Rohingya Dreams
Poetry Anthology by Rohingya Refugee Poets

Edited by
DRC’s Bangladesh Team
with support from DRC in Denmark and DRC Asia
Rohingya Dreams
Poetry Anthology
by 20 Rohingya refugee poets

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Forty-one poems composed by twenty Rohingya refugee poets show what life is really like in Cox’s Bazar Refugee Camp in Bangladesh. These women and men are united in their passion to share their dreams for education and peace for Rohingya.
This book is dedicated to all Rohingya.

To those who have survived and strive to achieve their basic human rights.

And to those who continue to hope for a better future.

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“The world is not strong enough to save us
The world keeps blind eyes for us
The world is too deaf to hear our screams”

Rohingya refugee poet, Secret Superstar, BMH irre
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The European Union and its Member States are a leading global donor of humanitarian aid. Through the European Commission’s Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO), the EU helps over 120 million victims of conflict and disasters every year. With headquarters in Brussels and a global network of field offices, ECHO provides assistance to the most vulnerable people solely on the basis of humanitarian needs, without discrimination of race, ethnic group, religion, gender, age, nationality or political affiliation.

The Danish Refugee Council assists refugees and internally displaced persons across the globe: we provide emergency aid, fight for their rights, and strengthen their opportunity for a brighter future. We work in conflict-affected areas, along the displacement routes, and in the countries where refugees settle. In cooperation with local communities, we strive for responsible and sustainable solutions. We work toward successful integration and – whenever possible – for the fulfilment of the wish to return home.
Disclaimer

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Introduction

The Poets

We are Rohingya poets. We write for the Art Garden Rohingya, an online poetry source. We are genocide survivors, now living in refugee camps in Bangladesh. Each of us has our own story. Each of us has our own trauma. We express our feelings and our pain through our writing.

"Nothing except writing poems can reduce my stress and sadness" Ro Pacifist

The Art Garden

I am one of the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya survivors who escaped to Bangladesh, haunted by stories of gang-rape, mass killings and arson attacks that prompted the world’s fastest exodus since the 1994 Rwanda genocide.

In March 2019, I launched the Art Garden Rohingya, an online poetry webpage. Since then, we have published over 400 poems in both English and Burmese. Now, we have over 120 Rohingya poets, including women. Literature is integral to society. When I belong to a group of people whose very existence is denied and who have been persecuted, to whom our state government says, “You are illegal immigrants, you don’t exist here,” writing my story and creating my art has become an act of advanced revolution.

I believe that peace through the art of writing is powerful. Literature is a good tool to fight against ignorance and injustice in the world. I, therefore, want my Rohingya new generation to choose literature instead of extremism. Instead of guns and knives, I want to see pens and books in their hands. Instead of radicalism, I want to write for social cohesion, reconciliation, national harmony and peace.

Mayyu Ali and the Art Garden
Background

Here is an underground movement of the highest calibre—our Rohingya humanitarians working as volunteers in the refugee camps with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) by day—and writing by night. Their bold words speak for themselves. They have fire burning in their chest. They want to write poems that create change. They want you to hear their voices.

Their poetry shows remarkable resilience, strength of character and their passion to continue fighting for freedom, calling for long-term solutions, and not just for themselves, but for their entire community. These poems provide a window to their souls as they share their intimate feelings about their current bleak reality, devastating memories from the past, and above all, their dreams for the future.

Most of these poems were written in English, as well as in Burmese, which illustrates their authentic voice. Many learnt English since living in the refugee camps from their dedicated work as volunteers for the humanitarian community, but many were working as teachers, students, translators and community workers in Myanmar also.

They all have a deep-seated desire to fight for education for Rohingya in Myanmar, Bangladesh, and across South-East Asia, wanting to improve their writing to maximise the impact of their words.

This was only the surface of the underground community of poets. The ‘Art Garden’ is the leading Rohingya-led platform for Rohingya poets globally who have inspired more than 5,000 followers to engage in literature. The concept of fighting with pens rather than guns and choosing literature instead of extremism is powerful and pervasive. And needs to be supported.

We are blown away by all these poetic visionaries who say, “we love Bangladesh, and we are so grateful to the government, but we all just want to go home.”

Emily Reid, Advocacy Advisor
Sue Clarke, Bangladesh Country Director
Annetta Spanggaard, Director of Global Communications
Foreword

“Existence precedes essence” is an existential saying, holding good for people of all times, though it is now most appositely applied to the Rohingya people, endangered to the point of total extinction as a race. A million survivors fled Myanmar’s Rakhine State to Bangladesh across the Naf River, as the third wave of refugees in the past few decades, where a benevolent world have stretched their kind hands for their bare existence. However, the refugees cannot pass their lives in such uncertainty, depending on the generosity of others for an unlimited period. What they need is their citizenship in their homeland and the freedom to access the necessities of life inclusive of food, medicine, education, expression, creativity and, above all, safety of life.

This slim anthology of Rohingya poems largely upholds this message in some form or other. Poems in this volume, as well as other drafts published on their Rohingya poetry webpage, the Art Garden, edited by Mayyu Ali and his co-poets, reveal the stories of killing, of atrocities, as well as their intrepid determination to fight back.

Amazingly enough, their weapons are their words, their poetry with real images of their sufferings, as well as dreams of regaining a land of peaceful bliss in their motherland. They are peace-lovers and not fighters without gun-fire or rocket-launchers. Their creativity is their finest firearm, since it is the outcome of realistic imagination, unlike the fancy or roaring imagination of a romantic poet. Not surrealism, not ultra-dreaminess, rather the kind of stark realism they have experienced, gives them power to write poetry and wrestle their legitimate rights.

This is a revolt of creativity based on “creative imagination” the world has rarely experienced in the past. The nearest parallel is also to be sought in Bangladesh, in the year 1971, when the
freedom-loving people and fighters called Bangali people fell victim
to an unprecedented genocide by the invading Pakistani army.
However, the final victory is ours, the freedom fighters of
Bangladesh. Now we have won a sovereign nation-state for us
Days are not too far away when the creative and peace-loving
poetry-fighters belonging to Rohingya people shall unfailingly
translate their dreams into reality with the firearms of their hearts.
Let us reassert that the road to world peace lies in the creative
co-existence of all individuals as citizens of their homeland and the
world as a whole.

**Mohammad Nurul Huda,** Bangladeshi Poet
Poet of the National Identity of Bangladesh
Chairman, Bangladesh Writers’ Club
November 2019
Acknowledgements

From the Poets

We – the Rohingya Poets – are grateful for everyone who helped us to elevate our voices and share our dreams with the world.

We want to thank everyone at the Danish Refugee Council who supported, guided and inspired us to become strong and to share our words with the world, especially Emily Reid who trained us. Thank you to the DRC Site Management Team for helping us to help our community, particularly Kathryn Bryant.

Thank you very much to the European Commission – ECHO for helping us to live in the camps, and for publishing our words. You have made our dreams to publish come true.

We want to thank everyone at Writers Rising (a writing platform) who helped us with mentoring, training and editing, especially to Marion May Campbell for her generous technical guidance on poetry, as well as Sally-Anne Watson Kane for her dedicated copy-editing from On Time Typing – Peewee Press. Thank you for the marketing expertise from Shalini Kunahlan, and all the writing mentors, including Sidney Roberts, Tom Bamforth, Robert Wood, Marion May Campbell among others. Thank you to Pen International in Victoria, particularly Josephine Scicluna for supporting the process.

We particularly want to thank the Art Garden, especially Mayyu Ali and his colleagues for all their support with translation and publications online. And last but not least, tremendous thanks to Mohammad Nurul Huda, the infamous Bangladeshi poet, the Huda Center, and for Shrabon Printing Press, for making this publication happen.
From the Danish Refugee Council (DRC)

Not least we want to say a huge thanks to the poets for pouring their heart and soul into their poetry. Thank you to each and every person who volunteered their time and energy into supporting this project.

Thank you Thida Shania for your beautiful artwork. A huge thank you to Mayyu Ali and Swe Rohingya for your translations despite challenges without Burmese computers or keyboards in the camps.

Thank you, Emily Reid, for discovering the poets, collating and editing this collection of poetry, and sharing refugee voices directly from the camp. And thank you Kat Bryant for supporting the project and the entire Camp Management team! A huge thanks to Marion May Campbell as Poetry Advisor, and Sally-Anne Watson Kane from One Touch Typing as Editing Advisor.

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A huge thanks to Sue Clarke, for seeing the potential of this advocacy initiative and for supporting the entire process.
The Poets

Thida Shania

My Story: A Bird Inside Two Different Cages

I am Thida Shania. I was born to Rohingya parents in Myanmar’s northern Rakhine State where my people have been discriminated against for decades. My people have been surviving like prisoners without freedom of movement, and even barred from marriage and education. When I grew up, I discovered that there was no gender equality within the Rohingya community. Women and girls are seen less than men. Female babies are not welcomed nor celebrated at birth.

I was a bird inside two different cages. One is the circle of Myanmar’s government persecution for being a Rohingya citizen. Another is for being a girl in the patriarchal Rohingya community. The world seemed so dark that I couldn’t see any light in my life. However, I kept my eyes open to dream. My dream is to acquire an education at school and to graduate.

When I was 14, my parents and I came to Bangladesh for my mum’s treatment but we couldn’t go back home because of security. Thus, we decided to stay in Bangladesh. I had always wanted freedom in my country, but never wanted to leave my motherland. It was quite difficult for us in Bangladesh to adjust to everything: the new environment, new people, new culture, and new tongue.

In Bangladesh, I could smell the fragrance of freedom. Unlike in Myanmar, there is no discrimination against people. I wanted to resume my schooling. I struggled in many ways and finally enrolled...
in a Bangladeshi school. Things were not that easy in class for me being a Rohingya. Sometimes, my classmates laughed at me when I could not pronounce Bengali words well. But I never gave up. My mum always encouraged me. I expected so much from my life, my dream became my passion.

