

## The Way Back Home: A Short Story

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### Abstract

### Short communication

This short story is about a man who has to leave his country for economic reasons. After leaving his country, he reconsiders what he is doing and decides to return back to his family. Indeed, travelling abroad without evaluating one's case and thinking about the consequences of such a decision may cause unexpected troubles one should avoid.

**Keywords:** Home, short story, way back, dangerous.

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### THE WAY BACK HOME: A SHORT STORY

With a brief laugh, Ahmed, who comes from the south of Egypt after marriage, is satisfied with his early days. . . When his travel companion reminds him of a funny situation he has encountered on the way back by bus . . . from Alexandria of Egypt to Aqaba of Jordan to Riyadh and later Dammam of Saudi Arabia and from there to Doha of Qatar . . . what a long, tedious and troublesome journey! The bus sets off from Dammam . . . Rafik, Ahmed's friend, suggests showing a tape of Ahmed's wedding on the projector on the bus . . . he only wants this suggestion to break his silence, and to lift him out of the clouds of depression that have taken control of himself, and its intensity begins to increase as he approaches his place of work . . . Ahmed rejects the idea . . . in noisy fun, his travel companion repeats his unsuccessful attempt to persuade him . . . most of the passengers declare their support for the proposal . . . the bus driver settles the situation lastly when he tells everyone that the projector is faulty.

Ahmed doesn't care what is going on around him . . . he is immersed in himself . . . cozy up with his recent memories . . . he only got married two weeks ago . . . now he has to return to his work and leave his bride at the height of her ecstasy . . . she begs him to take her with him, but as a farm laborer he cannot bring her to his workplace . . . he promises her that this year will be the last of his estrangement . . . he admits that he is not convinced to travel, but the pressure of financial circumstances forces him to ride this huge wave. He glances at the bus passengers . . . an old woman catches his eye chattering with her well-dressed daughter, who seems not to listen to her while she is peeking at an elegant man in the front seat, trying to make his repeated

looks at her spontaneous . . . he is indifferent to the looks of surprise and disapproval issued by those who notices the signs between the two . . . and a young man says he is coming from Bahrain . . . he talks about his academic project in America . . . he now works as a truck driver in Doha to save enough money to implement his project . . . and a man from whom time has stripped the freshness of youth, so he looks older than his years, talking about the sea, fish, its types, benefits, and cooking methods, and a Bedouin occupies two seats with his worn-out rags and his turban, which has not known cleanliness for a long time until it turns to the color of dirt . . .

and a child who moves a lot and moves between passengers without being restrained by anyone . . . some of the passengers turn to different conversations, and the bus driver's groan rises in a song similar to wailing, as long as Ahmed hears something similar from the people of the desert . . . but he does not understand its meaning . . . he continues drowning in his thoughts . . . for a close, distant lover . . . he separates from her before he drinks from the fountain of happiness that he has not known before . . . in the past lean years . . . ten years of alienation . . . he has been able to prepare his three sisters for marriage and then devote himself . . . and now he is back on his own . . . he attains only a videotape that includes some of the details of his wedding . . . his companion says:

Oh! Ahmed, take it easy . . . never mind.

He does not want to enter into a sterile argument, and here he is on his long journey that began four days ago from his village, located in the far distance of the Egyptian countryside . . . he moves from one bus

to another until he and his companion end up . . . on this bus.

His colleague returns to try to rescue him from the depths of grief:

Ahmed . . . be happy . . . don't worry.

He lost his appetite to talk four days ago, and what is the use of talking as long as worries surround him from every side? His absence from his wife and he is talking about marriage . . . the hard work that awaits him begins before sunrise and ends after sunset . . . the ghost of the coming months that he will spend alone except for his grief, far from his family and village . . . the pain of feeling . . . a twinge of regret, because he has responded to the urging of his sponsor to return to his work in that far country. The driver slows down the bus . . . to allow a convoy of camels to cross . . . Ahmed looks out of the window at the desert in the unknown . . . a sea of sand extends to the horizon . . . a dreary and dreary atmosphere . . . a veil of evening darkness begins to spread around him . . . As the specter of sadness spreads within himself . . . the darkness of the night creeps lumbering very slowly . . . as the darkness of despair creeps into his soul surrounded by grief. The night is relaxing . . . he listens closely, perhaps her distant voice infiltrates his ears, penetrating the noise of the bus, and the voices of the passengers, but he only hears the wind wailing to kindle the yearning in his heart, which is plagued with pain . . . and the present tense stimulates memory to retrieve the details of the recent past days. The bus has reached the

border . . . the driver stops to collect the passports of the passengers in preparation for the completion of the crossing procedures. When he asks Ahmed to hand over his passport, he does not respond . . . I insist on him, so he begins to address the void . . . his patience runs out, he shouts furiously asking for the passport, the driver's cry wakes Ahmed from his distant world . . . paying attention as if he was seeing the driver for the first time.

He speaks as if he had made an irreversible decision:

I will not hand you my passport.

Who knows the length of the distance traveled? . . . only they know the seriousness of the decision he has made.

The driver asks with great bewilderment:

Why don't you hand me your passport?

The answer is decisive and clear as the sun in the clear sky.

I will not travel any more . . . I will stop here waiting for the next bus to go home.

#### **Author's profile**

Gassim H. Dohal holds a Ph. D. in English Literature. He has contributed research papers and articles to several academic journals. His works appeared in journals like *Agathos* journal, *The IUP Journal of English Studies*, *International Journal of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies* (IJCLTS), *Revista de investigaciones Universidad del Quindío* (RIUQ), and many others.