

I asked a friend once, how her life was outside of Lebanon.

Far away from her home, family, and everything she knows and holds dear to her heart; she replied to me as if she was an artist; trying to paint a portrait of an answer with beautiful colours but all she had were the dark pastels she doesn't use much.

"I miss home" was the first thing she said to me, "you meet all these people and you visit all these places but your heart never really connects to anything, everything is superficial, everything is not home".

Knowing that her heart breaks every day for leaving the land she grew up on, leaving it as a beautiful past she has forbidden herself to go back to, I ask myself, do I really want to let go of home? Is there nothing I could do?

Our country is falling apart, but its not the first time. Thirty years ago after the civil war, Lebanon faced an economic and social crisis similar to the one we have today, and instead of giving up, our parents chose to stay and fight. Having this faith in our country helped it overcome these difficult times, and right now its our job to do the same.

The way I see it, we have two options: to run away from our home and give up hope, or to stay and fight with patience in order to give the future generation the childhood and life they deserve.

My fellow students, no place is going to give you Faraya's homely nights and special campfires, no one is going to ask you repeatedly if you've eaten enough more than your teita, no meal is going to taste like roadster's mighty chicken, no laugh is going to be louder than your aunt's when she's over sharing gossip with your mother, and the list goes on... But most importantly, no land is going to love and forgive you for everything you've done to harm it, intentionally and unintentionally, like Lebanon has.

Despite the troubles that we face with our country and government, these are the times that get us, as citizens, closer together and stronger than ever. Remember the feeling of playing cards and games with your family because the power was out? Or maybe even the fierce unison we felt during the 2019 protests? Even the economic crisis today is teaching us more about cautiously spending our money and reminding us of the small privileges we had, that we always took for granted.

We cannot expect to break something, leave it broken, then demand to get rid of it because it's not perfect. Think about it, Lebanon and its people, have cultivated so much of your personality, and so much of the personalities of the people you love most. How are we going to leave the mother that helped us grow?

We've let criminals lead our parliament and take our home away from us. Why have we accepted defeat? Ladies and gentleman I urge you to fight with me. This land has been through so much oppression, it has lost so many of its people, and now it's losing the one thing left to save it; us.

At the end of the day, no country will be the same for us Lebanese citizens, and its tears me up to even think of our children missing out on that childhood our parents fought for us to have. Together, we have endured so much, and together, we'll make Lebanon strong again. All we need is faith.