

Edith : I see my familiar streets getting smaller,  
\* and my family waving from the pier.

I can hear the water lapping against the edge of the ship. Other than that  
\* it's silent under the stars. The warm breeze makes no noise as it gently rocks me back.

I'm feeling excitement. I think of the streets and friendly faces waiting for me, and my future job ~~in~~ <sup>which</sup> will enable me to bring ~~to~~ my family, <sup>especially</sup> my daughter.

\* I only have a small bag with my smartest clothes - with my mother's jewellery sewed inside. I have left my family - including my daughter behind. I have a picture of her in my locker - the only thing I will never sell.

\* My hopes are one that when I land in Liverpool I find a job in that pays enough for me to rent a house and send money back to Jamaica. My dream is one day for my daughter to come and live with me in England.

\* I am scared that, despite my husband fighting

and dying for Britain in the war, that  
people I want be welcoming to me.

My Dearest Esther,

I am writing this to you from the  
breakfast room on the Winklerish, and I  
will post it when I get to ~~Portsmouth~~ ~~Barbados~~  
where we stop to pick up supplies.  
I have been on the ship for 5 days.  
I'm missing you so much, but I'm  
very excited. I take care of your grandma  
and know I am thinking of you always.



Bobby Rayner

Dear Brother Jenkins,

I have ~~been~~ finally arrived in London, I have so much to catch you up on. I ~~met the best woman on the ship, she has honey brown eyes. I think I'm alive~~  
In London its really cold and the wind howls like nothing you have ever felt. Its horrid, I only just found a small room to stay in, all of the apartments say no blacks. Its like their comparing up to animals. I want to go home. I miss the golden sun of the caribbean, I miss the swaying palm trees, I miss the beach, I miss you. Its strange how much has happened since the horrid, rocky sea-sickening journey on the ship. I got a job on the NHS as a cleaner. Even though I'm ~~I go~~ a qualified doctor, apparently the public dont want black doctors, whats the difference? The polluted air has taken over my lungs. I can almost feel the rank, black smoke infecting my body. ~~There~~ The dirty, grimy piles of rubble fill my road.

A question of identity

Are you looking for a place to live?

Are you optimistic about life here?

Are you on your own?

Yes I'm looking for somewhere

I'm nervous, but have high hopes.

Yes, I left my family at home so I'm on my own.

A sense of place

• They've come for a better life and been treated badly

• The message that you're stronger together

EVE

Anna, 21

My home, slipping further away, and ~~the~~ my future, closer with every wave.

I can hear the waves hitting the boat and cheers from belowdecks. The sound of laughter echoes of the polished wood. I can hear seagulls too

A mixture of excitement, the giddy thrill, sensativeness and an ominous feeling of what's coming next.

I've brought with me a jumbled <sup>assortment</sup> ~~sort of~~ of dresses and photographs, and memories of my past and hopes for my future. I left my family, my house and my dog and my brother and sister. I have left more than I've brought.

I hope to have a good life, a stable job and the ability to visit home whenever. I want to be happy.

I worry I will be faced with racism which will limit my opportunities, and worry I will be too homesick to stay and build a new life.

EVE

Dear mum + dad + Ailish + Lyra

I've arrived in Barbados and my journey to England is well underway. I miss home but I'm excited about my new life. I am sick of this boat! I hope you're all well. Missing you,  
Eve

Dear everyone,

I am in England! The journey was long and rocky; the food was horrendous. I miss you more than words can express, and hope you are well. It's odd, I left behind more than I've brought. <sup>or I'm just an optimist</sup> Maybe that means I have room for new things. When I first stepped off the boat I was shocked. It was cold and rainy (like I was told) but I could see the remains of London. It was nothing but crumbled memories and shallow graves of rubble.

I went quickly to my new home, a room in a Victorian building if the landlord was honest. The cold was horrible! Everyone was watching me and I'm worried racism will hold me back. The newly established NHS is my chosen job. I hope it works out. I arrived in the room where I am writing to you. London is growing on me but I miss home. Please give my love to everyone. I will send my next letter with a cheque. I'm very unsure and nervous about life but I hope it works out. I hope to have a good life, a stable job and the ability to visit you when ever. I guess all I want is to be happy and fulfilled here. I worry that racism will limit my opportunities and people will only see the colour of my skin and not the fact I'm a well educated woman. Well, until next time. Love Anna

## A question of identity

Why did you decide to get  
married in England?  
How was your journey?  
When did you meet?  
I've decided to get  
married to show we  
wanted to be in  
the Mother Country.

## A sense of place

Backbone = courage  
Revelation  
Poverty  
Kill  
Long Journey  
Industry  
wish to regain service  
Helping family  
'Lovely City'  
Broad mindedness. I am -

Samuel:

I see the waving hands of my  
brotherhood. The steps of many,  
some running, to see us off  
reverberate in my ears. A nervous  
feeling pushes its way into  
my head, and despite my  
resistance, it overwhelms me.  
Feelings of dread make me  
~~more~~ worried for me my family,  
anxious for their lives after  
I leave.

