



**FEATURES** People of Algeria

**OP-ED** Typical Intelligence

**POETRY** Canvas Reset

**SHORT STORY** My Impatience

**STREAM OF THOUGHT** An Approach

**FEATURES** Micro-aggressions

**OP-ED** Perception is Reality

**POETRY** Life Between Parentheses

**SHORT STORY** Photo Story

**POETRY** Today

**SHORT STORY** For All the Anxious Over-Thinking College Seniors

**STREAM OF THOUGHT** خذ أثري، دع

التفاصيل، واعبر

**FEATURES** بلا ولا شي

**POETRY** كنت مسرعاً

**SHORT STORY** تجمع العين الثالثة

**STREAM OF THOUGHT** عادة

#### EDITORIAL TEAM

Fatema Al Saffar  
Hala Al-Sadi  
Huda Al Jeshi  
Ikram Hamizi  
Kaies Ben Mariem  
Kawthar Kadhém  
Kareem Nofal  
Larissa Kassis  
Leila Mnekbi  
Majdoulin Al Mwaka  
Naeem Sayes  
Rana Al Beel  
Ruba Al Sharki  
Sami Abd El Baki  
Whab Atef

#### EDITOR IN CHIEF

Safea Altef

#### ASSISTANT EDITOR IN CHIEF

Marwa Ben Khalifa

#### CONTACT

mepi@lau.edu.lb  
<http://mepitl.lau.edu.lb/>  
+ 961 1 786 456, ext. 2822  
The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Lebanese American University or the US State Department and Middle East Partnership Initiative Tomorrow's Leaders scholarship program.

#### COVER BY:

Safea Altef



This publication was produced by students of the MEPI Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program at LAU. The program, a collaboration between the U.S. Department of State's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and the Lebanese American University (LAU), was launched in 2008. Coordinated by LAU's Student Development and Enrollment Management unit (SDEM), it provides higher education opportunities to youth from around the Arab world who demonstrate outstanding leadership potential but who may otherwise not have the chance to study in an American educational system. The program's mission is to prepare future Arab leaders for the complexities of the 21st century. Through high-quality academic support, leadership development activities, and civic engagement opportunities, the program fosters professionalism, ethical conduct, and tolerance in order to enable students to become globally competitive leaders and agents of change in their respective societies.

# UNNOTICED

*Comfort Zone, Mind-Shaping, Choices, Discovery, Belief, Experience, Change, Understanding, Customs and Traditions, Unintentional Manifestation.*



**FEATURES** People of Algeria page 4

**OP-ED** Typical Intelligence page 6

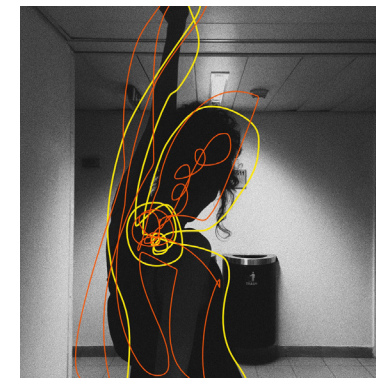
**POETRY** Canvas Reset page 8

**SHORT STORY** My Impatience

page 10

**STREAM OF THOUGHT** An Approach

page 12



**FEATURES** Micro-aggressions

page 14

**OP-ED** Perception is Reality page 16

**POETRY** Life Between Parentheses  
page 18

**SHORT STORY** Photo Story page 20

**POETRY** Today page 12

**SHORT STORY** For All the Anxious  
Over-Thinking College Seniors  
page 20



**STREAM OF THOUGHT** خذ أثري، دع

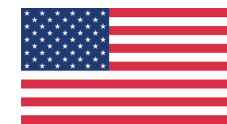
page 26

**FEATURES** بلا ولا شيء page 28

**POETRY** كنت مسرعاً page 30

**SHORT STORY** تجمع العين الثالثة  
page 32

**STREAM OF THOUGHT** عادة page 34



Produced by the students of the Middle East Partnership Initiative Tomorrow's Leaders scholarship program at the Lebanese American University

# People of Algeria: (Gr.) Berbers (En.) The Others

written by Ikram Hamizi

“Are you one of those who say I am Amazigh and not Arab?” is what I was asked in my first days as a student in Lebanon in 2015. My hazy perception of my identity answered, “I am Amazigh, but of course I am Arab. Being Algerian means I am Arab.”

This short anecdote is one instance out of many. The subordination of the Amazigh ethnicity and component in North African countries has been nurtured on the political, social, and particularly, educational levels. However, such issues are often shifted to the margins or faced with invalidation and defamation to diverge the public from the actual cause. Today in Algeria, the fear of the ISIS wave containing the country, the terrorist ghost of the 1990’s Black Decade, and the making of new ethno-states in some parts of the world hide the exigency of such a deeply rooted issue. Nevertheless, it must be exhumed before it may well forecast future problems.

Consequently, what makes one Algerian or North African? What constitutes this identity and why is it important? Jacques Derrida, a renowned philosopher and father of deconstruction, identifies himself as a Jewish Franco-Maghrebian\* and questions identity in his book, ‘Monolingualism of the Other: or The Prosthesis of Origin’<sup>1</sup>, by directing these questions down to the weight of languages.

\*‘Maghrebian’ and ‘North African’ are used interchangeably here.

North Africa: Who are the ‘Berbers’?

The etymology of the word Berber is said to be derived from the Ancient Greek word “βάρβαρος” (bárbaros) as an adjective for “non-Greek” or “foreign” people. Berbers refer to themselves as Amazigh (Plural: Imaziyen. Singular: Amaziɣ) meaning “Free People”, and they are an ethnic group indigenous to North Africa. Subdivision names are often used by people coming from a particular region.. In Algeria, Kabyles, Shawis, Mزاب, and Tuareg, are some of the Amazigh subgroups who speak diverse dialects of the Tamazight language.

Algeria during and after the colonial period:

Algeria’s nationalism is rigid and built over the common history, struggles, and aspirations of its people. However, the elements that were institutionalized in the hope of homogenizing the country’s identity have molded it into an asymmetrical shape. The identity of the country was clearly affirmed as Muslim, Sunni, and Arab, not accounting for the pluralism, particularly, of languages and ethnicities; and therefore, identities and cultures. The collection of essays, ‘The Battlefield: Algeria - 1988 – 2002’<sup>2</sup>, explores the persistent attempts to abruptly impose Literary Arabic (al-fuṣḥā) on a wider scale in a country that is inherently trilingual. The issue was that Colloquial Arabic is not formal, Tamazight is not spoken by all Algerians, and French is the colonial language, so Literary Arabic was decided to be, not only the country’s language, but also its identity. These attempts started during the colonial period, where several Algerian scholars and political parties went on to also condemn the Amazigh language as inferior to Arabic, the language of God.

Several movements arose calling for a multicultural state that recognizes the pluralistic nature of Algeria. However, the policies of Arabization and the radical linguicides on the educational and social levels continued and created resentment and later on, profound identity issues. Nevertheless, the support for the Arabization was undeniable. The revival of the Arabic language was



seen as a response to the colonial oppression, and the popularity of the Arab Nationalism raised the hopes of recuperating the Algerian Muslim identity. It is worth mentioning that the Arab identity in Algeria only spoke of Arab Sunni Muslims, which ostracized anyone who did not fit that description.

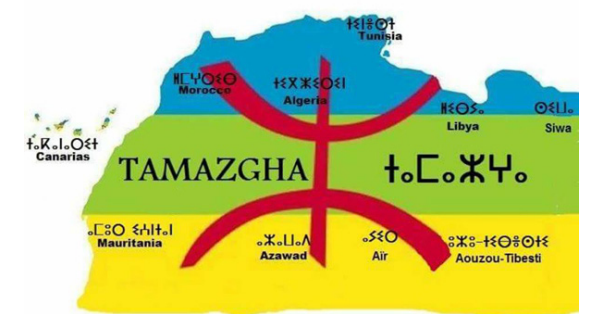
Algeria in the 1980s:

A new Algerian generation with a large “Arabisants” (an Algerian term used locally to refer to those who are Arabic educated) segment is born. Nonetheless, the administration and governmental institutions remained mostly Francophonic. The Cornell University Press-published essay collection, ‘Algeria in Other’s Languages’<sup>3</sup>, explains that this generation has neither seen the reforms nor the national revival it was yearning for but rather a duality of the Arabization policies. It has seen a scarcity in job opportunities and a globalized economy that favors the Western language which is spoken by the wealthy Elite.

Algeria in the 21st century

The Algerian policies did not change much from the post-independence period. The country’s mantra remained the same as the one of the Muslim Ulema Association “Islam is our religion and Arabic is our language” making these two inseparable and interchangeable socially. The denial of the latter means the exile from religion, society, and the national identity. An example of this would be the way some Algerians often perceive the Amazigh Kabyle region. Due to the Kabyles’ strong attachment to their identity and the numerous movements the region has embraced, they were accused of being heretics, racists, and separatists.

