

## SUDAN

In truth, it upsets me to see the lonely old man  
taken to the home by his own son;  
but it pains me more to see the small, helpless boy,  
waiting for his mother in the dry river-bed.  
His mother could do nothing but leave him there  
when she went to look for food and water.  
In the end she found a few herbs; nettles.  
Eating them might have saved her life,  
but she preferred to die with them in her hand  
thinking of her abandoned son.  
The child is still waiting for her,  
his eyes wide, terrified,  
his stomach swollen like a balloon,  
flies in his pus-ridden eyelashes.  
To go on living the boy needs us,  
his only crime was to have been born in a country  
infested by the curse of war.  
The poor take flight with their meagre belongings  
pursued by a blood-thirsty mob:  
mothers, children, and starving old folk,  
walking to a black, uncertain future.  
Although it upsets me to see the lonely old man  
it hurts me more to see the helpless boy.

Coventry, Winter 2012