I have left my family and  
my city Kingston. Through  
bing, trophies and statues of  
my Idols, pictures of my family,  
this cannot fill the widening  
gap in my heart. The other  
things, things are necessary for  
my survival. Blankets, money and  
food and water will keep me alive.

My hopes and dreams are to  
regain my job, the airforce, the one  
I hid in the indescribable horrors  
of the war. I hope my skin  
colour does not segment me from  
others.

David  
80

Dear Joseph,

My journey has just begun. I fear I will not make it without you, my family. The waves rock the boats with such force my food wants to leave my stomach. The food isn't all bad and the bed comforts me. I will talk more soon.

Wish me luck Samuel  
XxxxX

Dear Joseph,

Again, my regards. I am here in England, <sup>carrying</sup> ~~carry~~ the image of you in my heart. I have made f



A question of identity

Questions

1. Why did you find it necessary to stand up there and speak your mind?
2. Did you think when you came from Trinidad there would be no racism?
3. When you look down on the white police officer what do you think?

Answers

1. Answer

2. Answer

3.

A sense of place

- People not knowing, nothing about Africa, want to know, tell me, why?
- See the country, mental picture, true
- Keep Britain white
- Smiled, took his hat off
- Striped mystic, given edge and belief
- Brutal and beautiful exposure
- Cow bell, doveing drumming
- All west ladies will do their share, that is why they leave
- Hard to victory

Florence Jacksonelle

I see everything blurred into one. The water beneath us sloping about. We leave Monday, quietly as though, that was not a big deal. Relations were and more sympathetic regard, the sun shined down, like hope in a unforgettable land. The boat was a colossal expanse of gaily white. I felt tears flood my view and turned from my home. I looking onwards. "Never look backwards" my mother used to say. "Well, I would never again." I heard Peter, my daughter shouted, I turned sharply back around. There she was, her father, my husband physically dragging her back so she didn't jump into the ocean. I lifted my hand and waved limply "I'll be back." I screamed across the humming engine of the ship, her figure becoming smaller and smaller, one couldn't have heard. I pick up my small bag and think of what the world could be, a million dreams keeping me awake. I had already planned things like being a nurse. That was my dream, a small insignificant dream which was nothing, there were hundreds of people on the boat, I was a woman, I was scruffy but I still had a dream and it was special to me, like the photo of my smiling daughter in my jacket pocket. I rapid engulfed would be as I imagined



Frida Rix 81

Dear Sammy,

I am on the ship now, my long journey has just begun. This will probably get to you when I am almost there. I miss you. The food is horrible, people are disregarding of my gender and hope and love is <sup>as I try to sleep</sup> keeping me awake ~~at night~~. I dream of you and Sylvie every ~~night~~ <sup>day night</sup> and think of you at day. Tell Sylvie I love her and that the ship is every bit like her toy. Although I know she has already seen it. Also tell her never to jump into the sea and that I have seen seagulls.

All my love,

Florence/Mia.

Dear Sammy,

I am here! Finally, I have arrived. After a month of dragging pain I had a weird feeling on the boat and went green, I scared me, but someone said I was just a bit sick. I am not in the best of situations currently. As we got off the ship I stumbled my legs felt like jelly and I struggled to stay upright. There were loads of white people staring out at us. They looked confused but also slightly angered. As I walked through the wave of people they split like God was looking down upon us. A white man shouted at us and stuck his leg out I tripped over it and fell. The rain dripped down and it was so grey, I sympathised with each tear. They syr told me my wrist was broken later.



Earliest impressions of England: These are too nebulous to sort out and identify. The point is not that I had very few. On the contrary. 'England' was in the air virtually for as long as I can remember. But it was a diffused presence; part of a texture of feeling and imagination - particularly the latter. The element of fantasy and daydream was very strong indeed.

England was a place to which mysterious family relations - known only through hearsay - had decamped years before. To go to England was a desirable assumption into a kind of magical realm. There was the familiar Trinidad ritual of 'going away'. The only true going away was the going away to England. Those who went to North America possessed none of the same magic - for me at any rate. Departure was an initiation rite into manhood and mystery. The whole Dock procedure is engraved in memory: the assembled family down to third and fourth cousins flocking round the baggage shed; the big white ship with its lit-up portholes; the departee dressed in a new suit and carrying a brief-case; the gang-plank being raised to the accompaniment of appropriately stirring music - Auld Lang Syne; the widening gap of black water between the ship and the pier. Then, in a day or two, the postcard from Barbados; and, later on, the postcard from the Azores; and finally, the blue English air-letter with the strange sounding address. The constancy of the pattern deepened the mystery.

Write Here: Windrush Stories  
Songs in a Strange Land

fp-10A