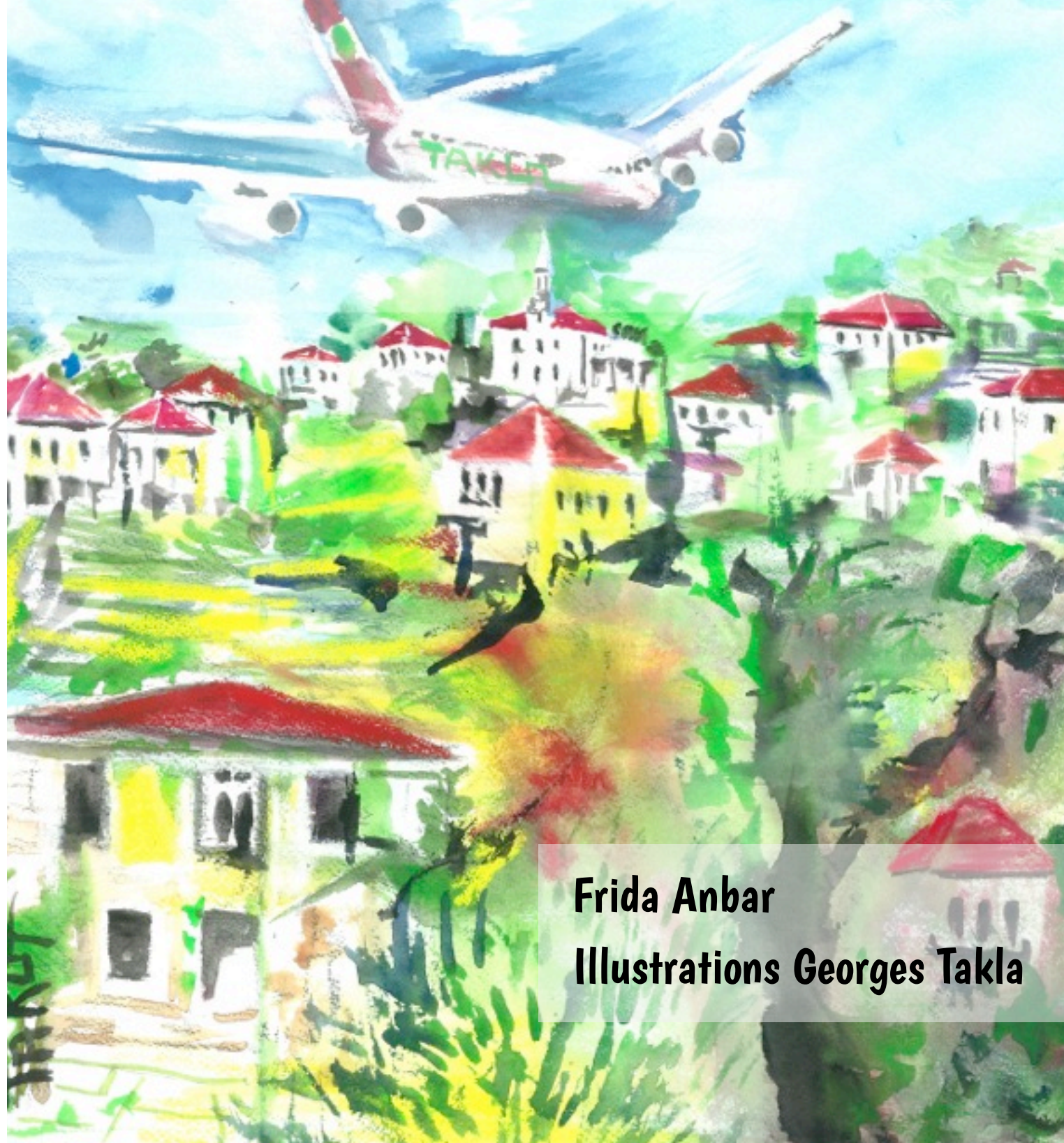


# TELL ME ABOUT LEBANON JEDDO!



**Frida Anbar**

**Illustrations Georges Takla**





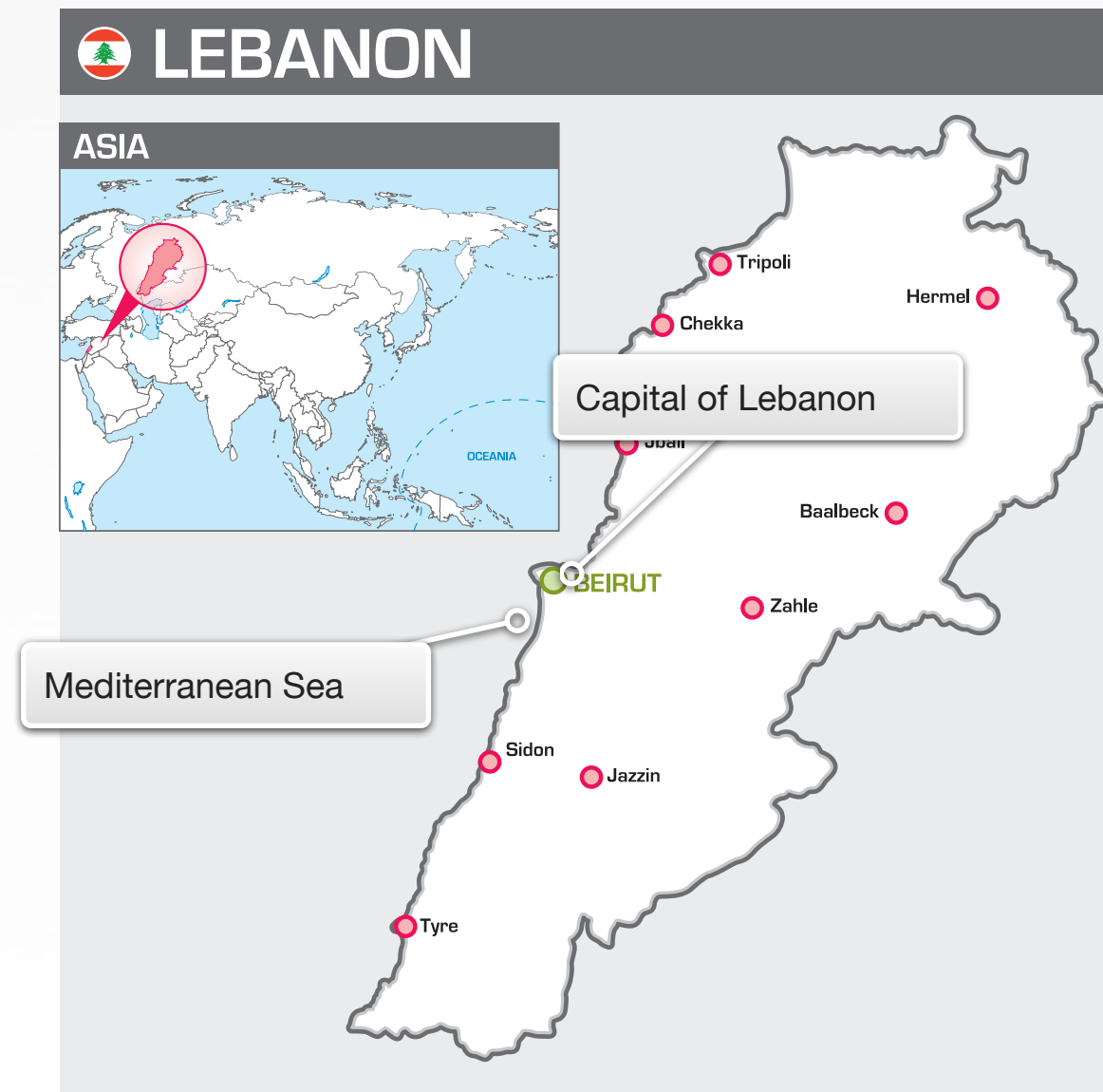
**This book is dedicated to my father. Michel Anbar taught me to  
love and respect Lebanon unconditionally.**

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**Frida Anbar - Georges Takla**

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Lebanon is a small country within the Middle East. It spreads over 10,452 km<sup>2</sup>.







**Our sincere thanks go to our famous  
Lebanese singer Majida El Roumi.  
