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Scattered Shoes: Hugged with Security

Avreen Arif

The wind burned my cheeks as it blew the biting freezing air, making my cheeks bright red, and my nose runny. I stood outside the door with the scattered shoes of kids my age. The dread filled my veins as it was the weekend and all I wanted to do was be home and play Minecraft or watch YouTubers play Minecraft. After a long week of school, I had to look forward to more learning. My cousins all came to this small Masjid run by a Kurdish Imam who was well-known in the community. He opened the Masjid for the Kurdish people living in Plano, but also for anyone who needed to do prayer before heading back onto the road. It was in front of an old mall that was popular in the late 80s, maybe early 90s, a silver and gold shop next to it, and behind the old mall, the massive Church could be seen. It was 10 times the size of our small Masjid, and I am not even exaggerating. Still, I hated going. Which was a horrible thing to think about, but at the time I was 10, but the second my right foot stepped through the doorway, the feeling of security overcame me. I felt safe in the house of God. The feeling I felt standing outside was thrown out and was replaced with comfort and warmth. The nostalgic scent of freshly placed carpet made me aware of my surroundings. On Saturdays it was dim inside with the blinds being shut at 6 p.m., but on Sundays they were open to allow the bright sun to shine into our small Masjid. My teacher would look over at me and smile at my arrival. "Assalamu Alaikum." (Peace be upon you) She greeted me. Same with the Imam's wife. I greeted

them back with "Wa Alaikum Salaam." (And upon you peace). She knew my dad and was excited to know that my siblings and I were learning how to read the Quran. My eyes landed on the vanilla tape lining the carpet that helped the girls stay in a row while praying, the divider that separated the men and women, and the paper taped on

I felt safe in the house of God.

the divider with the Arabic alphabet. Behind the divider was the minbar where the Imam stood to lead prayer. "Allahu Akbar" (God is the greatest) he began the prayer. I could still hear his faint voice in the back of my head when I pray now. His recitations were beautiful, something that you want to continue listening to even after he was done, and when it was done, you feel all your sins stripped away from you. You are a blank sheet of paper with no pencil markings.

Lollipops

Maris D. May

