

A refugee's song ...

I left, with flames behind, hope in front of me,
With bruised heart, with smoke-filled eyes.
I left with torn hands, my feet in the mud.

I left, with flames behind, hope in front of me,
Rage in the head, thunder in the ears.
I left, fear in the belly, brothers in skin,
Fever in the blood, bitterness in the mouth.

I left, with flames behind, hope in front of me.
My body has departed but my soul has remained behind.
Across land and seas I wandered, without stopping,
Hoping, begging to be able to arrive one day.

I have constantly approached women and children,
Met old people and innocent parents.
I left, with flames behind, hope in front of me.
My body has departed, but my soul has remained behind.

I ran, walked, jumped, stumbled,
To regain freedom one day,
To be given my taste for life again one day,
And finally to be able to rediscover smiles and joy.

I left, with flames behind, hope in front of me.
My body has departed, but my soul has remained behind.
One morning the boat docked, thanks be to God,
I finally found freedom.
And hope returned, I finally savoured
The hoped-for, desired and deserved happiness.

I arrived, but my heart is still wounded.
I was given shelter with threats and handcuffs,
I was locked up in walls of freedom
The cold outside and the ice in the hearts of the centre's staff
Were the witnesses of my first hours.

I arrived, but my heart is wounded.
All these people look at me astonished and annoyed,
This stranger disturbing their peace,
Who has forgotten what the verb "to eat" is,
And who has travelled for months.

I arrived, but my heart is still wounded,
I no longer know who I am, where I am; I'm overwhelmed.

This text first appeared in French in Courriers de Prêtres-Ouvriers'