She has generously agreed to let us use  
her beautiful song  
Biladi Ana at the end of the book.**



**It is snowing in Montreal. Light silky flakes spin cheerfully in the air. They tease Mika as he presses his cheek against the ice-cold window of the school day-care waiting room.**







**Thursdays are reserved  
for his adored **Jeddo!**  
He picks him up after school,  
and they have dinner together.  
After homework is done, magic  
unfolds in the living room.**

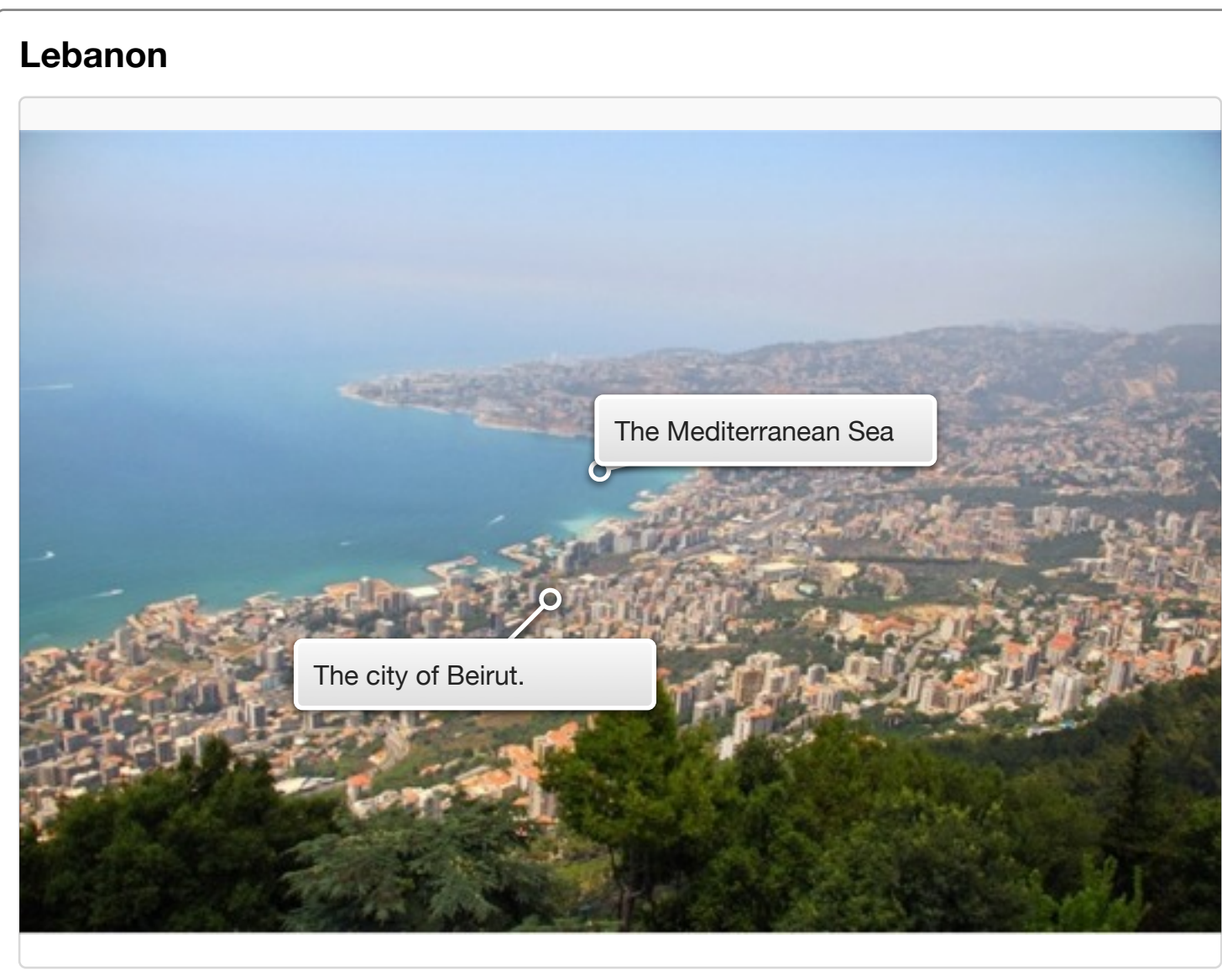
*You can click on the red text to see the translation of the Arabic word in English.*

