



## 2020 REFUGEES & HUMAN RIGHTS CHILD & YOUTH POETRY CONTEST DIVISION 3 – GRADES 9 TO 12

### NIMRAT KALIRAI, GRADE 9 IROQUOIS RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL SECOND PLACE



### FLOTSAM OF HUMANITY

I don't remember what my life was like at two years old.  
I look back at old pictures, see myself swinging joyfully on the swings at the local park;  
See myself eating birthday cake before I've even blown out the candles.  
When you don't have to worry about shelter and security and survival,  
You forget just how critical these things are to your well-being.  
You often forget to count your blessings.

Alan was only two years old.  
On the news, he lies face-down at the edge of the water.  
Red shirt, blue shorts, barefoot, tiny arms limp by his sides.  
Seeing his small, unmoving body, you prayed you heard wrong.  
Forced to flee his home, before he could even pronounce his own name.  
So young. So fragile. Yet, gone before his life had even begun.

Alan's story opened the world's eyes.  
He was the face of the refugee crisis and it tore at everyone's heart  
But only for a moment, before it became business as usual.  
We hear the number of fatalities on the news every once in a while,  
But it's all too easy to forget that behind every digit is a life;  
Is a mother. A father. A child. A grandparent. A friend. A neighbour.

Millions of lives continue to be lost and each life is one too many.  
We cannot continue to ignore those who are suffering.  
We need to speak for those who cannot speak, and fight for those who cannot fight.

It's up to you now: you can choose to advocate to change the narrative.  
Or you can continue to ignore the issue, leave it for someone else to solve.  
Choose wisely. Choose with conscience. Choose humanity.