

“The Rose”

Rula, 11-years-old, Syrian Refugee From Daraa, Syria

“She still shivers and fears bombs,” explained Rula’s mother Dalal, as the little girl continued drawing on the bare floor of their small and dark room in the Palestinian refugee settlements in Beirut’s Sabra-Shatila neighborhood.

Rula is 11 years-old and was at risk of kidnapping in her hometown of Daraa, Syria the epicenter of the conflict that is now known as the Syrian civil war.

“Soldiers would come and take the kids in the morning before they get on the school bus some rebels, some thugs. They were at risk of either dying by bombs or being kidnapped we had to leave,” said Dalal.



“This Drawing Is For You”



Rula, her parents, and three brothers left their war-torn city of Daraa three years ago and fled to the neighboring country of Lebanon. They now live in one of the most disenfranchised neighborhoods of Beirut the Sabra Shatila settlements a community that is home to thousands of already-vulnerable Palestinian refugees who are now faced with a large influx of Syrian refugees in their volatile neighborhoods.

Rula’ older brother, Mohammad is 17 and works in the vegetable market he needs to work in order to help support his family. Rula’s father used to be a farmer in Daraa, but he can’t find a stable job in Lebanon he sometimes works as a construction worker.

She and her two brothers, Ahmad, 15, and Yusef, 10, go to a local Lebanese school. Dalal told me they sometimes miss school, because the bus doesn’t pick them up. “The discrimination for Syrian refugees is everywhere,” said Dalal.

Rula said she misses her school and friends. “I don’t know where they are now, I miss them,” she told me as the white of her eyes shined in the dark room. Rula also told me that she wishes she had more friends here. Her older brother Ahmad explained that they usually get bullied by other kids because they are recognized as refugees. Before handing me her drawing, Rula said she also misses her teacher back home. “When I grow up I want to be a teacher,” said Rula.

Tara Kangarlou, Art of Hope, Lebanon