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The Afghan Girl

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The Afghan Girl

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Author Bio

Stephanie Allen is a sophomore from Yadkinville, NC. (It's not close to anything you've heard of.) She's been writing since before she can remember, but isn't majoring in English. She chooses to confuse her parents by picking Japanese instead. Stephanie wears wild socks, can't decide between pirates and ninjas and is in a serious, long-term relationship with the word skullduggery.

The Afghan Girl

You say you wonder what would cause her
To look at you so accusingly; why is she so angry?
It's not so difficult to understand, really.

Try losing your parents at six years old,
Try witnessing the sky give birth to
Brilliant Easter eggs of red and black,
Try watching them crush your mother and
Blast apart your father, pieces scattered
Too far to recover them all.

After you've managed to grasp that,
Cross the mountains, but do it in winter,
Making sure your clothes have holes—and
Leave your feet bare. Follow your grandmother
With your siblings through the snow. Hide in caves,
Huddled together more from terror than for warmth.

Swallow your pride, next.
Beg for blankets, plead for food.
Make sure to thank God that you're the youngest,
Because it means that your brother and sisters
Will starve themselves for you to eat. And then,
Hate yourself for thanking God for this.

Now, spend the next six or seven years
Drifting from one grey refugee camp to another.
You grew up in the countryside, where there was
Room to run for days, and a sky that stretched
Beyond even that. These masses of people choke you.
You will nurture your anger, your hate.

Remind yourself as you rise each morning to
Another day of poverty: you come from
Warriors who raged every day, every minute
Against fate's fickle nature. Carry that within you,
Let it blossom in your eyes, let it mark you.
Anger is written into your face, a warning for life.

And when a photographer approaches you,
Daring to steal a moment of the life
You claimed in defiance of fate, and dictators
And even God, look directly into the camera.
Reject the world and its pity. Give the world instead
Your anger. They will need it.