

STORY OF A WOMAN... NOW OLD

I am ninety-one years old now. As I reflect, it is hard for me to believe I have journeyed through so many years. My life has been full of family; ten brothers and sisters; family created from my marriage to John; and my family of friends that hover over me at this time in my life. Ninety-one years is a huge collection of memories. Where shall I begin?

My mother, Anna, came to America with her two older sisters and their husbands. She was eight years old when she said final good-byes to her parents in Lebanon. She never attended school in America. Instead, she spent her days occupied with household tasks she cared nothing about. She spoke only Arabic all of her life. When she was fourteen, she married my father, Happy, as if it was her pre-ordained destiny. My father was very strict, battering her too many times.

My mother was a beautiful woman. Her full round face was framed by curls, and wavy dark brown hair. Eyes strong, yet gentle at the same time, her facial features were strikingly beautiful. Those that saw her never wanted to look away. She was easy-going, even when my father was demanding, often unrelenting. My mother had little interest in housework, no matter how much there was to do. From an early age, I learned to take care of my mother's responsibilities to save her from abuse and to make her life easier.

My mother became pregnant right away and was pregnant every year until her death at the age of thirty-two. She bore ten children.