



**2019 REFUGEES & HUMAN RIGHTS  
CHILD & YOUTH POETRY CONTEST  
DIVISION 3 – GRADES 9 TO 12**

**JACE MILLER, GRADE 9  
FATHER MICHAEL McGIVNEY  
CATHOLIC ACADEMY  
HONOURABLE MENTION**

**THE LOTTERY**

I am lucky.

I am lucky enough to be able to get up at night and drink a glass of clean water.

I am lucky enough to worry about university instead of being drafted into the military.

I am lucky enough to be a child of immigrants who left their home because they wanted to.

I am lucky enough to be the 109 in 110 people that have not been forced to flee from their country.

I am rich in blessings and with opportunities.

But that is not of my doing.

So why should I deny my brothers and sisters an opportunity that I have, but did not earn?

Sometimes, I forget how sweet-sounding silence is.

There is someone in this world who would give anything to wake up to silence instead of jolting awake to bombs.

And in the unappreciated silence, I have the ability to speak.

But I say nothing

Because sometimes I forget how poisoning the wrong kind of silence can be.

So I owe it to my less fortunate neighbours to break my silence so that they can be heard.

I owe it to my less fortunate neighbours to give them access to a place of asylum,

A place I live in but did nothing to deserve.

I am lucky enough to be able to turn a blind eye to those who are not lucky enough.

But I will not.

We must not.

Because after all,

Everyone who was born here just got lucky.



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**JUSTINE RADCLIFFE SALAZAR, GRADE 12  
RICHMOND HILL HIGH SCHOOL  
HONOURABLE MENTION**

**A BEAUTIFUL PLACE**

He was born in a beautiful place  
Where gunshots are music to his ears  
Where no matter what time of the day, it plays.  
Where it only stops when the enemy is dead.

He was born in a beautiful place  
Where what you think does not matter  
Where what you think you cannot utter  
Where you are told what to believe and remember

He was born in a beautiful place  
Where nobody can appreciate  
Where you are forced to be deaf  
Where you are forced to be blind  
He was born in a beautiful place  
Where the beauty can only be seen  
If the song will stop from playing  
And the violence cease its ending

He is now living in a place  
Where he can finally taste peace  
Where his voice is finally heard  
And his rights are finally earned





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**SRISHTI RAO, GRADE 9  
FATHER MICHAEL MCGIVNEY  
CATHOLIC ACADEMY  
HONOURABLE MENTION**

**A FLAME**

I'm just like you  
Maybe not in the way I have lived –  
An infinite cycle of war, hunger, and disaster –  
But I'm human, just like you.

So please notice me  
Don't look away as if nothing is happening  
Turning a blind eye won't help the fact that  
My house no longer feels like home  
And I want nothing more than to leave this place  
Where nothing seems familiar anymore  
The peaceful town I once knew, the happy people I once saw, the  
memories I made –  
All burned down to pieces.

And the same flame that caused this destruction  
Exists in my heart  
A painful combination of rage, fear, and confusion  
And an overwhelming desire for everything to go back to normal

But this fire also has the power  
To light my way through the darkness  
And you can help too  
Take my hand and let me in  
To feel the warmth of your land  
To feel like I am part of the world again  
To feel loved and wanted

To feel safe at home.