A Glass of Tea

(After Rumi)

Last year, I held a glass of tea to the light. This year,
I swirl like a tealeaf in the streets of Oxford.

Last year, I stared into navy blue sky. This year,
I am roaming under colourless clouds.

Last year, I watched the dazzling sun dance gracefully. This year, the faint sun moves futurelessly.
Migration drove me down this bumpy road where I fell and smelt the soil, where I arose and sensed the cloud.

Now I am a bird, flying in the breeze, lost over the alien earth.

Don’t stop and ask me questions. Look into my eyes and feel my heart.
It is bruised, aching and sore.
My eyes are veiled with onion skin.

I sit helplessly in an injured nest,
not knowing how to fix it.

And my heart, I’d say,
is displaced

struggling to find its place.

Shukria Rezaei (17)
shukria video
Afghanistan

I remember when they killed the innocents.
I remember the crying all around my village.
I remember that no one asked why,
why did you kill those people?
I remember the smell of blood on the ground
and how they tried to hide the blood with sand.
I remember my mum’s tears.

I remember how they stole away my friends.
I remember the fear that I was next.
I remember they talked about humanity.
But they were not human,
not even to a kid like me.

Waseem Sherzad
Camp

I smell socks and I feel disease in the air.
A smell like coins. A feeling like rock.
Never a chance to wash. Rain. I pray:
Let the rain land where it wants to.
Don’t let the rain fall on the blood.

Omar Ayub
I Shall Go Back

I shall put the suitcase full of gifts
I have promised, down on the floor.
The gifts they have been waiting for.
I shall see their smiles.

I shall hang the flowers
that my cousins, uncles, and aunties,
have put around my neck at the airport,
on the nail.

I shall sit down for dinner,
With family.
and breathe the steam of Quadid
that nourishes you just by its smell.
I shall sleep outside,
in the hot summer night
and feel the soft winds holding me.
and I shall never
wake up with the fear of war.

I shall hear my mum swooshing the carpet-sweeper
early in the morning.
I shall hear her say: Wake-up, guests
are coming. The house needs to be tidy.

I shall feel at home, once again.
I Shall Go Back

I shall go back to my country
to smell the earth,
to drink from the springs.
I shall go back to my country
to feel the warmth of my house,
to be with my cousin
to swim in the river
and sit under the trees.
I shall go back to my country
to sleep on the grassy bank
and watch the stars.
I shall go back to my country
to dream and to wake from my dream,
and to fear, and to find

I am still back in my country,
on the bank in the warm night with stars.

*Abudullah Almaree*