

Overseas: Toby Millis:

To be free. Overseas.

Where ships set sail in the breeze on its mission,
But there's people on board with lives that they are risking.

To be free. Overseas.

I wonder if those people think the same way as me.
Who takes care of them and supports their needs?

To be free. Overseas.

From country to country,
It's not the same as going on holiday with daddy and
mummy.

Protection is granted to a tourist and not to a refugee.

To be free. Overseas.

Are they as free as us, and how free are we? Were we all
refugees?

Our parents come home from their jobs with money,
To provide for their children on a weekly basis: Sunday to
Monday.

To be free. Overseas.

How did it start this way?

I look back from my hostel in Calais where the white cliffs of
Dover lay.

To go down England way and the big U.K. must be a great
show of effort to put on display,

But were their efforts made with ease?

We won't forget those who lost their lives to be free.

Overseas.

Refugees: Brian Bilston

They have no need of our help

So do not tell me

These haggard faces could belong to you or me

Should life have dealt a different hand

We need to see them for who they really are

Chancers and scroungers

Layabouts and loungers

With bombs up their sleeves

Cut-throats and thieves

They are not

Welcome here

We should make them

Go back to where they came from

They cannot

Share our food

Share our homes

Share our countries

Instead let us

Build a wall to keep them out

It is not okay to say

These are people just like us

A place should only belong to those who are born there

Do not be so stupid to think that

The world can be looked at another way

(now read from bottom to top)

Free: Amy Ludwig Vanderwater:

Last year

This girl

This girl you see

She was not a refugee

But just a child

Who loved to read

To walk with grandma

By the sea

The nights were loud

They had to flee

So now

We call her refugee

She is a child

May she be free

She could be you

She could be me

A Poem of 'News' Headlines: Alfie Futerman:

500,000 migrants get social housing

Migrant madness

Here comes the flood

Migrant chaos all summer

KEEP THEM OUT

SEND THEM ALL BACK HOME

Migrants shun the English language

You pay to teach the migrants manners

They are here for your jobs

The swarm on our streets

£17 billion a year

Free hotel rooms for the Calais stowaways

Keep out, Britain is FULL UP

So when they ask

Why we fear

And treat our fellow humans as lesser

Tell them to look at the front page

Of the tabloid newspaper

**Everlasting Admiration – A Poem by Betty Porter, Eco
Magazine**

Not a single day goes past
where I don't think of them,
Of the seas that separate us.

It consumes my thoughts

And my heart

All with no choice.

No choice but to be miles and miles away from their home

Their luck does not shine

But their hope does

And I just can't understand how they have become so
involved,

Tiny feet, tiny hearts

Why can't we just keep the children away

And shelter them

Even though there aren't many left.

I want to welcome each and every one of them in,

With arms so wide

Reaching for them all

Arms entangled with hope.

I wish I could let them know that someone is thinking of
them

Keeping them close to their hearts

So close.

That there is more than hate, unfairness, pain

That there lies everlasting admiration

Entangled with hope.

You are all in my thoughts and in my dreams

Day and night

And I'll make sure you never fade away.

ONCE IN A BLUE MOON: Daniel Mansarry, Renaissance FC

Despair pursues the Lorries.

Desperation battles the sea.

Death an ever-present reminder,

Pray...Prey! Oh! Leave be.

Souls so innocent,

Hearts so Pure.

Little hands shiver

Cold...Cold! Oh! Please no more.

Once in a blue moon,

Miracles pay the daring a visit.

A feathered pearl once trapped-

Fly...Fly! Oh! So, exquisite.

Dear Syria: Nouran Tohmeh , Safe Passage Young Leader

Dear Syria,

You are the source of love, your sunny day with your spread winds.

Syria, your stunning sea, your crowded towns, your narrow streets- where the smell of jasmine shows love to the orphans and poor children.

Syria, you are the country of seven rivers, your city Tartus, with her beautiful view, your mountain Qassuen in Damascus, your sloping roads, your old neighbourhood with her equally as old houses and your majestic views off of the cliff in swede.

But the hands of time have been so cruel to you dearest Syria. My beautiful country with your woman in white hijabs that compare to pearls, your coffee smell in the mornings with the Quran with the imam lovely sound from the minaret of the mosque- you are breaking my heart.

