

Refugees Voice

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Humanity is the most important value we must preserve in today's intricate world.

Everyone has a story to tell. A story of love, hope, survival, wisdom and sometimes pain.

Read it, live it, spread the word! (Alina Cioculeasa)

Tell me why - Declan Galbraith

*In my dream, children sing
A song of love for every boy and girl
The sky is blue and fields are green
And laughter is the language of the world
Then I wake and all I see
Is a world full of people in need*

Chorus:

*Tell me why (why) does it have to be like this?
Tell me why (why) is there something I have missed?
Tell me why (why) cos I don't understand
When so many need somebody
We don't give a helping hand
Tell me why?
Everyday I ask myself
What will I have to do to be a man?
Do I have to stand and fight
To prove to everybody who I am?
Is that what my life is for
To waste in a world full of war?*

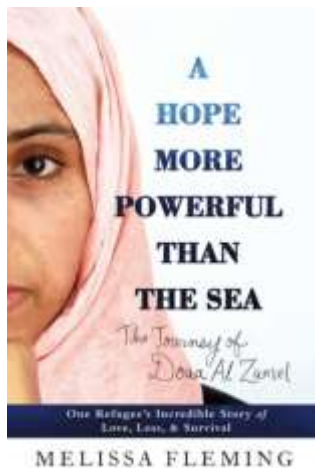
The story of a hero

Retold by Andrei Iacob

Doaa is a 19-year-old aspiring student who was forced by the war to live a difficult existence with her family in exile.

One day, a motorcycle gang tried to kidnap her on the street. Despite all these, Doaa was still hopeful, because she was in love with another refugee, called Bassem and they ran away onto an old fishing boat.

After two days at sea, she started to get worried, and on the third day she told Bassem: "We will never reach the shore. We will all sink."



Within minutes, the boat capsized and sank, with 300 people trapped below deck. Unfortunately, Bassem drowned before her eyes.

Later that day, a mother struggled towards Doaa with Masa, an 18-month-old girl. "Save her," she said, "I will not survive." Sensing his end was near, a Palestinian approached with his nine-month-old granddaughter, Malek.

"Please take the baby," he said. "I am very tired." Then he gave up and let the sea take his life.

Doaa, the 19-year-old who could not swim, who had just watched her fiancé drown, was now in charge of saving two lives. They were crying, agitated, hungry and thirsty. So she told them stories and played with them.

On the fourth day at sea, Doaa saw a merchant boat. They spotted her with search lights in the dark and extended a rope – astonished to find a young woman with two babies.

Doaa's heroism was praised in the Greek media. On 19 December, one of Greece's most respected institutions, the Academy of Athens, gave her an award for bravery.



SOURCES

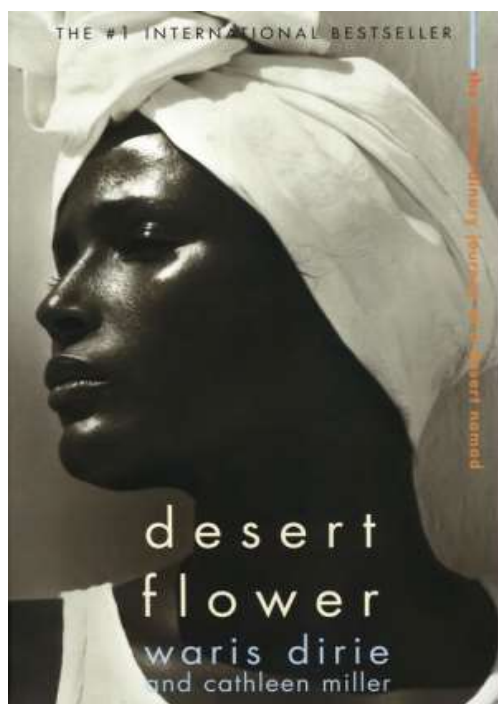
- <http://tracks.unhcr.org/2015/06/the-death-boats-a-survivors-tale/>
- <http://www.marieclaire.com/culture/a24655/i-survived-a-week-at-sea/>
- <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/12/3-real-stories-from-refugees/>
- <https://alistairreignblog.com/2016/01/31/documentary-melissa-fleming-is-a-voice-for-refugees/>

The story of WARIS DIRIE

Retold by teacher Elena Preoteasa

Waris Dirie was born in 1965, a nomadic family, in the region of Gallacalo, in the Somali desert, at the border with Ethiopia.

In 1997, Harper Collins published Waris Dirie's biography "**Desert Flower**" (in New York) and the book quickly became an international bestseller.



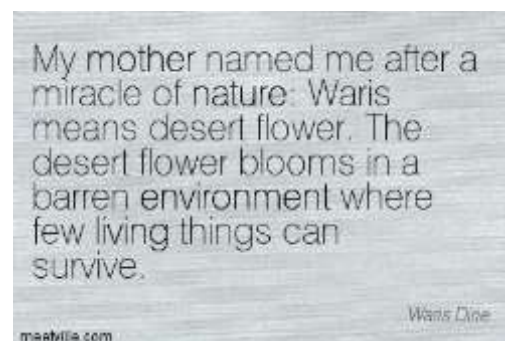
The book "**Desert Flower**" by Waris Dirie and Cathleen Miller is about her life. She was a hardworking girl, living in harmony with her family and nature until she was around five years old. Even if she went through difficult times, she said: "***I thank God every day that I'm from Africa***".

