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## Refugees

A.P.Govindankutty

Struggling to keep pace  
With those walking in front  
The young mother, a widow,  
Her man killed in the resistance,  
Her meagre possessions  
On her head, in a cardboard box,  
Bread and water in a bag  
Hanging from her right shoulder,  
Younger child, a girl of two summers,  
Sleeping on the left shoulder,  
Elder, a boy of four years,  
Keeping step with her,  
Holding her right hand,  
Not able to answer the child  
Where they were going,  
How far they had to go,  
Her mind sagging with fear  
Of the child's tender legs  
Losing strength  
As the road lengthened  
Before them,  
Just pulled on with the rest of the village,  
Taking care not to lose them from sight,  
For in this wide world,  
They were the only ones she knew.

Not knowing where to go,  
What to expect or endure,  
The villages were moving,  
For it meant certain death  
If they chose to remain  
Where they were born,  
Brought up and buried their dead.

Village after village headed to the sea-shore,  
A cease-less flow of humanity,  
Each looking forward  
To squeeze into a boat  
To the other continent,  
Where, if at all they reach there,  
Without meeting death in the sea,

What held in store,  
They never knew.

With what little they had  
They were living in peace,  
When the invading horde  
Descended on hem  
Driving them from their land,  
The land the super-power  
Sought to dig up  
For metals and hydrocarbon,  
But was refused mining rights  
By the chiefs of the tribes,  
For, their faith didn't permit  
Digging the earth  
For extracting wealth.

That the invading horde  
Acted for the super-power,  
The people had no way to know,  
Nor that the host countries  
On the other continent  
Were paid by the same power  
For taking in the refugees,  
If ever they landed there  
Without perishing in the sea.