Then I felt alive. I started smiling. I started seeing the light inside myself. But I was unaware that I would have to pay for smiling. I still never thought of giving up. After I crossed the border, I thought I had slowly been released from those two cages. But I was wrong. I had to hide my real Rohingya identity to join the school here in Bangladesh.

Now, I have become a prisoner of my own guilt. However, unlike most girls, I am mentally relaxed. Now, I am dreaming day and night with my eyes open. My dream is to empower Rohingya girls and women and to seek opportunities of education for a new generation. I have a message for all Rohingya girls and women: “Dream big. Keep dreaming. Even a prisoner has the right to dream. Be enough strong within yourselves and fight against genocide.”
A Woman

I am the fountation of my home
The whole family held me by my legs
Pain in itself and going on
I could never feel my own

I am the gardener of my offspring
I nurture each flower
Sometimes the water gets salty from my sweat
I could never feel my own

I am the lamp of my home
I spread light everywhere
I burn in myself and my arm in darkness
I could never feel my own

I am a dancing doll of my home
My little feet entertain all
Sometimes my home’s floor flares redly,
I could never feel my own
Just Once

Don’t answer on behalf of me a thousand times
Grant me self-confidence just once

Don’t chide me wrong and right a thousand times
Notify me its dissimilarity just once

Don’t sustain my burden all the time
Let me depend on myself just once

Don’t protect me a thousand times
Teach me self-defence just once

Don’t assume me weak seeing my soft skin a thousand times
Realize my strength
I conceived you once.

In this poem, ‘Me’ refers to a woman. The poetess depicts the different opinions of women. It reflects a quest to encourage women’s self-confidence and self-defence.
Azad Mohammed

I'm 23 years old and work for Rohingya culture at the Cultural Memory Center. I was born in the Buthidaung Township, in Rakhine State, Myanmar, where I became a poet and photographer. I fled with other Rohingyas after many waves of violence from the Myanmar military in August 2017. It was the fastest refugee outflow in the world. I am now living as a refugee. Rohingya refugees are diverse. We have our own stories to tell. As a poet and photographer, I want to show what it is like for Rohingya refugees on a daily basis in the camps in Cox's Bazaar.

Due to the Myanmar military, I became a forcibly displaced person, despite living on the earth like all other people. After becoming a refugee in the world's largest refugee camp, with more than one million Rohingyas, I learnt all about human rights and saw all the human rights violations against our people. I decided that it was time to tell our experiences, situations and stories to the international community by writing poetry and taking photos. I have been writing poetry since 21 March 2018, which was International Poetry Day, and have been taking photos since November 2017.

Life in the refugee camps is very difficult. Many Rohingyas still lack adequate access to food, shelter, health care, education, and the right to earn a livelihood. I finished my matriculation exam in 2014 but then I was blocked by the Myanmar government from attending university. I want to advocate for my Rohingya community and want to tell their stories by writing poems.
A Poem to Bangladesh

I.

Our homes, placid tapestries woven
In streams and dales, were burnt down
With the fire from rocket launchers.
A fabric swallowed in the blaze of artillery,
A genocide unravelling behind us as we fled,
The screams of women coiled around the mountains.

Orphans of a nation crossing the border,
Bangladesh took us in, saved us from the
Fires of an abusive father nation.
We cannot forget their kindness
But our lives now are fading and useless.
As life churns out new generations,
Each lost further in exile.
We hope we will not be forgotten
Before we too are gone.

II.

Time now is tinted with pain.
We tell the world each day
And wonder how many times
We have to repeat ourselves
Until our words are given meaning.
How many more days will we have
To stay, separated from the lives
We should be living. Lost time,
A blood-soaked clock wrapped
Inside a faded UNHCR tarpaulin.
Yaa Rabb! Yaa Allah!
Even within the walls of the refugee camp,
They've cut us off from one another.
The soldiers stole our telephones
And the government shut down the
Cellular towers. So we could languish
Even more isolated than we've been.
We can see our old homes across the river
But cannot contact our family
Members who were left behind.
It was a small shred of hope we had left
And now it fades too.
To the people of the world:
What was our fault that causes us to suffer so?
How can you watch us and never move?
Rohingya Dreams

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Bloodbath

Woke up at predawn
Thundering sounds of gunfire
Fearing for our lives
Gathering kids and relatives

I asked people when the day broke,
‘Bang! Bang!’ they responded while escaping
Soon, the soldiers patrolled around
We all hid inside the houses

At noon,
We left the village.
One day later,
The sky was smoky.
The smoke burned our ancestral documents
That’s how it smashed our future

Infants are hungry for breast milk
Crossing death and dread
Without ignoring them
Their mums escaping for their lives

Translated by
Muyyu Ali
Mayyu Ali

On a green piece of land sandwiched between the MayuMountains and impassable tropical rivers in Myanmar’s west Rakhine, I was born in 1991. Even before I knew the word nationality, my birth certificate was confiscated during a paramilitary operation called ‘the Nasaka’ against my Rohingya people in Myanmar. This was when my life first became interwoven with the genocide against Rohingya, my people. As I grew older, I encountered a world where every human right was denied to us. I learnt how we were marginalised and discriminated against religiously, socially and politically, just for being who we are.

Despite this, I managed to go to school in a rural area in Maungdaw Township. In 2008, I passed my matriculation, the exams to enter university. In 2010, Aung Naing, my Buddhist friend, and I submitted our applications to become school teachers. He was selected. I was rejected. Because he was born to Buddhist parents and I was born to Rohingya. In my country, this distinction matters.

In June of 2012, the anti-Muslim riots spread across Rakhine State. Hundreds of Rohingya students were banned from attending Sittwe University. At 21, I was one of them and was desperate and full of rage. Our designated lives have changed from restriction to extermination. We live in fear. We face death. We find ourselves alone. In the violence that began on 25 August 2017, the Myanmar security forces burnt down my home. I became homeless in my motherland. My parents and I started the voyage through the hills and the iron fences at the border to flee. After three days and two nights, we reached Bangladesh after crossing the Naf River in a small rowing moon-boat.

I am one of the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya survivors who escaped to Bangladesh, haunted by stories of gang-rape, mass killings and arson attacks that prompted the world’s fastest exodus since the 1994 Rwanda genocide.
Torture

Genocide’s blade doesn’t discriminate by age
He who is young and strong
Male, and educated
He is abducted, tortured and sent to the grave

My father and I were made to strip first
Our hands were tied, we were hung up
“Say as I say,” the officer threatened
Our tongues didn’t want to lie

They wanted us to confess, “We’re terrorists”
They plucked each hair of my father’s beard
They set fire to my phallus with a lighter
The eyes of my father were shutting down

The prison is built on my father’s land
The prison that he built during forced labour
Where he was tortured to death inside
And I was imprisoned for years

This poem is based on an account of a Rohingya son who was imprisoned for years in Myanmar’s Buthidaung Prison. He witnessed how his father Karim Ullah was tortured to death by Myanmar police in Maungdaw Police custody in October 2016.
The Naf River (Naf Dajja)

The river separates Arakan and Bengal
The river that Rohingya startle to hear
The crossing is to escape or to die
Where many are swallowed alive

The East becomes a roaring inferno
The West is the world’s largest makeshift camp
Some leave their limbs behind, bodies are carried
Others cross with bullets embedded

A bullet in the chest bigger than a heart
A body falls into the water
Another, dances on the riverbank
The world just watches on
The Doctors in Hell

We are a Muslim people, a minority
Once boasting of our tradition and history
But the structure of our house
Where we have resided for generations
Groans beneath the weight of race and religion
And the chauvinism of our Junta’s oppression

It was 1978 in Myanmar
When the state-sponsored virus infected us
Our symptoms were undeniable
Their cause identifiable
But doctors ignored our suffering
The infection fared with time

In 1991’s Myanmar
The disease ravaged our people
And one quarter of a million forced to leave
Physicians at last turned their heads
But dismissed, upon examination
Our ongoing extermination
The doctors thought of virus’s otherness
But not the dying patients’ goodness

Our disease progressed to a second stage
In 2012 a heart-stopping crisis
At last a diagnosis was pronounced:
“Systematic killing and racial hatred”
The doctors saw us in our cage
But chose again to disengage
Neither the defence to virus yet
Nor the arrangement of ICU for us
The more the time lagged on
The more the virus spread
From citizenship denied
To killings they tried to hide
Again and again the cycle worsened
While doctors turned their eyes blind
From crimes against humanity
We moved to ethnic cleansing
We are a “text-book example”
Yet the text prescribes no treatment

August 25 delivered us to the final stage
The virus consumes our bodies
And invades out our souls
From hidden killings to genocide
We have progressed without treatment
While doctors avert their gaze

The metaphors in this poem portray the inaction of global leaders in relation to Myanmar’s genocidal operations against Rohingya people. The poet, as a Rohingya, feels that the atrocities on Rohingya have been happening in open eyes of the world without required intervention.
Pacifist Farooq

I am Pacifist Farooq, a poet, educator, peace-builder and footballer. My poems are featured in various anthologies including I AM A ROHINGYA and Poetry Bus. I was born in the year 2000 in Buthidaung, northern Rakhine State, Myanmar. I completed my matriculation examination with two distinctions in 2016. But then I was prevented from pursuing further education like so many Rohingya. In August 2018, I narrowly escaped the genocidal operations of Tarmadaw and now live as a refugee in Cox’s Bazar Refugee Camp.

I started to write poems in late 2016, after I passed my matriculation examination. By that time all the Buddhist and other students, who practiced a different religion, were joining their respective universities, even though their marks were much lower than mine. But I could not, simply because I’m a Rohingya. I was hoping to receive higher education, but instead I started to write poems to survive. My first poem was titled “Dream of University”.

I don’t know any poetry rules or the meaning of poetry that well. But being a victim of racism and discrimination, every word that comes to me is poetic. And the sufferings and hardship force me to compose poems. I didn’t want to be a poet. My dream was to be a professional footballer. But when I grew up, I realised my world is not like I thought. Being Rohingya is considered a crime. The reason why I am writing poetry is to highlight our sufferings before the world.
Burmese Master, Rohingya Cat

A cat is eating
Dried fish,
In a house's storage.

