



# CREATIVE FLIGHT

*An International Half-Yearly Open Access Peer-Reviewed E-Journal in English*

## Certificate

**of Publication**

This certifies that

**RESHMA T M**

whose article "The Prayer of a Refugee: An Analysis of Sea Prayer by Khaled Hosseini" submitted for publication in April Issue, 2021 (Volume 2, Issue 1) of Creative Flight e-Journal (ISSN 2582-6158) has been successfully published on 30 April, 2021.

30.04.2021

Date

Dipak Giri, Editor-in-Chief

Creative Flight E-Journal

<https://www.creativeflight.in>

# **Creative Flight**

**An International Half-Yearly Open  
Access Peer-Reviewed E-Journal in  
English**

**(ISSN 2582-6158)**

**April Issue**

**(Vol. 2, Issue 1)**

**~ ACADEMIC SECTION ~**

**Edited by**

**Dipak Giri**

**Editor-in-Chief**

11. History and Literature of Khasha/Khah Language: An Overview — **Dr. M. M. Sohil**.....146
12. ‘Crime against Humanity’: Remembering the 1984 Anti Sikh Carnage through the *Pages Stained with Blood* by Indira Goswami — **Prosenjit Ghosh**.....162
13. Radicalism in *An Abbreviated Child* by Rita Garg — **Heena Kauser**.....176
14. Social Darwinism and Evolution of the Underclass Identity: A Study of Aravind Adiga’s *The White Tiger* — **Akansha Shukla**.....188
15. Post-Independence Indian Diaspora and Foreign Policy in International Relations: A Representation of Opportunities and Challenges — **Sahabuddin Ahamed**.....196
16. Ontological Status of 'Thanatopraxy' on Discrimination; ‘Gendered Body’ and Its ‘Performativity’ through Dalit Women’s Constant ‘Resilience’ against Atrocious ‘Caste’ and ‘Social Hierarchy’ — **Labani Sarkar**.....218
17. English Translation and Wider Readership: First English Anthology of Bangla Dalit Poetry — **Jyoti Biswas**.....225
18. Playing with Sexual Identity: A Study of the Selected Poetry of Emily Dickinson — **Moumita Pal**.....241
19. The Prayer of a Refugee: An Analysis of *Sea Prayer* by Khaled Hosseini — **Reshma T M**.....257
20. Voicing the Unvoiced: (Re)-Reading Narendra Jadhav’s *Outcaste: A Memoir* and Omprakash Valmiki’s *Joothan* as an Alternative Narrative of Protest through (Re)-

## 19

### **The Prayer of a Refugee: An Analysis of *Sea Prayer* by Khaled Hosseini**

Reshma T M

Former Assistant Professor

Carmel College, Mala

SNM College, Maliankara

Kerala, India

#### **Abstract:**

Khaled Hosseini, one of the most widely read and the author of *Kite Runner*, *A Thousands splendid Sun's* and *And the Mountain Echoed* who depicts the problems of the suffering sections of the society. He is the founder of The Khaled Hosseini Foundation, a not-for-profit organization which provides humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan. His *Sea Prayer* is an exact picture of the problems of refugees. Though a small work, it paints the pain of a refugee while leaving their native land and also the mental suffering that he has going on when they move in search of a better living. The problem of refugees is one of the great social issues. In this twenty first century, though we claims to be developed, educated and equal, there are groups of people deprived of all these benefits. They are Refugees. For several reasons, they are forced to leave their country, move to some other places in search of a proper shelter. But they reach nowhere. Studies are going on the issues of refugees, but still there are lots of people struggling to find out a living.

#### **Key words:**

## **Refugees, Sea Prayer, Insecurity, Unwanted Outsider**

“Say this city has ten million souls,  
Some are living in mansions, some are living in holes  
Yet there is no place for us, my dear, yet there is no place for us”.

- **W.H Auden**

This is the painful situation of refugees. A group of people, displaced and has been forced to cross national boundaries and who cannot return home safely. Refugees are forced to leave their motherland, try to find shelter in a strange land where they are treated as unwanted outsiders. Every refugee will have a pathetic story of this kind. Their history is as old as human civilisation. It is unimaginable for a human being to think about a life without a proper shelter, a home, a country of their own. But the fact is that, there are millions and millions of people, living miserably, as an unwanted, as a displaced, as an outsider.

The term refugee was first used in the context of French conversion policy by which French Protestants fled from their country during the late seventeenth century. Later, the term began to use to refer to those people who fled from their land of origin to some strange land. The 1951 UN Convention on the status of Refugees defines a refugee as a person who ‘owing to a well founded fear of persecution for reason of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or a political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country’ (UN Convention on the Status of Refugees, 1950)

Thus, there may be a lot of reason behind their migration. Sometimes religious or racial discriminations lead them to leave their native land. Political upheavals in their place may sometimes lead to their migration. Environmental or climatic changes

sometimes affect them and force them to flee from the land. Economic problems are another major reason behind some migration. Whatever the reason, the soul of their peaceful life may get set apart with the migration. For most of them haven't a proper destination. They don't know what to do or where to go. Even if they have, there is a sense of insecurity all around their migration. Without food, water or shelter, they wander and finally reach somewhere. But there they are like an unwanted guest. In the foreign land, they are seen with a suspicion. People of the foreign land consider them as an intruder to their peaceful life. Sometimes, social, political, or religious orders made their life almost impossible or terrible in the foreign land.