**Jeddo Michel opens up his life's photo albums, the one before he came to Canada.**





It was in the other country. The one that Mika does not know. The country of the sea and mountains. The country of the past, that of the heart. It was long before the onset of the civil war. It forced the family to leave their native country, Lebanon, which Jeddo Michel tenderly calls **Lebnen**.







For Mika, it is a delight that is renewed every Thursday. Well settled unto Jeddo's lap, he embarks on a new journey launched by a fresh new story with every photo.

**When Jeddo speaks about Lebanon, his voice shivers.  
Behind his wrinkled face, a certain light is reborn.  
His eyes shine like stars, as the evoked memories  
resurface.**





- Look closely Mika, even if the picture has been tarnished by time. Notice this house with the terrace under the **Ariche**? It is our family residence in Aley. Winters were always spent in Beirut, but summers were exclusively reserved for the mountain, the **Jabal**.



Photo Credit : SOETCO, is specialized in the renovation of old traditional Lebanese houses.

- Try to observe the three arches that surround the windows. It is typical of the Lebanese houses that decorate the mountain of **Chouf**.



Photo Credit : SOETCO, is specialized in the renovation of old traditional Lebanese houses.



**Aley is nicknamed " The princess of summer resorts " because of its closeness to Beirut and for its amazing climate.**



**Try to imagine, Mika, the sweet wind in the spring, the fertile earth, the view of Beirut at your feet and the friendly people of the village.**





**Every Sunday, the whole family used to spend the day with us. Two and sometimes three generations were all mixed up happily together.**





**Your Teta, God bless her soul, cooked gigantic portions. Her joy to receive her family gave her the strength to prepare everything.  
For a Lebanese, the family is sacred. Hospitality, a fundamental value.**





Your grandmother's table was always abundant and infused with **Baraka**.

She served an assorted **mezze**, made up of about twenty dishes of all kinds, before the main course. Recipes were handed down from mothers to daughters; a tradition in our country.



As for me, I was responsible for the **Kibbeh nayyeh**. I crushed the meat in a big stone mortar called "jouroun".

**Rezallah** ya Mika. Rezallah ya Jeddo.



Mets libanais



Kibbeh nayyeh



**When he was your age, your dad spent all his summers in a garden blooming with fruit trees. Surrounded by his brothers and sisters, cousins, and friends he played endlessly and invented games all day long.**