The bad master sees,
He is furious,
Swells like an ogre,
Quickly reaches the cat,
Holding it by the neck and throwing it violently.

Fortunately, the cat
Falls on the roof of a heap of dried beef
Of Eid al-Adha.
A Dreadful Knife

My father was shot in his leg.
When he asked for a glass of water,
He was killed with two more bullets.

My two brothers were thrown into the fire.
My mother was gang-raped.

I'm infected by the cancer of losing my family.
The pains roves around my chest.
What is it worth to be alive in this world?

A dreadful knife
Cut the young from the old
And left its mark. August 25.

Dear friends,
Try to lift me up from this bed of pain
Carry me to the floor of peace

This poem is based on an account of Zahidul, a genocide survivor from Tulatuli.
Massacre in Maung Kyi Taung

In bright daylight, it rained bullets  
All over the villages, we were forced to die  
And some found with horrific wounds  
At the hospital, even first aid was a far cry

We ran and hid to escape, soldiers said,  
“Leave, you don’t belong to Burma.”  
Our houses were burnt down and we ran,  
Lost legs and hands in launcher-bombs

We crossed over the stream and river  
Then ranges of hills and mountains  
To save our sisters and brothers  
From being raped and murdered

At that time, we swam amidst our sweat  
We ate shrubs and tree leaves for bread  
No angel to save our lives  
No angel to listen to our cries

At last, our screams reached the sky  
From throats which got dried  
And even the birds couldn’t fly  
They wondered “Is this hell?”

They witnessed:  
“Arakan, isolated and prison cell.  
Now smoky in flames and fumes  
The corpses turn to the living hell”

Poet’s Note: Maung Kyi Taung (Sfarrang) is in Buthidaung. During the violence on 25 August 2017, Burmese soldiers set fire to the village and shot at villagers. Dozens were shot dead and the rest were forced to leave the land. The poet depicts the account of a survivor.
Shahida Win @ WinWinMaw

My name is Shahida and I am from Irrawaddy district. My mother (a Myanmar Muslim) married my father who was Rohingya. After they had 10 children, he was deported to Rakhine State. The sweetest and happiness time in my life was as a student. My honourable teachers were really my benefactors.

My poems are the real voice of Rohingya women and girls that need to be heard. In my first poem, I tried to convince my people that girls too deserve equality in the society. They should have equal rights to be educated; they should be treated with respect, and at least treated as fellow human beings.

Currently, I write Burmese poems about the feelings and suffering of Rohingya women. In our society, females are discriminated against, they have to face domestic violence, they need a dowry to get married, and they don’t have equal chances to learn education like boys. Most of the Rohingya people don’t know about the world as they are kept in concentration camps, in open-air prisons. And they don’t have the right to be educated. Working at NGOs, I found that many women and girls are discriminated against and are ill-treated. They always share their feelings with me because I am one of them.

I had a life dream to be a doctor, but unfortunately I could not fulfil this. Now I will try to be a good poetess. I will not give up. I want to document my story to encourage other girls not to give up in their lives too. Every night, I teach some Rohingya women at my shelter. I want to help them at the very least to know how to write and read. My passion is reading books and listening to music.

In our community, if a female works at NGOs or outdoors, she has to face many challenges. It is not accepted and she will be criticized heavily. They think women should be only housewives. It is one of the biggest cultural barriers as a Rohingya. As we Rohingya have no freedom of movement, most of us don’t have knowledge about the
rest of the world. Most people follow what they are told by the elders.

In Myanmar I worked as a translator for MSF, and now in the refugee camp, I have worked as a humanitarian volunteer at several humanitarian organisations including MSF. I am also working at the Cultural Memory Centre and am very happy to write about our Rohingya traditions, culture and history.

I don't face much criticism here working with NGOs like before in Myanmar where they are suspiciously watched by the government, and with so many travel restrictions. Now, our people's mind-sets are changing a little after fleeing here. They found other females from Bangladesh who are working at NGOs, who are allowed to work by their community. Yet by seeing this, many Rohingya now accept that women should also work with veils. I must admit that I was happier there.

Being a refugee is like being subhuman or an outcast of the global community. We are not treated like human beings with dignity. We are discriminated against, restricted and unwanted anywhere in the world. I sometimes feel down and with that I were not born as Rohingya. We have no future. Many people still don’t know that Rohingya are poor because we don’t have equal rights to run a business and no freedom of movement. If someone is poor, how could he afford to pay for their children’s education?

Our future is bleak in this overcrowded refugee camp. Through my poetry, I want to let know the world, especially Burmese, about the suffering, and the situation of Rohingya. I want peace, equal rights, gender equality and freedom. I want Rohingya girls to be educated. I want Rohingya women to be treated with respect. They too deserve equality and they should not face gender-based violence, discrimination, ill treatment and domestic violence anymore. If Rohingya girls have opportunities to be educated like others, they can play a vital role to make a change in our community.
I Am Beautiful with Thanaka

Circular patches on cheeks with Thanaka
Those who see the face
Embrace the spreading fragrant scent
Distinctive beauty of a Rohingya Juliette
Modeling on the global stage
How ideally charming, ever priceless
On velvet and tender cheeks
While applied, traditional Thanaka
Gives a sense of culture and maintains Rohingya manner
Just fascinating, the view is eternal

It protects from sunburn
And dries up in the wind
Such a cooling sensation
To touch the paste of Thanaka
Softens the palms of both hands
Blending with the water of love
Grinding it on stone slab
And gently on velvet cheeks

Translated by Mayyu Ali
Traditional Henna

Henna handwork at Rohingya wedding
So boastful tradition and heritage
Outstanding and quite graceful
Artwork that shines up
Fiancée whose heart beats restlessly
To apply henna before the wedding
The bridegroom who awaits to see

On velvet and smooth palms
Redly and redly circular patches
Henna art like the heart
At the full-moon night
Singing traditional song for fiancée
Bridesmaids do disco dance
The moment of fun and joy
During the predawn,
Grinding leaves of the henna
Artworks of henna in forms and framings
Apply and decorate the fiancée
Full happiness of traditional gathering
Tradition of Rohingya fiancée and history of henna
Ever incomparable tradition we maintain!
Refugee Life

On the bleak hills with no shades
Huts of refugees are between winds and rains
Sometimes the sun’s heat is extreme
Sometimes it causes floods with heavy rains
Shivering with icy coldness that freezes blood in the veins
Harrowingly experiencing all kinds of seasonal rough paint

All age groups, young, old, male and female
Keeping aside our shame,
We have to go to the food distribution centre in a rush
And there, we have to jostle to stand in a queue as beggars
We have to beg rations to fill a few inches of this stomach.

Fellow human beings inhumanely killed us
Forcibly drove us out of our mother land
So we have to survive by seeking refuge into the other’s land

We have to pass our days
By taking asylum in the confined camps
On the back of other’s land like a burden
As an outcast and that is our refugee life.

Being Rohingya is a misfortune or a fault?
Our future seems to be bleak
While our way back home is uncertain
We no longer want to carry and maintain
The title of the most persecuted community
We really want to live
With dignity
And with social values
Like other fellow human beings.

Translated by Swe Rohingya
I'm Ma May Chit and I'm about 19 years old. I used to live in a small township. It's called Buthidaung, which is situated in the northern Rakhine State of Myanmar. It's a great place to live and it suited me. Now I'm living in Bangladesh, in the refugee camp.

First of all, I would like to share something in this story about me. I studied until Class 10 in my country, Myanmar. And then, I couldn't continue my studies because the government didn't allow the Rohingya community to access higher education. Also, the community and I always had to face a plethora of discrimination from the government, as the world knows.

Actually, I always used to dream of being a good teacher when I was at school, but my destiny couldn't access that opportunity. Secondly, my dreams and I had to flee to the refugee camp from my motherland, but my mind hasn't changed. I'm an ambitious person and I have hobbies such as writing poems, reading books and guitar-playing. In refugee life, I didn't have anything to do except waste time. So, I started to write poems to share my feelings with the world about the current situation of my community and...
the beauty of nature. Writing poems makes me not only skilful in English but also it makes me powerful and strong to change my world.

I'm not the only one facing challenges; there are so many women who are facing challenges in the refugee camp: such as having to survive within a big family or to endure under-age marriage. The young women have no rights and cannot go against their parents' wishes. Neither can they study, nor do they have a safe house to stay in. What should they do?

Please STOP them imposing early marriage on us. PLEASE BESTOW upon us the rights to do something useful with our lives. Thirdly, my main purpose in writing poems is that I want to be a good poet to record our memories about how we are surviving here. I want to let the future generations of the world know. I'm looking for an option about how I should take care of educating my community, and I want to empower women where the majority are illiterate or uneducated.
The Ocean in My Dream

It's a place where there is a dreamland,
But, none of us can try to stay
Because it's much too deep.

It's a place where there are diamond waves
And romantic sounds,
Which make our minds insane,
That's the weather of sorrow and
The storm with merciless hearts.

It's a beautiful moment where there is love
With the sweetest cool,
It's the hottest fire
Burnt lives and souls.

It's a calamitous song where she is singing
With her blazing eyes,
It's collapsing the entire world
And the roses of a butterfly.

Filled with tears,
Mixed with the blood of the victims,
Concentrated sulphuric acid
Falling from the steep slope in cascades.

I'm asking in the name of that ocean,
It's the Arakan of my nation,
25th August marks the creative nature
Of my nation.

The roses were my hopes,
I'm a servant of my luck,
It makes me a goal-less butterfly
Around the globe.
Why I’m Here

When I was little,
I was gleeful and carefree,
I used to play anything without fear,
I used to study any subjects peacefully,
But, my destiny made me flee to a refugee camp.
Now I have become cheerless and anxious,
The situation I’m surviving is with many challenges,
I wonder WHY I’M HERE
Like in a prison.