Your demolished buildings acting as cold, rough blankets to the crying children, to whom the memory of their mothers in white hijabs seems like a distant dream of angels- and the smell of coffee has been replaced with blood, the memory of the Quran with the sound of imam, replaced with the sounds of screaming sibling being ripped away from each other.

A sound that is all too familiar to me.

I was 9, I loved him a lot, I didn't have a sister, but he felt like my sister, my mum, my dad and my best friend all at once. He was- and still is my everything. Time hasn't changed that.

He was always next to me every time I needed him, he was my hero. A real hero. And then he disappeared... I never really knew where he went, I felt so alone.

But the hands of time chose to show us some kindness. 6 years later.

When I got to hug him again, it felt like the whole world was in my arms, our tears like the seven rivers of home, his smell like the jasmine I once knew.

I felt safe again, happier than I ever thought would be possible. I didn't know if I was dreaming, I had to ask him if he was real, it was so hard to believe.

I remember someone of my family took a picture, I can't remember who it actually was because I forgot every one when I hugged him, but I still look at that picture of me and my brother, my world and I dream of how one day, one day we might be together again.

And I know everything seems like a never ending tragedy sometimes, but Syria, you are the country of strength and kindness, do not cave under this pressure that bigger than any of your mountains. I know how beautiful you are, i know you can overcome all of this.

Time is on our side Syria, and you will always be in my heart.

Uprooted: Mia Roman

Would you uproot
The flower that you had cultivated
And come to love so much
To send it to soils unknown
Unless it were to prevent the withering of its petals?

RCK, Sam Bard:

I spent one month volunteering in the kitchen of RCK.

(Refugee Community Kitchen).

There are so many things I can't even put into words.

These are the things I can;

Everyday we prepared and distributed 1500 hot meals, which
can be quite a challenge

The main meal is rice and curry, cooking these takes talent

That's why the volunteers are in charge of the salad!

We use many vegetables like lettuce and carrots

And in the winter its freezing so we all wear jackets.

But out of the kitchen and into the camps full of tents

In the winter, for the refugees, the cold is much more intense

As someone that was there for more than a week,

I saw things that are sadly internationally, not so unique.

Out on food distributions, I saw things that made my knees
weak.

My eyes have never seen, such awful living.

Camps made of half-tents, there are no buildings,
Oh how I wish this wasn't just the beginning...
Full-grown men huddling together for warmth.
I can't even imagine what they do in a storm
Police vans intimidatingly driving by slowly.
Their eyes full of hate, staring out coldly.

Lines made up of so many people I couldn't even count,
Mostly men and children waiting with hands out.
Some are in a mood and come across as rude
Others smile and thank us when they get their food.
But those that are rude just don't have the strength to be
nice
They've been beaten and battered and that comes with a
price
When they've finished their food, they'll queue again, twice.

Every now and then a drunkard will stumble into the
distribution.

If they start making problems, RCK has a safety policy to
leave the premises.

Every now and then a drunkard will stumble into the
distribution.

Other refugees will instantly run in, to take them away so
everyone else can still eat.

I have never seen such joy from someone drinking tea.
I'm English and I've never seen someone so happy drinking
tea.

A shivering refugee
Eyelids slowly close with glee
A relaxed face and shoulders drop
The first sugary sip that makes the world stop.

Many refugees want to talk to the volunteers
They want someone to laugh with, with someone to share
Mostly they want a distraction from what's going on there

Refugee: Sam Bard

I am fifteen and I am a refugee.

My eyes have seen such horrors and I'm tired of my
suffering.

I have spent so much energy.

My feet have crossed many borders yet must keep on
shuffling.

Now I'm in Calais, it's in Northern France.

Here the UK spent 100million in 3 years on barbed wire,
fences and CCTV.

That's a lot of money... I have no chance.

Some people take trucks or boats to try to cross, but many
are lost at sea.

I think it takes real courage to try to cross the English
Channel.

To escape the hell and death and hopelessness in these
camps.

Some even say I'm lucky it's only police beatings and tear gas
instead of tanks.

But wherever humanity exists there is also hope.

Without this tightrope, we could not cope.

One example is a charity called Refugee Community Kitchen
(RCK).

They give me one hot meal a day.

I want to tell you about my condition.

I live in a tent and my world is grey.

I always smell like smoke because of the small fires in the
camp.

Without them I'd freeze and and my clothes would be damp.

Everyone here lives in fear of death.

Or worse the police.

Their efforts do not cease.

It's easy to hate them and fear them.

But I wonder where they get their funding from.