The denial or exclusion of identities results in animosity, whether towards one’s own identity or the imposed one. In my case, I directed that hate inwards. I hated my heritage and my language. I would tell my mom not to speak our native language in front of my friends. I used to be distressed in class when a teacher asks me if I am



Amazigh; some students would laugh, and others would join to spare themselves from the public embarrassment and social taboo, that is, being ‘the other’.

This subordination of identities in Algeria is a repetitive pattern. It is not only my story, but one of many Amazighs. Calls of representation are always confronted with the well-used indictments of separatism. We tend to see differences as threats and we consequently try to assimilate them instead of embracing them as a way to advance the societies.





# “Typical Intelligence”

written by Abdelmadjid Hayi

Stephen R. Covey explains in his book “The 8th Habit” the concept of four types of intelligence:

*Mental Intelligence: corresponds to our mind.*

*It refers to our ability to analyze, reason, think abstractly, use language, visualize, and comprehend.*

**“You are smart, you will do great. You better go for it!”**

That’s what a lot of dear people to my heart told me when I got accepted to a full scholarship for four years abroad. They believed that being intellectually intelligent is not only a great asset but mainly the only needed one to succeed in studying abroad, and unfortunately that’s the way most of the Arab societies view it.

*Physical Intelligence: corresponds to our body.*

*It refers to our ability to maintain and develop our physical fitness.*

Unfortunately, in the Arab world; starting from the society to certain governments, intelligence is seen only as

mental intelligence and it is limited only to certain fields such as: Mathematics, Computer Science, Architecture, Engineering, and Medicine. They undermine other fields such as: Social Sciences and Arts.

*Emotional Intelligence: corresponds to our heart.*

*It refers to our self-knowledge, self-awareness, social sensitivity, empathy and ability to communicate successfully with others.*

In Arab societies, families and friends pressure youth to go for scientific fields whether they are interested in science or not. A child can be very talented and can produce pieces of arts that might be at the level of Mona Lisa, yet that is not important to Arab societies and he should focus on a scientific field. Another child can be gifted and very interested in soccer, for example, but still his/her family will try their best to get him/her into a scientific field. Many professional artists and athletes are seen in Arab societies as downgraded citizens.

*Spiritual Intelligence: corresponds to our spirit.*

*It refers to our drive for meaning and connection with the infinite.*

In certain Arab countries, higher education gives the opportunity to brilliant students to go for scientific fields while students who did not perform well in their Baccalaureate exam end up studying in social sciences or art fields such as: Law, Performing Arts, Psychology, etc. Fields that are highly evaluated in Western countries are undervalued in the Arab world. Many professional artists and athletes are registered as unemployed.

Being a lawyer and dealing with critical cases that can either save or destroy lives requires a high level of emotional intelligence, being an artist requires a high level of spiritual intelligence, and being an athlete requires a high level of physical intelligence. All these fields including social sciences, arts, and sports require one of the three types of intelligence that are not valued much neither by societies nor governments in the Arab world. Thus, any science field that require mental intelligence is seen as the best option to pursue and

those who are part of this field are seen as the most brilliant and intelligent citizens.

Albert Einstein once said that “Each individual is an intelligent individual,” that is what I personally believe in. The level of intelligence in each type differs from a person to another. “Every person is a genius, but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid.” It is high time we stop undervaluing the intelligence of others and forcing a mindset to them that they are not intelligent.

These four types of intelligence might be unnoticed by most Arab societies, but that does not mean they should be unnoticed by YOU.

Be well aware of your level of intelligence in all four types, and work on yourself to witness the best version of yourself.

**“Stereotypically, Mental Intelligence became the Typical Intelligence”**





# Canvas Reset

written by Huda Aljeshi

OUR LITTLE INSIDE JOKES,  
OUR FAVORITE SONGS, SPOTS, AND BOOKS.  
THE MEMORIES THAT WE CAN'T SEEM TO STOP  
REPLAYING.  
WE PLAY THEM OVER AND OVER IN THE HAUNTED  
JUKEBOX OF OUR MINDS.  
WE PUT IN COINS, ONE FOR EACH MEMORY, ONE  
FOR EACH MOMENT THAT MADE OUR HEART  
STOP.  
I'LL PUT IN A COIN, AND REMEMBER THE  
HARMONIOUS TRILL OF YOUR LAUGH.  
I'LL PUT IN A COIN, AND REMEMBER THE  
WAY WE'D SING TOGETHER, OFF-PITCH AND  
BOISTEROUS.  
I'LL PUT IN A COIN, AND TRY TO REMEMBER HOW  
IT STARTED AND HOW WE GOT HERE.  
WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR YEARS NOW,  
BUT AS THE DAYS PASS AND TIME TURNS A NEW  
PAGE,  
THOSE YEARS SEEM LIKE NOTHING, DON'T THEY?  
ALL THE TEARS AND VICTORIES THAT WE  
SHARED,  
THE PIPE DREAMS THAT WE BUILT FROM  
SCRATCH,  
THE SECONDS WEIGHED DOWN BY OUR JOINT  
HELD BREATHS.  
ALL THAT WE HAVE, ALL THAT WE ARE; DO YOU  
REMEMBER THE MAKING, OR AM I THE ONLY ONE  
THAT NEVER CAPTURED IT?  
NOW LOOKING BACK, I'M MORE OF A STRANGER  
THAN A PARTAKER

IN THE ACTS THAT WE PLAYED OUT TOGETHER.  
I WATCH US FROM AN OUTSIDER'S POINT OF  
VIEW, I WATCH US FROM A CAMERA LENS,  
AND ONE DAY, IF I'M LUCKY, I JUST MIGHT FIND  
THE COWITTEN SCRIPT AGAIN.  
IT SEEMS LIKE WHEN I GOT ON THAT PLANE,  
I FORGOT THAT I CARRIED WITH ME THE DETAILS  
OF AN EXISTING SAVE SLOT.  
I LISTENED TO MY HEART BEAT, BEAT, BEAT!  
IN UNISON WITH ITS STARTING ENGINES,  
NOT REALIZING WITH THE SPINNING OF ITS  
WHEELS  
THAT THE RECORD'S BEEN SCRATCHED, AND I'D  
HAVE TO PRESS RESET.  
(THERE WAS A COFFIN THAT BOARDED THE  
PLANE WITH US.  
I'M STARTING TO THINK IT HELD MY OLD SELF IN  
IT.)  
THE PLANE STOPS, COFFIN AND PEOPLE  
DEPARTING ALIKE, AND I PRESS RESET.  
I START OVER, PAINTBRUSH HELD OVER AN  
EMPTY CANVAS.  
THE SHADE I'M USING IS CALLED  
'OPPORTUNITIES,' AND I'LL PAINT MY  
MASTERPIECE STROKE BY STROKE.  
IT TOOK ME A PLANE TICKET TO REALIZE WHAT  
I HAD, AND IT'LL TAKE ME A PAINTBRUSH AND A  
CUSTOMIZED SHADE TO BUILD IT UP AGAIN.  
(IT TAKES AN EMPTY CANVAS TO BECOME AGAIN.)



Elizabeth Jennings Graham:  
  
(March 1827 – June 5, 1901): The African-American Lady Who Made a Stand before Rosa Parks. Elizabeth Jennings Graham insisted on her right to ride a horse-drawn street car in New York City. In an age when black people could still be the property of white people, it took the conductor and a policeman to physically remove her from the car, and her suit against them was what desegregated New York public transit.





# My impatience

written by *Unknown*

My impatience is appeased as the echoing sound of her heels announces her arrival. It has been a year since I have last seen her. Since I arrived, the ticking clock has accompanied my excitement. I have been impatiently waiting for her key to embrace the door lock and now she is just four floors off the ground.

She advances slowly as she makes her way towards the staircases. She immediately grabs the handrail that guides her towards the first floor. Her tiredness forces her to stop. She shifts her gaze up to estimate the remaining stairs before resuming. As she forces her foot on the next stair, she is surprised by an imbalance leaving her right shoe broken into two pieces. She hastily grabs the separated heel and examines it with a distressed face before pressuring it into its initial placement. She knows that her movement is meaningless yet she does not want to believe it. It is her favorite shoe, at least it has to be as it's her only one. As she stares at the damaged piece, she tries to estimate the number of hours of work that would match the price. She doesn't want to let go of that shoe, she can't afford to. She takes off the other pair and reunites the two of them with her fingers. She allows one tear to caress her cheek before reminding herself that she still has a long way to go.

She laboriously reaches the third floor. She once again grants herself a brief moment of rest. As she stretches

her arm to grab the handrail, she is reminded of a glaring blue spot near her elbow. She delicately pressures it. It doesn't hurt anymore, physically. She immediately puts her purse's strip around it. "They cannot see it, he is their hero", she keeps telling herself. She has been perpetually repeating the same two sentences, even while lying down on a hospital bed. However, "they" knew. When I knew I was 5,913 miles away; my brother had just hung up on Skype. The words "extreme fatigue" and "depression" kept resonating with me as I felt the room swallowing me. I had long blamed her selfishly for her enduring absence and excessive work without realizing that it was a sacrifice that has proven its flagrant sufferings.