At the age of twelve, her father arranged a marriage to a sixty-year-old boy. She didn't want to marry him but her father got 5 camels in exchange. She

decided to run away, and so she had to cross the desert to Mogadishu. She had no shoes, no food or drink, no money, illiterate, nothing but an overwhelming will to survive. With great courage and extraordinary intuition, qualities she had naturally developed in her nomadic life, she found her way to Mogadishu, and eventually to London, working as a servant in the Somali Embassy.

On her way, she was nearly raped by a trucker. When she arrived in the city she lived in the house of her sister and helped her with her kids, later she lived with her aunt. After a few years she managed to work as a house keeper in London. A stranger asked her, if he was allowed to take photos of her, but she was afraid of him because of her difficult past.

When her family returned to Somalia, Waris refused, hiding her passport and ID. To support herself she worked at McDonalds while living in a youth hostel with her new girl friend, who was also from Africa.



After some years she again met the stranger who wanted to take photos of her and he gave her a card with his phone number. She decided to call him. That was the moment her top model career started. The problem was her visa. The only way to get a valid visa was to marry an Englishman. She did it and so she could stay in London. She was also allowed to

travel around the world and she became one of the most famous models in the world. She speaks up about female circumcision, a terrifying experience she went through in Africa.

Her deep convictions and philosophy of life are summed up at the end of the book when she says:

“Many friends have expressed concern that a religious fanatic will try to kill me when I go to Africa. After all, I’ll be speaking out against a crime many fundamentalists consider a holy practice. I’m sure my work will be dangerous, and I admit to being scared.... But my faith tells me to be strong, that God led me down this path for a reason. He has work for me to do. This is my mission. And I believe that long before the day I was born, God chose the day I will die, so I can’t change that. In the meantime, I might as well take a chance, because that’s what I’ve done all my life.”



She moved from London to New York and became one of the first African supermodels to receive an exclusive

agreement with the cosmetic group Revlon. She also graced the front pages of all the major magazines.

She appeared as a James Bond Girl, alongside Timothy Dalton in “The Living Daylights”.

The BBC commissioned the programme **“A Nomad in New York”**, based on Waris Dirie for their series **“The day that changed my life”**.

The US based famous journalist, Barbara Walters, interviewed her on behalf of NBC. Waris was also interviewed by Laura Ziv for the magazine Marie Claire, in which she decided to tell about the cruel ritual of female genital mutilation and also her own destiny.

She travels on behalf of the United Nations around the world, participates in conferences, meets presidents, Nobel Prize winners and movie stars and gives hundreds of interviews to draw attention to her mission.

In 2002 she founded her own foundation, called **“Waris Dirie Foundation”** to support her work as a campaigner against FGM.

In 2010, the Foundation was re-named **“Desert Flower Foundation”** to reflect the broader approach to addressing Female Genital Mutilation through economic projects in Africa.

The foundation’s team is made up of men and women committed to gender equality, human rights and all of them share Waris Dirie’s ideal: Ending **Female Genital Mutilation**.

The Desert Flower Foundation and all its campaigns, projects and activities are financed by private donations.

The key work aspects of the Desert Flower Foundation are:

Raise Awareness

Through workshops, seminars, conferences, presentations, charity events, online campaigns etc.

Prevention work

Through projects like "Save a little desert flower", which seeks to protect little girls in Africa from FGM.

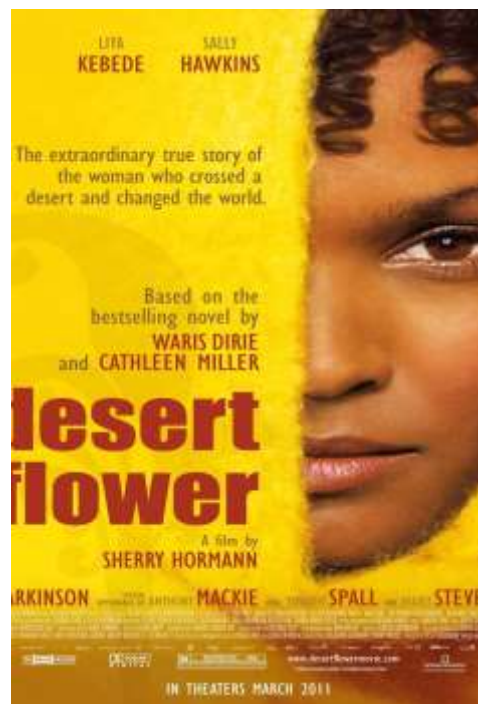
Damage Repair

Through Desert Flower Centers they try to help and guide victims of FGM to regain, as much as possible, their life quality and confidence.