Here we have no education except play school,
Here we have no good medicine for any diseases except
Paracetamol,
Here we have nothing to relax our mind and body,
Except ascending and descending the hilly mountains,
Here we have no breathing-space to respire,
Just bad smells,
I ask myself WHY I’M HERE over the hills.

Everywhere, I have to stand in lines and wait for a long time,
When I go to combine showering and toilet,
People knock on the door if I’m too long,
I have to come out without finishing my shower,
When I go to take water from the tube-well or water-tank,
I have to listen to and abide some unkind abuse
From lots of people, if I try to get there earlier,
I feel WHY I’M HERE in unseen violence.

Rohingya Dreams | 42
I’m sleeping on the diamond bedstead in a golden-house,
It’s like in my own house of my motherland
But, it’s a sweet-dream, when I open my eyes,
I’m on a mat in the heat, under a tent,
It’s covered by tarpaulins and bamboo,
It was provided by donors and repaired by NGOs
Each year it gets damaged,
I wonder WHY I’M HERE like in a small hell.

Sometimes, I smile outside by keeping tension on my inside,
When my motherland makes me remember to compare here and there,
I can’t control myself to conceal my depression,
Sometimes, I cry and share my feelings to others,
Sometimes, my smile hides my bloody tears
And, my laugh hides my screams,
I ask myself WHY I’M HERE in sadness and pretence.

Being a refugee, I can’t do anything freely,
My imagination and hobbies are always infinite,
But, not my opportunities and my destinations, my beliefs,
They are my prosperity,
I can’t forfeit them, they’re my opportunity,
I ask WHY I’M HERE in a refugee life.
Ro Yassin Abdumonab

My journey to Bangladesh was so horrible — an unforgettable nightmare. It took me and my family many days to arrive. I managed to dwell here without fear of bullets or brutal faces, peacefully. At least I can sleep well and breathe the open air, even though our plight here is miserable.

My name is Ro Yassin Abdumonab. I am 26 and am currently staying at the refugee camp in Bangladesh. My luck was not with me when I hoped to graduate. Because of the hatred and racism targeting the Rohingya minority in my country, I was not given any chance to pursue a proper education. After the biggest and worst conflict ever, I had to leave my homeland and am now surviving in the camp. Now I work as a freelancer, but I used to work as a school teacher in my village where I taught English, Physics and Chemistry, but I always wanted to be a poet and philanthropist.

I wrote many different anthologies in the past but never shared them with anyone because of security reasons, and because I was afraid for my safety. I suffered many difficulties living in my country,
but I couldn’t speak up there. I would have been killed if I had raised my voice for my people.

When I got the opportunity to meet different people, such as humanitarian workers, journalists, researchers and human rights groups, I thought it would be one of the best chances for me to share my suffering and raise my voice for my community to the world through poetry. I want to share what we have experienced—about being persecuted and oppressed in my country. Now I have such strong confidence that my voice will finally be heard. Now the world will get to know who we are and what has been done to us.

Since living here, I started to write poetry again about different issues such as peace, war, humanity, life in Myanmar, discrimination and the struggle of life’s journeys. Nowadays, I am known to all as a poet and philanthropist—but this time without fear.
Saving a Life

It's me who didn't want to leave home
Wandering around like a bird watching its prey
All they wanted was to kill me
To eradicate me from this world
But the Almighty wishes to keep me alive

It's me running from village to village
Just to escape from burning and killing
Seeking refuge in paddy fields and forests
Starving for a couple of days in hiding
Eating raw leaves of unwanted weeds

It's me at the sharp edge of the machete
The bleeding field was full of wounded souls
Crawling among corpses to the safe zone
Heartbeat rate was abnormal, just about to die
Blood in the artery was circulating faster

It's me who chased thousands of faces to flee
The long walk I travelled for days was wayward
The river I crossed was an ocean for me
I was about to drown in the middle

It's me who is surviving in the tarpaulin shelter
Forced to walk on foot to get here
Unable to forget the violence there
And difficult to cope with the heat
I still hope for a better future
The Ever-Loud Cry

The loud scream of pain was heard by all at night
An innocent was oppressed and interrogated in custody
Again, the loud cry was repeated many times
But nobody was there to hear
Then, I saw that it was better to keep silent

It was the innocent, calling out for aid
Shouting on that dark frightened night
Raising my voice to clear the messy path
But none dared to go through it
Then, I thought it was my last day on earth

Again, I made up mind to bear all brutalities
But I couldn’t, as it was too much
Shedding my tears down my little face
Drowning in a sea of blood the whole moment
Then, I cried many times to get me out from the mess

And I was meant to oblige, which I never did
When my soul was about to say goodbye to the world
They searched everywhere and found me close to death
Set me free as they bargained in exchange
Then, I got home but lost hope to live there
Ro Pacifist@Abdurahman

My heart seeks to flutter, but shatters into pieces when your literacy frequently blames me for my illiteracy. The international community tries to quench our hunger with rice and our thirst with water. But in the camp settlements, I am hardly surviving without knowing how to live life. WFP provides us with food; WHO cares about our health; IOM gives us shelter and UNHCR registers us as refugees. But who offers us education? While some developed countries facilitate higher education, others deny it.

I'm Ro Pacifist, a 23-year-old student from Myanmar. I am very well-known as a Rohingya, one of the most persecuted, oppressed and distressed people in the world—but instead I want to be one of the most educated people who create peace for the entire world.

Rohingya Dreams | 48
I have been a prisoner for decades. Where would I learn? Who would teach me in jail? And, how could I learn the aim of life as a lifetime prisoner? The fact of the matter is that I’m not allowed to do anything as a refugee. Despite being a perfect organism, I’m merely a disabled person. The global people ranked us as the least educated community in the world, but I’m frustrated – it’s not our fault for being uneducated. It’s undoubtedly the fault of the entire world because it is too weak to offer me any opportunities to learn, even in my motherland where I was given birth. I am more eager for education than you. I graduated with top marks like you. The discrimination is that you can step up to higher education, but I can’t even imagine doing higher study because I have been trapped in an uncovered jail.

No one feels me! Everyone feels themselves. Finally, I do feel, “No one for anyone”. Sometimes, people from other countries call us “stateless”. At this, my heart and brain can’t resist sobbing and my eyes become an ocean of tears because I failed to abide in my mind and heart. I have my own state, where my forefathers have been generating generations from decade to decade. Are we here just to be tormented, massacred, slaughtered and raped? Aren’t we human beings created by the same Almighty God? Don’t we have the nerves to develop the world? Don’t we belong to anything, anyway, anywhere? Please try to feel me. I’m hardly alive, just surviving and starving. Although I can’t enjoy my life, please let me live life at least. Let me see what you see. Let me feel what I want to feel. And, let me be a person like you shining in the entire world. I have my dreams and hopes. I believe that I have the ability to do everything.
My Building

Who is lucky enough to be master of such a building?
On a big tree-free mountain
Under the red, hot sun
Decorated with plastic fences
Bambooroves
And tarpaulin covers.
It's distributed by IOM
Supported by the DRC
And, made in Camp8E
All aids, assistances are free
Just out of humanity.

Once a cyclone started
My building danced happily with the wind
When the cyclone was over
I was in there
But I knew not where.
A cloudy mountain in the sky
All muddy water around
Streaks of moist sand gathered
I was alone on top of the hill
And, couldn't help shouting and shouting.
But there....
None except DRC to hear me
Who provided me with First Aid
And supported with Shelter Kits, too
Indeed...
My building is just like a sundial
That's remade over and over
I'm spending my life, just like a bird
With lots of fears in a nest
On the tip of a mango, in the windy rain.
In the rainy season,
I don't go to bed early as you do
With no sleep, just like a busy ant
Tiredness makes me sleepy
But fear keeps me awake
Finally...
I do daily work all day
And, a night stroller too, all night
Because my building's at the mouth
Of landslides and floods
A shark.

This poem is a voice for the victims living in Camp8E.
That Night

On the night of 25 August
When I was crossing the Naf,
On a small fishing boat
To survive in Bangladesh
It's almost midnight
A big terror, the bottom broke
The engine turned off
I was out of hope to escape
Nothing in my sight, dark all around
I screamed for help
But none to hear me
My tear changed into red
And, my eyes, bloodshot
I was in fear of death

I wanted to hear someone in the world
But no sound, except the horrors
Of the waves dancing with the boat.
Still, I was on it, taking me somewhere
But I knew not where
I obliged the helpless breeze
To spread my voice to the world
But she was too weak to carry it

For hours, I tried to jump to escape
Finding no way, exhausted
I was half-dead
My lips were pleading to the Almighty
The boat almost drowned
I was floating on for hours
But I was still in perseverance.
It's almost dawn – daylight
Suddenly, the boat reached the shore
I was out of thought, jumped at once
Swimming vigorously,
Caught the land
And escaped that night
At last on the other side.
Kabir bin Kasim

I had a big dream to attend a higher degree college and university. But it melted like a lighted candle due to the disallowance of my government. I am the one whose village was completely burnt down by the military and whose villagers were brutally slaughtered and thrown onto bonfires.

I am the one whose villagers were gathered in a place where they then picked up the beautiful girls and women — whoever the military liked. I could have run away, out of their sight when the military and Rakhine extremists encircled my village, but unfortunately some of my relatives, including my cousin (the son of my real uncle), who were very kind to me, were arrested for no reason and sentenced to sixteen to twenty years. And eventually, they banished us from our ancestral land to Bangladesh. And finally, people around the world started calling us ‘refugees’ but the Bangladeshi government have registered us as “Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals/persons”.

