

# Reflections in poetry on the refugee crisis

By Y4 & Y5 children at  
Greystone Community  
Primary School, Ripon



Leaving

# Leaving: an anthology

Ripon City of Sanctuary has been working closely with Greystone Community Primary School in Ripon, North Yorkshire, leading assemblies and classes on what it means to be a refugee. The entire school has shown an exceptional level of openness to, and concern about, issues of asylum.

To explore what it might be like if the children suddenly went to an Arab country, just as a Syrian child has come to their school, we spent several sessions looking at aspects of Arabic art, language and culture.

The children in Hackfall, a class made up of Year 4 and Year 5, were inspired to write the poems in this anthology. Built on what they had learned and their responses to it, their words demonstrate a remarkable depth of understanding.

We hope you will enjoy their work, and the children would ask that you look out for their haikus (three-line verses with a 5-7-5 syllable pattern) as well as some clever acrostics (where the first letter of each line spells out a relevant word).

We are refugees... Our long journey is endless... Now we need a home. We are refugees... Our long journey is endless... Now we need a home. We are refugees... Our long journey is endless... Now we need a home.

- Jasmin & Liam

Now we need a home. We are refugees...

Ready to journey | Everlasting deserts | Forever-lasting travelling | Under a baking sun | Give me water | Escaping Explosions!

Under a baking sun | Give me water | Escaping Explosions!

- Corban

## DERELICTION

Disaster! We have to leave.  
It means we have to travel for miles  
So hot...  
Perilous  
Long journey;  
Abandoned homes.  
Can't breathe.  
Every victim is  
Derelict.

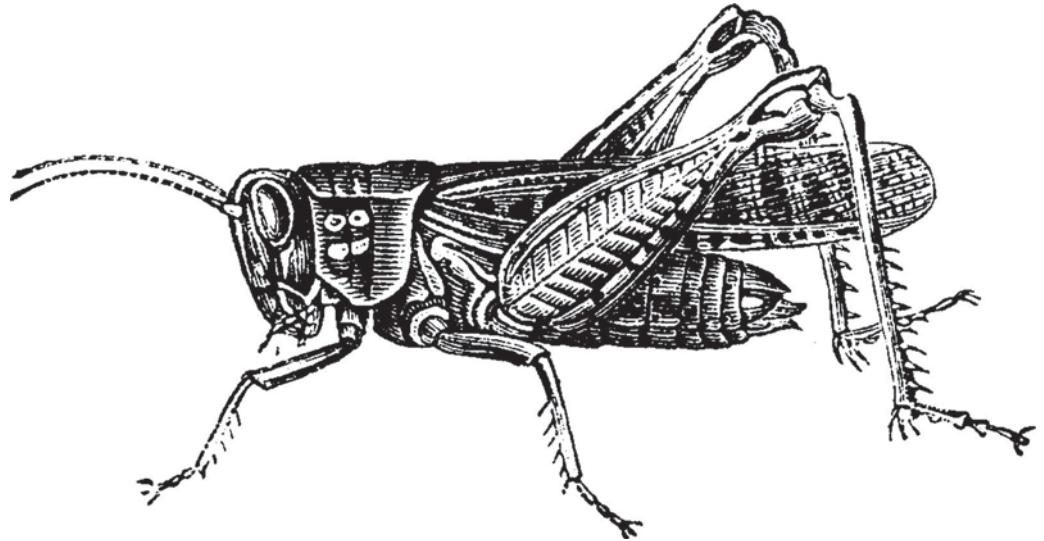
- Mia

## NOT A SWARM

I'm a refugee.  
We need to have a new home -  
I'm not a locust!

I'm not a locust!  
I don't want to be harmful -  
It's just... you are scared.

- Lucas & Ashton





The place has been destroyed

Help, please!

Everyone evacuate

War help

Away we go

Lost loved ones,

Lost loved friends.

- Max

## 6.3m IDPs

Disaster! We have to move on.

It means miles and miles under a hot desert

Sun.

Perilous

Long journey across hostile lands.