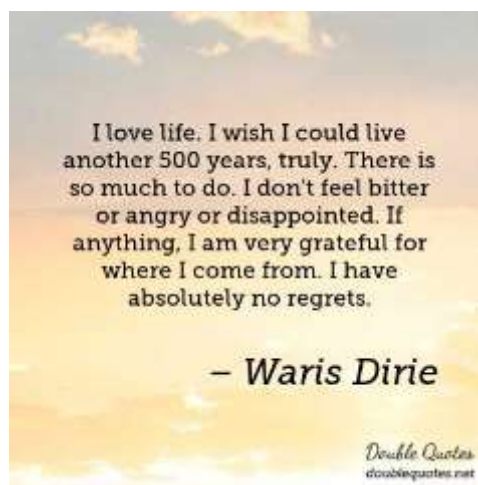
In March 2008 producer and Oscar-winner Peter Hermann (**"Nowhere in Africa"**) commenced with the shooting of **"Desert Flower"** (the budget: USD 16 Mio). The initial filming took place in Djibouti with mostly amateur actors. Further locations included New York, Berlin and London. Waris Dirie served as associate producer for the film, which was directed by Sherry Hormann.



Waris Dirie is played by an Ethiopian supermodel and the image of Estee Lauder, Liya Kebede, who has already played roles in two big productions: "The Good Shepherd" directed by Robert De Niro and "Lord of War" by Nicolas Cage.



In the movie we can also see other prominent actors, such as Sally Hawkins ("Happy Go Lucky", "Cassandra's Dream"), Timothy Spall ("Harry Potter", "Vanilla Sky"), Meera Syal ("Scoop", "Anita and Me"), Juliette Stevenson ("Bend It Like Beckham") and Craig Parkinson ("Control").



Online written media

Collected by Vlad Vlădaia

- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/refugees>



- <http://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugee-crisis>



- <http://globalnews.ca/tag/refugees/>



- <http://edition.cnn.com/specials/middle east/syrian-refugees/>



- <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/immigration/index.html>



Quotes about refugees

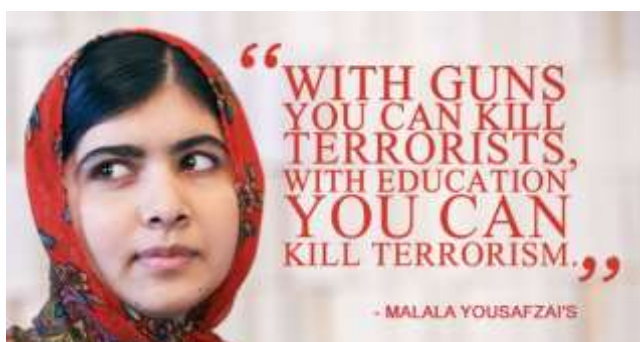
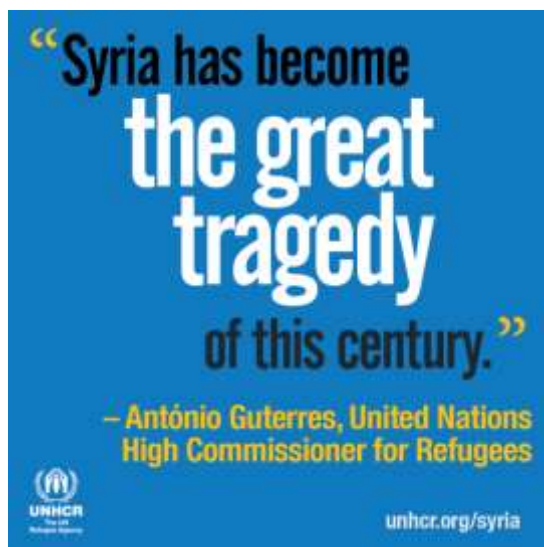
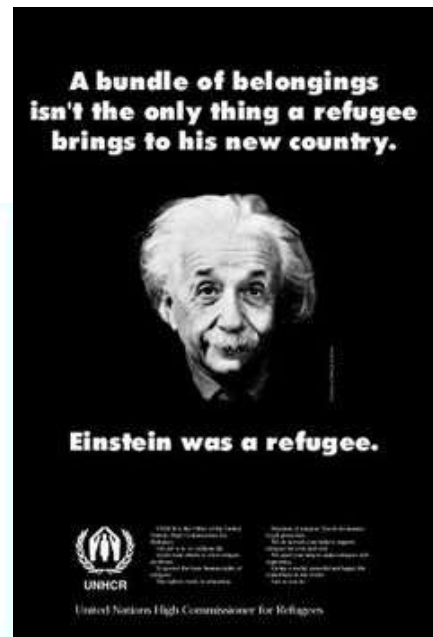


Migrants and refugees are not
pawns on the chessboard of
humanity

— Pope Francis —

Quotes about refugees

Collected by Vlad Alboiu



you have to understand
that no one puts their children in
a boat
unless the water is safer than
the land
--"Home" by Warsan Shire

Authors who were once refugees

By Alina Cioculeasa (teacher)