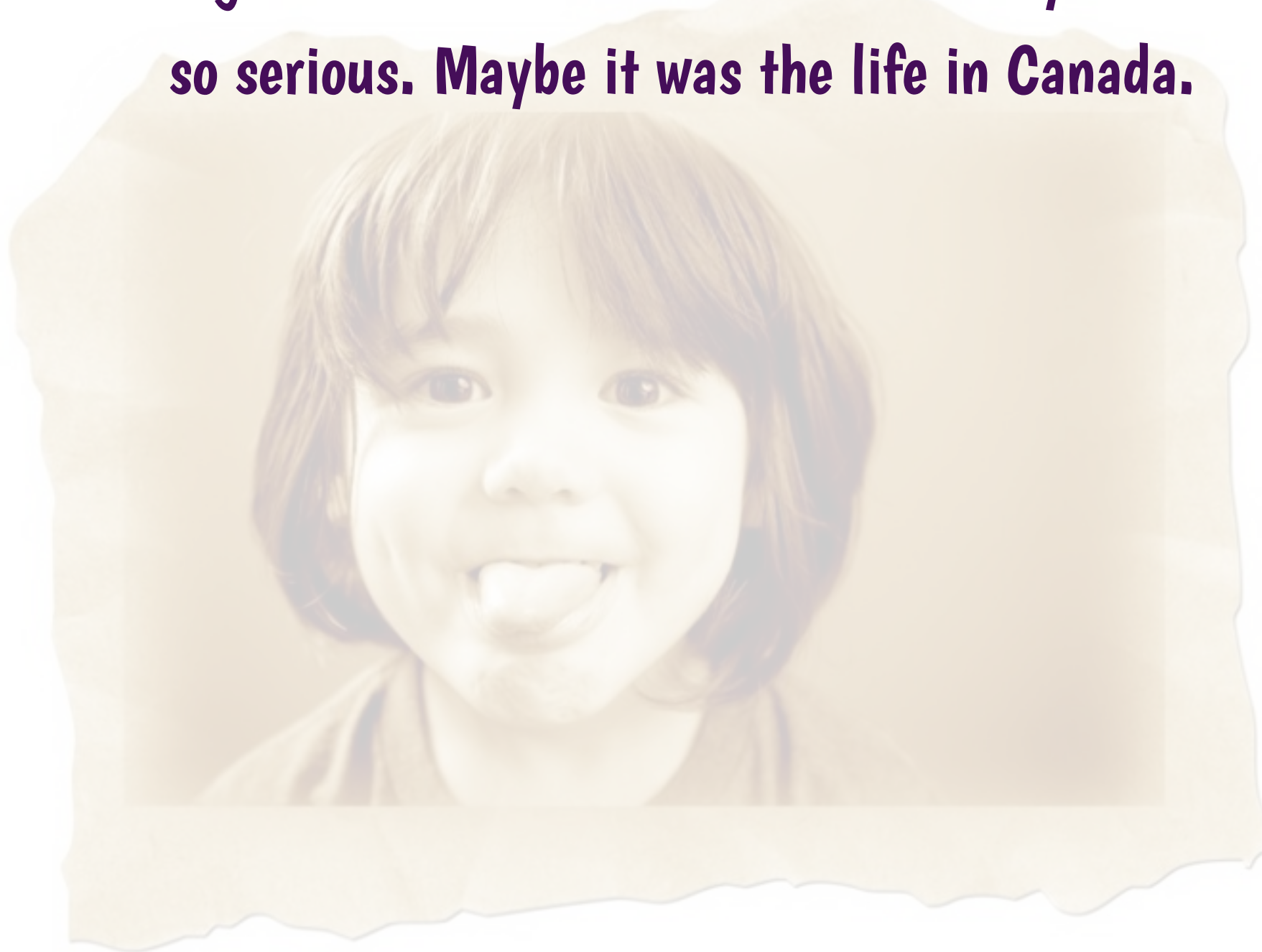


**Lebanon was prosperous way back then. When foreign tourists came to visit, they told us they discovered paradise.**





**While scrutinizing the faces, Mika remains puzzled. He can't really recognize his dad as the child with the wild hair and deep gaze. Today, his dad wears glasses and combs his hair in a very neat way. He always looks so serious. Maybe it was the life in Canada.**





**Thursdays came one after the other  
and so did the discoveries  
along the way.**

**-What are they doing here, Jeddo?**

**-They are dancing Dabke! It is the  
Lebanese folk dance. It conveys joy  
and freedom, and expresses nation-  
alism. The dancers form a circle  
and strike the ground with their  
heels. How can you not feel this ex-  
citement when you dance on  
Lebanese soil**



**One Thursday evening, a text jumped out from the album. Letters drawn in black ink that looked like an artistic drawing.**

**-And this, what is it Jeddo?**

**It is a poem written in Arabic called Zajal, a form of spontaneous poetry consisting of responses that go back and forth between participants sitting around a table during family gatherings or weddings.**



**Another time, Jeddo shows him a picture of a stone citadel built on the open sea.**

**-You know Mika; the history of Lebanon goes back 7,000 years before Christ. Our country was the cradle of the Phoenician nation, the Mediterranean people who developed trade during centuries, and built cities on all the coasts.**

**This castle was built in 1,227 by the crusaders. Saïda is the third biggest city in the country and is particularly famous for its medieval souks. It is also in Saïda, 3 000 years ago, that soap manufacturing was born.**





**Some Thursdays, when Jeddo speaks about Beirut, the years that mark his features fade as if by magic. As he tenderly flips through the album, his love of Lebanon brings the pictures back to life.**





- Beirut is not a city Mika, it is a queen. From her corniche, this seaside promenade at the edge of the Mediterranean Sea, she shows off a thousand faces: from the vibrating district of Hamra with its restaurants and cafés up to the gorgeous Achrafieh lined with charming streets shaded by bougainvillea's.