She finally reaches the final floor. She is exhausted yet she still managed to surpass the innumerable stairs. I can hear the sound of her keys clashing as she searches for the one that corresponds to the lock. I hastily run towards the entrance and open the door for her. I can finally see her now. There is my mom with her radiant smile that always prevails. I throw myself at her and pressure my arms around her. Tears are uncontrollably pouring down my face. I take her hand and deposit a gentle kiss. I never let go of that hand again.





# An Approach

*written by Kaies Ben Mariem*

At an interview for a program I was applying to, I was asked to talk about life, to define it, or at least to try, in my own words. Life to me is the sequence of actions caused by the decisions we make, this definition as it is, seems boring, meaningless, or takes away from the meaning that life carries within it. But it is missing a key component, the approach you have towards that definition, how do you approach the life you are living and with which scope or perspective. The way you see life and the way you try to live it makes all the difference in the quality and value it holds within.



Going through life and seeing how it reacts to the way I look at it, somehow threw an interesting challenge my way, to find the best approach to it. Mine as simple as it is, was quite a rewarding experience. To be able to see the small details in life, to be able to notice what is actually there but we do not see, to be able to appreciate the small acts of kindness that take place around us, to enjoy the small moments of beauty manifesting themselves to us, to be able to teach ourselves to perceive, to feel and to appreciate, to be able to really see what life is and what it can be, though what is going by, not seen, not felt, not appreciated, simply unnoticed.

**“The thing about “history” is that people usually take it to mean political or diplomatic history, so women are usually excluded from the narrative since they generally did not participate in such endeavors until fairly recently.” - Catherine Batruni, LAU History professor.**

**Amazigh: plural Imazighen, a word which means “free people” in the Indigenous Tamazight language**

**Berber: Berber, self-name Amazigh, plural Imazighen, any of the descendants of the pre-Arab inhabitants of North Africa. The Berbers live in scattered communities across Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Mali, Niger, and Mauretania. They speak various Amazigh languages belonging to the Afro-Asiatic family related to Ancient Egyptians.**

As an Arab, Shi’ite, and Bahraini woman, micro-aggressions are a daily occurrence. Micro aggressions are defined as social interactions (verbal, nonverbal) that communicate hostility, prejudice, etc. against someone because of their belonging to a certain group. They can be intentional or not. The background and the environment a person grows up in, the media content that propagates specific stereotypes, and the education systems that do not encourage critical thinking are all factors that leave their imprint in our subconscious and become difficult to overcome. These things can happen daily and often to minority groups; thus, it often goes undetected.

Being a Woman \ امرأة on the Global level

Being a woman means that you will spend a long time trying to unlearn the beauty standards that you are constantly bombarded with while you were growing up. It is the casual comments from your relatives about your curly hair and it is the “compliments” that people give you because you have a nice white skin. Thus, women end up having to fight two battles at once, one that takes place at their own homes, and the other is with the world outside.

When it comes to careers, the gender pay gap is the most observable way of discrimination against women; however, inequality extends to more than that. A concept that is important to note is the Glass Ceiling Effect. It is defined as a barrier to advancements in a person’s career, usually affecting women and minority groups. Needless to say, this is an invisible hindrance; hence, the use of glass as a metaphor. This is done through many micro-aggressions that serve as obstacles to the progression in one’s occupation. The repetitive interruption of women in meetings, men rephrasing the same idea that a woman had just shared and being praised for it and the inappropriate comments on a woman’s looks rather than her work are another instance of discrediting them and prolonging the notion of their inferiority in the workplace.

However, it does not end there. Then, they come back home for another battle. Relatives disdaining the fact that a mother can work and leave her kids behind and women perpetuating the idea of a perfect woman who can balance between her work-life and home-life – something that is practically impossible - in the hopes of granting themselves spots on the table with men. Such seemingly, harmless ideas put more pressure on women to perform two full time jobs, and with the

process of the privatization of family life, women’s work at home is kept unnoticed.

Being an Arab \ عربية on the Western Level

During my semester abroad in New Jersey, a student once told my friend and me jokingly that she finds it “creepy” when we switch to speaking Arabic. This happened days after my Uber driver was trying to convince me to leave my culture behind, given that I am now in the United States and I am free to do whatever I want. “It is a sign of a good culture,” he said, “you are not obliged to do anything you do not want to do here”. These are examples of Orientalism. As Edward Said explains it, orientalism is the view of the Orient as subservient to the West, uncivilized, and backward. The West had done it before to justify their colonialism, and it is far from gone today. The idea that there is “us” and “them” in the Western thought further emphasizes on differences in cultures to make the “other” seem so foreign, different, and distant. An incident that better explains this is when I introduced myself in class in the beginning of the semester, and mentioned that I am an Arab Middle-Eastern. My instructor then shook her head and said sympathetically, “I cannot imagine what it is like there.”

8 years old: Why don't you get a hair treatment? Your hair color would look prettier if your hair was less curly.

16 years old: Oh I would've never guessed you come from a village

17 years old: Why don't you smile more?

18 years old: Oh you're Shia right? Don't you have a different Quran?

18 years old: She's the Khaleeji one, she has the money

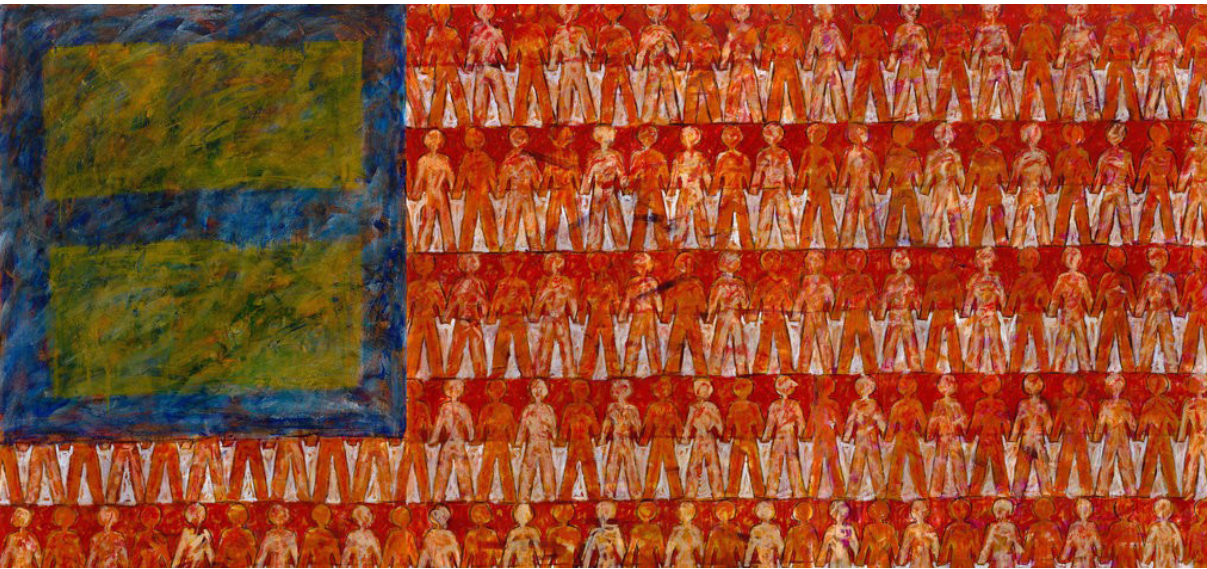
19 years old: You seem so uptight.

20 years old: You're Bahraini? You don't sound like one.

20 years old: It's so creepy when you guys speak in Arabic.

20 years old: Do you sleep with your headscarf on?

21 years old: I never knew girls would be interested in politics and football



Being a Shi’ite \ شيعية on the Regional Level

According to Pew Research Centre (2011), Shi’a constitute around 10-13% (around 300 million) of the Muslim population. Nonetheless, there are many misconceptions surrounding Shi’a in the world, and naturally with misconceptions come prejudices. My experience in other countries was different than the coexisting environment in Bahrain. People around me did not have the slightest idea of what it meant to be Shi’a. I have been asked if I supported ISIS, thought to have a different Quran, and was asked about the safety of the Shi’a religious commemorations and whether they were ‘scary’ or not. Discrimination against Shi’a can be as simple as dividing the two sects: Muslims and Shi’a. It is presumed that Islam = Sunnism. A frequent question that is directed towards Shi’a is “Do you come from Iran?” A question that erases an entire history of existence as old as Islam itself. This idea of Shi’a being descendants from Iran is a political one that comes from the fear of Iran’s influence in the region. Vali Nasr explains in his book “The Shi’a Revival” that fear from Iran in the region meant fear from the Shi’a, so regimes held more strongly to the Arab identity that excluded Shi’a and considered them to be the extension of Iran in the region. Consequently, they propagated this idea among people to maintain their power.