○ Isabel Allende

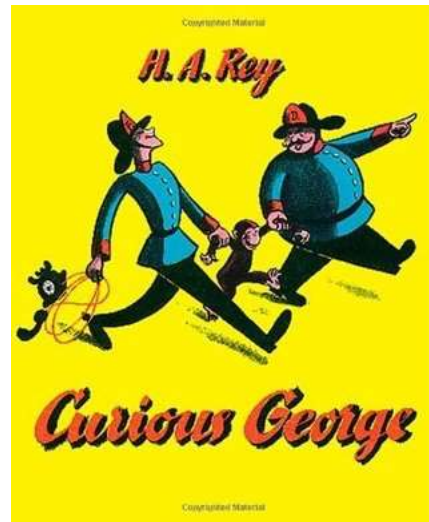
In 1973, Chilean author Isabel Allende discovered that her name was on a military blacklist. She was a cousin of President Salvador Allende, who had just been overthrown in a military coup, and her family was receiving death threats. Allende fled to Venezuela with her husband and children, arriving with no visa and no job. Nevertheless, she managed to continue her career as a journalist, and went on to write *The House of The Spirits* several years later.



○ Hans Augusto Rey and Margret Rey

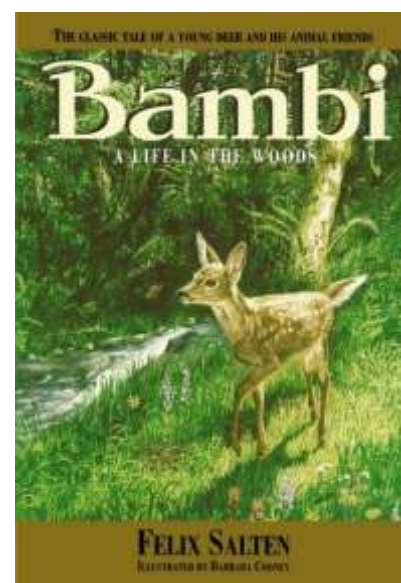
Hans Augusto and Margret Rey were the couple behind the monkey, Curious George. They were both German-born Jews, who fled to Brazil to escape the rise of Nazism. Hans and Margret got married in Brazil and moved to Paris together—but in 1940, as Nazis

prepared to invade, the couple fled again, this time escaping Paris on homemade bicycles, carrying the manuscript of *Curious George* with them.



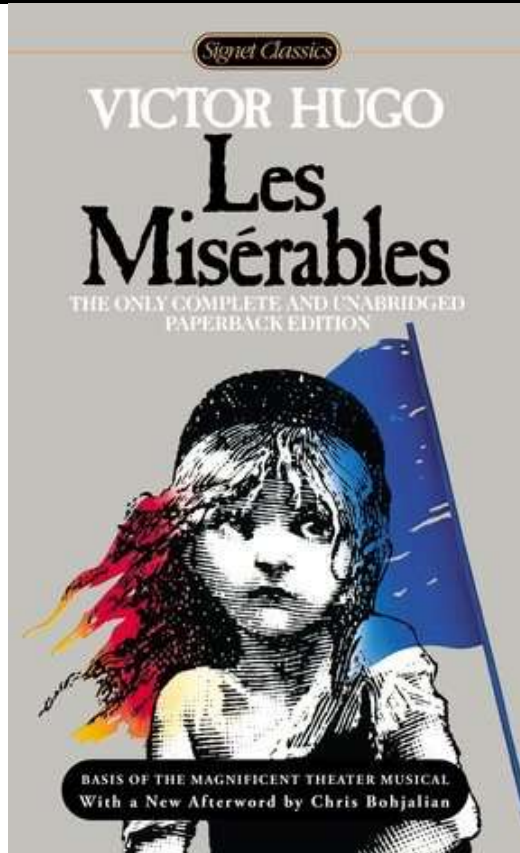
○ Felix Salten

Even if you have never heard of Felix Salten, you probably know his famous creation: a little deer named Bambi. Did you know that *Bambi* was banned by Adolf Hitler? Salten's family moved from Budapest to Vienna when he was a child. After Austria was annexed by Nazi Germany in 1938, Salten escaped to Switzerland.



Victor Hugo

The famous author of *Les Misérables* and *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* was also a politician and activist. He fought for universal suffrage, free education, and an end to the death penalty. Hugo was exiled when Napoleon III came to power, and fled France several times throughout his life. He was trapped in Paris during 1870.



POEMS ABOUT REFUGEES

He too is a man

BY ENZA ARMIENTO

If from far away you see
the brother written in the
Book of the books
like the spit into the sky
falling
down on the sea headstone
you'll wonder if he too is a
man
or just a black horizon
the poison of bad plant
spewed by a dying God
and left for mercy to the
mouth of the fish
silently to the water
and to the nights of bones.



Soundless

BY ENZA ARMIENTO

With threaded wires
war was announced in the
morning
the artillery voice came from the east
just after sunrise

Not a word!

The stars - you know -
they have millennial omerties
they watch heads hanging, empty shoes
and tiny fragments of flash
crying in the cracks of the walls
of concrete houses standing
Dripping children and women slipped
Black, white, half blood
clotted on the ground
of the great inhumane puddle
The only color
I witness it
It was blood.



