(Untitled)

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My mama left Lebanon
But never did she leave her culture
Never did she leave being Lebanese behind
Always teaching her daughters
You are Arabs before you are Americans
Teaching us Arabic
In a place that almost always told us that we must speak English
Feeding us food that we grew up learning as foreign
Teaching us mannerisms that made us different
Made the way we were raised somehow wrong
Because our culture has more discipline
More unity
More care
Than America has ever shown us
Making us always different
Until we decided to be different to the Lebanese
And Somehow
More American
And less Lebanese
Even though I left the dialect so many times
Calling my mama
YAMA
And going from riz to tinmin
And lebni to roba
Code switching not just my behaviors
And understanding all dialects in one setting but struggling one
dialect at a time
But anyways the Lebanese always said we were different
That we hold ourselves differently
That we walk differently
Even though I know how I should kiss my mother’s hand and place it on my forehead out of respect
And always keep my legs on the ground
And I still hesitate before I lay my legs on anyone
But we can never hold the phenotype
That is assumed to hold the American identity
Even being born in America can’t change that