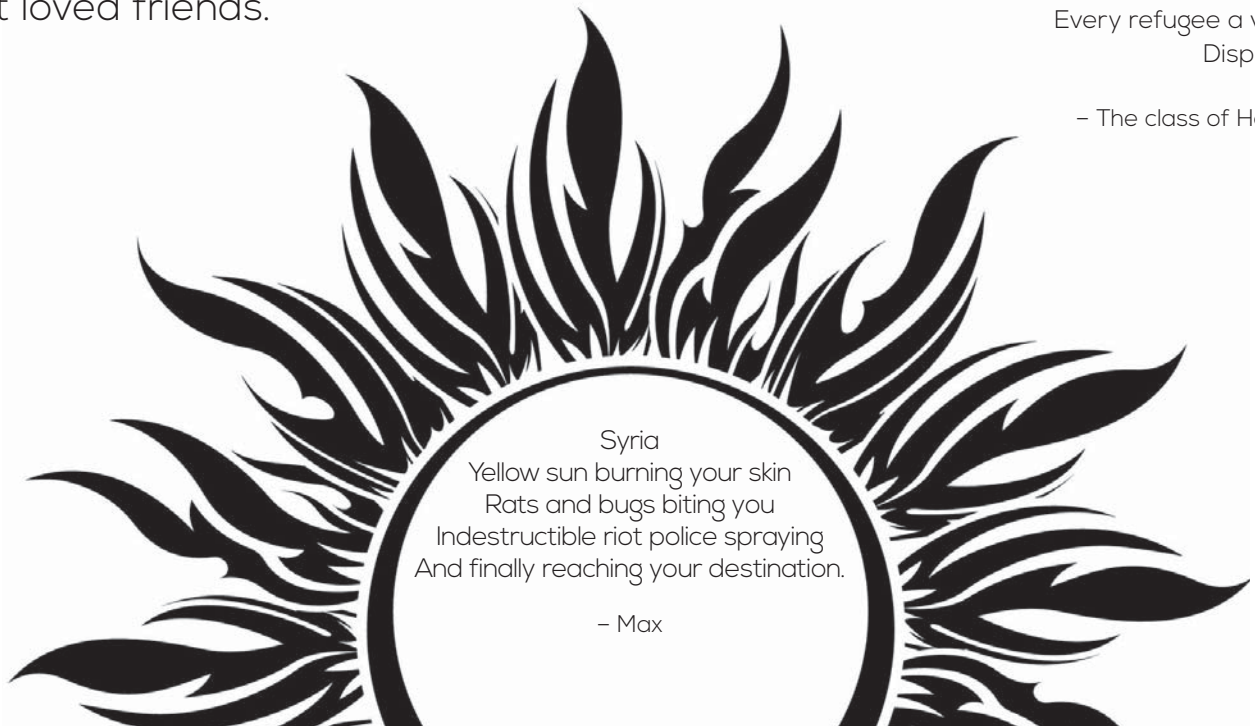
Abandoned homes.

Crushed dreams.

Every refugee a victim,

Displaced.

- The class of Hackfall



Syria

Yellow sun burning your skin

Rats and bugs biting you

Indestructible riot police spraying

And finally reaching your destination.

- Max

## THEN NOT HELP

A Syrian needs help:

"Save us, please!"

You can come here –

Let them do what you do.

Upset children, the whole journey.

More people will help... then not help.

Some soldiers help; some don't.

Endless travel.

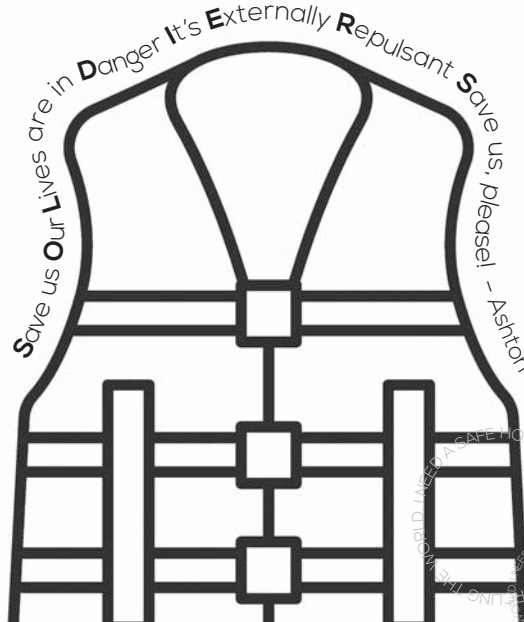
Eventually you will find a home.

Kids are waiting out tears.