IN A FAR AWAY POEM

Antonio de Michele



IN A FAR AWAY POEM

I hug the sand
childish like me
without first
piling a castle
for dreams and fables

Water cuddles me ashore
after having beached me
on the belly
and my small shoulders
facing the seagulls
also foreign
above me
snooping childhood

My killer cradle is here
where I shall sleep
in peace
if War died with me

I will not open my eyes
which have already known
dust returns to ashes

Empty will remain
my chair
in the universal kindergarten

Antonio de Michele
06/04/2017



We Refugees –

Poem by Benjamin Zephaniah

<https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/we-refugees/>

I come from a musical place
Where they shoot me for my song
And my brother has been tortured
By my brother in my land.

I come from a beautiful place
Where they hate my shade of skin
They don't like the way I pray
And they ban free poetry.

I come from a beautiful place
Where girls cannot go to school
There you are told what to believe
And even young boys must grow
beards.

I come from a great old forest
I think it is now a field
And the people I once knew
Are not there now.

We can all be refugees
Nobody is safe,
All it takes is a mad leader
Or no rain to bring forth food,
We can all be refugees
We can all be told to go,
We can be hated by someone
For being someone.

I come from a beautiful place
Where the valley floods each year

And each year the hurricane tells us
That we must keep moving on.

I come from an ancient place
All my family were born there
And I would like to go there
But I really want to live.

I come from a sunny, sandy place
Where tourists go to darken skin
And dealers like to sell guns there
I just can't tell you what's the price.

I am told I have no country now
I am told I am a lie
I am told that modern history books
May forget my name.

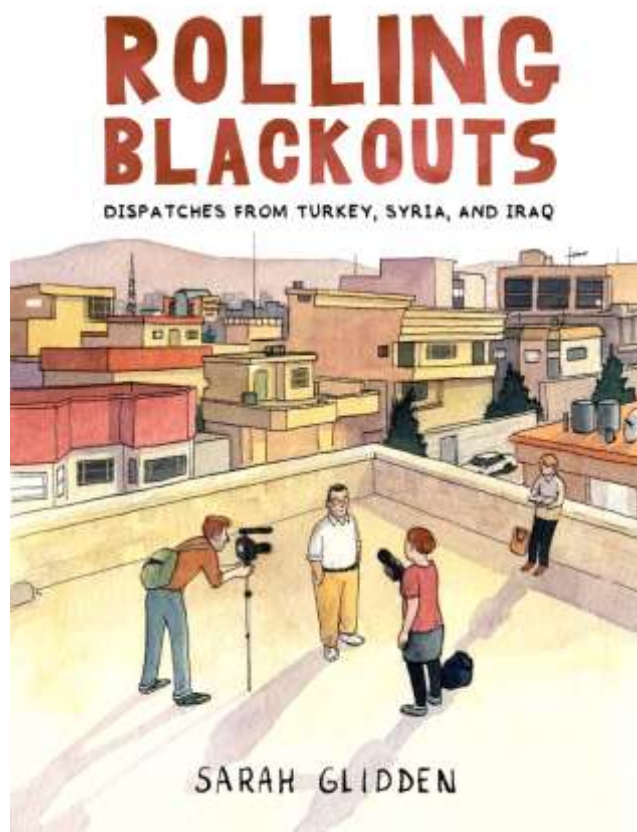
We can all be refugees
Sometimes it only takes a day,
Sometimes it only takes a handshake
Or a paper that is signed.
We all came from refugees
Nobody simply just appeared,
Nobody's here without a struggle,
And why should we live in fear
Of the weather or the troubles?
We all came here from somewhere.



Graphic novels about refugees

Sarah Glidden - a cartoonist and illustrator working primarily in non-fiction and reportage comics.

Cartoonist Sarah Glidden accompanies her two friends—reporters and founders of a journalism non-profit—as they research potential stories on the effects of the Iraq War on the Middle East and, specifically, the war's refugees.



Along the way, Glidden meets people who have had to leave their homes for various reasons. For example, one couple left to avoid prison for publishing things not approved by the Iranian government.



Graphic Novel Features Somali Olympian Refugee Who Died At Sea (by Reinhard Kleist)

Omar's remarkable story is captured by German artist Reinhard Kleist in a new graphic novel called **An Olympic Dream: The story of Samia Yusuf Omar**, which was published in the US. The book documents Omar's childhood in war-torn Somalia, her hopes of becoming a professional runner, and her journey from Somalia through Ethiopia, Sudan, and Libya.



Since 2012, more than 11,300 refugees have died attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea into Europe. Among them: Samia Yusuf Omar, a 21-year-old runner from Somalia who undertook the voyage in the hopes of getting closer to her goal of competing in the 2012 London Olympic Games. Omar burst onto the international scene during the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, where she competed for Somalia in the 200-meter race.

Emboldened by her participation in the Beijing games, Omar hoped to represent Somalia in London in 2012. But back home, a different reality awaited her.

After traveling through Ethiopia, Sudan, and Libya, Omar got on a boat in the hopes of reaching Italy, finding a coach, and making it to the Olympics. But the boat carrying her ran out of fuel, according to media reports. She failed to grab a rope tossed by an Italian navy ship rescuing passengers, and drowned.