A government bent on pushing us out,
we wait patiently for legality but while we wait they handout,

cutting open our tents and taking our shoes

I didn't know humans deserved such abuse.

I haven't seen her in a year and a half but my mother once
said;

My life couldn't be so bad if I had warmth and bread.

That's the dignity I have left, if only a shred

RCK feeds my stomach and my soul, a sugary tea is heaven

this much I know

The volunteers come with smiles and a distraction from this
hell

This hell is called Calais, in the racism and inequity I dwell

This Shirt: Amy Ludwig Vanderwater:

I love this shirt

But its too small

It's my team shirt

We were champs

I made a double play

Now its tight

My name is worn

The white is turning grey

A sleeve is torn

I love this shirt

I'm wearing it today.

All day it has rained: Alun Lewis

All day it has rained, and we on the edge of the moors
Have sprawled in our bell-tents, moody and dull as boors,
Groundsheets and blankets spread on the muddy ground
And from the first grey waking we have found

No refuge from the skirmishing fine rain
And the wind that made the canvas heave and flap
And the taut wet guy-ropes ravel out and snap,
All day the rain has glided, wave and mist and dream,
Drenching the gorse and heather, a gossamer stream
Too light to stir the acorns that suddenly
Snatched from their cups by the wild south-westerly
Pattered against the tent and our upturned dreaming faces.
And we stretched out, unbuttoning our braces,
Smoking a Woodbine, darning dirty socks,
Reading the Sunday papers – I saw a fox
And mentioned it in the note I scribbled home;

Refuge: JJ Bola

imagine how it feels to be chased out of home. to have your grip ripped. loosened from your fingertips something you so dearly held on to. like a lovers hand that slips when pulled away you are always reaching.

my father would speak of home. reaching. speaking of familiar faces. girl next door

who would eventually grow up to be my mother. the fruit seller at the market. the lonely man at the top of the road who nobody spoke to. and our house at the bottom of the street

lit up by a single flickering lamp

where beyond was only darkness. there

they would sit and tell stories

of monsters that lurked and came only at night to catch the children who sat and listened to stories of monsters that lurked.

this is how they lived. each memory buried.

an artefact left to be discovered by archaeologists. the last words on a dying

family member's lips. this was sacred.

not even monsters could taint it.

but there were monsters that came during the day. monsters
that tore families apart

with their giant hands. and fingers that slept on triggers. the
sound of gunshots ripping through the sky became familiar
like the tapping of rain fall on a window sill.

monster that would kill and hide behind speeches, suits and
ties. monsters that would chase families away forcing them
to leave everything behind.

i remember when we first stepped off the plane. everything
was foreign. unfamiliar. uninviting. even the air in my lungs
left me short of breath.

we came here to find refuge. they called us refugees so we
hid ourselves in their language until we sounded just like
them. changed the way we dressed to look just like them.

made this our home until we lived just like them and began
to speak of familiar faces. girl next door who would grow up
to be a

mother. the fruit seller at the market.

the lonely man at the top of the road

who nobody spoke to. and our house at the bottom of the
street lit up by a single flickering lamp to keep away the
darkness.

there we would sit and watch police that lurked and came
only at night to arrest the youths who sat and watched police
that lurked and came only at night. this is how we lived.

I remember one day I heard them say to me
they come here to take our jobs
they need to go back to where they came from
not knowing that I was one of the ones who came. i told
them that a refugee is simply
someone who is trying to make a home.
so next time when you go home, tuck your children in and
kiss your families goodnight be glad that the monsters
never came for you.
in their suits and ties.
never came for you.
in the newspapers with the media lies.
never came for you.
that you are not despised.

and know that deep inside the hearts of each and every one
of us

we are all always reaching for a place that we can call home.

Refuge: Jason Fotso.

Turn away the refugees.

We will not

open up

our homes and hearts

for

children.

Close our doors on

the weak.

Only

fear behind

our

love can put

strength in our

hands.

We cannot let them bleed into our

nation.

They share the blood of our

enemy.

Our own

are endangered by

the refugees.

We have forgotten

the words that

the Statue of Liberty shines.

In this darkest hour,

terror

stands stronger than

our people

of

power.

This

fear

conquers

the home of the brave.

(read from bottom to top, use the spacing)

SURVIVING COVID: Tanya

'And then the brook dried up...'

What happens when everything dries up in your life ?