Bahrainia \ بحرانية on the Domestic Level

The term “Bahrani” (plural: Baharna) has been used as a slur to refer to the original inhabitants of Bahrain. Although the term has been re-appropriated by the people, it is still widely used against the Baharna in a demeaning way. By definition, the term refers to the indigenous ethnoreligious group, and it usually extends to the Eastern Coast of the Arabian Peninsula as “Bahrain”

used to refer to a much larger region. The Baharna constitute the lower class, socially. They are mostly disadvantaged and distinguishable by their dialects. Some companies in Bahrain will ask their employees to sound ‘less Bahrani’ when dealing with costumers. Reem Bassiouny, an Egyptian professor of sociolinguistics, explains that Baharna are the second-class group in society; therefore, they feel the need to change their dialects if they want to have a prosperous career.

Baharna have close to no representation on the media, especially the national one. On the rare occasion that Baharna are displayed on TV, it is usually to mock the “thick” dialect in which they speak. So, it comes as no surprise that I have been frequently told that I do not sound Bahraini when I’m outside of Bahrain. Upon her return to Bahrain, my friend was conversing with a Bahraini man about her experience in Lebanon when he then proceeded to ask her the following: “Were they able to understand your thick accent?” Often, when this issue is addressed, people dismiss it as a dramatic and a self-victimization notion. However, considering the media era (media = representation) we live in, this issue should not be as underplayed as it is.

Questions about the other are important. Although, these questions should be assessed before vocalizing them and must be proactive rather than accusatory or demeaning. The vitality of actually breaking the barrier and discussing such issues, openly, remains constant. Frequently, social values and policies are intertwined. Such ideas are usually institutionalized and are further engraved in communities that way. Similarly, social values can put pressure on the system and change it and concepts that are passed to us by the system are the most dangerous ones in a sense that they hinder the society to think for itself. So, to conclude with Emmanuel Kant, he once said “Dare to know”.



# Perception is Reality: The Looking-Glass Self

written by Naeem Sayes

The feeling of the absence of an identity is generally unbearable for us—when we feel lost, we feel miserable. However, in the world today, it is almost impossible for any of us to give a concrete answer to the eternal question “Who am I?”

In his book, *Human Nature and the Social Order*, Charles Cooley introduces a deeply interesting social-psychological theory; *The Looking-Glass Self*. I am not who you think I am. I am not who I think I am. I am who I think you think I am. Put in less puzzling language, Cooley’s concept of the looking glass self states that a person’s self grows out of a person’s social interactions with others. Using social interactions as a type of mirror, we absorb people’s judgements of us and we tweak our values, worth, and behaviors accordingly. As a result, we end up adjusting our sense of self depending on the person we are with—you are a different person with your friends, another different person with your parents, and another different person with your siblings.

This can draw the conclusion that we only emerge as a self by creating first; a mental model of the other person’s interior world, and furthermore creating a mental model of that person’s mind-modeling of us, in an endeavor that is indeed beyond our knowledge. This process, particularly when applied to our lives in the realm of the digital age, raises numerous questions about the nature of identity. Is our self-concept built stoically in solitude or in the turbulent crowds of society?

Here is an example we can relate to. You meet a person for the first time and perhaps because of a smart comment you dropped somewhere, they complement your intelligence and show interest in your ideas about the world, ideas that for you, had never been more banal and mainstream. The next time you meet this person, you feel a sudden boost of confidence that seemingly came out of nowhere and you feel the need to provide your input on all the ideas that they discuss. You do all of this without realizing a very important concept: it is all in your head! Perhaps they think you have interesting ideas, but that does not necessarily mean they think you are intelligent. In your mind; however, you are intelligent

in their eyes and thus you attempt your best to live up to “their” expectations of you.

This is a fascinating idea in the context of romantic relationships. The concept of romantic love becomes the ultimate identity affirming phenomenon in the world—you meet somebody, and in their eyes, you find yourself the way you want to be found. What happens when a relationship does not work? The reason why romantic heartbreak is kind of death in brackets, is that a person goes through an identity dissolving experience, losing their sense of self.

Romance, despite its alluring appeal to discussion, is not my topic. Above all, we are here on a journey to discover and permanently bring to the surface our best self that will benefit us when we go back to our home countries and build the expected future. While romance is an almost inevitable part of this experience, it is never the core. I want to bestow upon you a challenging concept and a harsh reality in my attempt to liberate you from an inevitable, perhaps bitter, experience and possibly your first challenge throughout this journey: your identity crisis.

It sounds like a burdensome challenge that you are too juvenile to face, and this is where you must be wary the most, for it comes slowly, never giving you the chance to act against it until you zone out of your daily life and its concerns, realizing that you have become naively lost.

When we arrived to our new lives in Lebanon, we were extremely excited about every new experience this opportunity has offered us. The most thrilling asset for most of us was the people—everyone seemed interesting and rich in stories about their lives, home countries, and themselves. As a natural result of this perception, we began to mingle and converse. It is rather impossible to deny the beauty of the experience, but every experience has its downsides. Most of us have been raised to be polite and kind, qualities which many interpreted wrongly as invitations for friendships. Seeing everyone as a friend, your ideas of how they perceive you become your new reality—expectations you need to fulfill in order to

keep your new friends. In a large group of people like ours; however, this presents an additional challenge. If each and every person has a different perception of you, you will be tempted to form an enormous number of personalities in a rather short period of time.

No one wanted less friends; everyone wanted more. At a later point in time; however, you looked at yourself in the mirror with a blurry idea of who you are. You are on the verge of losing your identity. If you are the intelligent intellectual in the eyes of him, the funny person in the eyes of her, and the novel-like poet in the eyes of them, who are you in your own eyes?

This was the newcomer’s dilemma that very few had realized: While wanting to build new meaningful relationships in our new world, we had to face the reality that we wanted to fit in, or maybe keep up with all these impressive people and their impressive stories. In order to do that, we tweaked ourselves to fulfill the image that we thought each person had of us, many of which were simply inaccurate creations of our imaginations.

My message for you is simple: after you welcome this generous experience, you will find yourself in an especially delicate position—while wanting to serve your socio-psychological needs, you will be tempted to hide aspects of your true self while bringing to the surface others that do not belong to you.

Be the master of your own image. What we present to the world is rarely our true self: It is a combination of years of bad habits and fear-based behavior. I invite you to look deep within yourself and bring to the surface the true traits that make you who you are. Embrace yourself—you cannot please everyone. The most important lesson that I have learned through this experience until now is that you have to face no one but yourself at the end of every day. I immensely hope that you realize this lesson before you dissolve your identity completely. Experience teaches bitterly, while wisdom teaches softly.



# Life Between Parentheses

written by Larissa Kassis

ONCE LIFE HAD SPOKEN  
ASKING YOU TO LISTEN CAREFULLY  
FOR WHAT YOU NEVER THOUGH COULD SPEAK  
TODAY I TELL YOU;

YOU ARE ALL ALLOWED  
TO DREAM  
TO SAIL  
TO HOLD YOUR RESTLESS THOUGHTS  
TO RUN OUT CHOOSING YOUR OWN PASSAGES.

TODAY YOU ARE ALLOWED  
TO CRASH THEM  
ALL THESE STOP SIGNS YOU ONCE CREATED OUT  
OF  
DOUBT, GUILT AND REGRET.

I, I NEVER MEANT TO STOP YOU  
HURT YOU  
OR PUSH YOU AWAY  
MY THRONES ARE PART OF ME, PART OF MY  
EXISTENCE  
I ASK OF YOU  
MY FRIEND  
TO LEARN HOW TO HOLD MY PAIN  
GENTLY, AND IT WILL NEVER BLEED YOU

I APOLOGIZE  
TO YOU  
MY FIGHTER

TO YOU  
MY BLEEDER

AND I ASK  
OF YOU ONE MORE TIME  
LIVE AND BE ALIVE  
SHINE AND LET ME LIFT YOU HIGH

GIVE IT ALL  
I WANT IT ALL  
YOUR OUTBURSTS OF CRAZINESS AND  
LAUGHTER  
LET YOUR HANDS REACH MY SKIES  
GIVE YOUR VOICE THE OPPORTUNITY TO  
CONNECT  
STRONGER, LOUDER AND HIGHER.

GO BELIEVE IN WHATEVER MAKES YOU ALIVE  
AND REACH THIS UNLIMITED HAPPINESS OF  
YOURS  
BREATHE, EVEN IF YOU CAN'T BELONG

I SEE YOU A GENTLE SOUL  
HOLDING ON TO ME SO TIGHT

LET GO..

I DO NOT OWN YOU  
STOP SEARCHING FOR A PLACE OR A HUMAN  
BRACE  
YOU HAVE IT

THE POWER THAT WILL NEVER STOP YOU FROM  
CREATING THE BEAUTY OF LIVING  
THE PROMISE OF SCREAMING THE WORLD WITH  
THIS JOY  
SWEARING THAT THIS WILL ALWAYS BE THE  
CASE

DIVE IN..

FORGIVE ME AND ALLOW ME..

