

# MY TRIP

As the plane swirled around for the best possible landing, I looked out of the window and saw the mountainous landscape of Afghanistan. This is the place where people believe that *nang and namoos* (honour and pride) is the ultimate thing to live for. If you don't have this, you are considered sinful. As I got off the plane, the moist heat of Afghanistan plastered against my body. It was spring and the aroma of mulberries and fresh air wafted into my nose. The noise there was overwhelming. Farmers guided their sheep across the busy roads while angry impatient drivers pounded the horn on their steering wheels.

I greeted my relatives by exchanging kisses on the cheeks and them asking me about school and my grades. On the car ride to my aunt's house I took that time to observe to city of Kabul. The city was bustling and there were beggars on every street. Young boys working shaking anti-pollutants called *espond*, usually used to get rid of evil spirits. Beggars pleading for money, vulnerable, having no shelter from the scorching heat of the sun. Every one of them working. But what surprised me the most was the fact that children washing cars were fighting over who washes the car. Is this how hardworking they are?! The place people think is a warzone is a place full of hard workers, determined people who would risk their body to keep their pride and honour. Not people that carry Kalashnikovs everywhere they go.

My father seemed at home. It was as if he found the missing piece in his life. There is a very old song about a man living outside of Afghanistan who doesn't feel as if he is at home, as if he is not at his *watan*. We went to a little village called Kopisa. A peaceful village where everyone knows each other. The place where my father and his 11 siblings grew up. We walked through fields, the majority owned by my grandfather. Young boys were urging the horses and cows to plough the wheat and other things. In my hand I grasped a slingshot that my cousin had made for me. I picked a rock and rested it on the leather pad. Once slung

it flew into the nearby school. However, when my father shot it, it hit a bird square on the head. After 20 years of not doing it, he still had it. Not even a sorcerer can take Afghanistan out of an Afghan.

Time to leave. Yet a part of me didn't want to go. Anyone in Afghanistan would be fortunate to have the opportunity to live in London. But this was my *watan*. This was where all my ancestors were born and it seemed unbearable to leave. When I got on the plane and started to fly, I realised that a little part of me was still in Afghanistan.