



Back Again Poem
(Afghanistan Refugee-Afsana, 14, female)

A New Friend

I sit alone.

It is the half an hour
in which American girls
and boys sit down and
pick at their food
while discussing their day.

Just eat and you can go back to class.

I look in my lunchbox,
Father packed it.

Naan bread, pualo, yogurt and bottled water.

I start to eat.
A girl with hair like
molasses and skin the
color of mine walks up to me.

Hi, I'm Rebecca.

Rebecca smiles big
Enough to block out the sun.
Suddenly I notice the lunchroom has
muted as if holding its breath
to see what events will occur.

Hello, I am Afsana.

Rebecca sits down
next to me.
The cafeteria noise returns
as if pleased with the results.

We eat in silence.
It feels like a million years
before she asks
the question I dread most.

Where are you from?

My legs get nervous,
my fingers dance.
I feel as if I am a
cornered child and
she is a Taliban soldier.

I am from Afghanistan.

Rebecca smiles.

So am I.

It was my turn to smile
bigger than the world.
Bigger than the Taliban's
force.
Bigger than a million American schools.

I have made a friend.

October, 1997

Monday, Oct. 14, 2013. *Anja Niedringhaus/AP Photo*

<http://globalnews.ca/news/1251075/15-images-from-associated-press-photojournalist-anja-niedringhaus-career/>