53 | Rohingya Dreams
Where should we go to get a free life, like all the people around the world? I am also included in the human race. But the government under whom I am dwelling is treating me not as human: they don't even let me inhale the air like other people around the world breathe. My government always treats me like their oppressor, but in reality, I am not able to look at them eye to eye. I am the one who is always targeted for no reason. Though I am a refugee here in Bangladesh, I can move freely in camps out of my restricted areas without fear, but in my native land, I could not move from here to there without endorsements (approval letters). Although I had taken the endorsements for the trip, they arrested me and fined me. Some were beaten; others were released after being fined. Women were checked in a separate room by the inquisitor, while others were laughing. I didn't know the reason why I wasn't allowed a higher education, though I was fully qualified for it. But in the present moment, they are allowing some of our brothers and sisters to access higher education, but it seems that they are lying to the world. Every authority has refused to offer a better solution for my life. My life has neither security nor guarantee. None of the students are spared insults. Don't I deserve peace? Can't a hungry person get food from all over the world?

I'm a student, a Rohingya by race who was born on 17 December 1995. I'm the eldest one among my brothers and sisters. I had passed the matriculation exam in 2014. I am hungry for my native land, for rights and peace. My blood and your blood is the same: under the skin we all are the same.
Just a Wick

Devouring my ancestors through the soil
Where they lived for hundreds of years.
Today, I can’t be inherited

Deriving from my forefathers
Who were serially born in this land
Today, I can’t be owned

Generated from progenitors
Who fought for freedom of land
Today, I can’t be tried.

Being a descendant of my grandfather
Who led for a better nation
Today, I can’t be elated

Being born from a father
Who first found persecution
Today, I can’t be well grown

I’m discriminated against systematically
Trying to hide my rudiments
I’m oppressed racially
Restrictions are countless
I’m trapped in an open-air prison

Today, I’m paralyzed
I’m devastated if I die or continue
Inside the genocidal circle,
I collide everywhere
I’m just like a candle that is about to die
Just suffering by melting
Now it has meted completely
Just glimmering from the candlewick.
I’m just a wick.

55 | Rohingya Dreams
Checkpost

The nearer I came to a checkpoint,
The more I feared, not because of the few documents in my hands
But because the look on my face was not pitiful for them
Thousands of fears surrounded me to pass it once
My heart pleaded to save my dignity
Putting all the trust in the Maker.

When I went to school, I was restricted
I had to dismount to cross the checkpoint
Pushing my bicycle along
While my Buddhist friend was paddling.
Being late for school and private tuition
Missing lessons in class for being late.

In passing townships, lots of documents,
Carrying recommendations and approvals
In baggage more than clothes and dry rations
But these weren't enough in the inquisitor's sight
I had to alight from the vehicle I rode in
Forced to stand in a long queue
Being robbed of valuable things like by a pickpocket
I was beaten for not paying a fine.

Arriving in time at the hospital delivery ward wasn't easy
Checking in late by parking her reserved car
Assailed as a documents holder, getting mugged for no reason
What torture a pregnant woman faced at the checkpoint
Instead of giving birth, she died
With the embryo inside her womb on the way.

For me, as I'm Rohingya, an immigrant
The checkpoints are like resurrection
So many ordeals were heaped upon me
Just to pass through a village, to cross a town quarter
At the end, I came to realise that I'm a frog in a well.

Rohingya Dreams | 56
I became a refugee at a young age. I fled from my native country to another land due to violence and discrimination. I write and compose poems because in my life I felt and feel many, many difficulties like boredom and tension. In my refugee life, when I see my community and what they are facing, how they are feeling in the camps, I become so upset. So, I would like to spread our feelings and make sure the world knows about us. I would like to be part of an effort to promote unity and peace across the world. People often see the worst in each other and changing this outlook might help resolve conflicts.

I'm a Rohingya youth. My name is E.R. Jani Alom (my Burmese name is Khin Maung Soe). I am a devoted child of my parents who are now in spirit. The best event in my life was when I was born into
this world as one of my mother's children in Western Maungdaw, Arakan (Rakhine) State, Myanmar. As the first boy of seven children, I was proud to pass the matriculation in 2015. After that, I was a teacher at the middle school for students in my village because I was denied college and university, so could not get my bachelor's degree.

My hobbies are sport, shopping, reading books (articles and novels) and travelling. I really love playing football because movement is very important for the body. I like shopping because it's important to improve my outfits. Besides that, I love traveling very much, because when I go to another place, I meet new colleagues and also gain unforgettable experiences from them for myself. I love reading books that make me feel included in the story presented. In my opinion, the best books indicate the feelings of the writer well. I have a big dream and am always trying to reach big goals.

But, what can I do when situations make me weak and hopeless? I always try to explore my spirit. So, I decided to express my aspirations through my poetry and my voice. With the hopelessness, there was an excess of feelings. But I am an optimistic boy. When I was a child, my parents always used to say that I was a successful boy and that I would be a successful man. I am sure that I am smart, friendly, kind-hearted and faithful. I am a creative, and will always be driven to do something that I want, either for myself or for other people. I hope everything that I dream will be achieved.
Missing a “Heart”

Once upon a time when I was innocent
Great bad luck loved me so much
She came with mighty waves
She circulated through the vein like blood
She was also like electricity.
Even though she hurt my heart
I had to give her the best priorities.

I kept beside my fear after seeing her ego
Even she was welcomed with a sweetest smile
Though my kiss was touched
What I needed for a peaceful life.
That I was suited and understood
She was only for me but not for others.

She was forfeited due to a remiss of mine
I can’t find in either practice or in dream
Missing not because of absence from eye
But because of staring, too
Neither tender in eyes nor satisfying wishes.
The heart becomes deplorable
And the soul does too
Why do I become despairing?
Why does my soul become frail?

Sometimes she appears
Sometimes she goes away
Is she magic or not?
I can’t believe my eyes and mind
Let me see clearly where you are
Getting neither fragrance, nor odour

Even though I inhale the oxygen from all sides
Give me a signal to welcome you again
Luck

Luck is in you whenever you look
No one can snatch it from you
Like a dewdrop or a floating leaf
And know that they are because they have to be.
The world will remain as it has always been
And the leaf will be carried by the water of the river.

Hope is with you when you believe.
There are also the ones who have no hope.
Even if you close your eyes and dream up things
We and trees throw shadows on the earth.
The earth is not a dream but I see folk.

Who discern touch, and hear no lie.
You can’t enter but you’re sure it’s there.

Some people say that we should not trust our eyes,
That there is nothing, just seeming.
You are forgetting the earth on which you walk
I would open a book and could decipher nothing
Searching more but getting less
Everything occurs too normally
My eyes are open but they cannot see for gloom of night:
I can do no more than lift my heart to thee for inward light.

And now I am ready to keep running
When the sun rises beyond the borderland of death.

See a new horizon every time with your eyes,
Neither what I wished nor what you wished happened
See the long shadow that is cast by the tree.

Embrace every moment with open arms
I imagine the earth when I am no more
What has no shadow, has no strength to live.

Nothing happens, no loss, it’s still a strange pageant,
What never added up will add up,
What was incomprehensible will be comprehended.
Ro BM Hairu

I am a Rohingya youth who fled from my native land to another country, due to war and violence. I write my poems to let the world know that the Rohingya community has been facing many types of violence in our country, Myanmar (Burma). If people read my poems, they will know completely about the Rohingya and what they need from the people of this world, like justice and protection, just like what any other humans need to survive.

I'm Hairullah, a loving child of my parents, Amanullah and Dilbahar. I was born in 1998 and passed my high school exam in 2015 in Arakan State, but Rohingya students who matriculated were denied college and university education from 2012 by the Myanmar Government. I can do nothing for my future to develop myself and be bright. Attending a tertiary college and university is not only my dream but also our ethnic community's dream too.
I started writing poetry to let the world know that the Rohingya represent a community, which has been facing many types of violence in our country. I write poems to express my feelings to others. Although I can get depressed, writing normally makes me feel happy and if someone does not understand me, they can learn more about me by reading my poems.

Right now, our educated offspring are turning into illiterates. There is no other way, unless we are given opportunities in this refugee camp in Bangladesh.
My Dreams

I

The meaning of peace is what?
From birth to the end of their lifespan
Our progenitors died of hunger
While striving to get it once
How hard is peace to own
Never chanced to open the windows
of our hearts once,
Just to see the whole of the land
Where we all have been.

The meaning of freedom is what?
From birth to the end of their lifespan
Our forefathers died of hunger
While in the struggle to gain it once
How wonderful is the freedom to possess
Never had the opportunity to open the doors
Of our hearts once,
Just to see the whole of the land
Where we all have been.

The meaning of justice is what?
From birth to end of their lifetime
our brothers and sisters are mortal
while in it they wait and hope
to gain it at least once
Never turned to us for the existence of the entire body
Just to share the bonds of our heart
Where we all had been longing for it
Who my forefathers were
and from where they descended
to be matchlessly known in our world
as they were too the holders of
the cards analyzed by the Ruler of
that time as the identity card
as the Burmese used to do
whereby they crossed from town to town

It was snatched forcibly from
our brothers and sisters by the plan
of the Ruler’s target to make them
Landless and citizenless even when
they did use the card as before
The time of the cards in their hands
has been of no use in the sight of
the Ruler of where they were born
When they tried to show
Their disappointment to the world
It keeps silent like it’s blind and deep
When will we be a part of this world?
When will the world see us as human beings?

After all in my entire life
The card, the citizenship that I had
As my identity in my motherland
was snatched unlawfully away but
the affection, my patriotic heart that I have
As the inheritance of my people
Still couldn’t be removed from my heart
Which makes me remember both my land
and people everywhere I reach.
I was kept like a frog in a well
From birth to manhood in my motherland
From where I wished to see the ocean
But I wasn’t allowed to go outside
That environment

Although I wanted to give voice
To the world about how
“I’m kept as a prisoner”
The cover of the well was closed silently
Then I cried lonely
“When will you let me out of here?”
“When will you let me out of here?”

After the tsunami accidentally
Had blown down on me
And together with the well I got damaged
Then the mighty wind threw me
To the neighbouring place, in Bangladesh
Alas! My life has transformed into a “refugee”
Now I can’t be even an owner of a home
where I dream to live together
with my full family members like I had before
When will I be a resident of my native land?
My Traumatic Life

Until midnight I sink
In the ocean of memories.
My pillow, wet

Then my eyes won’t let me sleep
As they’re afraid of nightmares.