ALLOW ME TO SEE YOU HUGGING ALL WHAT YOU  
EVER WISHED FOR  
ALLOW ME TO SHOW YOU WHAT YOU'VE NEVER  
LOOKED FOR IN ME  
ALLOW ME TO CHERISH YOU BEING PART OF ME

AND ALLOW ME,  
TO BE THE GIFT THAT YOU WILL NOT ONLY  
SHAKE, TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT IT HAS  
INSIDE  
BUT TODAY YOU WILL HAVE THE COURAGE TO  
OPEN ME  
AND LOOK INSIDE OF ME TO ALLOW AT LAST  
MY QUESTION FOR AN ULTIMATE ANSWER  
WILL YOU ACCEPT MY HAPPINESS?



Gargi Vachaknavi :(Born about c. 7th century BCE). A Vedic female sage. Gargi Vachaknavi was a renowned woman scholar of the ancient times born around 700 BC. The Vedic literature praises her as a highly knowledgeable natural philosopher and an expounder of the Vedas. One of the most coveted titles given to her by the Vedic literature is Brahnavadini meaning a person possessing the highest knowledge of Brahman.

Atrocities in world history that have been largely forgotten:

The Indonesian anti-communist massacre of 1965: Between 500,000 to a million people were killed. As stated by a CIA report, “one of the worst mass murders of the 20th century, along with the Soviet purges of the 1930s, the Nazi mass murders during the second world war, and the Maoist bloodbath of the early 1950s.”

The Congolese genocide: A Death Toll Rivaling the Holocaust. With an estimated death toll of six million.

Holodomor: was the man-made famine of the Ukraine started by the mass importation of grain from the Ukraine to the USSR. This was part of the wider Soviet famine of 1932–33 that was caused by the Soviet collectivization of grain from various regions of the USSR in the wake of failed NEP policies. It was estimated that between 4.5 and 7 million Ukrainians met their deaths as a result of this “extermination by hunger” with exact numbers being impossible to determine.

**Recognition:** (Noun); Identification of someone or something or person from previous encounters or knowledge.

**Unsung:** (Adjective): Not celebrated or praised.

**Notice:** (Noun): The fact of observing or paying attention to something.



# A sample of images that went unnoticed in my personal collection.

Photo Essay by Kareem Nofal



“Cause if we don’t leave this town, we might never make it out”  
- Sleep On The Floor - The Lumineers

You’re gonna go there, and you’re gonna fulfill that promise.  
You’re gonna catch that dream that you had in your head.



“I don’t know what to want from this world. I don’t know what it  
is you want to want from me.” - Queen of Denmark - John Grant

I really don’t know what to want from this world. You really  
have no right to want anything from me at all.



“The worms will come for you” - Man of War - Radiohead

On the futility of life. Death is an inevitable force, no matter  
what you do with your life, you will eventually feed the worms  
under the ground.



“الورد راسم ودادي” - Nediya - Yasmine Hamdan



“I still wonder how we conquered hell” - Miracles (Back In  
Time) - The Dø

Describing the current moment as an okay thing. Not fucked  
up. Good. Worth noticing and focusing on.



“Most people are crushed into servitude” You’re So Cool -  
Jonathan Bree

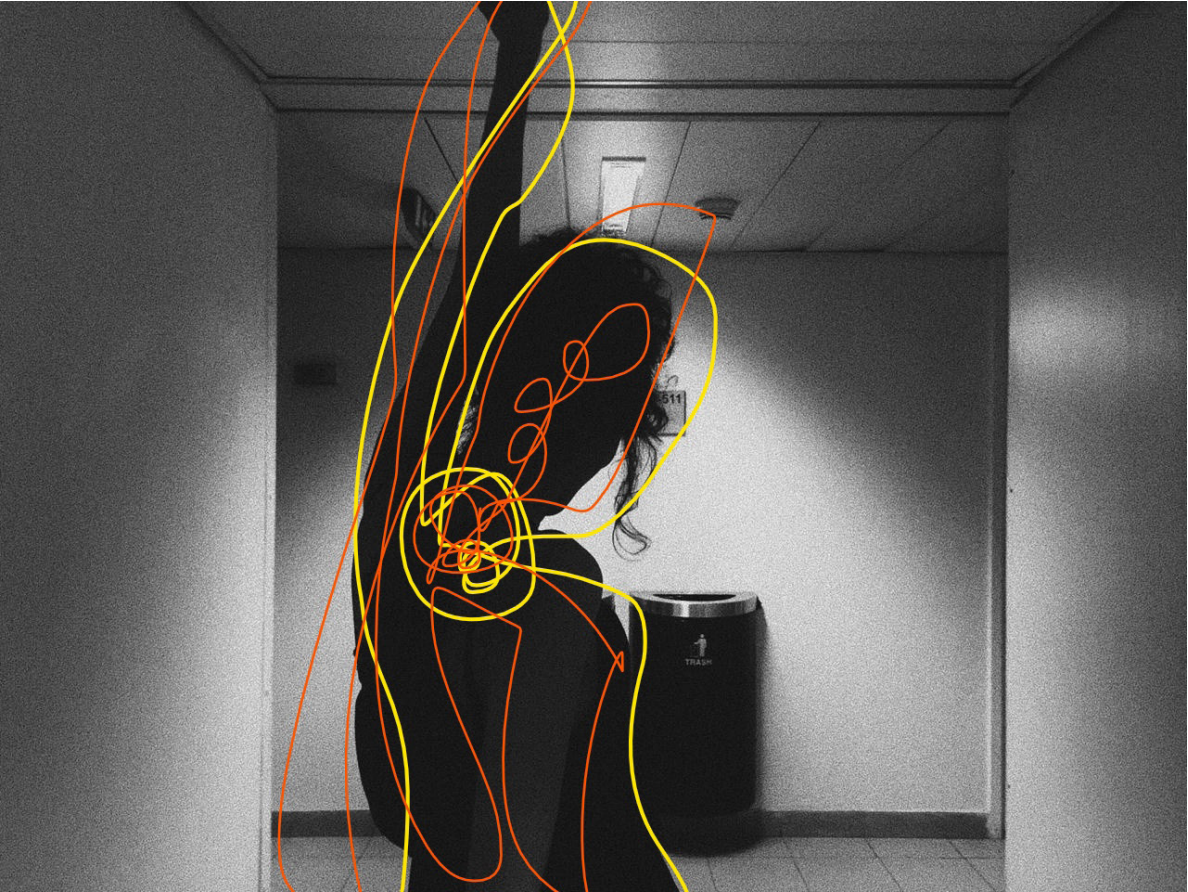
We are all serving the elite class. Everyone else is forced into  
submission whether they like it or not.



# Today

written by Ruba AlSharki

TODAY  
I WANT THE WORLD TO SEE ME.  
SO I TURN ON ALL THE LIGHTS  
WITHIN MY FICKLE ENTITY AND  
WITHIN THE FEARLESS LIGHT BULB CENTERED IN  
MY CUBICLE ROOM  
I DO NOT PULL THE BLINDS DOWN  
BECAUSE  
TODAY  
THE WORLD AND THE CREEPY NEXT DOOR  
NEIGHBOR IS LUCKY ENOUGH TO WITNESS ME  
REVEL IN MY OWN DESERTED BODY  
I STRIP MYSELF AWAY OF MY ARMOR THAT  
HOLDS ME BACK FROM MOVING GRACEFULLY  
BECAUSE TODAY  
I'M NOT ANYBODY'S SIDEKICK  
TODAY  
I BASK IN THE GLORY OF THE SPOT LIGHT  
AND I PUT THE MUSIC THAT FEEDS MY SOUL  
I CLOSE MY EYES  
I LET THE BEATS ENGULF ME  
I CHEW EVERY BEAT ONE  
BY ONE  
SYNCHRONIZED WITH MY HEART THUMPS  
EACH BEAT PULSING MAGICAL SUN RAYS  
THROUGH ME  
TODAY  
I LET MY BODY KNOW THAT IT IS OKAY TO MOVE,  
TWIRL, TWIST AND TURN  
I BEFRIEND THE TILES ON MY FLOOR, SWAYING  
BETWEEN THEIR LINES  
BECAUSE  
TODAY  
I HAVE THE ROOM ALL TO MYSELF  
SO I LET THE LIGHT BULB KNOW THAT



TODAY  
I AM NOT INTIMIDATED BY ITS LUMINOUS RAYS  
BECAUSE  
TODAY  
THE LIGHT BULB FLICKERS INTIMIDATED BY MY  
ALLURE  
INTIMIDATED BY MY ELECTRICAL HEART  
TODAY  
I'M UNAFRAID OF WHO IS LOOKING  
MY NAKED SOUL IS ECSTATIC  
TO JUST BE  
  
TODAY  
AS I AM DANCING AWKWARDLY  
STRIPPED OF MY SELF-DEPRECATING ARMOR  
IN MY ROOM WITH MY BLINDS AS HIGH AS GOD  
I AM LUMINESCENT  
AND  
I  
AM  
NOT  
AFRAID  
TO BE SEEN  
TODAY  
I WANT  
THE LIGHT WITHIN ME  
TO BE SEEN  
I WANT  
THE CREEPY NEIGHBOR TO WITNESS THE  
MAGNITUDE OF MY DISORIENTED DANCE  
I WANT  
THE STREETS OF LEBANON TO LOOK AT ALL THE  
WAYS IN WHICH I EXIST  
TODAY  
I ALLOWED MYSELF TO SEE ME.