Everyone should help;

Refugees need our help.

– Kieran



– Thomas



# danger

Fire and danger –  
Trying to escape from home.  
I am in danger!

– Tilly

# OBSTRUCTION


The separation I can't  
Handle  
Everyone  
Wants  
A  
Loving,  
Living family.

– Jack

# CAN'T GO FORWARD DON'T GO BACK

Destruction here, not your home.  
If I was you... don't go back.  
Survive as long as you can.  
Places are dangerous.  
Long, endless journey  
At your country, there is nothing.  
Careful on your journey.  
Escape the country.  
Don't go back to your country!

– Liam



I see  
the border/  
I'm face-to-face  
with revolts/  
We can't  
escape.

– Jakob

So mean to the refugees. – Aymee

Safe – Old – Letting no one like refugees in their country – Dying – Indestructible riot police – Evil soldiers – Refugees

## STOP

Stop people coming!  
Only refugees.  
Long journeys  
Around the world -  
Danger will come one day.  
Get to the border, travel quickly.  
Refugees will travel all night,  
Looking for homes.  
Soldiers need to help us.

-Skye

## CITY OF SANCTUARY

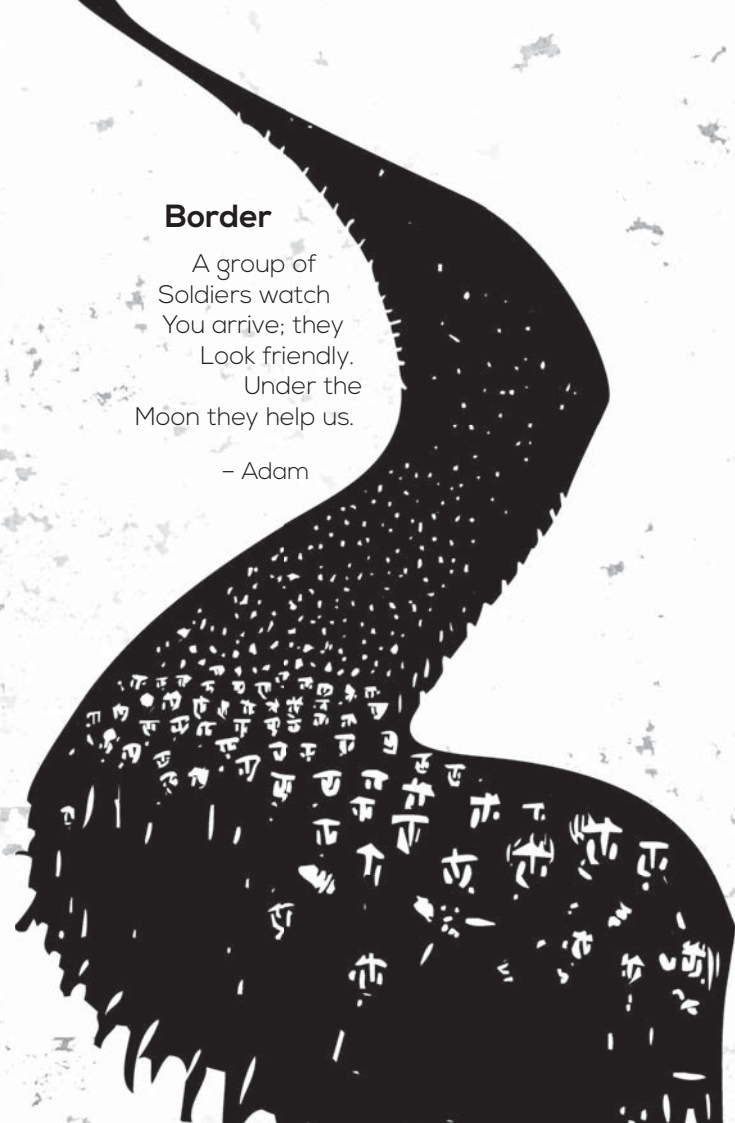
I'm finally safe.  
Thank God I made it here now;  
I have a home now.  
I'm finally safe.  
I'm in Ripon with my friends;  
I have a home now.