I dream like that
In a void, I am unaccompanied.
Any drive is forfeited,
No ancillary is espied,
So I scream but there’s no echo
Repeatedly walking unremittingly
but in no direction.

This journey is fatiguing
Then I wake up appalled.
When I fall asleep again
I hear people scream on a
Sinking boat in an ocean,
But I can do nothing for them.
When they have fully sunk,
I shout.

It’s the time when the sun rises.
The night makes me fearful,
Then the day starts with complex thoughts.
Life is full of horrors.
My darkened future alerts me
To survive, as if to brighten me.
The name refugee makes me
Blind, deeply stupid, and disabled.
Even though I possess all the organs of a human
I’m totally different from others.

When I holler to the world
It keeps silent.
I know my world is different,
It retards my forward steps.
Then the heart stop breathing.
The mood clots circulation,
The brain gets senseless from thinking.

When the time comes for the sun to set,
I have sought all the answers.
I’m Ro Anamul Hasan, born in 1997 in the northern Maungdaw, Arakan, Myanmar. I passed matriculation in 2014 but was not allowed to attend university because I am a Rohingya.

I compose poems because our silence kills our generation. Thus, I scream through my poetry in order to know how the world can hear our voices and how people can feel like I do.

For me, poetry raises our voices and activates each word to express how it suffers. As I’m under pressure, I’m being persecuted. All this forces me to write something to reduce my stress and trauma. Perhaps, the world may have discriminated against how we escaped under the bleeding swords while being slaughtered, under bullets and rain while firing and inside flames.
I am burning with rage, as one of my most persecuted family members was my grandpa who was killed; my five uncles were sentenced for 73 years for no reason.

My grandpa was a senior humanitarian aid worker. He worked for UNHCR and WFP for many years in Northern Arakan State. He was a well-known person in our area. One of my uncles was also working as a humanitarian worker when he was arrested. Spending 73 years in jail means they are lifetime prisoners. They were tortured brutally. Even though they are really innocent, they can find no justice.

We were deranged and driven out of the country like a nest is flung by a storm.

How rough the persecution on me has been? It’s really beyond your thoughts and imagination.
My Shelter

Everyone knows my camp
The World's Largest Refugee Camp
But it's unlike the other camps.
Mine is overpopulated, crowded
Sunburn, landslides and flood-prone

My shelter is a tarpaulin, propped up with bamboo
Its height is a little higher than a man
Its width is not larger than your single room
Several members have to sleep together
Just like in a prison cell.

In the hot season, there's no cool shade
Sweat from my body drains like steam
Boiling dry, I'm dehydrated
I conk out just like a fish on land
My shelter at noon is like hell

In the rainy season, I'm at risk
Shelter bogging down after flood
Devouring babies and old people
During mudslides from the hills
Cyclones flinging the roofs about.

Life is not life under the shelter
Being a human, being under the universe,
Surviving like animals in a forest
Is it believable for you?
Just come to see more
How I'm suffering daily.

Rohingya Dreams | 70
Restriction

I'm not a human being like you
Even though I have all the human organs
Inside the genocidal circle.
I was born and grew up differently.
Ending with life under pressure

My movement is restricted
I can't leave this rural village
My feet yearn to walk once
My eyes want to see once
My mind wishes to travel once
Just a town under a freedom sky

My education is restricted,
I'm not allowed to attend college
Nor university to complete my study
I can't dream to be a doctor like you
Dreams are remaining unfulfilled
My future is darkness day by day

My cell phone is restricted
I can't use it outside
I'm not allowed to insert a Sim card
Nor is WiFi connection allowed
Shopkeepers don't sell me a credit card
Police arrest me for using a cell phone

Is this lawful?
A human has human rights
Even animals are with their rights
For me, every right is restricted
I'm similar to you, but not the same.
Being a Rohingya

My birthplace is hell
Because of burning and lynching
No one has the power to protect us
Just looking on like they are deaf.

My birthplace is a blood stream
Because of slaughter and murder
No one has the ability to cover us
Just listening like they are blind.

My birthplace is the battleground
Because of ongoing genocide happening
No one has pity to help us escape
Just staring like a robot.

Falling down again and again
When I try to stand with my own legs
Due to unlawful persecution and torture
I’m restricted inside the discriminatory circle
I can’t move hither, nor thither
Just rolling inside and dying daily.

Denying me everywhere
I wish myself to be a human being
I was born unfortunate
Just for being a Rohingya.
Mohammed Imran

I'm someone who has lost everything. Just look at me – what is my name?

I can't even remember who I am because I lost my real name. I'm Mohammed. I was born in a poor family on 28 February 1999 in Myanmar, in the Maungdaw township, in Arakan State, where most of the Rohingya people live. I lived there without citizenship, without freedom, without education, without happiness – and also without my fundamental rights. I also felt a different kind of sadness, extreme pressure, irritation and torture. That's why I had to flee to this Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh.

I'm a loser – one who lost everything, even my forefather's name. Because I lost my real name, what is acceptable for me now is Rohingya. Call me a Rohingya. In Myanmar they call me Bangali, which brands me as stateless. This is what's really unacceptable for...
me and my generation. I could never be happy with that name. I had
begged them hundreds of times not to make the name stick. I was
born with a touch of Buddhism.

From 2017 to 2018, I studied in Class 10 at Maungdaw High School,
but we weren’t given the same opportunities as the Buddhists.
However, I could not continue my studies because on 25 August
2017 we had to flee from my motherland into Bangladesh. I had
hoped to become a doctor but I had to flee, all because of the
Myanmar (Burmese) government. I have changed my old dream and
I have a new dream to become a poet to write about our Rohingya
feelings.

I have been volunteering with an organisation called Food for the
Hungry & Medical Teams International (FH-MTI) as a Community
Health Worker (CHW) to support my family and help our people. I
love the organisation so much because they help and support our
Rohingya people who have left their own nation and are living in the
refugee camp. I’m working as a volunteer in this organisation and
they’re only giving me a small amount per month. However, I would
support this organisation without any remuneration because they
are helping us.

When I am free from my work, I would like to spend my time writing
poems to express the feelings of our community. I would like to
become a poet to write about our persecuted minority Rohingya
people’s feelings.
Being Rohingya I’m a Criminal

When, as an innocent child,
My ambition was to be literate
To spend my future in the right way
The government didn’t allow me to realise
My ambition because
That’s a crime in my nation
I’m from the Rohingya minority of Arakan

When, as an innocent young student,
Myanmar couldn’t tolerate my gaining an education
To build my future generation
So, I had to leave my nation empty of education
So why? That’s a crime in my nation
I’m from the Rohingya minority of Arakan.

When, as an innocent teenage boy,
Doing everything for my nation
To be free and to lead a peaceful life
So why did Myanmar force me to leave
My nation like a criminal?
I’m from the Rohingya minority of Arakan

In my nation, no place for those
Who are Rohingya, educated people
Who would build our future generations of our nation
That’s why we are recognised
Like criminals of the nation
We’re from the Rohingya minority of Arakan
In my understanding of freedom,
I want to love my own country
A teacher wants to educate the people
A soldier wants to defend the people
A doctor wants to cure the people
All of these are what I want freedom to be

It's such a crime what they did to me,
I'm the one who has all the evidence that proves
That it's a crime, an old crime against my forefathers
You (the whole world) hold only me responsible
Just because my pain is shown
I'm from the Rohingya minority of Arakan

The struggles are keeping on, getting tough
As I am blinded by these things
But I'll surely fight until I see the light
And I pray that the Almighty makes my future bright
That's why I'm a criminal of my nation
Because I'm from the Rohingya minority of Arakan
What Freedom Can Change

Freedom can change the nation
For there are more questions
Even after death, it will ask more
If we love to live for the nation,
We will surely find success in freedom

Freedom can change the nation
For there are more questions
Even after death, it will ask more
If we are the colour of the nation,
We have a responsibility to be a nationality

Freedom can change the nation
For there are more questions
Even after death, it will ask more
If we want sunshine or a misty day,
We will surely need our nationality

Freedom can change the nation
For there are more questions
Even after death, it will ask more
If we want to be a doctor to cure our society
We need an identity within society

Freedom can change the nation
For there are more questions
Even after death, it will ask more
If we are soldiers to protect our society,
We will surely find success in freedom

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Freedom can change the nation
For there are more questions
Even after death, it will ask more
If we educate ourselves together,
The nation will progress to an advanced level

Freedom can change the nation
For there are more questions
Even after death, it will ask more
If we are the educated people of the nation
We must show the reflection of our character

Freedom can change the nation
For there are more questions
Even after death, it will ask more
We must not be the illiterate people of the nation
We must apply ourselves to develop

You are my lover on this Earth
All colours must conjugate with what we want
Is there freedom in our nation?
To be a nationality, to be an identity,
To be a literate person
Lalmoti Khan @ SFI

My favorite fruits are mangoes and my favorite music is Rohingya mandolin music. Everyday I eat rice with spices and different kind of vegetables. I'm very interested in playing and watching football. But in Myanmar, there is no chance to play for our motherland, because we are Rohingya.

I am 21 years old and work as a private teacher for middle-class students. I was born in Buthidoung Township, Rakhine State, Myanmar. I passed my matriculation in the 2015 academic year. As a Rohingya in Rakhine State, I was not allowed to attend university.

My dreams are to liberate Rohingya people from slavery through literature and to serve people in the community. In this difficult time, the reason why I write poetry is not to revive the history of my Rohingya people in the Arakan. I serve my responsibilities through any way I can find to revive our own arts. I also write poems to empower our ethnic people and to help civilize them.

Every human life is very valuable. Every creature is adored by their short life. They firmly grasp the time-poor lifetime. Hence the losers,
who lose the chance in their valuable, short life to embrace merit and goodwill for themselves and others, and the mirth for eternity that eases life hereafter.

If we look at keeping vicissitude aside, rethinking the happenings of life, the ones who are unaware of this valuable time, who are lost in wealth and comforts and ignore life hereafter, they are really the absolute losers.

