

Refugee Crisis *Part 1*

- Sophie Mae Berman

Conflict in Syria, violence in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Eritrea, and poverty in Kosovo continue, driving a massive surge of refugees into Europe. As families flee from destitution and violence, world leaders argue about policy; what should be done to solve this rapidly swelling global problem?

“Trembling in their house in the blasted-out Syrian city of Homs, Ahmad, his wife, his son and his daughter listened for the barrel of bombs. They had been falling on the neighborhood for three days with the frequency of raindrops... the conflict assumed a terrifying regularity. The buzz of a warplane. Then a deep, heavy thump as yet another structure in their corner of the city was blown to smithereens. And then there were the knocks on the door two houses down... a frenzy of violence. The neighbors were not strong enough to keep out the soldiers. The women in the house were raped before their throats were slit. The men were simply shot. Ahmad and his family took what they could carry and ran...” (Kingsbury).

In September, The Boston Globe and Wall Street Journal headlines were dominated by the global migration crisis of desperate families and children fleeing their native countries in fear of their lives, while clinging to the desperate hope of beginning new ones. Imagine the entire population of the state of Connecticut scrambling fearfully to save their lives, paying smugglers \$1800 per person to board rubber rafts that might lead to safety after traveling two hours across the sea. Huddled families, often propelling themselves with a single oar or “clawing at the sea with cupped hands” face this challenge daily, many drowning in the process. The massive population of the state of Connecticut would not quite equal the 4 MILLION refugees who have fled Syria alone since its civil war began in 2011, precipitated by peaceful prodemocracy protests. Half of Syria’s refugees crossed the Aegean Sea into Turkey, landing first on the island of Lesbos where 2,000 people still arrive daily (Sacchetti).