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| Suitable for Key Stage 3 (R1) |

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**Leaving Home: Poem**



**Lorry**

There are fifteen of us inside.

We don’t look at each other.

Like we’re ashamed of being here.

Heavy doors slam…it goes dark.

Father squeezes my hand.

I try to imagine his face smiling.

Then sickness.

The stink of diesel and constant lurching.

Father cradles me in the dark

And wipes my wet face

With a crisp white handkerchief.

We listen to the engine.

Hear it gut -training its way up twisting mountain roads

Then screaming free-wheeling down into valleys.

Father opens up a bag of apples.

I cannot eat.

At night it’s cold.

At first we sit alone.

Strangers trying politely not to touch…

But warmth slowly draws us together

And we huddle in a tight shivering mass.

At the first checkpoint

Father lays a finger on my lips

We hold our steaming breath.

Soldiers’ boots crunch on frozen mud.

Lorry doors slam.

There’s shouting in a language not ours.

And a dog barks.

Then the engine starts. We move again.

We breathe again.

Twice more we are stopped.

Once they open up the compartment

Shine torches at crates we hide behind.

Light streaming in through wooden cracks.

Surely they’ll see us. Surely they’ll find us.

Then on… picking up speed across the flat plains

Heading for the coast.

‘The sea,’ says Father.

‘Just goes on for ever. You wait. You won’t believe it.’

And then some time in the morning we stop.

I can hear the cry of strange birds.

‘Seagulls,’ says Father.

We hear the driver leave his cab and

Speak to someone in our language.

He is laughing.

As they open the doors

We smell bread.

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