

# my BELOVED city

*“If I forget you Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill.” (Psalm 137)*

Jerusalem, the city where the ache seems to echo always louder and deeper. All of us love it, long for it, fight for it, and hate it all at once. Our history might be varied, colorful, and stretching for miles, but it always seems to begin and end in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem goes beyond the physical place. It is an emotional space deeply ingrained into our upbringing. It is a major part of our own Palestinian identity. It is a city that belongs to all of us, but not a city that all belong to. With the increasingly racist laws practiced by the Israeli government, Palestinians find themselves, yet again, *personae non gratae* in their own homes. Restrictions on land use and on building regulations, and the encroaching settlements that surround the city are some of what comes to mind when we talk and think about the holy city of Jerusalem. To go beyond that, Jerusalem’s cultural identity as the place where all three Abrahamic religions meet and co-exist is in serious danger as the Israeli Occupation continues to push the Palestinians out, which leads to the loss of both the Christian and Muslim identity of Jerusalem, making into a Jewish-only city.

As Palestinians we cannot afford to be pushed out of our homes again, and the key to not losing one’s land is to not lose sight of what is being taken and what has been lost. The key is not to forget. This is what we attempt to do in our special edition on Jerusalem. We aim to do what TWIP does best, and that is document all that is beautiful, special, horrific, and sad about Jerusalem. In this special issue, dedicated to this breathtaking city, we give you an array of fascinating articles about everything from personal stories to important observations on injustice, discrimination, and survival. We open up with “Jerusalem Blues” by Ali Qleibo, articles on challenging unlawful politics and resistance by Mona Sabella and Megan Driscoll, and hopes and challenges in the education system by Abdalqader Hussein. We also have beautiful contributions from MIFTAH and ARIJ, the Jerusalem-Ramallah Bus Company, and Bank of Palestine. You will also read about innovation, despite all the difficulties, in articles about renewable energy, building libraries, and community resilience. This issue is crowded with important information about Jerusalem that we all need to know, whether we have access to the city or not, so that we can understand the extent of suffering that is met by unfathomable perseverance. This special issue features a tribute to the late Maha Abu Dayyeh. When we first started working on this edition, Maha was still with us, and we were thrilled to choose her as Personality of the Month. It was very sad for all of us to hear of her passing. Maha was a fighter on all fronts. She fought the good fight for Palestinian women’s rights and for her health with equal fervor. We have shed only a little bit of light on this Jerusalemite who was very much like her own city, an icon of perseverance.

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