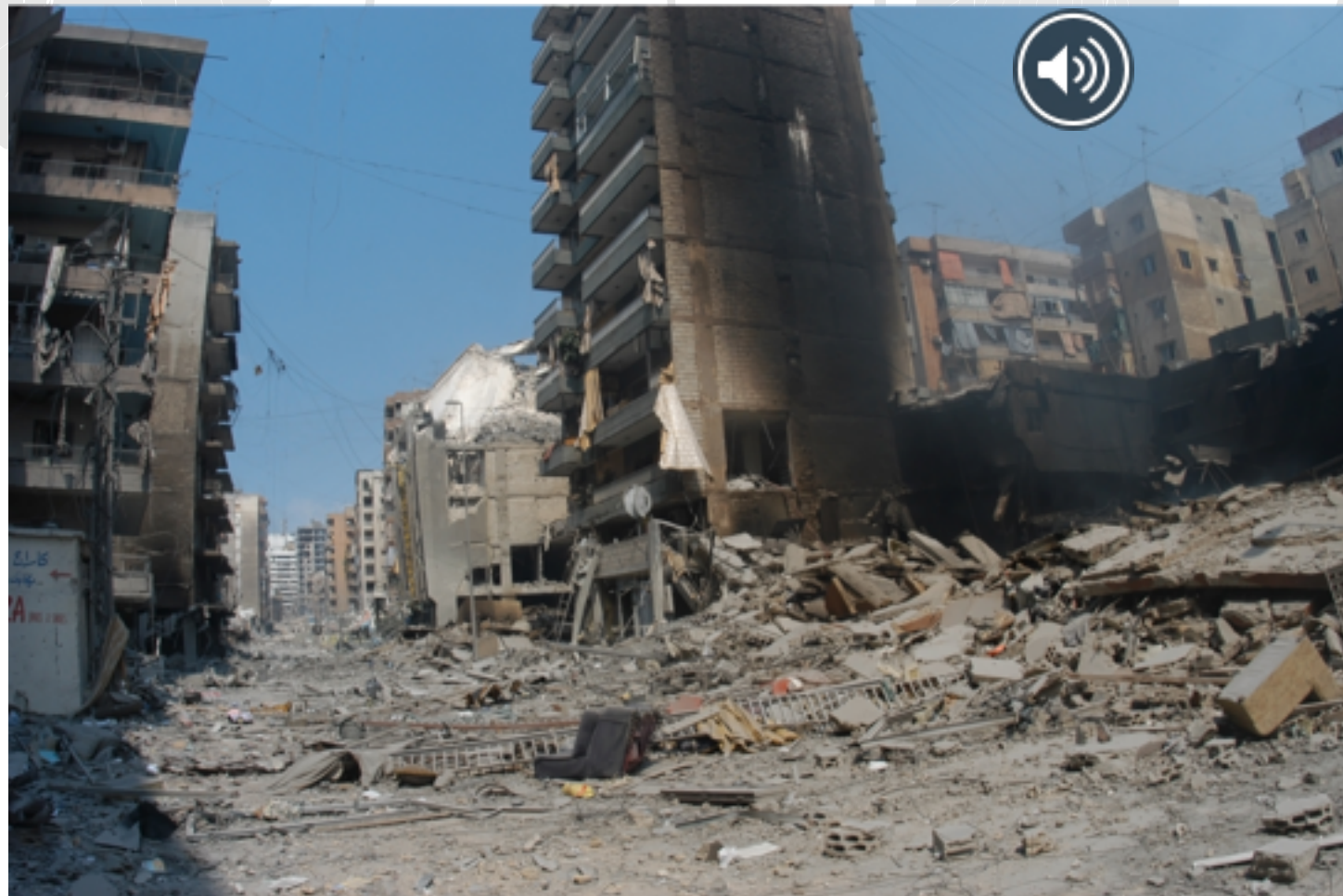




**In Beirut, we find the Place de l'Étoile, the Parliament and the Grand Serail. Capital of the Lebanon, it is also a very important financial and cultural center. Throughout the years, many poets glorified its beauty and a multitude of singers sang its oriental charm. But everything, everything, was disrupted by this war.**



- Why was there a war Jeddo? Why did you all leave?
- Maybe, ya habibé, because we did not deserve this little country any more. This jewel, blessed by the Gods, raised in front of the sea and tenderly surrounded by mountains, what did we make out of it except ashes? Olive trees burned, brothers became rivals and Beirut put on its widow's veils. I don't want to darken your eyes Mika, let's change the subject.





- This evening, I shall take you into the paved streets of emirs Chehab and Fakhreddine's city: Deir el Amar. It is your Teta's home town.



**Look, at this photo, it was your aunt's christening. Let's go through the Saïdet el-Tallé church door, decorated by the crescent and the cross.**





**Mika's eyes widen. Despite the passage of time and the faded picture, he recognizes a young Jeddo in front of a majestic palace. Intrigued, he looks questioningly at him.**





**- Beiteddine is the name of the city and of the castle. It was built by a Lebanese prince, emir Bachir Chehab II, in the XIXth century. It embodies a real jewel of oriental architecture and Byzantine mosaics. There is a lot to be proud of, little Canadian of Lebanese blood.**





**- Jeddo Michel, is it normal to belong to two countries?**

**- My little Mika, one sits in the heart and the other one is governed by reason.**

**One embalms the past and the other waltzes with the future. I did not elect duality; it was imposed on me. It is the prize of all immigrants. Some people see it as a weakness, ya habibi, I choose to make it my armor.**





**Jeddo adds.**

**- Lebanese heritage runs through your veins. Your accent and your actions bear the marks of Canada. Your profile is oriental and you are facing West. Isn't that the biggest challenge: taming the past to conquer the future?**







**- This Thursday, it is South that I am taking you. Look at this fantastic view of the city of Jezzine perched at an altitude of 950 meter.**

**It is known for its famous natural waterfall! There is also a cave in Jezzine that is cut in the rock. It sheltered emir Fakhreddine when he fled the Ottoman army in 1633.**



In this beautiful town also, was born the craft of high-end cutlery. The blade of the utensil is surmounted by a bird representing the Phoenix. The city and its artwork are both a true marvel.

