


Name:

Diary entries

 Read the diary entries below.

April 18, 2007

My pencil is so small now that I have to scrunch my fingers to hold onto it. But I want to keep writing even if I don't have much to say. This morning, I watch a little ant crawl over the rug, crossing each brightly colored square. Brown. Red. Black. Brown. From one end to the other, he crawls. "Pop!" The sound of gunfire makes my heart jump. Beside me, my mother keeps on sewing up another hole in my brother's shirt, but her hands shake a little. The ant keeps on, not upset by the noise of fighting and killing outside our walls. At the end of the rug, he has to climb the rough, curling edge. He is off the rug now, marching to the wall to disappear through a tiny crack. The ant is gone. "Pop!" "Pop, pop!" Closer, this time. The needle slips from my mother's fingers. If only I were an ant.

July 25, 2007

I dreamed again last night - about when we still lived in our home country of Iraq, and the bombs were coming down. In the dream, my whole family sits together around a candle that casts dancing shadows on the wall. My little brother squeezes my hand so tight, but I don't complain. Another explosion. The blast of the bomb is closer this time, shaking the floor under my feet. I hear a scream. Then a soft voice in my ear says "Shhhh, quiet now. It was only a bad dream." I open my eyes and see the ugly brown wallpaper that lets me know we're in the nearby country of Jordan, not at our old house in Iraq. My mother pushes my hair off my face with gentle fingers. "We're safe now. Go back to sleep."

Diary entries, continued

September 3, 2007

My first day of school in Jordan starts with a walk through fire. I keep my eyes down. But I feel the stares, making the back of my neck hot. And I hear the whispers. One boy calls out—just one—but he says what other kids must be thinking, “Go back to Iraq!” Inside the classroom, I quickly choose a desk in the back corner. My stomach is filled with heavy stones. I will tell my mother that I tried, but I cannot come back to school here. And I will never be a doctor. I will just stay inside our tiny apartment and grow smaller and smaller, until I disappear. Then a cheerful voice says, “Welcome!” I look up. The smile on the teacher’s face reaches all the way to her eyes. The stones in my stomach feel a little lighter.