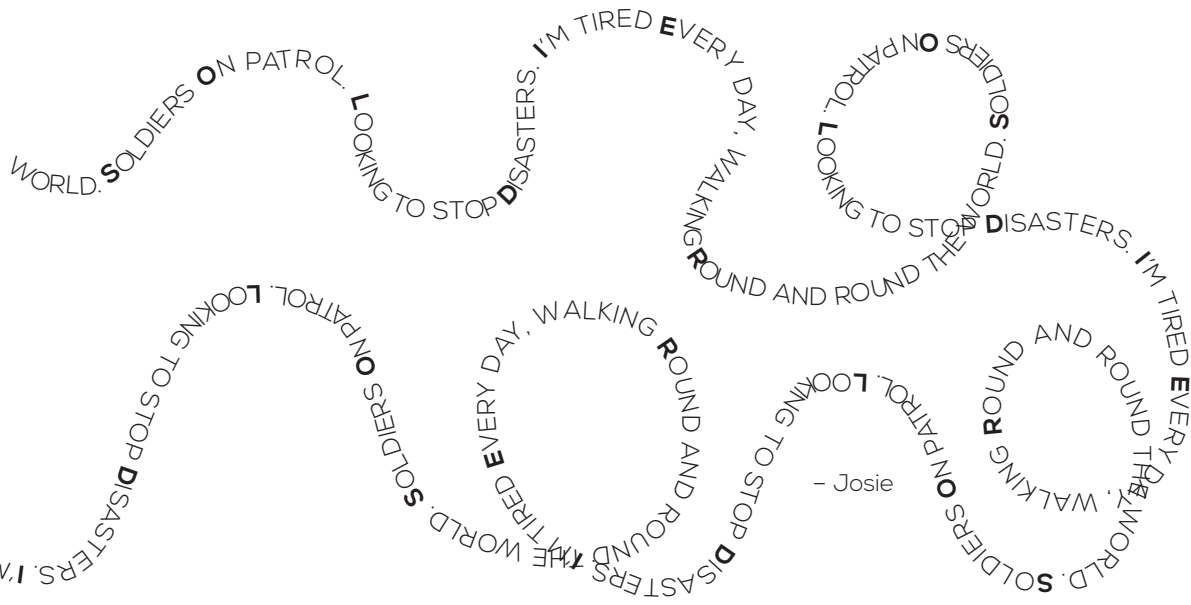
- Ruby & Isla

## Border

A group of  
Soldiers watch  
You arrive; they  
Look friendly.  
Under the  
Moon they help us.