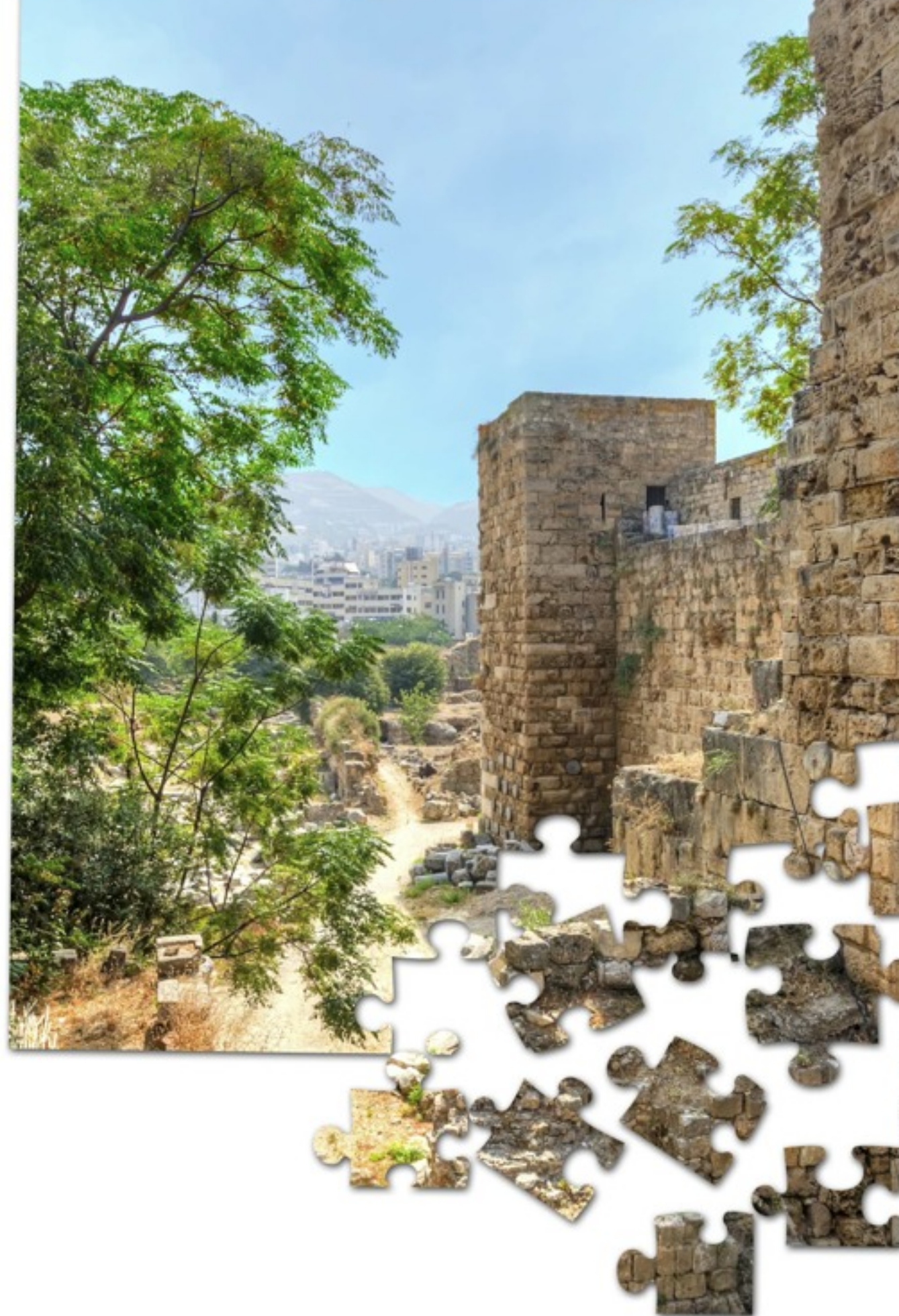




**One evening, Mika remains silent.  
He abruptly closes the albums. He feels so  
impatient!**

**- Jeddo, I don't want to listen to the stories  
of Lebanon anymore! It is true that I was  
born in Canada, but it's time for me to disco-  
ver the country of my parents. My past, my  
roots as well as the secrets buried in the  
abandoned houses left behind in the  
deserted villages.**

**I want to go to the Lebanon!**





**Amused by Mika's reaction, Jeddo pinches his cheek and repeats, as he always does: "Lets wait and see this summer."**







**The years passed by  
as they do so skillfully.**

**The seasons followed one after another.**

**Mika grew up and Jeddo  
closed his photo albums.**

**Many years later, a car stopped in front of a stone house with an empty roof, a shaky balustrade, and tired wooden shutters. A young man, with a baby in his arms, got out from the car.**



Photo Credit : SOETCO, is specialized in the renovation of old traditional Lebanese houses.





**After a moment of hesitation, he stepped over some bits of stone and pushed the front door armed with a rusted lock. He walked slowly, apparently moved by the scenery and holding the child tight against his chest.**

**Deserted, the house was hardly standing. Although the garden was left behind a long time ago, the lemon tree, the apple tree, and the coconut palm were still standing tall proudly facing the green valley.**



Photo Credit : SOETCO, is specialized in the renovation of old traditional Lebanese houses.





**Guided by the light, the young man went out onto the porch.**

**A certain Ariche survived the passage of time.**

**Mika recognized it instantly.**

**In his memory resonated the voice of his Grandfather  
as he wiped a tear and then another.**



**He whispered in the little baby's ear.**

- My jeddo's stories occupied my childhood. Every Thursday, he used to tell me a new one: about the country, our family and our traditions. He was right; Lebanon is certainly a small paradise. If I am here today and if I love this land, it is because he ignited and nourished that feeling in me. He preserved it through his photo albums filled with discolored pictures but so rich in values and feelings.**





**Mika continues.**

**The baby twitters.**

**- Here I am today, in this house in Aley. It's time to resuscitate these sleepy roots. I am finally back home. His house is now mine and later it will be yours.**

Photo Credit : SOETCO, is specialized in the renovation of old traditional Lebanese houses.

