

Home Without A Home

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Table of Contents

Introduction	Page 2-3
<i>Viet Nguyen</i>	Page 3-4
Rooms For Refugees/ Positive	
Action.....	Page 5-6
Poem...	Page 6-9
<i>Perspective and What Gets</i>	
<i>Lost</i>	Page 9-10
<i>Last, First,</i>	
<i>Middle</i>	Page 10-12
Conclusion.....	Page 12-13
Works Cited.....	Page 14-15

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The ideology of home is a warm bed, a closet with clothes, food in the pantry and people who love you. When the door opens you hear laughter, you see the same furniture, picture frames with the people that are important, and the smell, those same smells that encapsulate you and the only though is, “Home”. There are people in this world that hopefully had that life at one point, but now they're living in a brand-new place because the mouth of the dragon they were sitting on was closing and they had to go. Peoples live have been completely uprooted and they have nothing except for what they could carry in their hands or a small pack. I decided to examine the short stories from the book *The Displaced* by Viet Nguyen, the first being *The Introduction* which was also written by Viet Nguyen. This story is about a Vietnamese family that became refugees in San Jose, California, which when they arrived, was going in the dumps. The second short story I looked into is *Last, First, Middle* by Joe Azam and this is the story of a young boy evolving into a young man but through his journey he had the hardest time figuring out his identity, struggling with his maiden name from Afghanistan. The third short story is a visual story called, *Perspective and What Gets Lost*, by Thi Bui. These images show what decisions that a family has to go through when they leave their country and become refugees. The final story I'm using is *The Sympathizer* by Viet Nguyen where he talks about a fictional set

of characters set in a historical event and tells the story of a double agent for both the USA and Vietnam. There's nothing like the feeling of being home, but sometimes you're home and that feeling isn't there.

The *Introduction* tells you the story of Viet Nguyen, his struggles of coming over seas and how his family acclimated to society. He says in his short story, "...I remember nothing of the experience that turned me into a refugee." Not knowing what happened in your struggles to receive a title is, in a sense, a disadvantage. The reason being, there's no fire there, you don't know the hard work that was put in, but Viet Nguyen does know what it feels like to not belong and not feel at home. Leaving your home country at four years old, you were accustomed to a certain lifestyle even at four. In the stories that his siblings passed down to him on their journey from South Vietnam to the United States, they explained graphic mental images of, "...dead paratroopers hanging from the trees on our route..." Once settled in the United States, San Jose California to be exact, they realized that there were a lot of Vietnamese that resided in this location. They all realized that the town was in the downslope of economy, not having very many businesses open and the area not being the best. A lot of families including Viet Nguyen's decided to open their own businesses in the city of San Jose, bringing a home feel to the town for the Vietnamese. The problem they started getting into was, since there was such a high demand for the Vietnamese shops, the demand for the already established businesses went down which caused some of them to close down. This caused store owners that were going out of business to post on their windows, "...ANOTHER AMERICAN DRIVEN OUT OF BUSINESS BY THE