# For All the Anxious Over-Thinking College Seniors (Myself included):

*The reality of un-noticing*

written by Majdoulin Al Mwaka

“Dude we’re graduating next semester”. These five words have enough impact to shake me from my reverie. Picture this; you’re sitting in bed attempting to write your politics paper only to find yourself drifting away. Your mind begins to wander through the things that you need to get done and all the plans you need to come up with for the “future that awaits you”. What are you going to do after graduation? A question people think they’re initiating a little talk about and is harmless to ask me yet, it evokes within me my deep seated anxiety and shifts my thinking from the present to the future in a split second. Thus, here goes the spiral of thought of how will my post-graduate life going to be shaped? As one of the most over-thinkers and worriers (trust me on this, just ask my closest friends), it is impossible to stay within the present moment. My mind is a 24/7 spinning carousel with people, events, emotions, and others constantly hopping on and off. It’s never left empty. There are always new factors being added and while others are being removed awaiting their turn to hop on again. Overanalyzing and obsessive worrying has become just another part of my daily routine. I, like any other soon to be college graduate, have cloaked myself in the fears and unknowns of post-graduate adulthood. Whatever it may be, ‘post-grad life’ is a state of mind that ultimately takes over and makes you question everything. The world is now a “blank canvas in which you may do with what you please”, which is terrifying. It might sound good at first, but when things don’t go as planned or when you feel like there are only so little options left, the unexpected panic starts to set in.

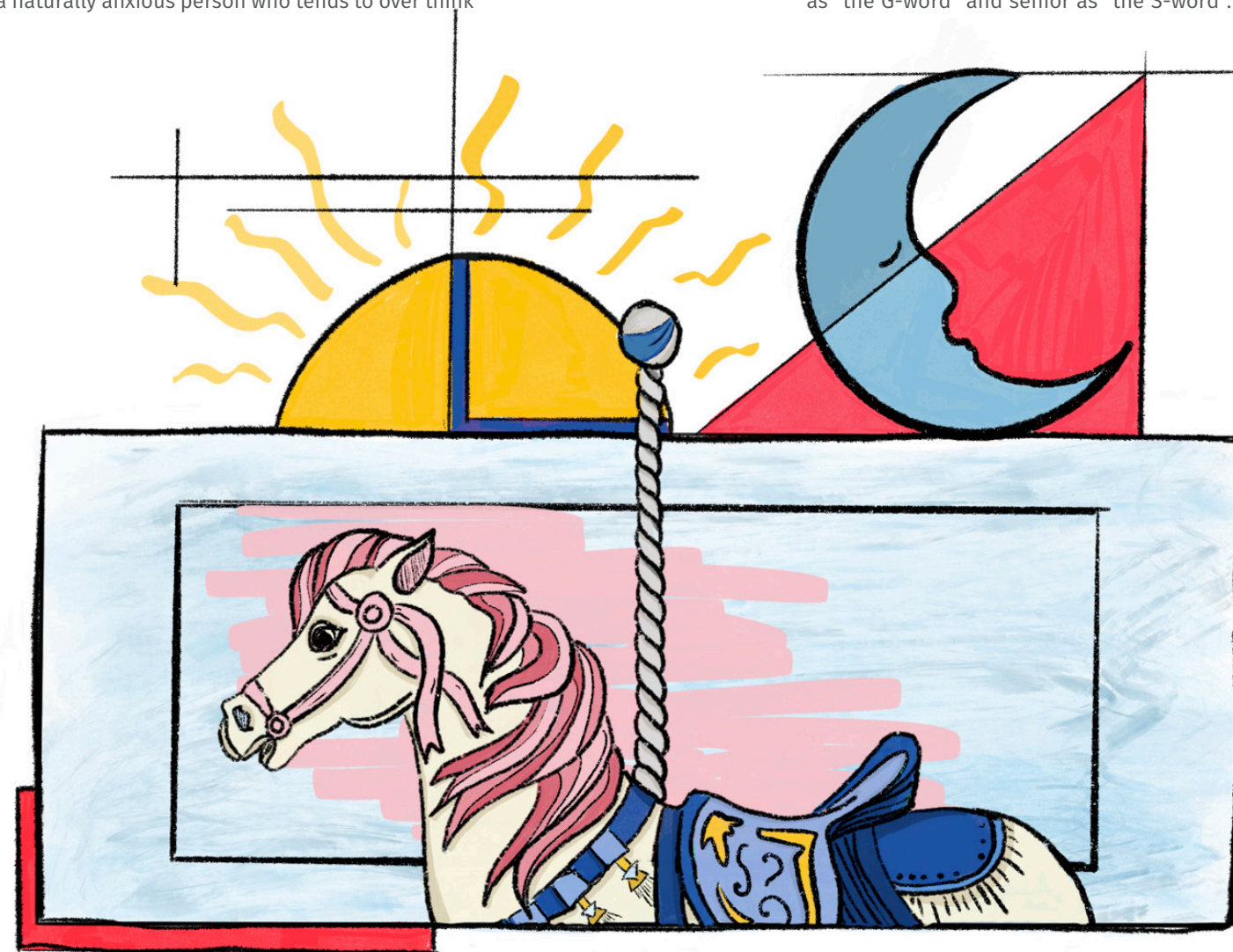
For the past four years, I had somewhat of a routine and was so comfortable with it that I almost forgot it wasn’t a forever thing. Change is supposed to be terrifying and exciting and senior year is no different. This is when you truly begin to understand that your life as you have partially become accustomed to in the past four years is changing drastically. The thoughts and emotions accompanying this realization are overwhelming. If you were me, you could have really despised the kind

of change that speeds by without letting you have the time to acknowledge it. I have never been someone who deals with change as gracefully as others might do. It comes with the territory of having a father who was bored easily of places and wanted to pick me up and go along for his whims and impulses. By 22, I’ve had as much change as possible. I craved stability, we all did. I’m a naturally anxious person who tends to over think

every single detail. I also like to make a huge deal out of good-byes (I may or may not have a full folder of old movie ticket stubs, fortune cookie fortunes, used plane tickets, outdated currencies from different countries, carnival bracelets, event maps, previous letters from teachers, and MANY MORE). This is why for the past few months, my friends and I have referred to graduation as “the G-word” and senior as “the S-word”. I, myself

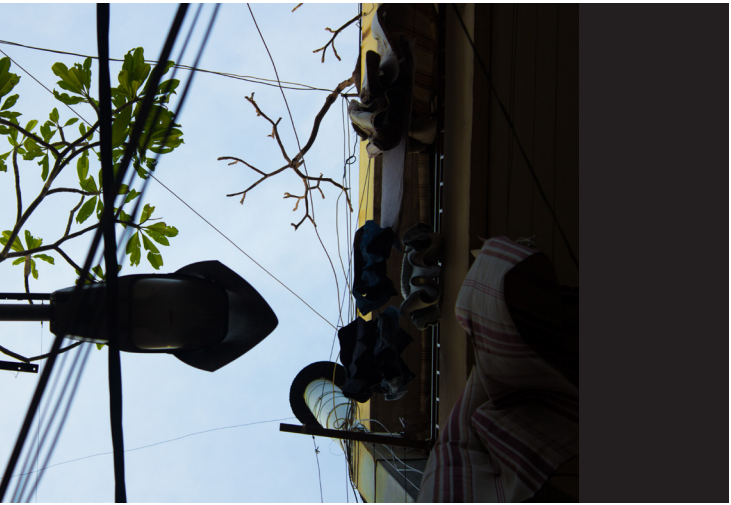
have changed the topic every time either my mother or father brought it up and my “future plans”. It didn’t take much to be scared of our futures. We were all by now functioning on Threat Level Red. We’ve been having soul-searching conversations in the middle of the nights since the beginning of the year. Yet, I still haven’t been able to shake this fear of graduation that I had. On certain days, I woke up wondering about the possible options, which I could embark on for the next chapter of my life, unlike other days when I woke up wanting to slow the whole process down.

One of my biggest fears was probably the mere thought of losing connection with my friends and that some friendships might diminish once I graduate. Of course, we would not lose touch completely, but it will never be the same as it is right now. We spent a lot of quality time together, studying, eating, going out, and living together. In our case as MEPI students, four years pass by in no time where you end up being a different person from that who entered college in the first year. I can genuinely say that the people I have met in this program are unmatched and irreplaceable. If I had to state just one thing I learned in college, it would be to truly appreciate the friends who were always by my side no matter what, helped me go through my ups and downs and were ready to support at any time and during any circumstance. Those friends who are there for you even if you need to go to the hospital at 12 am and spend the next five hours next to you even when they have to cross-campus the next day. Recently, I’ve been trying to overcome the resentment of my anxiety, and to remind myself of all the advantages and benefits I had at LAU. I feel grateful for all the people I met and all the opportunities I got throughout these years. Time really does fly. “Life moves pretty fast. If you don’t stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it.” One of my favorite 80-movie character once said these cheesy and wise words.





