

10452 Thoughts

April 23rd 2022- 10:14 PM
7 days left.

‘Dear Diary, the weather this Sunday is breathtaking at that time of the year, I realized that while sitting next to the living room window, as I admired the sun’s rays reflecting on the roof of the small house on the top of the hill, surrounded by trees disguised with a golden mask stolen from the sun. It was almost perfect, if you choose to ignore the burnt plants and bushes and the smell of the trash that hasn’t been picked up by the truck in three days, something about a labor strike... I started my day with my mom’s kiss on the forehead, the same way I always have, and every day approaching the end of the month, the kiss tastes a bit more bitter, a bit sadder. I got dressed and went to the kitchen to help my mom with the cooking. We were having teta and jeddo (Grandma and Grandpa) over for lunch today. Dad came home around 12, as he works on Sunday mornings, because we kind of need the money lately, with the crisis and everything, but I’m thankful. I’m thankful for everything, I learned that it could always be worse. He gave me a warm hug, and started to prepare the Arak, as we were waiting for my grandparents. My grandmother cried a lot during lunch. She told me stories about the day I was born, about how I used to grab her finger, look her in the eyes and smile while she used to sing for me “Nassam 3alayna el Hawa”. We only changed her mood when my father started reciting some old Lebanese jokes, and when my mom finally brought all the Lebanese sweets to the table after lunch, and although we all claimed we were too full to eat, not a single piece of Baklawa was left on the table. I watched them leave the house in the afternoon, and it hit me that the next time I’d see them, the roles would be inverted, and I would be the one leaving, but it won’t be for a few days, and it won’t be to get back home, quite the opposite... ‘

April 23rd 2022- 8:22 PM
6 days left.

‘Dear Diary, it’s me again, your favorite little doctor-to-be. One thing I am thankful for today is my passion for medicine. I have never found myself tearing up over something the way I do over molecular biology. I cannot wait to expand my knowledge and my potential in this field, and it’s strangling to think that London is going to offer me this opportunity much more than Lebanon ever will. It’s exactly like when you’ve given all of yourself to someone, and you find out that in the end, the friendship you have doesn’t allow you to work on yourself, it’s toxic and draining for you, but you stay because you love them. Anyway, I spent the whole day with my sister today. Celine is my best friend, regardless of the age gap between the two of us, she is always honest with me, and she is my safe place as much as I am hers. We went to Jeita for the day and admired the Grotto I know well by now, but that never fails to amaze me. We then proceeded by blasting Nassif Zeitun in the car, and got knefeh on the way back home.’

April 26rd 2022- 9:36 PM
4 days left.

‘Dear Diary, today was difficult, and harsh on my emotional health to be honest. My friends had prepared a gathering for me, a goodbye party if you wish. They were all united, and each one raised a toast to a memory of ours. For the first time in a while, I felt the weight of leaving. You know, the idea of leaving is like putting a lens in your eye, a filter: Nothing looks the same anymore, because you know you won’t experience it in a while. (if not ever, but that’s just an intrusive thought isn’t it) My friends were saying things like “Angy is the wildest person I have ever met, she would make me sneak out at 3 AM just to go

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get some KFC” or “Angy is the top student at her university, and not only because she studies like a rat, but because she loves it like no one else. May you become the doctor you’ve always dreamt to be!” While all I could hear was “We will never get to sneak out again at 3 AM” or “I will miss seeing her talk about what she’s passionate about while I’m still struggling with understanding basic concepts.”

It’s in moments like these that you start wondering, it is the right decision, is it worth it?'

April 27rd 2022- 7:00 PM
3 days left.