VIETNAMESE..." as shown in figure 1

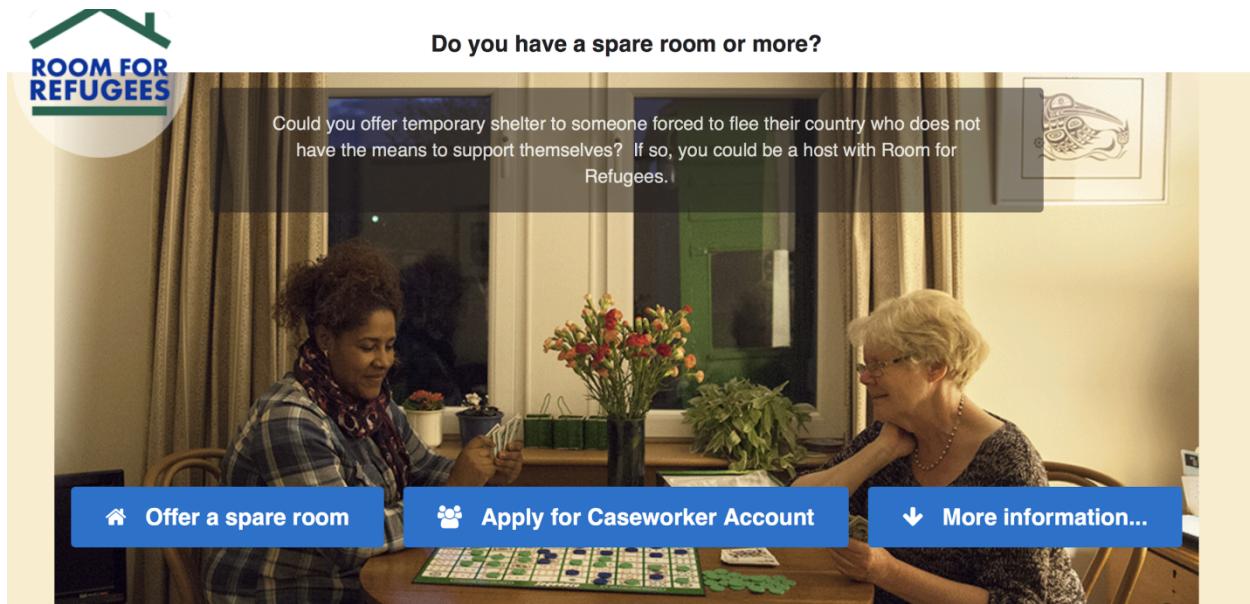


Figure 1 comic

He goes on to tell stories about how his family business saw a lot of pain the town like, "...the two policemen shot to death in front of my parents' store..." then once the stores started to do well, the economy in the city started to grow and blossom. Once that started, instead of the Vietnamese businesses growing and expanding they started to build a metropolitan city causing the Vietnamese to go out of business. One of the final stores around was Viet Nguyen's which

then, "...you will not see my parents' store, which was across the street from the new city hall. What you will see instead is a parking lot...". This being appalling, a group of people helped rebuild the economy and then they just get excavated from the home they made, this put them right back into a mental state of being displaced and a refugee state.

Image 2 From Rooms For Refugees



Now that research is being done, there are places for refugees to go. It's not as it used to be. Hoping you can show up to a city and someone will take you in, there's programs to help you and bring you in. I'm finding places like "Rooms for Refugees" and room for refugees (as seen in Image 2) helps people in need that came seeking asylum from where they need to and can bring what they need to and stay in your home or on your land. This company is mostly in the areas of, England, Scotland, Wales, North Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland. This company works with 300 nonprofit companies to help with funding and making sure that they place people in the correct locations for them. There's another company that's similar called "Positive Action" this company, being extremely similar to Rooms for Refugees", has a similar program and if you look through the website "Rooms for Refugees", they say "AirBnB" for refugees. Thinking of

that, the meaning of a bed and breakfast is a get away, and it sounds nice, but you leave the bed and breakfast to go home. To reside back into your life and to be back to apart of your society and refugees don't get to do that, they don't get to go back to their jobs, friends, family. Refugees have what they have, they can't just, "go back". They both offer help, everyone in the organization are there to open their arms and help whoever they can

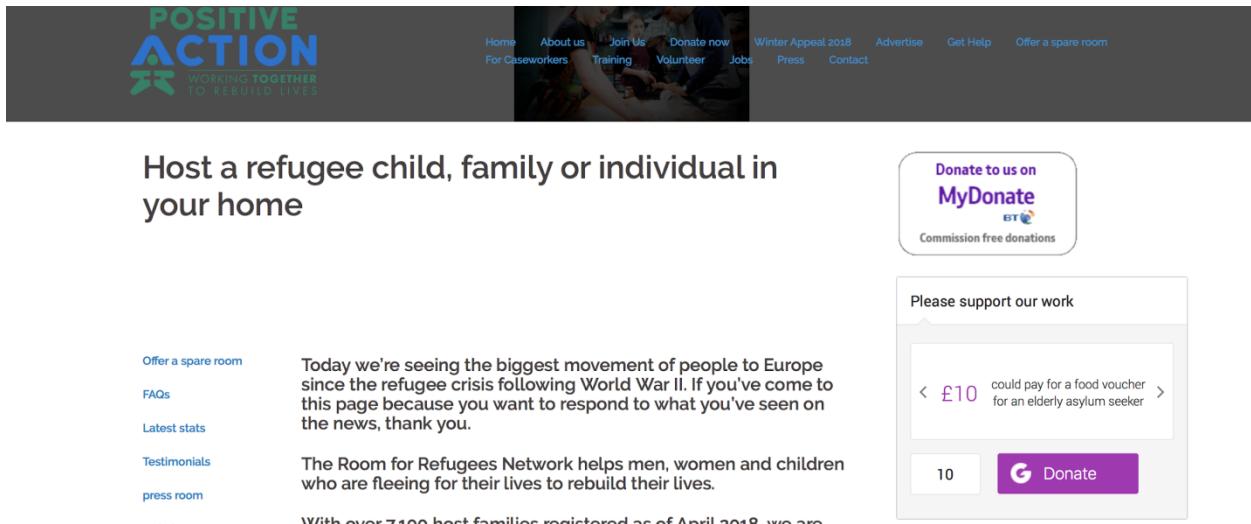


Figure 3 Positive Action

. On the about page of "Positive Action" they actually mention "Rooms for Refugees" and putting out there how they're both there to help.

