

He was a man of paradox. His anger was unsettling, but his humor was good-natured. He teased me about my picky eating but would point out if something was seasoned differently than he was used to. He'd be dressed in a full suit and tie or a single blue tracksuit. He would constantly bicker with my grandma, and then recite poetry to her photograph after she passed. He would either gift me jewelry, or a pair of pajamas.

He was a man of consistency. He would listen to the same Sabah Fakhri cassette in his hot car. He had a yellow canary named Basha-several yellow canaries named Basha, each one baptized in memory of its predecessor. He brought us our favorite foods every time we visited Syria, like Aladdin hamburgers and broasted chicken (once I broke tradition by randomly craving fish- that same evening, he brought me freshly fried fish). The only thing that rivaled his love for his family was his love for Syria. It pains me to know he didn't live to see his home free of tyranny, but I'm comforted by the prospect of his freedom in paradise.