The things that used to brighten your day

The people whose laughter put air under your wings

no longer come to visit

The air escapes and you are earthbound.

The friend you had lunch with

now eats alone

The doctor gives you instructions on the phone

You are told to dial 111.

The brook begins to run dry.

No one coming up the driveway

No crunch of wheels on gravel

No patter patter

of feet

No squeals of

'Nana! I have lost a tooth!'

The food we planned to share
spoils in the fridge.

The daily errands we used to take for granted
have become treats
remote as the stars.

Never had it entered the heart or mind
that one day
we would be more afraid of each other than burglars
Everything swept from under our feet
No stability in life.

My brook began to dry up.

It started with the raging headache

The backaches

Then the cough joined in:

persistent, irritating

like a dripping tap.

The fever,

not to be left out

came in and made its habitation in my body.

Diarrhoea, raging like a storm,
also settled in.

Not to be outdone were the taste buds
They left me, taking with them the appetite
that would have helped me battle the invaders

I had no energy to take a bath
(Luckily I couldn't smell myself either)

I just wanted to sleep
and sleep
and sleep.

The brook is dry, cracked and dusty

And now I feel the fire

First my head burns like molten metal

My mind is in denial

“This can't be it”.

I wait, when I should have fled,
and let the flames envelop me with delirium

I sleep, and wake, and

sleep, and

wake

Minutes are hours, slipping away

then jerked awake by a shower of sparks under the skin

My brain stops.

Everything I eat tastes like poison

No appetite

No rest

Who's this, pounding in my head?

The brain sends its messages

but they get lost on their way

The joints lie there

dull and aching

Going upstairs, carrying a bag of cement

not possible

They tell me:

'Self-isolate for ten days'

Ten days!

For weeks the firestorm rages,
consuming me
Fever, vomiting, backache, delirium
While my body is tossed to fro without mercy
And when I most need others' help
The others are kept away
No cups of tea
No one to change my tangled, sweaty bedding
No cool hand on my hot forehead
No knock on the door,
no voice asking, 'How are you?'

And then, as courage fails me
When I no longer care
if I live or die, just then
the fire begins to burn itself out
I make myself do little things
The first cup of tea
The insulin injection
I force myself to eat

the soup I cannot taste
I try to replace the fluids I have lost
For three days I survive on
oranges and Vitamin D3
I realise I can taste the oranges

They taste like summer
I feel their nourishment trickling through to my feet
I start to think, 'I might survive'
I decide to live.
The hazy, jumbled world
begins to clear and take shape
The days arrange themselves
in the right order again
The sleep is proper sleep that brings healing
The birds return, singing, 'Good morning, lazybones!'
My heart calls back, 'Thanks for waking me!'
The brook fills up with cool refreshing water,
my parched soul has been restored
No more self-defeating thoughts

No vacant stares

The brook is flowing again.

Treasure: Tanya

What is your most prized possession?

Your car?

House?

Jewellery?

Business?

People spend a lot of money to protect their possessions.

What travels faster than a car?

Glitters more than jewellery?

Gives more protection than a house?

I have something more

precious than all these.

In it flow the streams of life

When I'm happy, it's so light that I can float

When I'm sad, it's so heavy I can barely move.

It can break, invisibly, and with no wounds or symptoms

but next day it has mended itself again.

When I lose it, it finds me again

It's my best friend
It makes me laugh.
I always wonder
What is it made of?

Some describe it
As just an organ in a body
They are wrong!!
It can expand to take in the whole world
It can shrink to focus on a flower
Which will absorb it completely
It cannot be contained.
It transports me to far-away countries
The stories I hear
See
Read about.
Day and night it pumps, filling me with memories
Of sounds and smells
Of that day in Kew Gardens.
With no WiFi

No electrical signal
It tunes in to those beautiful
Songs and sounds.

When I lose my sight
Hearing
Speech
It'll still be seeing
Hearing
Talking
And leaving
Footprints of love
Where I walked:
My Heart.

They Took Your Home From You: Nikita Gill

Home is a language
You grey in your mouth
That now no longer exists anywhere
But inside your heart and head

Home is where
you had to teach your children
How to run from men who are dressed
In war and blood

Home is now a legend
A story of where you grew up,
Happy and safe before
They set you entire world aflame

Home is where you ran to the sea
Because the place you once belonged to
Now no longer remembers your name

Home was your refuge

Now, after cruelly

Taking it from you

They call you a refugee.