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Instructions for a Safe Return

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Shipers: Instructions for a Safe Return

INSTRUCTIONS FOR A SAFE RETURN

Carrie Shipers

After Carolyn Forché

Before your departure, read government
pamphlets, journalists' accounts, any media

recently banned. Remember: the language
you speak may say more than you wish.

Remember: there is no country called
Neutral, Surrender the only blank flag.

Upon arrival, make contact with local families,
filmmakers, and dissidents. It is unnecessary

to visit designated combat zones. Everywhere
danger, everywhere disbelief. Remember:

you are an uninvited guest. Surveillance is likely
routine. Under your pillow: passport,

penicillin, paperback *Crimes of War*.

Remember: bearing witness is a violent act,

truth the only weapon you may carry. Aspire
to poetry. Until then, write what you see.