borders are not necessarily where we think they are. There are borders round territory – and even those are not necessarily where we think they are, that's another story – but there are also . . . there's also the notion of borders around population, and those borders that can change the rights and status of an individual. So that notion of being a companion in defiance against silence, I think, belongs to that, because so many of the people who experience detention, they are still not across the border. Yes, they may be here, or they may have made it to America, or any other country, but they haven't actually crossed the border. There is a whole border of . . . a social border, the border of, well, ultimately citizenship, but there isn't . . . they haven't crossed the border, basically, of human rights.

KELLY SHEPHARD: No, no. I mean, they're not integrated in any way. They're not seen as being citizens in any way.

EMMA PARSONS: And they're not heard. So these tales provide a hearing. But, in fact, this year *The Refugee Tales Vol. III* does include tales by people who have experienced detention themselves. And that's the first time, the first two volumes, the tales are all the retelling of people's stories as told to writers. But in the current volume, the latest volume, there are tales told by refugees themselves and asylum seekers and they are powerful verbatim testimonies as to what's going on.

KELLY SHEPHARD: And they do, and, and we talked a little bit about this earlier. What I particularly like about the book is how accessible it is and how each of those stories is told in a very different style. Can you share a little bit more about the authors and how they were approached to write the tales? It comes across very much as a co-produced project and it would be good to know a little bit more about the processes behind the pages?

EMMA PARSONS: Yes, well the editors of the book are Anna Pincus, who is the founder and co-ordinator of *Refugee Tales*. She's also the Director of Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group, the charity, and David Herd who's a Professor of Modern Literature at the University of Kent. He's also a poet. And in keeping with the *Canterbury Tales*, he wrote prologues for each of the three volumes of *Refugee Tales*. *Refugee Tales* started in 2014, and the first walk was actually in 2015, when the first batch of tales were told, in the evenings at the end of a day's walking, but I'm sure we're going to talk about the actual walk in a minute. Now, Anna Pincus and David Herd, they wrote to writers whose interests and work was such that they thought the project would resonate with them. Writers such as Abdulrazak Gurnah and Ali Smith. Now Ali Smith's novel *Spring*, which I recently read, fantastic novel, that draws a lot from her experience of working with *Refugee Tales*. So after their involvement, those writers kindly introduced other writers to the project. And these included writers that they knew to be interested in human rights, or writers who had a migrant background such as Gillian Slovo and Kamila Shamsi. And they were given, the writers are given an open brief of how to approach the meetings with people who had experienced detention and how to retell their stories. But most writers, in fact, wish to honour their stories by staying very close to the testimony that was shared with them. So how it happens is: a meeting is arranged between a writer and somebody who has experienced detention, in a neutral setting with a chaperone from the charity. Because, this is a big thing for somebody to do. So, people who've experienced detention, you know, they have been asked if they are prepared to tell their story and nine times out of ten, yes they very much are. They want their story to be told. And then, after they've had that collaboration, they have a say . . . they obviously see the story before it goes to press, they have a final say over it. But they also receive support. It could be daily, weekly, monthly, for the subject of the tale, the anonymised subject of the tale, after the sharing, after they've shared their story with that person. I think it's important to say that those people who do share their tales, because these tales, you've read them, Kelly, they are tales of terrible loss, terrible trauma, brutality, epic journeys, tales of relentless years of navigating – not

just territory – but navigating systems, years of hostility, lack of welcome, hunger. You know, the list is endless. So, it's important to say that those sharing the tale, they don't do so while they're in detention. There has not been a collaboration between a writer and somebody who's experienced detention *while* they're in detention, because, of course, the sharing could trigger PTSD and in detention. There's no therapeutic support. In fact, there's quite the opposite of therapeutic support. And people have been wrenched from their families or their community support network. So there's nobody to turn to. So, the writers. I mean, are there are there are many writers but just to name a few: Ali Smith I've obviously named, she's also the patron of *Refugee Tales*.

KELLY SHEPHARD: Oh, I didn't realise that.

EMMA PARSONS: Yes. Yes she is. And Ali Smith has actually said of *Refugee Tales*, 'We will tell it like it is. And we will work towards the better imagined.'

