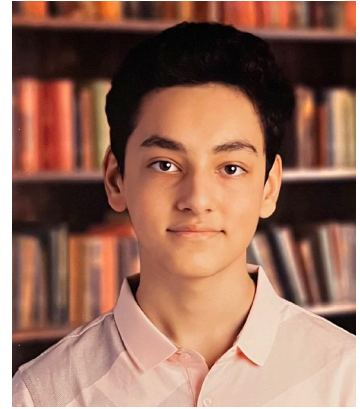




**2022 REFUGEES & HUMAN RIGHTS  
CHILD & YOUTH POETRY CONTEST  
DIVISION 3 – GRADES 9 TO 12**

**ALI ALVI, GRADE 10  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO SCHOOLS  
THIRD PRIZE  
CHILD OF WAR**



A young boy horrified by the sounds of fireworks  
Not because they're loud, but because it's a reminder  
of the gunshots

That used to ring out through the night, fired by both sides as they fought  
With him caught between the crossfire, as the sky lit up with red dots

He goes back to bed because his mom said not to worry  
But sometimes, when he closes his eyes, the past and present seem to get  
blurry

Safety starts to feel like a disguise that's on loan when you've spent your  
whole life in a hurry

Running from house to house but never at home, trying to scurry away from  
the fury

The fury of war that caused him to be exiled from his real home

A backpack of his belongings compiled is everything he owns

It's not just that he has been forced to roam,

But the atrocities of war that are vile and graphic

And are not shown on your mobile phone

Is what he grew up seeing and are all he's known

Inside his head, these images are piled

Row by row, they've all been filed into his core

The joy and innocence of his childhood defiled

You can take the kid away from the war

But you can't take the war out of the child