

# Foreword

Today the number of world refugees is the highest ever recorded. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees counts 65.3 million uprooted people in flight from persecution and war. Few escape the squalor of border encampments, and fewer still – less than half of one percent – advance through the multiyear process for resettlement in the United States. But that fraction looms disproportionately large in the rising American furor over the politics of forced migration. No amount of testing and screening, say critics, can root out the coming jihad.

Boise, Idaho, offers a calmer perspective. Here at the base of the Rocky Mountains, in one of the whitest of American places in one of the reddest American states, 13,000 refugees from at least 53 countries are rebuilding their lives. *Half the World*, herein, samples their transformative stories. A book of history, reporting, poetry, and memoir, the collection queries how communities cope with the shock of forced migration and how strangers among us confront the foreign and unfamiliar by helping others find the best in themselves.

Todd Shallat, Ph.D.

Boise State University School of Public Affairs

March 2017