- Adam





- Josie

## FAMISHED LAND

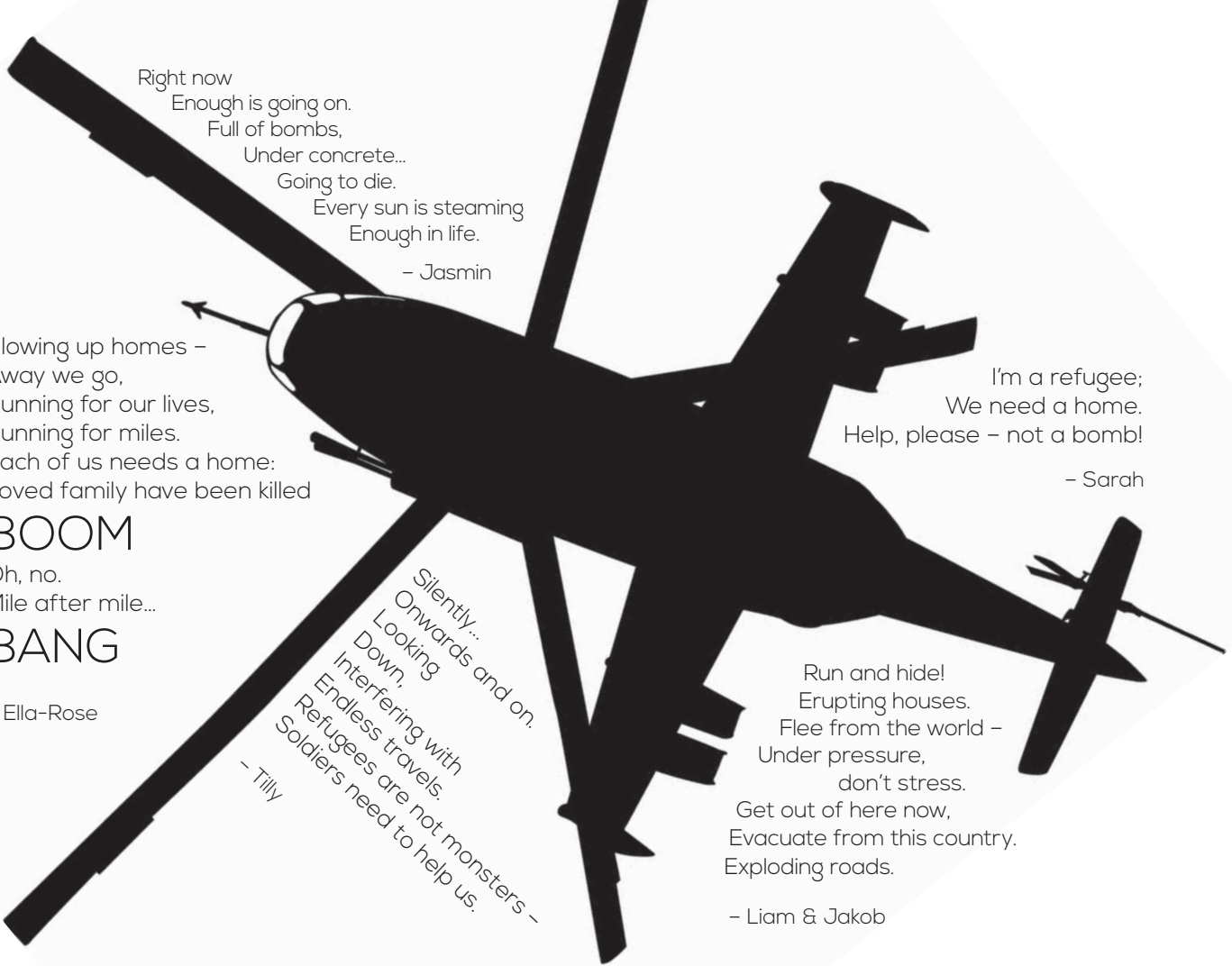
Please help us - we're so hungry.  
We have travelled so far;  
Please give us a home.

- Jack

Towns being bombed. Blown-up towns. Bombs racing. Deeper as even serious rocks bang through. You can't drink water from the sea. Guns trying to kill refugees. Smoking bombs. Rocket-launchers shot at people... Dead.

- Charlie





Right now  
Enough is going on.  
Full of bombs,  
Under concrete...  
Going to die.  
Every sun is steaming  
Enough in life.

- Jasmin

Blowing up homes -  
Away we go,  
Running for our lives,  
Running for miles.  
Each of us needs a home:  
Loved family have been killed

**BOOM**

Oh, no.  
Mile after mile...

**BANG**

- Ella-Rose

Silently...  
Onwards and on.  
Looking  
Down,  
Interfering with  
Endless travels.  
Refugees are not monsters -  
Soldiers need to help us.

- Tilly

I'm a refugee;  
We need a home.  
Help, please - not a bomb!

- Sarah

Run and hide!  
Erupting houses.  
Flee from the world -  
Under pressure,  
don't stress.  
Get out of here now,  
Evacuate from this country.  
Exploding roads.

- Liam & Jakob



We are Syrian! Being injured and killed. We come in peace.