There's a poem that goes out for refugees, and it goes,
 "no one leaves home unless
 home is the mouth of a shark.
 you only run for the border
 when you see the whole city
 running as well.

your neighbours running faster
than you, the boy you went to school with
who kissed you dizzy behind
the old tin factory is
holding a gun bigger than his body,
you only leave home
when home won't let you stay.
no one would leave home unless home
chased you, fire under feet,
hot blood in your belly.
it's not something you ever thought about
doing, and so when you did -
you carried the anthem under your breath,
waiting until the airport toilet
to tear up the passport and swallow,
each mouthful of paper making it clear that
you would not be going back.
you have to understand,
no one puts their children in a boat
unless the water is safer than the land.
who would choose to spend days
and nights in the stomach of a truck
unless the miles travelled

meant something more than journey.
no one would choose to crawl under fences,
be beaten until your shadow leaves you,
raped, then drowned, forced to the bottom of
the boat because you are darker, be sold,
starved, shot at the border like a sick animal,
be pitied, lose your name, lose your family,
make a refugee camp a home for a year or two or ten,
stripped and searched, find prison everywhere
and if you survive and you are greeted on the other side
with go home blacks, refugees
dirty immigrants, asylum seekers
sucking our country dry of milk,
dark, with their hands out
smell strange, savage -
look what they've done to their own countries,
what will they do to ours?
the dirty looks in the street
softer than a limb torn off,
the indignity of everyday life
more tender than fourteen men who
look like your father, between
your legs, insults easier to swallow

than rubble, than your child's body
 in pieces - for now, forget about pride
 your survival is more important.

 i want to go home, but home is the mouth of a shark
 home is the barrel of the gun
 and no one would leave home
 unless home chased you to the shore
 unless home tells you to
 leave what you could not behind,
 even if it was human.

 no one leaves home until home
 is a damp voice in your ear saying
 leave, run now, i don't know what
 i've become."

Figure 4 poem

This poem speaks wonders of people that are forced out their own country. In the “essay” *Perspective and What Gets Lost*, by Thi Bui, the pictures that portray in this short set of clips show almost exactly what the poem evokes. The pictures show a people who have nothing, a bunch of people with little to nothing except the clothes on their back and maybe a backpack. This shows the raw realization of how people are, and how they literally have nothing. This one picture shows a family, with a mom, and four young kids, the oldest being a boy, maybe a teenager and he doesn’t have time to enjoy his teenage years, it looks like he, and mom will be the two to support the family and make sure that they will eat and have roof over their head. The other picture shows a woman with all of these words around her like “Family” and “Friends”

“Religion” things like that where you don’t think you’ll lose unless you go away from them. The people that are displaced or refugees they don’t have anything at all, like family or friends they have the people that came with them and hopefully some family that resides in the place they decided to go.

There’s a picture, it’s semi famous of a little boy walking down a path of tents as seen in figure 4



Figure 5 of boy

and this picture shows the conditions of which refugees that flee for that freedom and solidarity end up in. People leave their whole lives back in their home country to end up in a camp. This picture reminds me in a way of *The Sympathizer*, by Viet Nguyen. In the book they talk about the fall of Saigon, and how when people fled from their homes to try and exit the country, they ended up in camps. In the sympathizer he says, “Outside our barracks and in the tent city...” and that didn’t really come to fruition until I saw this picture and the text about how the general

