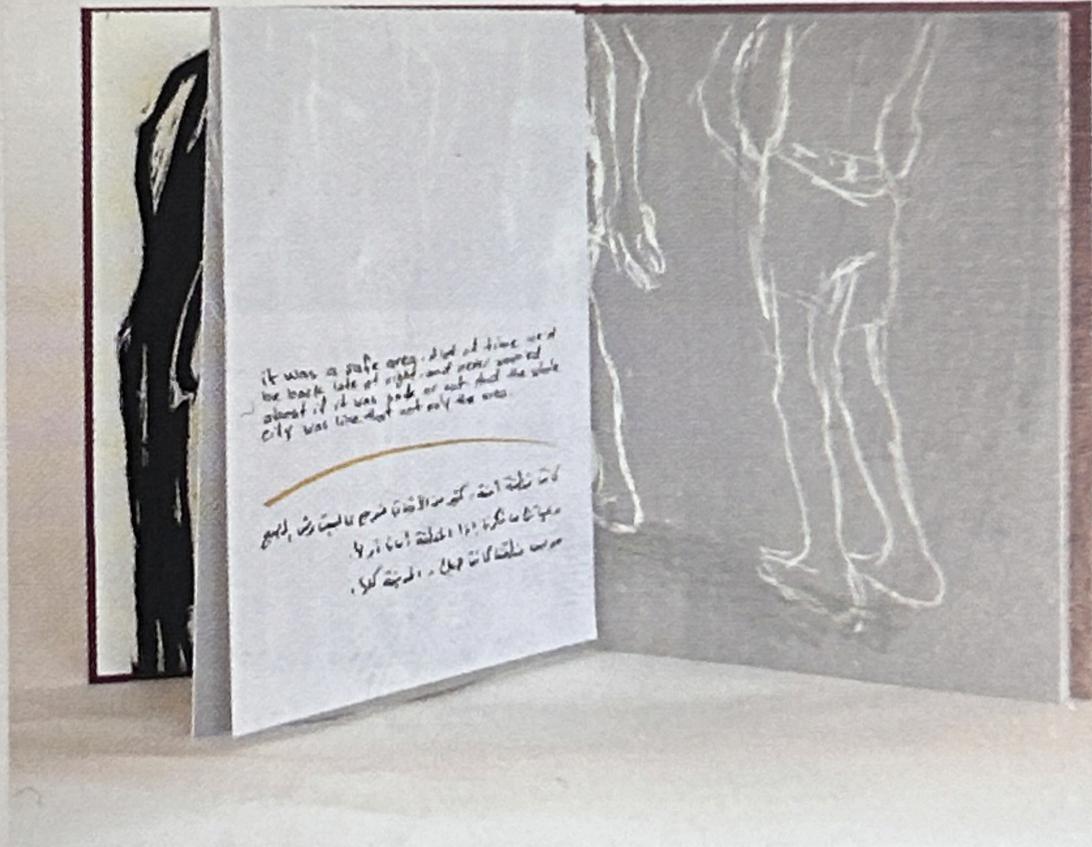


# I Had a Home Once

I met Abdullah in Istanbul in the autumn of 2014. At the time, I was working on a project about the bombing of Al-Mutanabbi Street and approached him to help translate a phrase for me. We talked for over two hours, I learned about his life in Syria and after. I asked him if he would let me tell his story, and he graciously agreed, offering me a rare window into what it is like to rebuild one's life from the rubble.

In the first book, *I Had a Home Once, Syria*, I contrast Abdullah's quiet childhood with the war that made him leave Damascus. Throughout, I overlaid prints with quotes: the footprints of the soldiers, who maliciously trampled on his university book, morning music over the sounds of the bombs and his vision of the future touches on the reality that it became.



*I Had a Home Once, Syria; I live in Berlin* (2022)  
Artist's book: woodcut, lithograph, silkscreen, offset printing, 280 x 560 mm (open), 380 x 280 x 50 mm (closed)

Book two, *I Live in Berlin*, chronicles Abdullah's exodus from Damascus, first to Turkey, then across Europe, and finally ending in Berlin. The quote from Shams Tabrizi (1185–1248) at the end sums up Abdullah's current feelings: 'Try not to resist the changes that come your way. Instead let life live through you. And don't worry that your life is turning upside down. How do you know that the side you are used to is better than the one to come.'  
*Nomi Silverman*

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