DesignMemo

To: Professor Wendy McCloud

From: Sally Alazab

Date: October 6, 2025

Subject: Project 2 Book Jacket Design

This document outlines my work for Project 2: Book Jacket Design. It includes an inspiration board showcasing various design ideas and several drafts of my book jacket design. The revisions and the final version were made after the peer review workshop. In this design memo, I will explain the book jacket's purpose, its intended audience, the context and design constraints surrounding the project, the rationale behind my design, its evolution, and a self-assessment of my work.

Section 1: Introduction and Purpose

This document is a self-assessment design memo outlining the process of creating my book jacket design. I designed a book jacket that reflects my personality, creativity, and style. I intended to create a design for my actual story, a design that shows the hard days I have been through and how the Civil War can affect your life.

The idea of writing a book about my story has always been in mind, and this project gave me the chance to learn how to design a book jacket. So this book jacket design can be a rough draft for my actual design that I am going to publish one day.

The primary users of this book jacket are potential readers who are drawn to memoirs, historical accounts, and personal stories of resilience. This design is also intended for publishers, editors, and book marketers who would evaluate its appeal and marketability. On a more personal level, the primary user is myself, since this project serves as both a self-reflection and a creative step toward my future goal of publishing my story.

Section 2: Audience Description

My audience is made up of people who have experienced civil war in their country and had to immigrate, as well as those who seek to understand these experiences. My memoir appeals to readers who care about human resilience and the untold stories of war and survival. It helps people better understand what it means to leave home behind forever and the struggle to adapt to

unexpected, life-changing events. At the same time, it connects with readers who value courage, family, and perseverance, and inspires those who find hope in seeing strength emerge from tragedy.

Beyond this, the audience also includes readers interested in personal narratives, memoirs of conflict, and stories of rebuilding life after hardship.

Section 3: Context and Design Constraints

This book jacket was created as part of a design project, which provided me with the opportunity to translate my personal story into a visual form. The context of the project required me to consider both creative expression and professional design standards. The jacket serves as a rough draft for a future publishable memoir, so my choices needed to balance personal symbolism with a layout that could realistically fit within the conventions of the publishing industry.

There were also design constraints I needed to follow. First, I worked within specific formatting requirements for a standard book jacket, including a front cover, spine, back cover, and inside flaps. Each section needed to hold certain elements, such as the title, author name, summary, author bio, and barcode. Second, I was limited to the tools and skills available to me at this stage of my design journey, which meant experimenting with color, illustration, typography, and layout within the software I had access to. Finally, I had to think about the readability and visual balance of the design, ensuring that text and graphics worked together without overwhelming the viewer.

Despite these constraints, I saw them as opportunities to be more intentional with my decisions. The limitations helped me focus on storytelling through design, prioritizing elements that best conveyed the themes of war, loss, resilience, and hope to my intended audience.

Section 4: Design Rationale

When designing my book jacket, I wanted every element to reflect both my personal story and the audience I hope to reach. I chose a soft, natural color palette, with beige as the base color, textured with dust to symbolize the aftermath of war. This background sets the tone of resilience, memory, and loss.

To visually represent the narrative, I used an illustrated house and a hijabi girl. The house, placed on the back cover, symbolizes the home that was left behind, while the girl on the front cover stands as the central figure of the story, representing myself and others who share this experience. A line of doves stretches from the front flap onto the cover, symbolizing hope and the possibility of peace emerging from hardship.

For the typography, I designed the title layout to reflect the theme of loss. The words *When Home* are centered, while *was* is aligned to the right and *gone* to the left, leaving an intentional gap between them to visually echo the idea of something missing. My name is placed at the bottom of the front cover, maintaining balance and clarity.

On the spine, I centered both the title and my name to ensure readability and consistency. I added "The New York Times Bestselling" in a bold blue shape on the front cover, giving it prominence and contrast. To emphasize the tension of war, I layered grey-black clouds behind the words *Home* and *Gone.*

On the back flap, I included my picture framed in black to stand out and to keep a consistent design element with the front cover. My name is repeated below in the same blue color as the blue shape on the front cover, followed by my author bio in black. The back cover holds the book summary, with the illustrated house placed to the left and the barcode positioned at the lower right.

Finally, on the front flap, I included a reflective question and answer, placing the text above and below the line of birds. This creates a sense of dialogue with the reader while tying together the symbolism of loss and hope.

Section 5: Evolution and Reflection

At the beginning of this project, my plan was to use a photograph as the background. I experimented with several images of clouds and birds to symbolize the story, but once I uploaded them into Canva, they became blurry and lost quality. Realizing this limitation, I shifted directions and chose a plain beige background from my color palette instead. This change not only solved the quality issue but also gave the design a cleaner, more cohesive foundation.