KELLY SHEPHARD: That . . . that quote of, 'We'll work towards the better imagined.' I'm intrigued to know what does that look like? So what is the better imagined in that? So, I guess where I'm coming from is this is Series III of the book, and we'll talk a little bit about the walks as well in a second, because I think that's a really important part of it. But I assume that 'a better imagined' gets to a point where these books don't need to be written, because the detention isn't happening? Or is that too simplistic?

EMMA PARSONS: No, I think that is 'the better imagined', of course it is. I think it's a case of: the call for indefinite detention, we hope, will no longer have to be made, which is what *The Refugee Tales* is about. It is calling for an end to indefinite detention. And if that ends, that is part of 'the better imagined'. But also I think 'the better imagined' fits in, really, with the . . . with what IDS is doing, because I've been listening to your podcasts and it's really interesting how the ethos, if you like, of IDS, as I see it, I mean, I know . . . I don't know much about it, obviously, but it connects with the ethos of projects such as *Refugee Tales*. And I was listening to the Hilary Cottam podcast, Hillary Cottam who wrote *Radical Help* and I was really struck by it, because she was talking about reforming the welfare state, so it's not directly to do with this issue. But she talks about, saying, 'At the heart of reform is human connection.'

KELLY SHEPHARD: Yes.

EMMA PARSONS: And, of course, at the heart of what *Refugee Tales* is doing is human connection. And it's that human connection that should bring about, eventually, 'the better imagined.'

KELLY SHEPHARD: You're absolutely right, I mean, that is the basis of a lot of the work that happens here at IDS, is all built on partnerships and that human level of connection to understand really complex issues. One of the things that we do quite a lot of here at IDS is try to think of different ways to help people to talk about things

because sometimes it gets . . . they're quite complex topics. So there's all sorts of different workshop techniques and different creative methods and ways that we work in a very participatory way to get to complex subjects. One of the formats is this thing called 'walkshops' And it's a lovely thing, I mean, we're based in a beautiful campus here in Sussex. So, you know, we'd be really remiss not to go out and walk in the fields around us. But the idea around 'walkshops' is very much that you walk and talk and quite often people will start to talk in a different way when they're walking. You know, you're not looking at somebody and you're striding out and you're letting your ideas flow, which is very different from sitting in a room and raising your hand or being in a kind of classroom setting. It's this idea that you walk and talk – really simple. We do quite a lot of that here at IDS. So what was interesting, I think, with the whole *Refugee Tales* side of it for me was that this isn't just a series of books at all.

EMMA PARSONS: No.

KELLY SHEPHARD: That's very much part of a whole project, a whole ecosystem if you like. And the walk that takes place every year, luckily, obviously, this year, for us, took place in and around Sussex. It'd be really nice to just hear a little bit more from your side of things about the accompanying walk. And I think the thing that I took away from it is that it's that shared experience, it's bringing together a community of people to walk?

EMMA PARSONS: Yes. Well, walking is incredibly powerful and I know a therapist who says she often wishes she could actually walk alongside her clients instead of having them sitting in front of her, or lying on a couch. I mean, walking is . . . it's like dancing, music, sport it's its own form of communication, it's its own language, if you like, and it's a way of sharing and creating intimacies. It's an equaliser as well. And it offers opportunities for people to support each other, regardless of initial power relationships, if you like, all that goes by the board. The balance of power completely shifts. And it also, I find . . . I mean, I love walking and I'm involved, very involved, in the walking side of *Refugee Tales* as well. And I think it's a great way of accelerating intimacies. It's also a very powerful way of being able to share stories.

And, in fact, David Herd puts it in the afterword to *Refugee Tales Vol. III*, I mean, he says, 'To tell and to hear a story is to establish an intimate connection, a connection that the hostile environment sets out explicitly to break,' – because you've got to remember that asylum seekers are constantly telling their stories to asylum officials. So David goes on to say, 'The sharing of the story is a potentially dangerous act. So it is for these reasons that the *Refugee Tales* project arrived at a collaborative model of storytelling, as a way of sharing the stories of people who had experienced indefinite detention, which did not render individuals unsafe.' So the walk has developed as a thing it's in and of itself, but also as part of the sum of the parts of *Refugee Tales* so he says, 'At the same time, however, as the project has grown and developed, all manner of other modes of storytelling have emerged. The walk itself is one long multiply-evolving set of stories, a mobile setting in which stories start up and intersect. It is a process that has gradually spilled out, so that as others have become interested in what *Refugee Tales* does, people who walk who have experienced

detention have spoken in Parliament, to the BBC, and to other broadcasters, and at festivals and events across the country. So that is the power of stories. Stories take root, they grow. Stories fly, they take flight.