Therefore, every human being should value their precious time. We shouldn’t waste our life on temporal or earthly desires. We should live for eternal mirth, beneficial for eternity without throwing our life into worthless pursuits. Hence, we can bypass the sufferings and reach our dignified life.
Avoid the Rough People

Good and bad, they can’t see
Foolishness that covers their conscience

Words of others, right or wrong
Little sense to differ, they easily accept

No thoughts of surety and goodness
They know the wrong, but not the right

“Only me, only I can”
They are gangsters who always contemplate

Light of familiarity and friendship
The spirit they don’t maintain

Lacking sense and vision,
Their thoughts are wrong, themselves stupid

Foolishness is their only imagination
Bullying others non-stop, they can destroy all relationships

Lies and cruel words
Wrong they think, don’t see the right

There are those, whose manners are rough, characterless
They lack love and kindness

Better to avoid all those bastards
Avoid the gangsters

Translated by
Masyu Ali

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I'm Zia and I live in Bangladesh with my family and one million other Rohingya refugees who survived the genocide in Rakhine State (Arakan). I applied to study Higher Education in Sitwe University and finally got a chance after trying lots of ways. I studied Physics but was ejected with hundreds after the religious violence against Rohingya community in 2012.

One very horrible moment I faced in my student life was when I was arrested at a checkpoint without any reason. I was returning to my village after finding out about my university. I was brought to a dark room and tortured without limits, so much that it injured my head and broke my left hand completely. I was locked in that custody room for three days. I did not see the sunlight and couldn't breathe fresh air because it was like a jail under the ground, the exit hole was covered by the soil. I didn't feel hungry or thirsty those days because I was in a coma. One day, I woke up in front of the hospital in our village after my father rescued me.

But my father was not allowed to admit me to the hospital for medical treatment because the government hospitals are not
allowed to give treatment to any Muslim patients. I was brought to my home where my mom provided me with treatment, psychosocially and medically as well. At least I could feel safe in the shade of my lovely parents. I told them all about how I was tortured for three days in custody. My mom kissed me on my head and poured her tears on my injuries. She had sold all of her golden jewellery to take me out of jail. After I recovered one month later, I saw what had happened to my village.

This changed everything in my life. To feel peace in my native land Arakan, is one of my dreams that hasn’t yet been fulfilled. I miss helping my grandpa with farming and fisheries near our village before fleeing with my family.

Now I am working at the Danish Refugee Council as a Camp Management Coordination Team Leader. I married my childhood girlfriend Sofara and now have a one-year-old baby daughter called Tokia. I’m encouraged to write poems by observing the situation of my community surviving in the camp. It’s also one of my passions. I love writing poems to advocate for the community and to share with the world about all the Rohingyas’ feelings and challenges after the genocide.

We are millions of Rohingya refugees surviving in different countries who need your support to get back our rights, nationality and dignity in our country, which we want to go back to.

“Make a peaceful world for others, the world of peace can be yours.”
A Motherless Migrant

The wall of salty water
The floor under the sea-floor
Shade of the clouds

The restless night
Thundered the whole night
The roar of the sea
Like the song of hell
The floating trees
Davy Jones on the ice-floe

The cyclone sang
Danced the premature island
My life ended at the coastline
Floating at a gulf
After sinking for some days
Hunting the starving sharks
The cabaret of the gannets

But, it's not a murder

I suicided my life
I survived the war
Suffered without land
A motherless migrant
Neglected by the earth
Relocated to the sea of mud
The ocean is my graveyard
A Dream that I Shouldn’t Dream

I

It’s a dream that makes me fly
A tour to the sky
A fairy was flying there
I wanted to talk, but she was shy
Her heart heard the voice of my heart
She saw the dream in my heart
She smiled, talked by the eyes
She didn’t let me fly
It was love at first sight
I gave her a rose
From a garden on the cloud
The red color of that rose
The rose is the same as her shoes
The night sky
The stars looking like the fireflies
And the moon is brightening from so high

She asked me to fly together
We reached the moon;
It’s late when we fly
She can fly faster than the eyes can see
She felt tired and thirsty
But, there is no water nearby
She asked me to carry some for her
I went to the cloud to ask for the water
It said I can only get if it rains
When I asked for some water from the sky
It said if I had the water, I wouldn’t keep the earth dry
When I asked for water from the stars
They said they have only light
So, I came down to the earth to take the water

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II

That morning so far
My dream is over
Then I couldn't fly anymore
I couldn't go again to the moon
That's why I couldn't take the water to her
I tried to go again to my dream
But, I couldn't get there
It was raining outside my shelter
It was pouring lots of water
I asked the rain
Please go there and rain
Pour down on the moon
The rain asked me again
Who needs me, who is there on the moon?
I said to the rain
She is my dream girl—I left her on the moon
She is a fairy in my dream
The rain said to me
It's a dream that you shouldn't dream
I said, Yes, I shouldn't dream
But still, I dreamed
I dreamed that I shouldn't

I requested to the dream
To take me there again
Because she is still waiting for me
She needs to quench her thirst
And I want again to see her
Maybe she is still laying there
Requested to convey my message
That I apologize to her
I got oceans of water
But, I couldn't make it there
Because I can no longer fly
I'm still crying, and tears pour like rain
I miss her so much
I miss the dream that I shouldn't dream

Rohingya Dreams | 86
Mohamed Ayas@MgKhinSoe

We are living in the jungle like wild animals, but our minds don’t change. My name is Mohamed Ayaz[s] Arkani and I am a 29-year-old humanitarian worker. I am married with two children and I am doing my first year of a Psychology degree. I used to live in Vill-Myo Thu Gyi, in Maungdaw where I was born. I didn’t get the chance to attend high school or to go to university or college because it cost too much money for the application for the university and also to apply for the approval to move to the university district.

In Myanmar, I have worked with a humanitarian organization called ACF since 2009. I worked in Mental Health and Care Practices with...
ACF for eight years in Myanmar and got a lot of experience in how to work for humanity and help my community who have been suffering from trauma and distress and are still living in the most vulnerable situations. Since 2012, so many of my Rohingya community have been affected after the religious violence in Rakhine State (Arakan).

After failing to access further study, humanitarian work helps me to support my community. I am the eldest in the family and have five younger brothers and sisters. It is really bad luck for them as they have only had access to elementary study in Bangladesh. If we could only have education, it would be really unforgettable. I have two children; my daughter is 5 years old and my son is 3. When I play with them, my daughter says that she will become a doctor, and she encourages me to act like a patient. But when I try to play, I keep thinking about her education, because she is in a refugee camp and there are no educational services, and it’s not certain how long we have to stay here. Now, life has become one of frustration and depression, so I have tried to cope by writing poems and reading stories.

I have a dream that my children could fulfil their education and hopes. We are the refugees with the least rights in the world and we are not even able to have a sim card. The worst thing is that I don’t know how to reply to my little girl when she says her dream is to become a doctor when she grows up. But I keep on hoping as sometimes, “Dreams do come true.”
Voice of a Primrose

While taking a rest under a primrose tree  
In sunny, sunny nature  
A sultry drop fall on my head  
I look up to see a gorgeous, crying primrose  
Ah! Those are her tears  
She just wants me to describe how she feels  

She is seeking justice from nature.  
Not to have any kind of scent  
Whether they be poisonous or lovely fragrances.  

She just wants to live in the heart of a golden bee  
Free even from love or kindness  
But, she wants the relationship with that royal bee  

She wants to talk to every lover of flowers  
She wants to hear some sweet words  
Even if they speak through thick masks.  
But she wants the praise from her thankful grower  

She wants to stay for a few more days  
To make a long story with the sun or the moon.  
She wants a future that will not end so soon.  

She demands her rights  
She wants a beautiful welcome within the people’s sight  
But if she commits a sin, she may end up in the waste bin.  
Or if she makes good breath, she may stay like a crown of greats.
She says she’d like to grow as a climber in the jungle
She could become friends with the king of beasts
She could climb far with her longest branches at least

She will not be a refugee in the flowers’ world
Who has the right to feel the benefits of nature
Even if she feels the sunshine to grow
Even if she can see the brightness of the moon with her lovely petals
She does have some hope to live a normal life.

She wants to smile from the first day of her blossom
She is a flower, parting with the others
Lonely, living in the dark night of the moon.
I'm KhinMyat Kyaw, a 19-year-old Rohingya girl. My parents are Mohammed Zuhar and Mubina Bibi. I was born in Maungdaw, which is situated in the Northern Arakan (Rakhine) State of Myanmar. But now I'm living in Bangladesh, Cox's Bazar Refugee Camp as a refugee.

I was studying in Class 8 in Myanmar but couldn't continue because I went to Bangladesh after the genocide. They didn't allow us to study like other religions. I started writing to ask where the humanity is for my people of Arakan. Actually, I always used to dream of being a good teacher when I was at school, but my destiny didn't allow me to access this opportunity. So, I started to write poems to share my feelings with the world about the current situation of my community.

Some friends disturb me during my job just because I am a girl. So, I'm here to tell my people to stop this kind of discrimination toward people. I have my own right to tell the world to:

"Dream big, keep dreaming, it's never hidden, the right is always positive and bright."
I never back down from here to anywhere.
I'm not the only one facing these challenges; there are so many women who are facing challenges in the refugee camp. Being a girl, I can't see the light of my life in our Rohingya community. My dream is still alive to see world with my beauty.

Now, I have become a prisoner in this refugee life. Refugee life sounds so easy but living here is actually very dangerous. There are no schools here to brighten my life with study.
When I First Fell in Love

When I first fell in love,
The nights seemed short
And days never want to end,
When your images leave my head.

When I first fell in love,
Only thinking of you brought me joy,
I forgot death and future,
You alone were in my head.

My brain hummed like a band.
When I first fell in love,
I spent millions on credit cards
Never wanting the network to drop,
Always cradling that phone call.

When I first fell in love,
My feelings seemed loved.
Everything looked nice in life
Couldn’t keep a distance from you.

