

## A Lexicon of Palestinian Boyhood L.F. Khouri

### 1. Saf (صف)

**Literal:** Classroom.

**Lived:** A stage for fear, laughter, rumors, and miracles—all within the same forty minutes. A place where windows were watched more carefully than teachers, in case the sound arrived.

### 2. Jibāt (جبات)

**Literal:** Israeli military jeeps.

**Lived:** Their engines carried a mood, a speed, a weather pattern. From that sound, we could tell which raids were routine and which would leave someone bleeding in the courtyard.

### 3. Courtyard (الساحة)

**Literal:** The open concrete space between classrooms.

**Lived:** Our first geography lesson. We learned where stones dipped, where blood pooled.

### 4. Ishtibāk (اشتباك)

**Literal:** Clash, confrontation.

**Lived:** The word adults used when they didn't want to say "shooting." It floated in conversations like a safety blanket, and yet every child knew it meant someone's mother would arrive at school wailing, twisting her fingers, and pulling at her hijab.

### 5. Istishhād (استشهاد)

**Literal:** Martyrdom.

**Lived:** A word that made death sound ceremonial, almost chosen.

### 6. Tawjihi (توجيهي)

**Literal:** Secondary school exit exam.

**Lived:** The thing we studied for even when gas filled the classroom. A chance at a better life, we were told.

### 7. Shahādeh Posters (بوسترات الشهداء)

**Literal:** Martyr posters.

**Lived:** The faces that grew up with us. We learned to recognize classmates better in grainy photos than in person.

### 8. Al-Āthin (الأذن)

**Literal:** The school caretaker/attendant.

**Lived:** The man who cleaned the blood in the courtyard. He taught us how to look, and how to look away, and why both mattered. The bucket was his sermon.

### 9. El-Dalw (الدلو)

**Literal:** The bucket.

**Lived:** The closest thing our school had to a ritual. Water first, so the blood wouldn't stick. Then sand. Then we wait for the poster.