

**1<sup>st</sup> Prize**  
**Division 3 – Grades 9 to 12**  
**Diatra Farasha**  
**Grade 10**  
**Bishop Marrocco/  
Thomas Merton Catholic School**



## **Goodbye Syria, My Love**

I'm scared, hiding inside a wardrobe  
Screams echoed, I cover my ears  
Pleas shouted, I hold my tears  
It stopped, still silence reigns

I'm drowning, a river surrounds me  
Knee high, I stare blankly  
Red liquid pooling, I scream hoarsely  
My family, floating lifelessly

Why? What have any of us done to you  
That you exterminate us in cold blood?

I'm lost, horrified, angry  
My blood boils, thrumming through my veins  
My body burns, igniting fire dangerously

I loath you tremendously  
For you have scarred me unbearably  
An unforgotten wound carved by bloodstained hands

But my wound will become a scar  
My hatred will morph into remission  
I'll loath you no more  
You're not worth my energy or time

It might take years, even decades  
But I'll eventually forgive you, though never forget you  
When a long time ago, I was also a part of you

Goodbye Syria, my love

**2<sup>nd</sup> Prize**  
**Division 3 – Grades 9 to 12**  
**Carl Natiuk**  
**Grade 12**  
**Toronto Waldorf School**



## Reflections on a Child

I play with their child.  
Taken in in my difficult situation,  
I am most thankful to them  
For what they have done for me.

I play with their child  
The little boy builds houses, ships, and docks;  
Like the ones I saw destroyed, came here on, and stepped out onto.  
He builds and I help him,  
Caring for him as my family.

I read to the child.  
Read of fairy tale palaces  
And rich and famous kings;  
All so far from what I experienced  
Mere months ago.

I read to the child.  
With this knowledge of the world he will most hopefully become one who cares;  
Welcomes others to his home,  
To his homeland.  
Welcomes me to his homeland with respect for my issues that are not mine.

I say goodnight to the child.  
He knows not of my instability, strain, and identity in a world of foreign customs and ideas.  
Not of the complexity of just trying to live, when in my position.  
He has grown up here.  
He says goodnight to me.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Prize**  
**Division 3 – Grades 9 to 12**  
**Noelle Taylor Rossi**  
**Grade 12**  
**Toronto Waldorf School**



## Refugees and Why

“Where are you from?” I asked (him)

Refugees – Germany grapples with record number of illegal refugees  
they have suffered

(or feared) persecution

News/Africa – Internally Displaced Refugees in Cameroon Ask for Help: Global asylum claims use 45%,  
but Canada lags in receiving refugees

Australia: Refugees in Indefinite Detention

I tried to calm the situation

Why has Canada only taken in 200 Syrian refugees?

WHY

IT SEEMED THEY HAD FORGOTTEN (HE) WAS A CHILD

...in need of help...

**3<sup>rd</sup> Prize**  
**Division 3 – Grades 9 to 12**  
**Sareema Husain**  
**Grade 12**  
**Richmond Hill High School**



## Lost At Sea

Trust in the power of God, my love

These rows upon rows of tents, this muddy field and constant shortage of food is only temporary  
Corroded iron hearts will soon start to melt, the wicked will no longer make you stir in your sleep  
Staring at the blood puddles of your brothers and sisters have made your soul weary, your eyes vacant  
I know you're getting impatient darling, but just wait a little longer

*Is it true that the borders are lined with dead bodies? Is that why we are travelling by sea, Daddy?*

Hush child, for we are quietly slipping out of the cusp of death

The currents mimic the tempo of God's breath, he is carrying us to safety

That lighthouse off in the distance, It is a rotating reassurance - we are almost there

We will step off this rickety boat and into a land of freedom

The boat is being swallowed by the ocean. She grips onto a plank with all the strength her little arms can muster

Where is her father? His face emerges from the water, and she cries out in relief

With cupped palms and an unsaid promise of never letting go

They swim for hours, aching bones and exasperated lungs taunt the grim reaper but they carry on

With wrinkled skin and cold body temperatures,

The thread of fate is cut and dances around them

As they sink to their final resting place

God opens its lucid arms and recollects their bodies

I'm sorry that I failed you, my love. This world is too cruel.

The only safe haven for you and me

Is at the bottom of the ocean.