walked down the path of the tent city and got spit on and scratched up in *The Sympathizer*. This gave me the visual of how that could look and what the conditions could be. I started looking into the steps of how you legally become a refugee and how to seek help to evacuate your country and do it in a safe way. On the website, Refugees.org, they show how much they help, how to become a supporter of the cause, and who they help. It's not only refugees, but, "Immigrants, unaccompanied migrating children, and survivors of human trafficking." they show this in figure 6. It shows all of the ways you can do your part if you're interested in supporting the cause. In the story *Last, First, Middle* by Joseph Azam, he talks about his story of coming from Afghanistan, traveling to Berlin, then eventually when his father could get out of Afghanistan, they made a break for New York. The Azam family did things differently, considering times were different. When they came from Berlin to New York they didn't stay in a camp or depend of family. They got a small one-bedroom apartment, his dad sold newspapers and his mom swept floors and cleaned up in a beauty spa. They saved up enough money until they could afford a shop to sell Afghanistan tapestry. This story being very similar to Viet Nguyen's family with a family business. The thing that a lot of kids that come from other cultures is when you start to grow up, most kids and teenagers want to fit into society as a normal kid. Coming into a classroom where you hear names like, "Kevin, Brett, Matt" and your name is Mohammad Yousef Azam, you don't have the self confidence to stand behind your name. His name converted to Joseph from him asking to be call Yousef and that name being close enough. He finally, at the end, found a way to incorporate his real name and his American name by saying, "...I chose all of them. Joseph Mohammad Yousuf Azam."... "It didn't fit in the space provided on the form that day but it fit the moment and it fit me. This was my American name."

Here's an example of what the application would look like for Joseph to attempt to put his name into the box in figure 6

Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status
 USCIS Form I-485
 OMB No. 1615-0023
 Expires 06/26/2019

For USCIS Use Only		
Preference Category:	Receipt	Action Block
Country of Birth:		
Priority Date:		
Date Form I-485 Received:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Applicant <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewer <input type="checkbox"/> Waived Date: _____ Serial Interview: _____ Lawful Permanent Resident of: _____		
Section of Law <input type="checkbox"/> INA 205(a) <input type="checkbox"/> INA 205(b) <input type="checkbox"/> INA 205(c), Act of 9/1/87 <input type="checkbox"/> INA 205(d) <input type="checkbox"/> Cuban Adjustment Act <input type="checkbox"/> INA 245(i) <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> INA 255(m)		
To be completed by an attorney or accredited representative (if any). <input type="checkbox"/> Select this box if Form G-28 is attached. <input type="checkbox"/> Visa/Number (if any) <input type="checkbox"/> Attorney State Bar Number (if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Attorney or Accredited Representative USCIS Online Account Number (if any)		
► START HERE - Type or print in black ink. <input type="checkbox"/> A-Number ► A-: _____		
NOTE TO ALL APPLICANTS: If you do not completely fill out this application or fail to submit required documents listed in the instructions, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) may deny your application.		
Part I. Information About You (Person applying for lawful permanent residence)		
Your Current Legal Name (do not provide a nickname)		
1.a. Family Name	3.a. Family Name (Last Name)	
1.b. Given Name (First Name)	3.b. Given Name (Middle Name)	
1.c. Middle Name	3.c. Middle Name	
Other Names You Have Used Since Birth (if applicable)		
NOTE: Provide all other names you have ever used, including your name at birth, other legal names, nicknames, aliases, and assumed names. If needed, use extra space to complete this section and use the space provided in Part 14, Additional Information.		
2.a. Family Name	4.a. Family Name (Last Name)	
2.b. Given Name (First Name)	4.b. Given Name (First Name)	
2.c. Middle Name	4.c. Middle Name	
Other Information About You		
5. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)	NOTE: In addition to providing your actual date of birth, include any other date of birth you have used in completing this section or any legal names or non-legal names in the space provided in Part 14, Additional Information.	
6. Sex <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	7. City or Town of Birth	
Page 1 of 18		

Figure 6 application for Immigration Visa



Serving the uprooted

For over 100 years, we have advanced the rights and lives of those who have lost or left their homes. We believe we have a shared responsibility to clear obstacles and uncover opportunities for people everywhere. So, when lives are uprooted by force or by choice, we fight alongside those on the path to independence.



[EXPLORE THE ISSUES](#)



Figure 7 of Refugees.org

The conclusion that keeps presenting itself is, becoming a refugee is draining, it makes your life turn upside down. The only reason that one would want to become a refugee, an immigrant, leave their home, is if they need to for their life and their family's life. Nobody is going to leave their family, friends, job, religion, and culture for fun, this is an educated decision to make a better life for the people they love. Whether it's donating to a shelter or giving your time to support in any way you can, next time you think about not having a sympathetic bone towards someone in need, think about what they very possibly could have gone through, what they are going through to try and better their lives. Remember how nice it feels to be home. Now think how that next refugee in a camp feels.

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