Refugees are different from other immigrants who voluntarily move to another country, sometimes as tourists, sometimes to improve their economic position. Though this immigrant has problems like subordinate position in the foreign land, cultural differences from the people of that land, theirs will be much better lives than the refugees. Because refugees are totally uprooted from their homeland, they have to start everything afresh. There is a sense of fear and hopelessness in them. This sense of hopelessness and fear can be seen in every refugee. It is impossible to forget Alan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian boy of Kurdish ethnic background. His family were Syrian refugees and left their homeland due to the Syrian Civil War. As they were trying to reach Canada, the boy drowned in the Mediterranean Sea on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2015. The image of this little one's lifeless body lying on a Turkish beach caught the world's attention. The boy and his family left their homeland to save themselves, but fate defeated them. Not only Alan, but many refugees surrender themselves to death. Lack of food and water make their life more miserable. More than this, the sense of helplessness hangs around their movements.

*Sea Prayer* written by Khaled Hosseini, one of the widely read novelists, presents the plight and hopeless condition of refugees. It is a short, illustrated work. It seems like a poem; at the same time

it is in the form of a letter by a father to his son, on the night before their journey to protect themselves from the disasters in their motherland. On a moonlit beach, the father is talking to his little child, who is sleeping. They are waiting for the dawn and a boat to arrive. He is explaining their peaceful life in Homs, Syria, before the war, and the sudden transformation of the place to a hell. He is also reflecting the dangers that they may have to face while crossing the Mediterranean Sea.

The poem begins as the father, addressing to his son, talking to him about his own childhood. Along with his brothers he used to spend his time on the roof of his grandfather's farm house outside of Homs. They woke up in the morning, and the father explains the usual morning activities, the beauty of nature, stirring of olive trees, bleating sound of grandmother's goat, the clanking of cooking pots, the cool air and the shining sun. Everything was simple and beautiful then. Even the father remembers his son, as a little baby and his mother showing him a herd of cows grazing in the field, which is beautiful with wild flowers. Everything was associated with peace. So much happiness is connected to his childhood memories. The father here wishes his child hadn't been so young because, he may have the memories of the beautiful farm house, the stone walls and the things that they have created as young boys. But the little one is not that lucky. His childhood memories are mostly associated with war, chaos and insecurity. The father wants his son to remember Homs as he does. It was a bustling city, mosque, church, shops; smells of food are associated with it. They used to make evening walks around Clock Towers Square. Their life was so beautiful and peaceful. But the father says, that life was just like a dream to them, "like some long-dissolved rumour" (Hosseini).

The readers get a clear and splendid picture of the beautiful life they spend there. The illustrations also provide the positive picture of their life in the homeland. Everything green and colourful. Flowers, busy city, busy life, all provide the idea of a normal life they had spent. But everything went upside down. The

simple protest turned to a siege. Bomb blast, starvation, everything made their life so miserable. The children know little things; they know how to transform bomb craters into swimming holes. They also came to know that people can be found under the concrete bricks and exposed beams the reality of death.

At present they were on that cold moonlit beach. Crying babies, worrying women, and people from different region Afghans, Somalis, Iraqis, Eritreans, Syrians, all of them were impatiently waiting for the sunrise. In fact “all of us in search of home” (Hosseini). The father then speaks a fact about refugees that they are unwelcomed and are uninvited.

I have heard it said we are the uninvited.

We are the unwelcome.

We should take our misfortune elsewhere. (Hosseini)

Everywhere, in the foreign land people consider them as an outsider, that they should take their misfortune somewhere else. Father hears his wife’s consoling words, she is consoling herself by saying;

Oh, but if they saw, my darling.

Even half of what you have.

If only they saw.

They would say kinder things, surely. (Hosseini)

But the father just looked at his son’s face and said to him “hold my hand. Nothing bad will happen” (Hosseini). He knows that this is the only thing that a father can do or say to his son in this situation. But in reality he is thinking about their unassured journey through the sea. He is thinking about the depth, vastness and indifference of the sea. Because he knows that he is powerless to protect his family from all these. All they can do is to pray.

*Sea Prayer* is a heartfelt prayer by a father, for his family, for a peaceful existence. Through him the author presents the life of thousands of refugees, struggling to find out a proper shelter for their dear and near ones. It is not so easy to explain their struggle. Besides having no basic needs, they are tortured by their identity. They are not sure where they belong to. Even they don't know where to go. The father in this work is going on through the same problem. He is afraid of the sea, he is not sure whether they can cross the sea safely or not. He is afraid because he knows his inability to protect the others if anything happen for he is tired physically and mentally. Feelings of insecurity and hopelessness are haunting him. Thus, the pain of a refugee is clearly depicting in this work.

### Work Cited

Hosseini, Khaled. *Sea Prayer*. Bloomsbury, 2018.

Mishra, Mallica. "Understanding Refugeeism: An Introduction to Tibetan Refugees in India". *Issues that Matter*, Edited by, Anitha, R, and Jimmy James, Macmillan education, 2017, pp. 141-147.

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/refugee>.