

THE CHILDREN NOT CHOSEN

Home was a place of safety
Street corner playing with siblings and cousins
Growing and learning and loving
And dreaming of castles in the warm air
Flying kites high into blue skies
Laughter skipping cross the courtyards.

Not blasting and bombing
Arm sticking out of rubble like a flag of surrender
When minutes ago it belonged to a mother
Cuddling fragile bodies still warm with love
As walls collapse onto them, sweat stink of fear
All light snuffed out.

Not clinging to the sides of a truck no air in the tyres
Bumping along strange streets to a nowhere place
Where there is nothing growing but fear and hunger
Their parents grow older and greyer
Eyes dulled by lack of hope no stories to share
No bedtimes to read for.

Under constant screaming of rockets and drones
Lorries crash into buildings and bodies and bones
There's just clouds of dust choking the bare earth
A battered trainer, toothbrush, torn teddy
No children where home used to be.