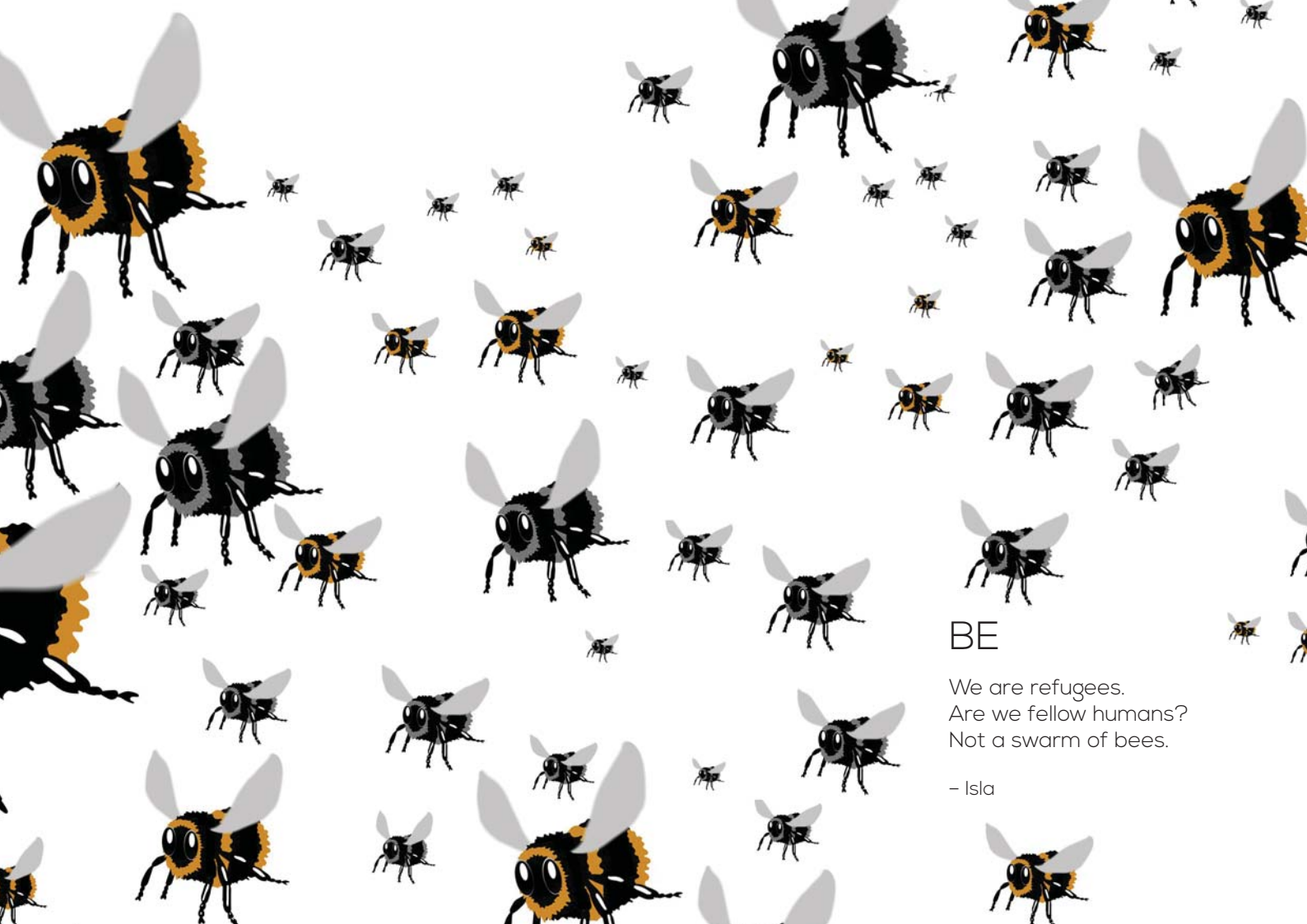
We are Syrian! Being injured and killed. We come in peace.

We are Syrian! Being injured and killed. We come in peace.

We are Syrian! Being injured and killed. We come in peace.

We are Syrian! Being injured and killed. We come in peace.

- Logan



BE

We are refugees.  
Are we fellow humans?  
Not a swarm of bees.

– Isla

## About this project

**City of Sanctuary** is a national charity committed to building a culture of hospitality and welcome for those seeking sanctuary from war, persecution or disaster.

The local branch, **Ripon City of Sanctuary**, has been working closely with children at **Greystone Community Primary School**. The school has shown a real interest in issues of asylum – and not only because they have already welcomed a Syrian refugee child. They are about to be awarded 'School of Sanctuary' status by the national charity; this is not given lightly, and confirms just how hard the school has worked.

The class of Hackfall, made up of children in Year 4 and Year 5, have been inspired to contribute these poems, on the subject of flight from war, to the inaugural **Ripon Poetry Festival 2017**.

Ripon City of Sanctuary would like to thank all of the children in the school as well as acting headteacher Ms Victoria Kirkman and Hackfall's teacher, Mr Gary Williams.

*Cover image reproduced by kind permission. Commissioned by Norwegian People's Aid. Illustrated by Lindsay Pollock. Produced by PositiveNegatives.*

*Please visit [positivenegatives.org](http://positivenegatives.org)*

[cityofsanctuary.org](http://cityofsanctuary.org)

