



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

**MAYA McKEOWN, GRADE 12
ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE SCHOOL
FIRST PRIZE**



CROSS ROAD

A boy stands beside a highway

He wipes a hand across his nose and holds out the tissues –
twelve pale pink packages of extra soft facial tissues
that he will try to sell for five qirsh each, but will be haggled
down to three.

He can already picture his sister's face,

two shiny salt tracks slipping towards her chin. The coins
tucked between the stitching of his jacket are quiet enough to be missed,
and not enough for a full dinner.

Men shout at the boy from inside their rumbling trucks and the boy scrubs
away his tears

before the dust falls back across the highway.

He wants to go
home.

He wants his grandmother's kanafeh,

the red-brown couch his dog and sister liked to sit on after dinner,
his mother's hand gently squeezing his shoulder when he starts to get
upset.

He wants long, lazy school days where his eyes fall shut and he dreams
about TV and ice-cream.

He wants buildings without holes.

Streets without crushed plates, crumpled coat racks, dusty wires peeking
out of the rubble

He wants to go home. But

the next truck rushes by and the boy wipes his nose and
holds out the tissues.