No frame is complete, unless all its layers are acknowledged to understand the narrative of it. If Beirut city to be a frame, there would be many layer grounds to its image, each of which are rich in details and stories. Here, is an attempt to catch the background of Beirut's frame, an element that is often overlooked, yet put together the realistic and charming tale of this city, its residents and passengers.



Huda Sharawi; (June 23, 1879 – December 12, 1947):

Huda Sharawi founded the Egyptian Feminist Union in 1923, and later became the founding president of the Arab Feminist Union in 1945. Her best-known act of protest includes removing her face veil in a crowded Cairo train station upon returning home from an International Women Suffrage Alliance conference, which was a turning point in making wearing a veil a woman's choice, not a requirement.

# Photo Story

written by Hala Al-Sadi



# خذ أثري، دع التفاصيل، واعبر

بقلم وهب عاطف



أنا لست اسماً ولا عنواناً

لست بالطالب الجامعي، ولا صاحب البشرة السمراء

وقطعا أنا لست ذاك الذي مزجته مخيلتك، طريفاً كان أم

ساذجاً، عميقاً كان أم سطحياً

أنا عشرون عاماً من قصص أعرققتها تفاصيل تعمّدها النسيان

تفاصيل أزقة ملأتهما ذاكرتي شوقاً ونفوراً

تفاصيل منازل ملأتهما أمني ضحكاً وصراخاً

تفاصيل في كل شخص، كل كلمة وكل إحياء

فبينما نقف هنا مجدداً يا صديقي على مفترق الطريق ذاته،  
فلنعتق بعضنا الآخر من عبء الاكتراث.

فمرغم أنت كما أنا بأن تكون مجرد تفصيل آخر في أحدفصول  
روايتي.

فخذ أثري، دع التفاصيل، واعبر.

# بلا ولا شي

بقلم فاطمة الصقّار و رنا البيل

لا نريد أن نبدأ بسؤال فلسفي، لا نريد أن نبدأ بتصريح صريح متعطرس يصف حالنا، لكن إن أدلينا بتصريح عن ماهيتنا فحينها سنتكلم عن تلك الأشياء الصغيرة التي لا يبدأ يومك من دونها. ومع هذا ليس هناك سبب لها، ولكنك تقوم بها على أي حال لأنها جزء منك أو لأنك جزء منها. هذه العادات التي أضافت لكيوتتك، وربما تجيبك عن سؤال فلسفي: من أنت؟ «أنا كعكة الشوكولاتة التي أكلها يومياً في الكافتيريا بدون سبب» أجابت نيكول. كم تضيف هذه العادات من جمال وهوية إلى شخصيتك. ماذا سيفوتك إن كبحت هذه العادات وحاولت إيجاد سبب لها؟

لا يسع ليلى في كل مرة أخذت فيها قلماً سوى أن ترى يدها ترسم نفس الوجه مراراً وتكراراً. لا تحمل الوجوه معنى معيناً، ولا سبباً محدداً، ولكنها فقط تجد نفسها سارحة في رسم هذه الوجوه التي يكسوها سواد السهر ورماد السجائر. في لحظة، عندما عادت ليلى بالزمن، وجدت نفسها ترسم نفس الوجه منذ صغرها من دون دون معرفة السبب، من دون انتباه وحتى من دون وعي، وكأنها مرسومة مسبقاً في مخيلتها. ليلى شخص ليلي، فهي لا تأبه لعادة شرب القهوة في النهار فهذا جزء لا يتجزأ من شخصيتها. وهي لا تعطي اعتباراً لمفهوم الوقت، وتجد الإلهام والروحانية في ظلمة الليل وسكونه. أمعقول أيعقل أن سواد السهر في عيون الوجوه الحزينة في رسومات ليلى ليس سوى انعكاس لعادات ليلى الليلية؟

يفتن إكرام كل ما هو غريب وشاذ وهذا الفضول نتيجة عشوائية لكيانها. سواء كان بيد قراءة بضعة كتب في آن واحد، وحين تصلها معاني محتويات هذه الكتب، سرعان ما يتحول فضولها لينغمس بشيء آخر فجأة ومن دون حساب، ثم تكف عن القراءة حين تصل إلى نصف الكتاب فقط، ولكنها لا تقبل بنصف حقيقة فتجدها مُستمعة ومُصغية لكل وجهات النظر المتنوعة المتفرعة ومُقبلة على اكتشاف كل شخصية. في وسط هذه النسبية وفي خضم هذه العشوائية، يوجد رابط يصلها بالعالم الواسع لأنها ترى أن كل اختلاف يستحق الإكتشاف، وكل كيان يمثل عالماً مبهرًا يملؤه الجنون والشغف، وكل طريق غير معروف يؤدي إلى قرية مجهولة تُسمى قرية الاحتمالات.

يعيش كريم في عالم متزاحم ومتسارع الأحداث، فكل يوم مليء بتفاصيل أكثر من الذي سبقه. بالرغم من هذا، يجد كريم مخرجاً لهذه الزحمة في أحلامه الزاهية. يقول كريم أنه قد يحظى بليال طويلة وأحلام أطول، ومع هذا يسترجع جميع التفاصيل. لا ينكر كريم أن نومه متقطع وقد يدوم حلمه

يهتم حمزة بالتفاصيل أكثر مما يهتم لمجمل أي شيء. يرى أن الجمال الحقيقي في الجزيئات الصغيرة التي كونت الصورة وليس الصورة الكبرى بأجمعها. يُقدّر حمزة التفاصيل غير الملحوظة حتى ولو تتطلب ملاحظتها جهداً أكبر، فمن منا سيقدم على كتابة أحلامه وتحليلها وربطها بواقعه ليستخرج منها معنى؟ فتجد حمزة في اليوم التالي يتصل بصديق وذلك بسبب شعوره بالذنب الذي يراوده لأنه لم يستطع تقاسم اليانصيب مع صديقه في الحلم. أحلام حمزة تُخبره الكثير عن تفاصيل يومه، فإن لم يلحظ شيئاً صغيراً في يومه، لا داعي للقلق، لأن أحلام ليلته ستتكفل بجذب انتباهه لها من جديد. أصبح لدى حمزة القدرة على التحكم بأحلامه والتجول فيها وحتى الإستيقاظ منها متى ما شاء. لدى كريم وحمزة قوة وقدرة كبيرة لا يملكها أشخاص عاديون أبداً، وربما

ليس لدى الفتیان من مهرب سوى أحلام لياليهما!

في خيالنا حياة ولكل منا عوالمٌ صغيرة وعاداتٌ غريبة لا نلاحظها ولا نبدي فيها اهتماماً في خضم الروتين والأيام المتشابهة. ولكن، ماذا إن أصغينا لها ولو لبرهة؟ ماذا إن فكرنا فيها ولو لوهلة من الزمن؟ ماذا لو احتفلنا بها ولو للحظة؟

فلنقرع الطبول فخرًا بثورتنا الصغيرة، فلنعزف الكمان أنشودة على ظلام ليايلنا، «ولنرقص على كل اكتشاف وجدناه وعلى كل سؤال أجبنا عليه. فلنتنفس ولنحلم لبرهة في خضم هذه السرعة حتى نغوص أكثر وأكثر في لعوالم الصغيرة الممتدة» - ليلى منكبي.





# كنت مسرعاً

بقلم سامي عبد الباقي



كنت في عجلة من أمري

كنت مسرعاً ولم أدر

إن كنت أمضي في الحياة أم هي بي تجري

كنت مسرعاً وتوقفتُ على مفترق طرقٍ

أُلَوِّح لرُكَّاب قطارٍ فاتني

كان بإمكانني أن أقطع تذكرة ولم أفعل

كان بإمكانني أن ألقاك هناك ولكنني لم أرحل

كان بإمكانك أن تأتي لكنك لم تسأل

وكان يمكن أن تكون عينا عسلتان كعينا ريتا

أن يكون أنفي أصغر أو ظهري أحذب

كان يمكن أن أكون عنك أبعد،

وللسماء أقرب

لكن أنفي الشرقي الكبير

يعود لأبي

وعينيّ الذابلتين لأمي

حتى طريقة إعدادي للقهوة لأختي

أما قهوتي يمنيّة

وما أنا إلا

أحاديث طويلة وتطول.

ما أنا إلا بلادٌ جديدة

ورسالةٌ قبول

ما أنا إلا حب أبي للموسيقى.

ما أنا إلا كل كاسيتات أم كلثوم التي اشترتها منه أُمي

في متجره الصغير

حتى صارت لأبي عشيقة.

ما أنا إلا ألف قصة بديلة

كان يمكن أن تكون ولم تكن.

