

Lebanese American University
8th Annual Creative Writing Competition
Spring 2020: Life Writing Matters

Instructions:

Please choose ONE of the following prompts. Write candidly; use lived examples to enrich your memoir. Develop scenes where applicable. Show, don't tell!

1. Revolution Narrative

Writing in the first person, produce a memoir (a personal narrative of 1,000-1,500 words) in which you reflect on the ongoing uprising in Lebanon that started in October 2019. Please make sure to address at least one of the following themes:

- Women and revolution
- Queers and revolution
- Catharsis
- Daily humiliations
- Violence (verbal, physical, psychological, vandalism, tear gas – experienced firsthand or vicariously)
- Alienation and belonging
- Online vs. street activism
- Inclusivity: Do you believe the protests were truly inclusive? To what extent did they integrate various culturally embattled groups/minorities (LGBTs, women, domestic workers, refugees etc)?
- Future plans: How do the political, social and economic realities impact your future plans? Does the option to migrate incite feeling of guilt or relief?

2. Edited Lives

First, choose a real-life character from Lebanon or overseas whose life has inspired or affected you in a way or another. This could be someone you know personally, such as a family member or a friend, or a renowned public figure, alive or dead (a singer, painter, socialite, thinker, politician, novelist, entrepreneur, philanthropist, poet, journalist, physician, dancer, activist, educator, actor, royal figure, or otherwise.)

Writing in the first person, produce a memoir (a personal narrative of 1,000-1,500 words) in two sections:

- In one section, develop a momentous and/or memorable lived incident in your chosen character's life (whether from their childhood, young adulthood, adulthood, or twilight years).
- In the other section, reconstruct the same episode in the same time period, imagining how the character's life could have been under different



circumstances. This doesn't mean that a happy/sad ending is guaranteed either way.

- Juxtapose your two sections and let them *resonate* with and *supplement* each other – to create one overall text rich with meaning/context.
- Position the lived versus imagined sections as you see fit; think of which arrangement would impact your reader the most in terms of *reading experience*.
- One section may be longer than the other.
- *Ask yourself why you have chosen this character.* The material you curate in both sections of the memoir should be *storyworthy*.

We look forward to reading your entries.

Best of luck!

Organizing Committee

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