

“He took the child and his mother by night”

This year we have seen them so often,
trudging, intrepid,
one clutching a child
to whom the other's eyes
at every second step
return, solicitous, alert,
fighting fatigue
for him, their treasured trust.

Week after week we watch
the trudging millions,
dauntless, unstoppable.
Through fire and water they have come,
desperate for hope.
They would walk continents,
batter the gates of every fabled city,
dodge boiling oil and scale the battlements,
shouting, “We too are human!”

Less visible to us
but constant in the tearful gaze of God,
lambs are led to slaughter,
nasrani to the last,
leaves of the lustrous trees of paradise
falling, golden,
into his open arms,
his trusty treasure.

Richard Bauckham