‘Dear Diary, I’m exhausted. We spent the whole day with my parents, heads in my papers, my passport, my ID... to make sure we didn’t forget anything, and I won’t get stuck anywhere in the airports in the world. We calculated everything from the beginning, and mom checked the list of “Zaatar, Zaytoun, Asal, and Mrabba” (Thyme, Olives, Honey, and Jam) for the 5th time this week. My parents call me “Mouhariba”, which means warrior, and I don’t know if they use it to reassure me that I am capable of anything, or to reassure themselves... Everything was ready, everything but me. Every hour passes by, and the reality hits me a bit more. I removed the wall all the pictures of my cousins, Celine, my friends, and my family, and put them in my suitcase. ‘You’re going to look good on the wall of our room in London’ I said out loud in my room, convincing myself that this is the path drawn for me, that I won’t get to accomplish anything in here, and that I needed to leave.’

Angy closed her journal, and next to the pictures that she ended up leaving on her bed, she laid down to calm the storm inside her. The images she had formed, the sounds she was hearing, the cries she was imagining while she was walking away in the airport, it was too much, it was too loud, it was too tiring. Her heart was beating too fast, her arms were numb and her eyes were shut, paralyzed.

Everything went silent. The world was dark and empty, it was still. The storm came to end, and she was slowly opening her eyes again, regaining consciousness but still drowning in confusion regarding what time it was, where she was and what was happening. She looked around, trying to form the picture from what her senses were able to capture, and she came to the conclusion that was in a hospital bed, alone. Angy didn’t have time to think about how she ended up here when a lady came in. She was wearing a long, white coat, had papers in her hand, and a stethoscope around her neck; it was her doctor: “Hope you’re feeling better Mouhariba” she said, with a smile on her face, and a soft gaze. She smelled like mint and vanilla, and her energy was reassuring but powerful, strong but kind, soft but indelible. On her name tag, you could read ‘Angy M.’ She put the papers she was holding on the table next to the bed and left. Angy, weirded out and still as confused as ever, sat spine tall on the bed, looked at the papers her doctor just put down and saw between them her own diary. She reached out for it, as something finally looked familiar in this whole mess, picked it up, and opened on the latest page.

May 12th, 2044- 6:32PM

‘Dear Diary, I had an amazing day today. I woke up early in the morning and got ready to go to the hospital where I have been working for quite a few years. One of my patients who had already suffered a lot from severe pneumonia is being discharged today, and the satisfaction that this brings me cannot be put into words. I went to my mom’s during my break to pay her a little surprise, and I was thrilled to have a coffee with her. Since the time I lost my dad, my mom needed me by her side, and I’m more than glad I was able to fulfill that need of hers. Seeing her every day is my biggest source of energy. I then proceeded by going to the University, where I’m both teaching and completing my research paper in Molecular Biology and Genetics, and while I was reading articles and experimenting, I got an email from Ted X in

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London, asking me to fly for few days and give a speech there about my latest findings, representing my beloved country in Europe. I couldn't be more thrilled. In the evening, I went out with some friends for a drink, and we discussed how good I would look as a bridesmaid at Celine's wedding which is going to be in a few days. Tomorrow, post-shift, she and I are going to shop for her wedding dress. You can't imagine how grateful I am to be able to share these moments with my sister.

I'm working on a big project, a first in Lebanon. I'm gathering speakers and scientists from several countries to discuss several fields in the development of Gene Regulation. It is going to be amazing, and I am glad that they all agreed to come so I can host it in my home country. The day I decided to stay here and not fly for London, is the day I discovered that Lebanon hosts valuable resources, brains and generous souls. I was able to meet people that are putting me on the right track in my academic, physical, mental and emotional growth. I belong here, and where you belong, you bloom. My roots are already planted in the soil of this country, all I had to do was work on expanding them, to reach the right places with the help of the right people. Sometimes, all you have to do is look around and understand that because you're adapted to where you are, you don't see the advantages, you think that elsewhere is more advanced or more stable. No place is going to be the country of my dreams, except Lebanon, because it grants me the feeling of belongingness. So to the Lebanon of my dreams, thank you for giving me my wings, I will fly and I'll raise your name with me.'