Two years ago, it got really bad and my mother had us leave the city and hide someplace outside of it.
But I came back. What was I going to do out there? I have to train.



Now there's no money to fix the stadium.
Maybe one day it'll be like it was and we'll be able to train like they do in other countries.
I've been training in the stadium as often as I can anyway. When I managed to shave a second off my time, I was really happy.



○ Graphic novel illustrates life of Syrian refugees in Lebanon

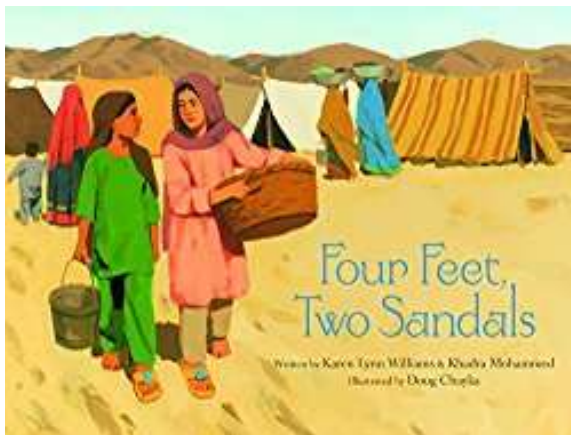
- “Meantime” is a graphic novel project initiated in March 2016 by French nongovernmental organization (NGO) Solidarites International (SOL). Five French, Syrian and Lebanese artists spent weeks talking with Syrian refugees in Akkar and Tripoli in northern Lebanon to create five graphic stories, which have been available online since Feb. 21 in English, Arabic and French.

- <http://comics.solidarites.org/en/stories>

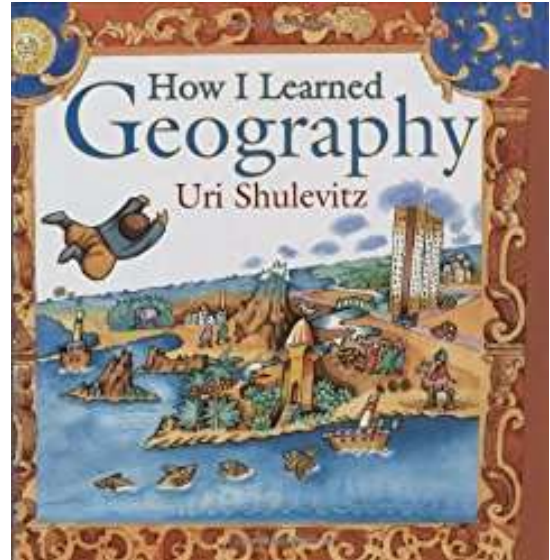
Books for children

Collected by Leonard Oteşanu

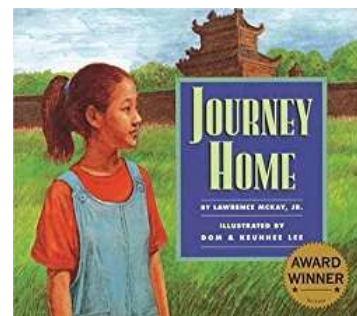
- **Four Feet, Two Sandals.** Two girls in a Pakistan refugee camp each find one shoe. Lina and Feroza meet and decide to share the sandals. A friendship develops and they share details about why they have come to the camp. The text contains descriptions about life in the camp, such as waiting in long lines for water, washing clothes in the river and waiting at home while boys go to school. This is an important book that humanizes the experiences of children in refugee camps.



- **How I Learned Geography.** This award winning book is based on Shulevitz's own experience as a refugee from Warsaw. In the story, a family escapes war, fleeing to Turkestan where they live in "houses made of clay, straw and camel dung..." One day father brings home a map instead of food for his hungry family. At first the young boy resents the map, but the father helps his son use the map to travel around the world in his imagination. Shulevitz gives more information about his personal experiences as a refugee in an endnote.



- **Journey Home.** Mai narrates this story of going to Vietnam with her mother, who was an orphan refugee from Vietnam. Her mother is searching for her birth parents with only a photograph as a clue. Mai describes how it must feel to not know what your origins are, and how scary it would feel to be on a journey and not know the destination. While this refugee story is told from a third person/second generation's point of view, it is an important one. **After all, being a refugee means that lives will be affected for generations, and certainly many of our children's friends are the daughters and sons of refugees themselves.**