كنت مسرعاً وفاتتني سنين طويلة

كنت في عجلة من أمري

وما بيدي حيلة

ليس لديك الكثير من الوقت الآن

فتريث بعناقك

دع القهوة تبرد

اقطع تذكرة

أو اثنين

أو فقط

كُنْ.



# تجمع العين الثالثة

بقلم صفية لطيف



التطور عملية بطيئة، أو هذا ما على الأقل ما يقوله لنا العلم. لم يسبق لأي شخص أن شهد تطورا ملحوظا في الجسد، ذلك أن فترة حياة الإنسان تعتبر قصيرة للغاية لتشهد على ذلك.

ولكن، في بيروت لبنان تغير ذلك. هناك، وقع حادث جماعي واحد تسبب بطفرة جينية بين عدد غير معلوم من الناس. ولكن قبل أن ندخل في تفاصيل هذا الحدث، دعونا نتحدث عن التطور أولا.

التطور يحدث أحيانا نتيجة عدم احتياج الصفة؛ أي أن صفة جسدية ما تختفي لقلة استخدامها ذلك أن العامل البيئي الذي احتيجت لأجله هذه الصفة لم يعد موجودا. يحدث التطور أحيانا أخرى بسبب الحاجة لصفة جديدة نتيجة البيئة المحيطة التي تتحدى وجود الكائن الحي ونجاةه. في حالتنا هذه، الكائن الحي هو الشخص المقيم في بيروت والبيئة هي بيروت.

كان أول حدث مسجل للطفرة الجينية في عام ١٩٩٧. هذه المعلومة متعارف عليها من قبل كل سكان بيروت غير أن ذلك لن تجدها في أي كتاب أو أي موقع إلكتروني، ذلك أن الكلام مسموح ولكن الكتابة عنها، وتسجيلها في التاريخ المكتوب صعب للغاية. في عام ١٩٩٧ ولدت فتاة بعين ثالثة في الجزء الخلفي من رأسها. نعلم بأنها عين لأن العديد من الفتيات الأخريات بين عامي ١٩٩٧ و ٢٠٠٠ ولدوا بنفس الحالة. لم تفتح العين أبدا في أول سنوات عمر هؤلاء الفتيات. أي أنه كانت هناك تركيبة العين ووظائفها ولكنها لم تستخدم أبدا، بل كانت تغطي تحت الشعر الطويل الذي أصبح علامة تميز فتيات المدينة.

انتشر الخبر سريعا بوجود «فتيات العين الثالثة». وكعادة كل المجتمعات، التغيير لا يُتقبل بسهولة. انقسمت بيروت

بسرعة بين جماعة تخاف وتكره العين الثالثة وبين جماعة تؤمن بأنها نعمة من الإله. الفئة الأولى رأت في العين الثالثة لعنة فخافت وهربت من أصحابها، حذروا من التعامل مع هؤلاء الفتيات وسجنهن في مكان واحد، بل أن البعض دعا لقتلهن، بينما رأت الفئة الثانية أن العين الثالثة تجلب الحظ مما دعاهم للبحث عن هؤلاء الفتيات للحصول على بركاتهم. أصبحت الكثير من العائلات الفقيرة ثرية بعد أن وُلدت لهن فتاة بعين ثالثة ذلك أن «بركات العين الثالثة» كان عملا مذرا للأرباح.

ولكن، لم تُفتح أي من هذه العيون على الإطلاق. عام ٢٠١٠ كان العام الذي تغير فيه هذا. عندما كانت أحد الفتيات تقطع الطريق، تأتي دراجة نارية من ورائها وتكاد أن تصدمها. غير أن الفتاة تغير مسارها فجأة وكأنها رأت الدراجة النارية قادمة، وهو بالفعل ما حصل. بدأت أحداث مشابهة بالوقوع سريعا بعد هذا.

توصلت الأبحاث اللاحقة إلى أن العين الثالثة تُفتح بعد أن تصل الفتيات سن البلوغ وأن وظيفتها الأساسية هي حماية الشخص الحامل للعين. بسبب هذا الاكتشاف، أصبحت العين الثالثة أحد أكثر المواضيع المتناقش عليها في القرن الواحد والعشرين. تسابقت بعدها المؤسسات العلمية والأمنية للبحث عن هؤلاء الفتيات، وأصبحت بيروت مركزا للشركات المتخصصة بالأمن وصناعة الأسلحة. استمتع أهل بيروت بالنهضة الاقتصادية الناتجة عن ذلك، غير أن أهالي الفتيات والفتيات أنفسهن عشن في خوف من القادم، لهذا السبب تأسس تجمع العين الثالثة. يبقى موقع وهدف هذا التجمع سريًا، يُقال إن ذلك للحفاظ على سلامة هؤلاء الفتيات، ولكن لا أحد يعلم. ما هذا التقرير سوى بداية لمحاولة بشرية لتغطية موضوع بالغ السرية. لكن الأهم من كل ذلك هو أن سكان بيروت تمكنوا منذ هذا الحدث العظيم من التمشي في الشوارع دون خوف من أي دراجة نارية.



# عادة

## بقلم ليلى منكبي

غريب أمرها وغريبة عاداتها، منذ سنة كانت تمقت السيارة، رأتحتها، ملمسها، رمادها وحتى الدخان الخارج منها، كانت تراه ساماً، قاتلاً. كانت تكثر من المحاضرات لأبيها حتى يقلع عن هذه العادة. ولكن الآن أصبحت ترى في هذه القطعة المتناثرة من الرماد مجالاً للتنفيس في خضم السرعة، ومساحة للتأمل في وسط الزحمة الخانقة. بل صارت تعشق إشعالها وتغوص في حالة تخمّر عندما يمتزج طرف السيارة الأصهب بلون الليل الداكن، في انسياب متدرج متموج. تباثرت هذه الفكرة عليها مع تباثر الرماد في إحدى الجلسات التي تختلي فيها بنفسها: مضت عليها قرابة سنة وبضعة أشهر في بيروت، كل من عرفها لاحظ تغيّرها وفي كل مرّة تغلبها الحيرة والتساؤلات: هل فعلاً تغيرت؟ وإن حصل هذا التغير المزعوم، هل هو سلبى أم إيجابى؟ أمعقول أن يتغير الأشخاص بهذه السرعة؟!

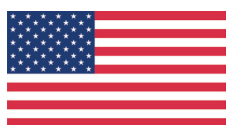
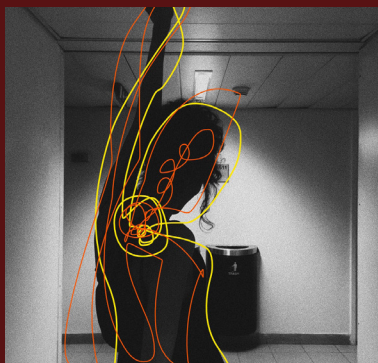
نفثت الدخان! ونظرت إلى الأعلى في محاولة لتحليل هذا التغيير الغريب، ما الذي بقي من ماضيها وما الذي انمحى؟ ما الذي بقي على عهده وما الذي تحوّل؟ أسئلة تحوم وتزيد مع الوقت ويبقى السؤال الأهم: هل الغربة هي الملامة؟

كلّ ما تعرفه هو أنها لطالما حملت في مخيلتها توهجاً ضئيلاً. اشتعلت في دماغها الأفكار ولكنها لطالما أطفأتها، لطالما علت في حنجرتها الأغنيات وتراكمت على لسانها الكلمات واحترق جسمها شوقاً للحركة ولكنها لطالما أسكتت النغمات، أسكتت الرقصات، وأغلقت على الكلمات في جرّة النسيان. لطالما رشح جسمها ألواناً وجراحاً مخملية ولكنها لطالما غطتها بالقتامة والسواد. لطالما اعترأها مسّ من الجنون وروح غريبة مرحة ولكنها خافت أن تكتشفها وخافت أن تكشفها للعلن في رهبة أن تزيع عن العرف وتأخذ طريقاً غامضاً مجهولاً. كلّ ما تعرفه أنها الآن، على الأقل، شبه حرة؛ حرة في قراراتها، في شخصيتها، في ما تكون وما تريد أن تكون وربما كان هذا التغيير الثورة الصغيرة التي انتظرتها والإنفراج الذي احتاجته.

أشعلت ليلى سيجارة أخرى، احتفالاً بالمجهول، وتأملاً فيما أنى... وما سيأتي!







## STUDENT INITIATIVE

### BEIRUT CAMPUS

P.O. Box 13-5053 Chouran  
Beirut 1102 2801, Lebanon  
Tel. +961 1 78 64 56  
+961 3 60 37 03  
Fax. +961 1 86 70 98

### BYBLOS CAMPUS

P.O. Box 36  
Byblos, Lebanon  
Tel. +961 9 54 72 54  
+961 3 79 13 14  
Fax. +961 9 54 62 62

### NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS & ACADEMIC CENTER

211 East, 46th Street  
New York, NY 10017, USA  
Tel. +1 212 203 4333  
Fax. +1 212 784 6597