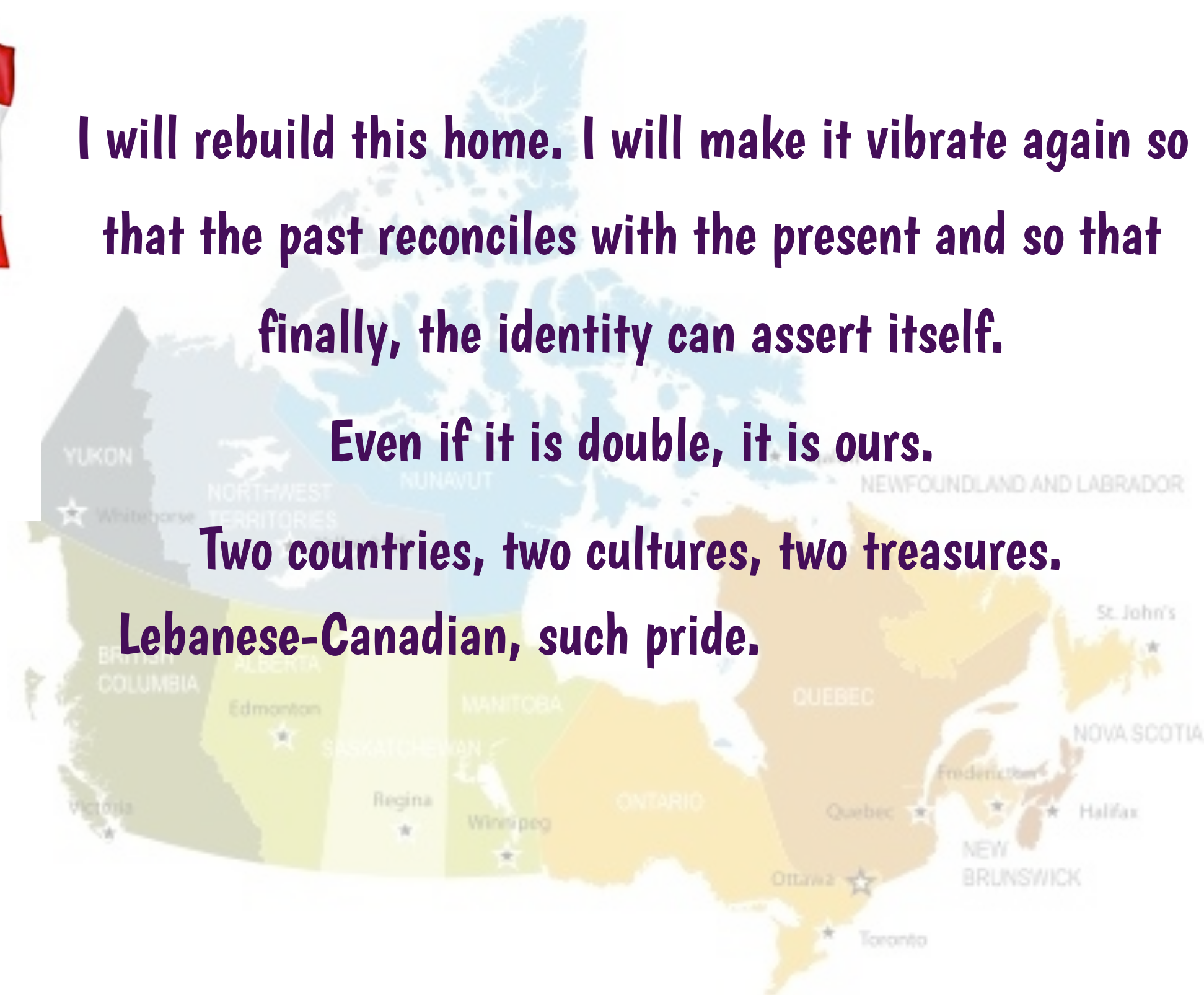




**I will rebuild this home. I will make it vibrate again so  
that the past reconciles with the present and so that  
finally, the identity can assert itself.**

**Even if it is double, it is ours.**

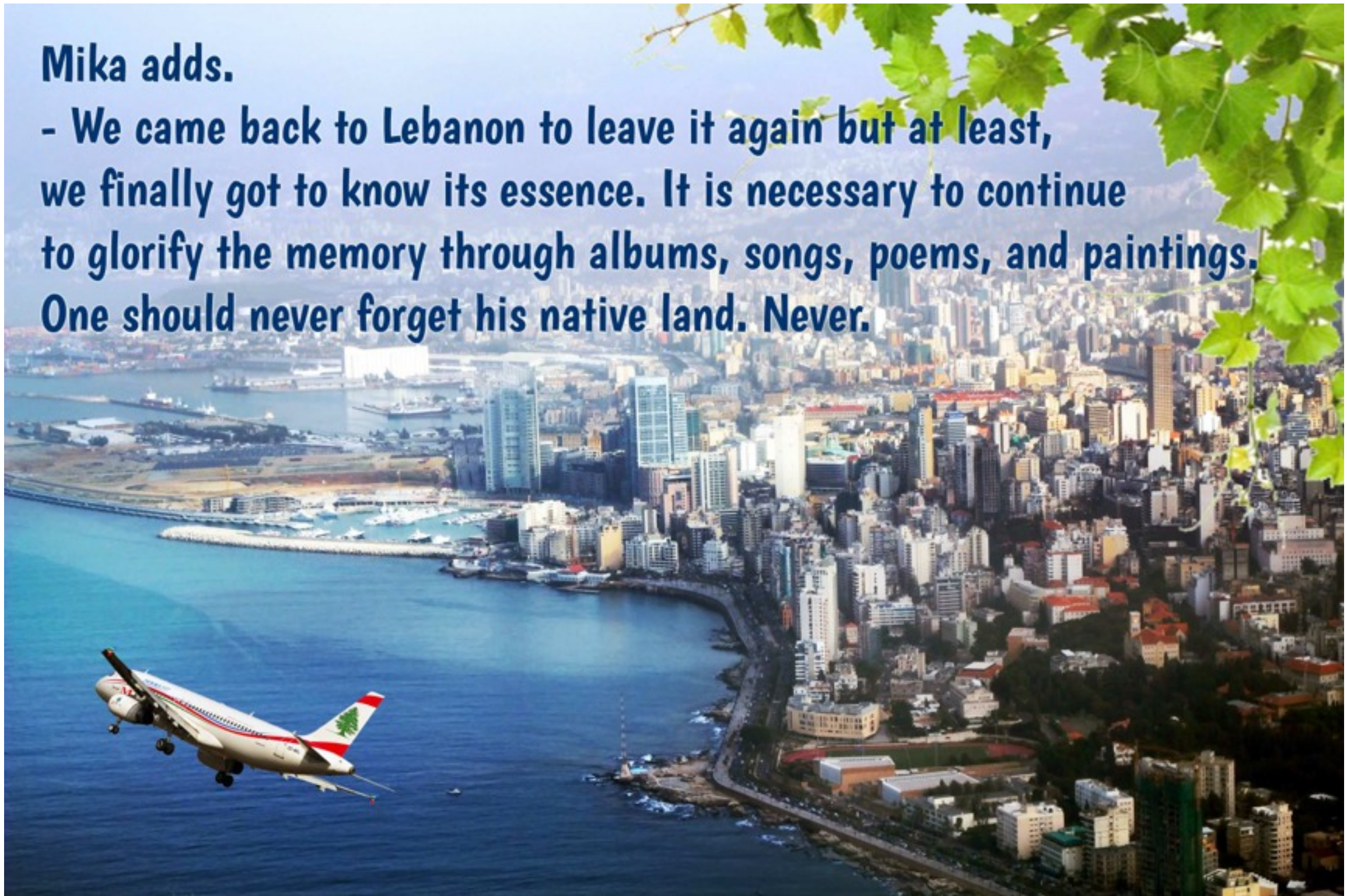
**Two countries, two cultures, two treasures.  
Lebanese-Canadian, such pride.**



