

**Thang Lian**

Age: 18, Grade: 12

School Name: East Kentwood High School, Kentwood, MI

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Category: Poetry

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## Slippery Lies

ii. Dark, dreary, cold. An expansive grey stretched above, fat sponges of white muddled within, like clusters of overly ripe Grecian grapes poised to burst. A peculiar man donning a wide-brimmed rice hat rowed, oars ever so slightly parting lips with the deep blue. On deck, shivering, foreign bodies oscillated like seesaws as morning fog eerily crept in: refugees. Voices hushed, eyes alert, heads down, anxiousness lingering like a ghost: tension, a rubber band extended past its limits.

*Back, forth, back, forth our boat rocked.*

*Grrr... Grrr...* The man's rice hat stooped, frowning against the current of the winds, the rhythm of the oars dissipating. *Grrr... Grrr...* A low grumble which I accredited to a hollow stomach began whimpering while fat, juicy droplets dove downwards. Hearts racing, invocations commencing, eyes twitching, Death nearing. Mother pinched me, her once youthful, earthen eyes a storm of worry as the hairs on my arms stood like pillars. "Son," she whispered sharply, letting my name tumble out like a prayer. Soon, babies cried and helpless mothers crooned while eyes searched. No land.

*Back, forth, back, forth our boat rocked.*

"What's happening?" The men hollered, unease and agitation budding. *Grr! Woosh! Grr!* Suddenly, whirlwinds lashed and unfurled like tentacles of the Kraken, hurling buckets of frigid ice-water onto the boat. The sky yowled and wept and howled, the rain a roaring, monstrous torrent. Mother quickly grabbed me by the arms, her nails burrowing into my skin, her breath frenzied.

"There! Now!" She screamed, pointing to the back. However, unyielding were my feet. "Now!" Her eyes demanded, red with earnestness and sleep deprivation, pushing me into the chest of a man I did not know.

*Back, forth, back, forth our boat rocked.*

The man flung me to the back, prompting me to screech until hoarseness overtook my throat. "Stay! Your Mother will be alright!" The man yelled back. But the way his words slipped and slid... lies, I told myself.

*Back, forth, back, forth my world rocked.*