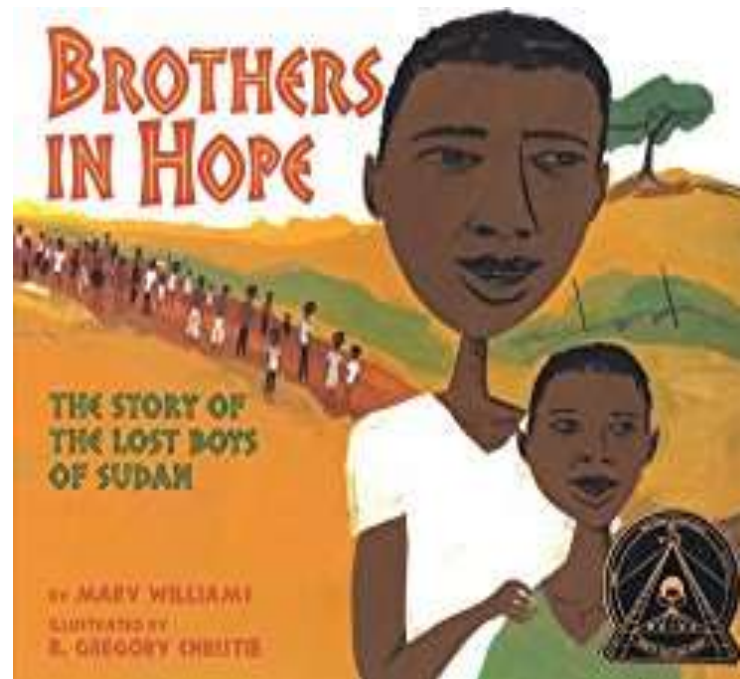


- ***Colour of Home.*** Hassan and his family have just arrived in the United States from Somalia, fleeing the war. First grader Hassan misses his home in Africa. He is homesick, he struggles with the English language and he misses the colorful landscape. His art teacher helps him find expression for his complicated emotions through painting. Painting his story brings back Hassan's feelings about the war and he is able to relate his refugee experience through a translator. I think this is a great book to help kids feel empathy and understand the variety of experiences that kids their own age may be going through.

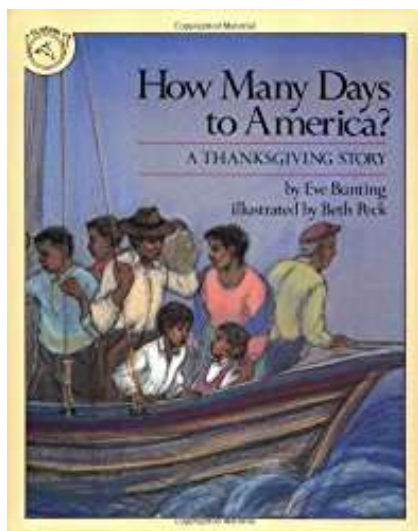


- ***Brothers in Hope.*** After 8 year old Garang comes home to find his village in Sudan destroyed by

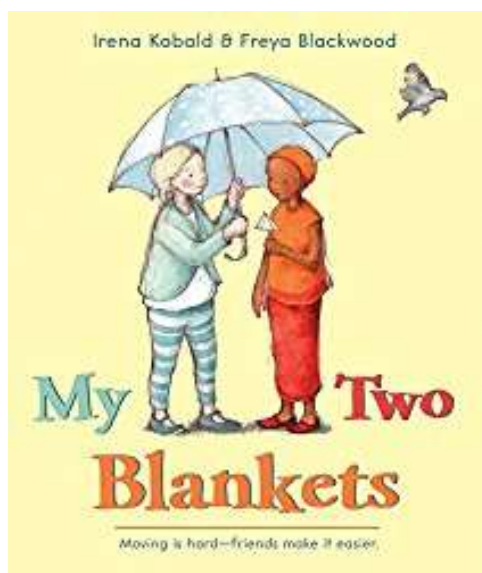
soldiers, he joins other orphan boys on a 1000 mile walk to safety. They travel through Ethiopia and Kenya, enduring hardship on the way. Not all of the boys survive the journey. Even the refugee camp where they stay has its own dangers. They boys are eventually accepted as refugees in the United States, but an afterword explains that refugee struggles do not end in their new home country.



- ***How Many Days to America?: A Thanksgiving Story.*** The police show up at a family's house, forcing them to flee their (unnamed) Caribbean country. They set off in a boat to reach America, and land on Thanksgiving Day. During the journey, they endure hunger, thirst and have their belongings stolen. While this has become a classic text for classroom discussion about American's history of immigration, its message will inspire conversations any time of the year, not just during the third week of November.



- **My Two Blankets** It follows a young African girl who travels as a war refugee to a new, strange country. She brings along a blanket that helps her feel safe. One day she encounters a girl in the park. The two become tentative friends even though they don't share a language. When the girl starts to teach her new words she starts to create a new blanket from the new words. Lovely.

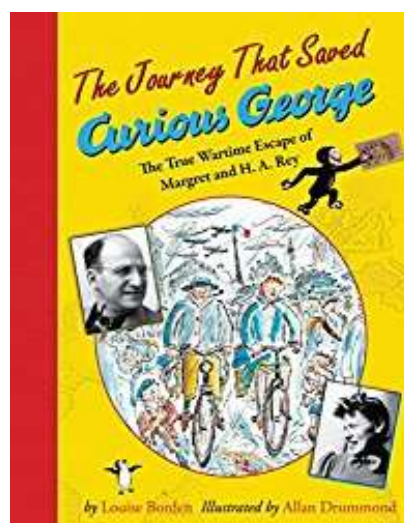


- **The Journey by Francesca Sanna.** The book is about a family that flees their home after it is destroyed and the father disappears. They travel in many different modes: car, boat, on

foot, etc. Yes, it is an intense book, but I think most children 5 and up can handle it, especially if they are aware of the refugee crisis. It is an excellent book for building compassion for others in quite different situations than our own. The ending is uncertain, but not without hope .



