Syria
If I were to write about Iraq it would be a very long story.

I prefer to talk about Syria instead.
From the start of the war in 2003 to right now, with many American soldiers in Iraq, we have had fierce fighting. Baghdad is very dangerous. I am from Baghdad. The American soldiers are still in Iraq and we can’t live there.

I would prefer instead to talk about Syria.
American soldiers in Iraq look different than here. There, the American soldiers came to the houses at night and took the Iraqi men. We have a long story in Iraq.

That is why I prefer to talk about Syria.
One night the American soldiers took 50 soldiers from one place NEAR US. They took them to we don’t know where, and they never came back.
And that is why many Iraqis went to live in Syria. Many Iraqis live in Syria because of what happened in Iraq.

And this is why I want to talk about Syria.

I feel sad about Iraq, because many people are dying from the war.
I love Syria because it was my second country. We didn’t have a place to go from the war, just Syria. It’s near to Iraq.

We couldn’t live there because the American soldiers come to the house at night... and that’s very dangerous.
دمشق هي عاصمة سوريا و تقع غرب البلاد. هناك منطقة صغيرة خارج دمشق تسمى ريف دمشق و يقتنها عدد كبير من العراقيين يسكنون بالقرب من ضريح السيدة زينب. سكنت انا في تلك المنطقة. سوريا هي بلد جميل فيها جبال و تلال و طقس رائع. متقلب في فصل الشتاء، و جميل و معتدل في فصل الصيف.
سوريا هي اجمل ما رأته عيناي على الاطلاق و عندما أذهب الى هناك أشعر بالراحة و آلام. ليس هناك حرب و ليس هناك جنود او دبابات او مدافع او دوريات. يعيش الناس هناك في مأمن و أنا شعرت بالامان هناك.
انه لمن الشيء الرائع أن يمشي المرء في الريف.

يساعدني الامان على الاسترخاء و هذا بعد ذاته يساعدني على مواصلة الدراسة و أن تكون لي حياة طبيعية. عندما يكون هناك امان عندها يصبح من الممكن أن نذهب الى المدرسة كل يوم. من الممكن أن نذهب للتزلج مع الاصدقاء في الشوارع.
دمشق فيها اجمل طبيعة خلابة رأتها عيناي على الاطلاق. كنت اذهب الى هناك كل عام لزيارة ضريح السيدة زينب وقبر السيدة رقية وزيارة جو المكان المتدس.
كنت في الرابعة عشرة من عمري عندما وصلنا في سوريا.
عشت هناك لمدة خمس أعوام.
في ما بعد انتقلت إلى الولايات المتحدة.

أشعر بالأمان و لكنني افتقد بلدي.
SYRIA

Damascus is the capitol, located in western Syria. Just outside Damascus there is a district called Rif Damashq and this small district is where a large number of Iraqis live, near the Mosque of Lady Zaynab. This is where I lived. Syria is a beautiful country with mountains and hills, and gorgeous weather that is fickle in the winter, and beautiful and moderate in the summer.
Syria is the most beautiful country that my eyes have ever seen, and when I go there I feel relaxed and safe. There is no war there. No soldiers, no tanks, guns, no patrols. The people live there are safe, and I felt safe there.
It is wonderful to walk in the countryside.

Safety helps me to relax, which helps me to continue school, to have a normal life. In safety, we could go to school all the time. We could go for walks with friends in the streets.
Damascus has the most beautiful and picturesque surroundings that my eyes have ever seen. I went there every year to visit the tomb of Lady Zaynab and the tomb of Lady Raqiyya - to visit the atmosphere of a holy place.
I was 14 years old when we arrived in Syria. I lived there for 5 years.
Then, I moved to the United States.

I feel safe and I miss my country.
COLOPHON

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This book is the result of the author's courage and focus at the Veterans Book Workshop, where we work to make manageable and material personal archives of images, words and memories from the current wars.

This book is one of many made in the Veterans Book Workshop. Each emerged from different circumstances and each finds its own unique use. One veteran may reference this book regularly, while another may set it aside in order to move on.

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We made this book for listening. Please accept our invitation. We made this book for deployment. Please pass it along and invite someone else to listen.

Thank you,
Monica Haller

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