When I first fell in love,
The whole world seemed like a club.

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Be United Regardless of Religion

We are all on a planet nation where we are born
Even if religions are different, we are one body
No matter who believe in what religion,
Humanity is for all, even minorities or majorities
We are human, we are equal
No discrimination, no quarrel, no hatred
Only peace and only love

Assaulting one another will make others laugh
It isn’t time to discriminate each other
It is time to be unified—to raise a voice
Through a platform of unity
A united voice is like a thousand voices of disunity

It spreads hatred among people
Let them be with their religions
Let us be with your religion.
Whatever happens at home,
It should not be in others’ ears.
Discrimination destroys love for one another
My name is Zahidullah. My nationality is Rohingya and I was born in Arakan State in 1998. I studied in Class 10 in a government school in Buthidaung Township in 2017. I am from an ancient family in Arakan, who were citizens in Arakan before the Independence Day of Myanmar. But now, I have been facing much discrimination without citizenship or freedom.

I’ve had many dreams, which are as yet unfulfilled, due to the Myanmar government. Because I’m a Rohingya, I can’t do what I want and can’t go where I want. Even to save my life, I’ve gone through a terrible and horrific ordeal.

I like poetry and would like to be a poet. I want to write or compose poems to tell about our frightful conditions and our history. I like to share my feelings through my poetry.

As a human,
I like to live like others
I like to dream like others
I like to study like others
But I can’t because of being a Rohingya.
I would like to get my freedom like others
But it is very expensive for me.
I want justice
But it’s rare in my land.
My Dream

I often dream to return to my sweet home,
In which we breathed together happily,
In which we could sleep well.
In which we each had a single room.

I often dream of going back to my birthplace
Where I was born and grew up,
Where my happiness remains,
Smiles, hopes and peaceful days.
I often dream of my citizenship
Which is historically my right.

I often dream of studying in my school
Where my future and success have remained.
I often dream of those playgrounds
Where I played many kinds of games.
I often dream of those roads and places
Where I walked and visited friends.

Note: Every Rohingya in camp dreams to their native land which is called Arakan.
My Historical Story

I was born in Arakan State in 1998.
I grew up in Arakan.
I am a Rohingya from an ancient family in Arakan.

I am the grandson of a civil servant
Who participated in the civil war for Myanmar,
The government gave him prizes for his bravery and cultivation.
He was given nationality as a Rohingya
He died and his evidence is still alive
But I was denied citizenship.

Being born in Arakan,
I can't breathe freely like you can.
Being a human,
I can't hope like you do.
Having the voice like you have,
I can't ask for what I want like you.
Having the eyes like you have,
I can't view those views you view.
Having the legs like you have,
I can't walk for what I want like you.

Being the same humans you and I,
You have been treating me as unlikeable.
Being called Rohingya by history,
You turn the direction of your voice, calling me Bengali.
Having grown up in the same place and way
You discriminate against me for everything.

In the poem, 'You' is in the Buddhist majority.
Roshidullah (Kyaw Naing)

I’m one of the youths who is from an ethnic minority, a Rohingya from Myanmar. I have been suffering just to live as a human in this world. My name is Roshidullah and Kyaw Naing. I’m a 20-year-old student. I was born in Maungdaw Township, Rakhine State, Myanmar (Burma) where I ended the precious life as a student.

I want to get proper education to develop my Golden Country although I had to face systematically genocide so I couldn’t complete my gigantic dream, which would help the new generations. Due to all the laws that discriminate laws in Myanmar, I had to survive my life like the birds in the cage, especially as a minority Rohingya. There were no branches to sit on, or platforms to share, no opportunity to get education, no health care, no freedom, no rights, no documents and no safe zone. I had to flee from my motherland, and then had to survive my life here in the refugee camp but no one cares why am I here.

Everyone desires to know ‘why are we here?’ it was thought that we ‘want’ to be here. Since arriving here in Bangladesh, I have been working under ACF and teaching at the Learning Center in the refugee camp in Bangladesh. I have some experiences working and teaching and I started writing poems and quotes as the world is blind and deaf to decreasing my stress. I want to let you know, the world, that I am a refugee; the world is not looking out for me. I am being discriminated against. I want to be on the human lists. The more I try to feel peace, the more I become in pain.
My Heart Is You Arakan

My tear is making rolls
I am not able to control
Tear is dropping like rain
Slowly down from cheek.
Searching for the path of you, Arakan
The tear is sinking from heart

My innocent heart became alone
My tear is falling down just like rain
I spent my last day for you, Arakan
It was going to think about you
I could go there if I would be a bird
To fly just to see you, Arakan

If the sun shines I can't control my tears
You're the light of my life
The stars are shining in the sky
You're heightening in my innocent heart

I can't survive my life without you, Arakan
Come into my deep ocean heart
I am trying to keep you in my heart
Still the tears are not stopping
Don't make me crazy and lazy
No words to express how I love you
Release Me from the Camp

Just being me, the whole world is blind
My precious life is ending in this camp
As a human being, let me out from it
With so many gigantic dreams
Let me build something for future

I’m a crimeless Rohingya
Why am I suffering in this prison?
I’m thinking about my future life
I have nothing. Surviving life
In the camp, it is peaceless

How difficult to breathe, how crowded
With so many tension and fear, why I am here?
My heart aches just to show you
Without crime I ought to survive
Passing away is better than the prison

Let me be a quality person for our community
There are no words to explain my brain sadness
Let me be released from the prison
It makes me disappointed
My eyes welled up in tears

With tremendous dreams
No charge to leave to change them
The whole world is deaf
I was made a refugee.
No one cares why I am here
No one thinks about me

Life is a tree, with no ways
To grow up in darkness
Mayyu Khan

I use the pen of literature and the brush of drawing as tools, which are directed at the sensitive world to explain my sharp feelings. Because I am a refugee, I still have a strong voice to raise. From the beginning, I have been struggling to end the refugee life and this remains my dream.

I’m Mayyu Khan. I’m a youth of 19 years and my ethnicity is Rohingya. My father is San Lwin and my mother is Aye Nu. My family is from AnukPyn in Rathedaung, a township of coastal Arakan state, Myanmar. My parents were displaced from their land during an anti-Rohingya operation in 1991 by the military junta. Moreover, their citizenship was taken away by the illegal act of 1982.

And then I was born into an inaccessible refugee camp in the outskirts of Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh in the 2000s where human rights and basic fundamental rights are not allowed to this day. Since childhood I have been denied many kinds of rights. I was only able to study up to matriculation by hiding my ethnic and refugee identity. My hobbies are to practice writing literature and drawing.

My favorite poets are Allama Sheikh Shaadi from Iran and Kazi Nazrul Islam from Bangladesh and Sheikh is so knowledgeable and appreciative of every human and civilization. Narrul’s poetry shows so much awareness for humanity. He was a freedom fighter and his voice was the weapon for every fighter, and that’s why his other name is “rebel poet”.

My favourite modern leader is Nelson Mandela because all his activities aimed at banishing racism from this world. His struggle was against racism and to establish equality, justice, peace and harmony for all.

Lastly, I want to be responsible for my helpless people. I want to help everyone who is dying without happy feelings for this beautiful world. I want to work hard to show the beauty of this world to all refugees, with the alias “Humans”. No more refugee life. Thank you.
Horror of a Refugee Boy

Everyone can just imagine.
To feel reality is very difficult.

Dear world,
I have received a bunch of condemnations, consolations,
but not our solution yet.
To understand my sufferings, you have to be a refugee.

Do not hate the refugees.
We are also human beings,
We are also made of blood like you are.
If you do not like refugees,
then why do you force others to be refugees?
Everybody loves their own country
as they do not want to feel hardships.
I love mine more than yours,
but I was forced to leave.

I supposed this world to be peaceful and simple.
I never thought that we would be victims of genocide.
Sometimes we are victims of trafficking,
sometimes victims of slavery,
and sometimes, victims of propaganda.
If I had known earlier the world was so cruel,
I would have died before birth.

Those whom I embraced as my beloveds are foes.
They threw us into the dustbin after their needs.
In fact, the refugee crisis is only their profit.
Even though,
They can't accept us as refugees!

I cry and pray to be released from refugee life,
Your strong voices will be needed
For the liberation of our refugee lives.
My Richest Identity

An ancient civilization, asleep in the shore of the Bay of Bengal,
My ancestors cultivated this land with blood and sweat.
They ruled this land and recited the occupation of-names.
This is my homeland, I love her so much.

One of the beauties of this world
is my birthplace,
The morning sun rose in my country like a golden lorry.
Three seasons make her beauty with many forms.
This is my homeland, I love her so much.

She has hundreds of canals and rivers flowing in the land.
These religions lie on either side of the river.
Thousands of years ago, everyone knew her as the rice bearer.
This is my homeland, I love her so much.

Rohingyas are from the Kaladan river to Naf river,
Again the majority of the Rakhine are from southern Arakan.
My country has seventeen towns and thousands of villages.
This is my hometown I love her so much.

My father taught me how to repel enemies,
Mother taught how to love the country.
I'm a proud Rohingya boy of Arakan.
This is my hometown I love her so much.
Please Meet the Poets

Thida Shania
Azad Mohammed
Mayyu Ali
Pacifist Farooq
Shahida Win @ WinWinMaw
Parmin Fatima @Ma May Chit
Ro Yassin Abdumonab
Ro Pacifist@Abdurahman
Kabir bin Kasim
E.R Jani Alom @ Khin Maung Soe
Ro BM Hairu
Ro Anamul Hasan (Boli Bazaar)
Mohammed Imran
Lalmoti Khan @ SFI
Sahat@Zia Hero Naing
Mohamed Ayas@Mg Khin Soe
Khin Myat Kyaw @Khotiza Bibi
Zahidullah@Prince
Roshidullah (Kyaw Naing)
Mayyu Khan

Citizen

Born anywhere,
You are a citizen everywhere.
Share land, water, sky
And the vast universe.
This universe is ours.

Mohammad Nurul Huda