- **The Journey That Saved Curious George: The True Wartime Escape of Margret and H.A. Rey** by Louise Borden, illustrated by Allan Drummond. This book is an excellent way to help us understand how the experience of refugees in wartime has affected the two writers personally. After all, there would be no Curious George! This hefty picture book puts together primary sources: Hans's diary, documents, photographs to tell the story of how the famous duo fled wartime France on bicycle, in 1940.



Malala's Story

○ 1997 Growing up in Swat Valley

- Malala was born on 12 July 1997 in Mingora, a town in the Swat District of north-west Pakistan. Her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai named her after Malalai, a Pashtun heroine.
- Ziauddin ran a school in Swat adjacent to the family's home. He was known as an advocate for education in Pakistan, which has the second highest number of out of school children in the world, and became an outspoken opponent of Taliban efforts to restrict education and stop girls from going to school.



○ 2009 Becoming an Education Activist

- Malala shared her father's passion for learning and loved going to

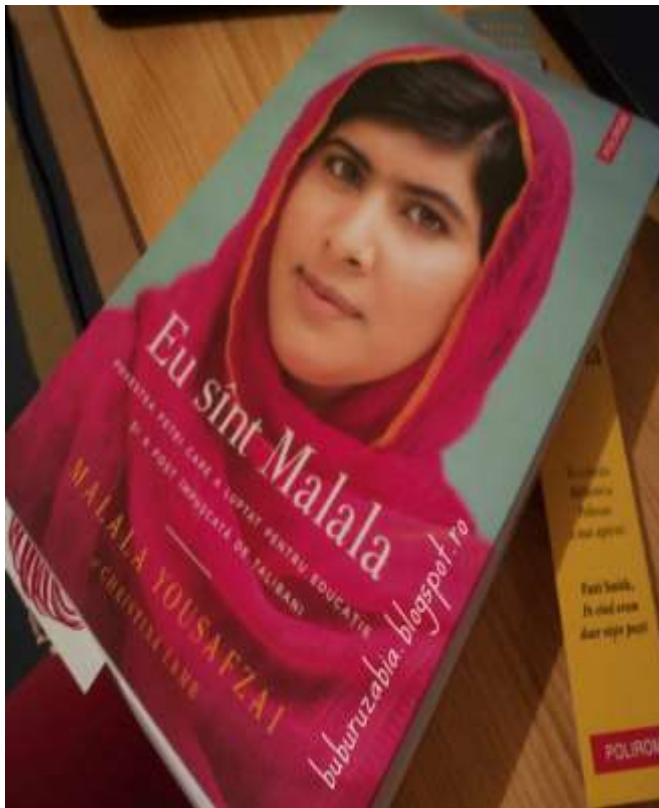
school. In 2009, as the Taliban's military hold on Swat intensified, Malala began writing a blog for the BBC Urdu service under a pseudonym, about fears that her school would be attacked and the increasing military activity in Swat. Television and music were banned, women were prevented from going shopping and then Ziauddin was told that his school had to close.

- Malala and her father received death threats but continued to speak out for the right to education. Around this time, Malala was featured in a documentary made for The New York Times and was revealed as the author of the BBC blog.



○ 2011 Awarded Pakistan's First National Youth Peace Prize

- In 2011, she received Pakistan's first National Youth Peace Prize and was nominated by Archbishop Desmond Tutu for the International Children's Peace Prize. In response to her rising popularity and national recognition, Taliban leaders voted to kill her.



○ 2012 Attacked for Going to School

- On 9 October 2012, as Malala and her friends were travelling home from school, a masked gunman entered their school bus and asked for Malala by name. She was shot with a single bullet which went through her head, neck and shoulder. Two of her friends were also injured in the attack.
- Malala survived the initial attack, but was in a critical condition. She was moved to Birmingham in the United Kingdom for treatment at a hospital that specialises in military injuries. She was not discharged until January, 2013 by which time she had been joined by her family in the UK.
- The Taliban's attempt to kill Malala received worldwide condemnation

and led to protests across Pakistan. In the weeks after the attack, over 2 million people signed a right to education petition, and the National Assembly swiftly ratified Pakistan's first Right To Free and Compulsory Education Bill.

○ 2013 Establishing the Malala Fund

- Malala became a global advocate for the millions of girls being denied a formal education because of social, economic, legal and political factors. In 2013, Malala and Ziauddin co-founded the Malala Fund to bring awareness to the social and economic impact of girls' education and to empower girls to raise their voices, to unlock their potential and to demand change.

○ 2014 Nobel Peace Prize

- Malala accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on 10 December, 2014 with Indian children's rights and education advocate Kailash Satyarthi. Malala contributed her entire prize money of more than \$500,000 to financing the creation of a secondary school for girls in Pakistan.

○ 2014 Nobel Peace Prize





SOURCES

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- <http://wowlit.org/links/booklists/refugee-experience-in-literature/>
- <http://www.warscapes.com/poetry/refugees-some-poems>
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Colegiul Energetic

Râmnicu Vâlcea