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*The Syrian Violin maker*

After the voyage  
he needed a home for the soul,  
an instrument that might sing  
of his history.  
Aged maple was a gift,  
as were the tools he used  
to carve out the body,  
making a place to cradle survivors,  
whose names are written inside.  
Beneath the veneer there is a space  
aching for the gentle stroke of a bow  
to coax out the chanting of children,  
sunbirds, humming jasmine,  
the drone of scooters in the street.  
Yes, there is an elegy for all this,  
the slow sawing of a life divided,  
the frenzied tempo of a father's heart,  
breast beating, wailing, sirens  
rising to a crescendo  
until there is nothing  
but the welcome resonance  
of waves breaking  
on another shore.

Mairéad Donnellan

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WALKING, AS AN ACT OF REBELLION, AN ESCAPE OR OF BEING.



“A society without strangers would be impoverished; to live only among ourselves, constantly inbreeding, never facing an outsider to make us question again and again our certainties and rules, would inevitably lead to atrophy. The experience of encountering a stranger—like the experience of suffering—is important and creative; provided we know when to step back.”

—Elie Wiesel



Hungary has closed its border with Croatia to refugees in a bid to block the path of streams of migrants desperate to get to northern Europe.

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What is the distance

There is the distance in miles, the distance that your body experience when you leave one place for another.

There is the distance that is determined by why you walk down a street, leaving all behind.

There is the distance when you cross the borders of language.

You can cross from one part of a city to another still speak English, but not understand a word spoken.

But whether you cross borders-ocean to flee persecution, or for an adventure, to re-invent yourself, always you bring your past identity, which mingles with the new.

Multiple layers of being.



Hungarian refugees walking to Austria in 1956.  
Some 200,000 Hungarians fled a Soviet crackdown, with most going to  
Austria and 35,000 coming to Canada

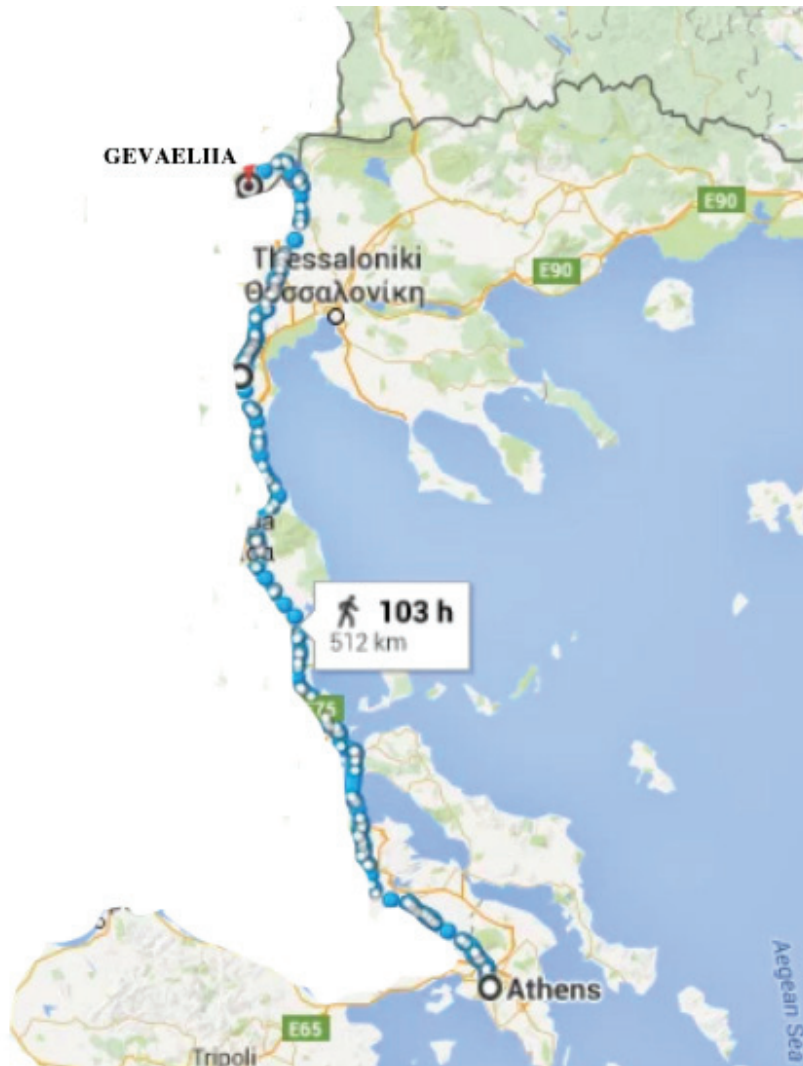
Röszke, Hungary

116 h  
573 km

By walking, you escape from the very idea of  
identity, the temptation to be someone, to have a name and  
a history ...  
The freedom in walking lies in not being anyone; for  
the walking body has no history, it is just an eddy in the  
stream of immemorial life.

TABANOCVE





It's 15 April 2012, and it's Osama's birthday. And it is again a birthday interrupted. There's a knock at the door.

It's Wednesday 10 November 2015. Three years after he left Assad's jails, two years after he escaped Syria, and seven months after he survived the sea, Hashem Alsouki finally sees the words he has been waiting for Welcome to Sweden .



The distance from Syria to Germany is approximately 3,700 kilometres.

For refugees fleeing civil war the journey can take weeks, months, if not years.

No one travels for thousand of miles, carrying children if not for HOPE



Arriving at each new city, the traveler finds again a past of  
his that he did not know he had: the  
foreignness of what you no longer are, or no  
longer possess lies in wait for you in foreign  
unprocessed places



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## Unbelonging

The black bamboo I planted is thrashing about  
as though trying to uproot itself, return  
to its native land, or get warm  
in this cold damp country.

Perhaps it has bamboo-memory,  
a form of collective consciousness.  
Phyllostachys Nigra from subtropical China  
rooted beside my pond in slow growth,  
difficult to dislodge now, so keenly settled,  
though not invasive, not spreading unwanted  
as others have, but acting with discretion  
as an outsider must  
when seeking to assimilate.

I tried to root myself as fast as the bamboo,  
but everything was too shallow,  
it was hard to get a grip in a place  
where family history defines who you are.  
I was thrashing about, afraid to speak,  
a foreigner without the forgiveness of exotic.

It wasn't the land that didn't forgive:  
the rules of growth were the same as before,  
chaffinches sang the same songs, trees  
sprang the same leaves. Silently  
I planted a garden in the hungry earth  
but it was thirteen years before I found my voice  
in the patterns of a poem,  
named myself through acceptance  
of unbelonging.

by Nicki Griffin

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Over the course of roughly a decade, a yellow warbler banded with the number 22105811 was caught 21 times -- about twice a year -- and became a much anticipated visitor to the park. “He migrated back and forth from Latin America to Tommy Thompson Park, Toronto, Ontario at least 10 times, and if you pile all that together that’s 30,000 kilometres of flight from a little creature that weighs about the same as a quarter,” <sup>1</sup>



Utopia! Who's Listening Now  
New Works by Anne O'Callaghan  
April 22 - May 20, 2018  
Visual Arts Centre of Clarington