



2022 REFUGEES & HUMAN RIGHTS CHILD & YOUTH POETRY CONTEST DIVISION 3 – GRADES 9 TO 12

STERLING HUANG, GRADE 9 UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO SCHOOLS SECOND PRIZE

A TRAVELER'S TALE



A grandmother's last wish, a brother's last birthday.
A mother's scream, a father's shout, a child's sob.
As we felt pain, as we lost homes, as we lost family,
The world saw nothing but images, words and videos.

As a final ship approached the dock, a line became a stampede.
When the ship gave a final horn, I looked behind me.
A grandfather's broken cane, a sister's trampled teddy bear.
When we felt sadness, the world saw screens and heard radios.

In a refugee camp, a single stamp decided our fate,
Walking past an injured man, I wondered:
Was I stealing another human's path to safety, to survival?
As I felt guilt, the man felt despair, but the world cheered.

"Thousands of refugees saved", reports global media.
Worldwide nations shout, "Welcome to your new home."
"How much more will be left behind", I wonder.
"How many more stories left untold...?"

When I arrived in my "new home," it always felt foreign.
As I walked across the street, I always was the minority.
When I wanted education, language was a barrier.
As I needed opportunity, race was an obstacle.

What I had arrived in could not truly be home,
What I had left behind was no longer home.
Trapped between two shores, neither truly there nor here.
When will I truly be home? When will the world see my story?
When will I be accepted?