

# Verse: *Always Home*

*By Zoey Hills and Paw Kee Lar*

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My home is a place where moist thick air  
fills my lungs,  
As the rain leaks through our wooden  
roof.  
It is a place where the teachers leave  
burning red prints  
On your skin with a bamboo stick  
When you disobey the rules that keep you  
protected  
From the outside world.

My home is a place where the men in  
green come take my safety.  
It is a place where my village goes down in  
dark flames,  
and turns into my past.

I walk from the place that kept me warm  
with laughter of those around me.  
I run from the place I called home,  
The place where my memories and  
childhood is stored.  
I leave the place where my friendship lays  
With the abandoned volleyball.  
I leave my responsibilities of the  
household,  
Of the pots and pans I would cook the  
family tradition in.

I come to a place where I sit in the dirt  
and watch  
The hunger around me eat people alive.  
I live in the dirty camp where children's  
stomachs  
Are just full enough  
That they don't starve,  
And the taste of Thailand swirls around  
me  
Until I give it the thing it so desires,  
The feel of home.

I leave the camp where I was raised,  
But never thought of as home.  
I fly from the camps that healed my deep  
wounds,  
And my thoughts  
That tortured me.

I come to a place where I don't lose  
anyone,  
Where only good thoughts come to mind.  
I live in America,  
But it is not the home that kept me warm  
and happy.  
It is the home that keeps me safe.



CUSTOMS OF THE WORLD

A Karen women in traditional dress.



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**ZOEY HILLS**, left, is a 9th grader at Boise Junior High.

**PAW KEE LAR** is a Burmese Karen refugee from a UN camp in Thailand.