KELLY SHEPHARD: They do, I mean, I could talk about stories as a means forever and a day. But can I take you back to the book for a moment. One of the chapters I really like is written by Lisa Appignanesi, and she tells *The Dancer's Tale*. So, this obviously fits quite nicely with what we've just been saying around dancing and stuff. But the bit that I particularly like is that she writes about encountering her interviewee and realising that she herself has had lots of preconceptions about refugees. And so when she's first meeting this person in a public space, she writes, 'You don't look like refugee. You're calm and perfectly poised. I must be wrong.' And I guess that these stereotypes are what we all have in our heads. You know, they're fuelled by images from the news of people that are dishevelled and in terror and it really comes through really clearly that, actually, she's saying, you know, she quite shocked herself that even she was thinking, 'Hang on, you don't look like a refugee.' How far do you think that this kind of media image that we have and . . . how far do you think that that, those stories, these stories and tales, help to debunk the myths and the realities of refugees?

EMMA PARSONS: The media image is irresponsible. I mean, the media, the language the media uses, 'swarm', 'flood'. I mean, even 'migrant', you know, that's othering thousands of individuals into one group, just like that. Even, actually, it's hard not to use the word 'detainee', because it's a quick shorthand, but I don't know if you've noticed, I've deliberately been trying to use the phrase, 'people who have experienced detention', because they're people.

KELLY SHEPHARD: Yes, yeah.

EMMA PARSONS: And Ali Smith's tale in the first volume is called *The Detainees Tale* and I know that . . . I mean, I don't know because I haven't talked to her about it, I don't know her, but I am sure, being Ali Smith, she will have deliberately used that term, to point out that somebody is dehumanised, is othered by those kind of terminologies.

KELLY SHEPHARD: Yeah, yeah, those labels, yeah.

EMMA PARSONS: And yes, I mean, in *The Dancer's Tale* she talks about refugees, so, harrowing images of women and babies on sinking boats leap into my mind, a tattered angry mass at The Jungle in Calais. Children behind barbed wire fences, clamouring groups in tented cities. Yes. Well that is all absolutely true, but all those people are individuals who are suffering something that they didn't expect to suffer. And on that image of refugees, Shami Chakrabarti said of *Refugee Tales* that it's a wonderful way of re-humanising some of the most vulnerable and demonised people on the planet. And I think that's, you know it's . . .

KELLY SHEPHARD: It kind of says it all, doesn't it?

EMMA PARSONS: Yes.

KELLY SHEPHARD: Emma, I want to thank you very much for coming in to IDS today and a thanks really to all of the authors and all the people that have been involved in putting the books together and the walks, because I think it is very much about lifting up the stories of human beings and hopefully, as you say, bringing them all into the light. So thank you very much for joining us.

EMMA PARSONS: Well, thank you so much.

KELLY SHEPHARD: Thanks for listening to the first episode of Series 2. You may have noticed that there's more of my voice in this episode than usual. I'm Kelly Shepherd and I lead the knowledge and impact work at IDS and as the voice of *Between the Lines*, I'm not usually the one interviewing. But I've been involved in the walks and this is a subject that's close to my heart. *Refugee Tales* is a great introduction to Series 2, where we'll focus on Books for a Better World and how understanding people's lived experiences are key to bringing about change. Also, a thanks to everyone who's been in touch. It's great to hear from you and get your feedback and ideas for future episodes. Keep them coming. Email betweenthelines@IDS.ac.uk or tweet us at [IDS_UK](https://twitter.com/IDS_UK), hashtag [#IDSBetweenTheLines](https://twitter.com/IDSBetweenTheLines).