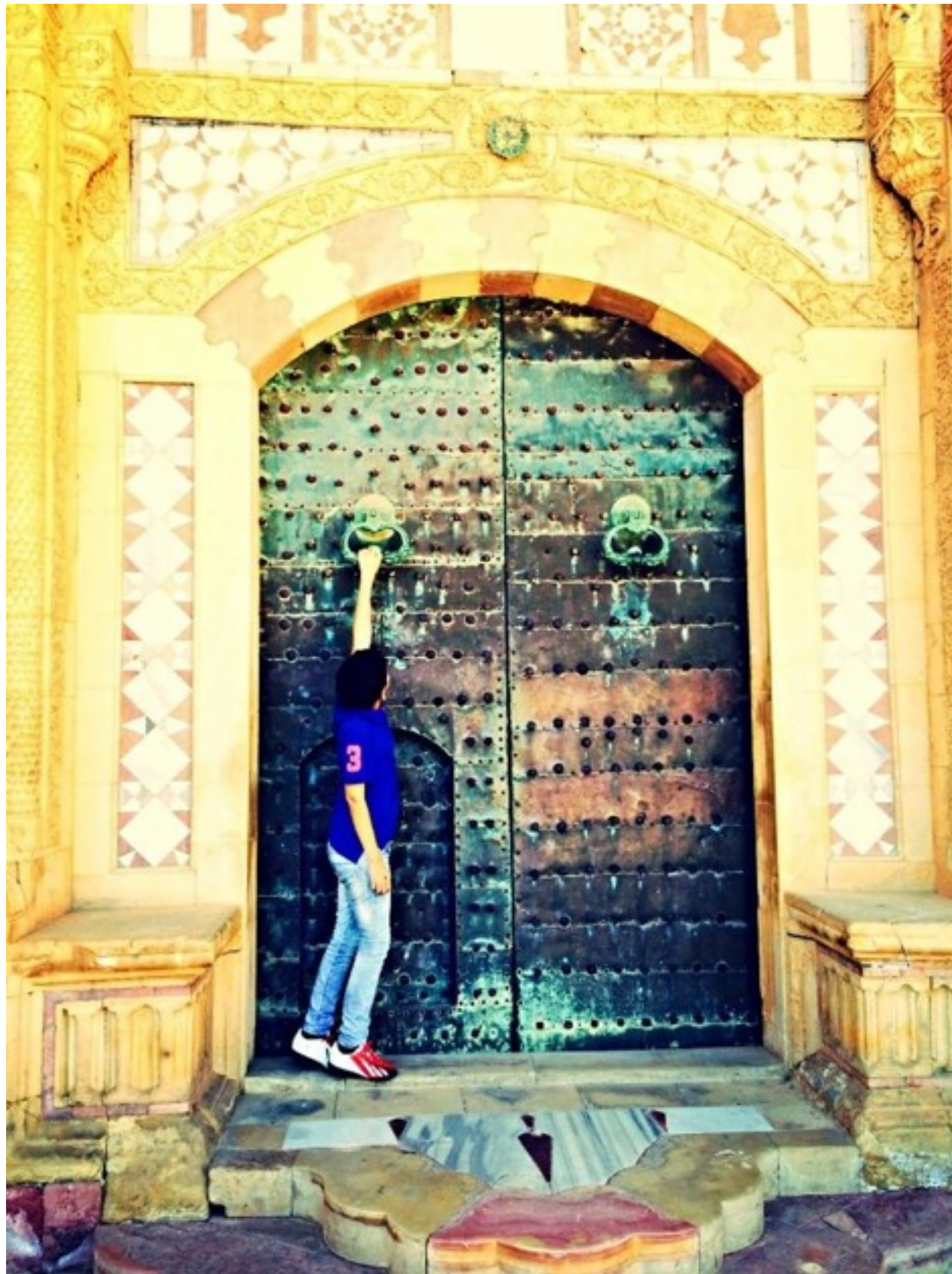


**Mika adds.**

**- We came back to Lebanon to leave it again but at least, we finally got to know its essence. It is necessary to continue to glorify the memory through albums, songs, poems, and paintings. One should never forget his native land. Never.**







**It is never too late to open the  
doors of the past, transmute it into  
the present and with it, define the  
joyful colors of the future!**

**It is never too late!**

بلادي أنا  
بلادي أنا ولبنان عهد  
ليس أرزاً ولا جبلاً وماءً  
وطني الحب ليس في الحب حقد  
وهو نور فلا يضل فكبد ويد تبدع الجمال .. الجمال وعقل  
لا تقل أمتي وتحتاج دنيا .. نحن جار للعالمين وأهل





**For the love of the native country and respect for the new homeland**

**Frida Anbar, French writer**

**[www.fridaanbar.com](http://www.fridaanbar.com)**

**Georges Takla, artist painter**

**<http://www.taklaart.com>**

**SOETCO**

**<http://societesoetco.com>**



Ariche

Vine leaves tree, in Arabic.

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**Termes connexes du glossaire**

Faire glisser ici les termes connexes

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Rechercher le terme

Chapitre 1 - Jeddo

Chapitre 1 - Jeddo



# Baraka

The Baraka represents a concept where all resources multiply.

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## Termes connexes du glossaire

Faire glisser ici les termes connexes

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# Chouf

La région du Chouf est au sud-est de la capitale libanaise Beyrouth.

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Jabal

Mountain resort.

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Chapitre 1 - Jeddo

Jeddo

Grandpa, in Arabic.

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Kibbeh nayyeh

Raw minced lamb or beef mixed with cracked wheat and oriental spices.

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Lebnen

Lebanon, in Arabic.

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# Mezze

Mezze is a selection of small dishes served as appetizers before the main dish.

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Rezallah

It was the good old days, in Arabic.

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Teta

Grand-Mother in Arabic.

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Rechercher le terme

Ya habibi

My deatr one, in Arabic.

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