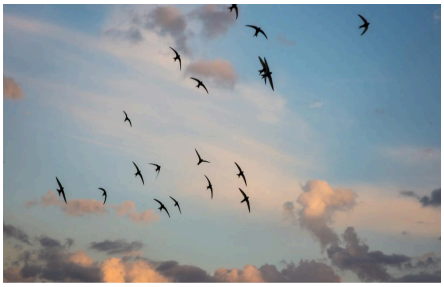
From there, I looked for ways to still incorporate the key symbols of clouds and birds. I positioned the clouds beneath the title to reinforce the theme of war, while the birds were arranged to stretch from the front cover to the front flap, visually connecting the design and representing hope. I also explored different font options, eventually narrowing them down to three that best fit the story.

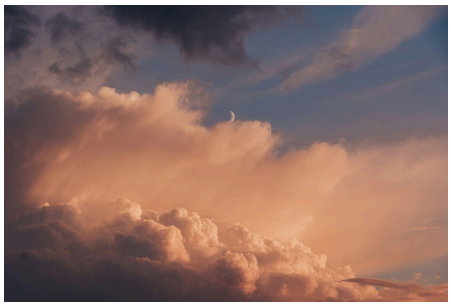
Feedback from my classmates helped me refine the design further. I moved the barcode to the bottom of the back cover for better alignment and shifted the illustrated house to the right for balance. I also adjusted the color behind the "New York Times Bestselling" label to a darker blue, creating consistency with the blue text on the cover. On the front flap, I slightly realigned the text and repositioned the birds to give more breathing room, ensuring that both graphic and text could exist without crowding.

Through these revisions, I learned how flexibility and feedback are essential to the design process. My final choices grew not only out of my original vision but also from adapting to challenges and making thoughtful adjustments.

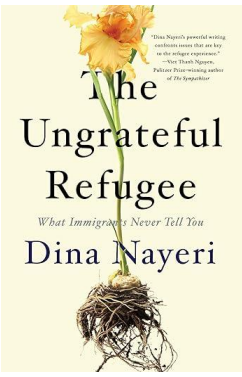
Inspiration Collage

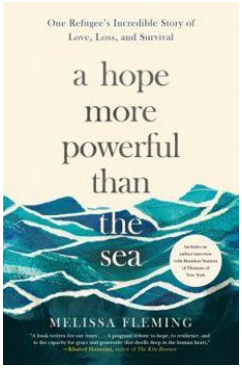
Background options:

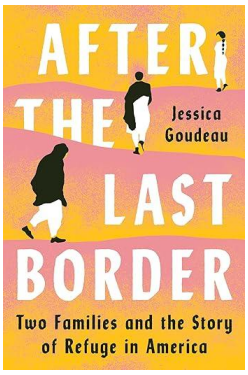


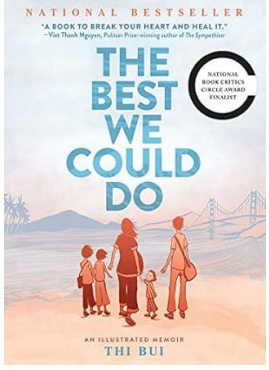


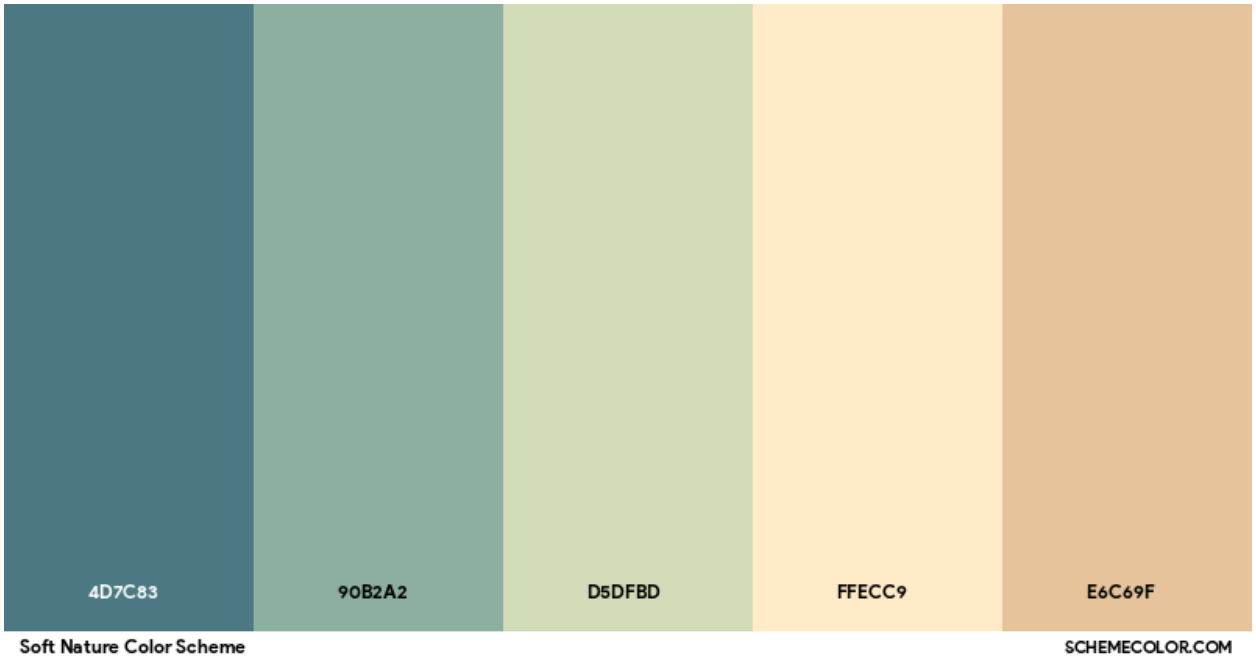
Inspiration books:











My target audience would be people who have experienced civil war in their country and had to immigrate. My memoir should appeal to people who care about human resilience and untold stories of war and survival. It should help people better understand what it means to leave home behind forever and the struggle to adapt to unexpected, life-changing events. It should also connect with people who value courage, family, and perseverance, and inspire people who find hope in seeing strength come out of tragedy.

Fonts

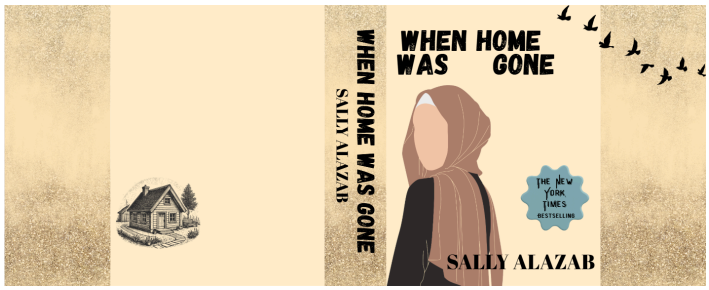
When Home Was Gone

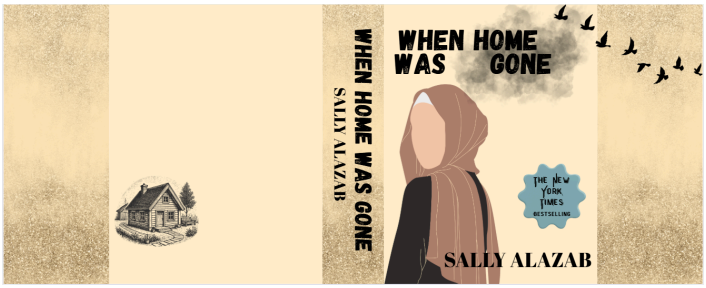
When Home Was Gone

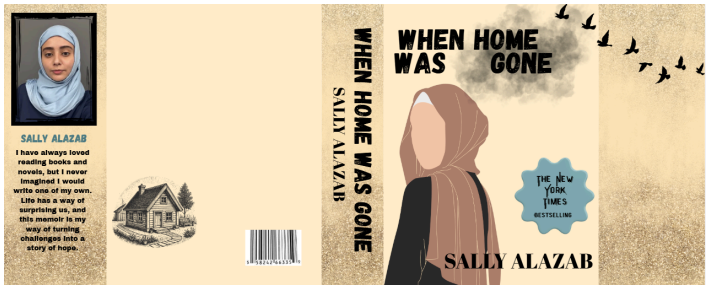
WHEN HOME WAS GONE

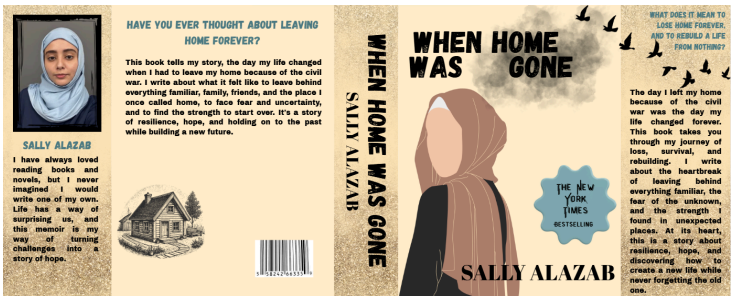
WHEN HOME WAS GONE

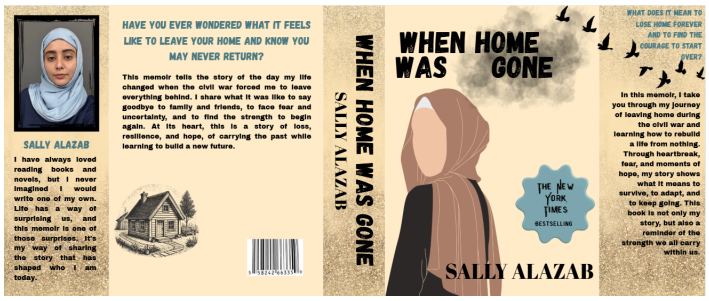
WHEN HOME WAS GONE

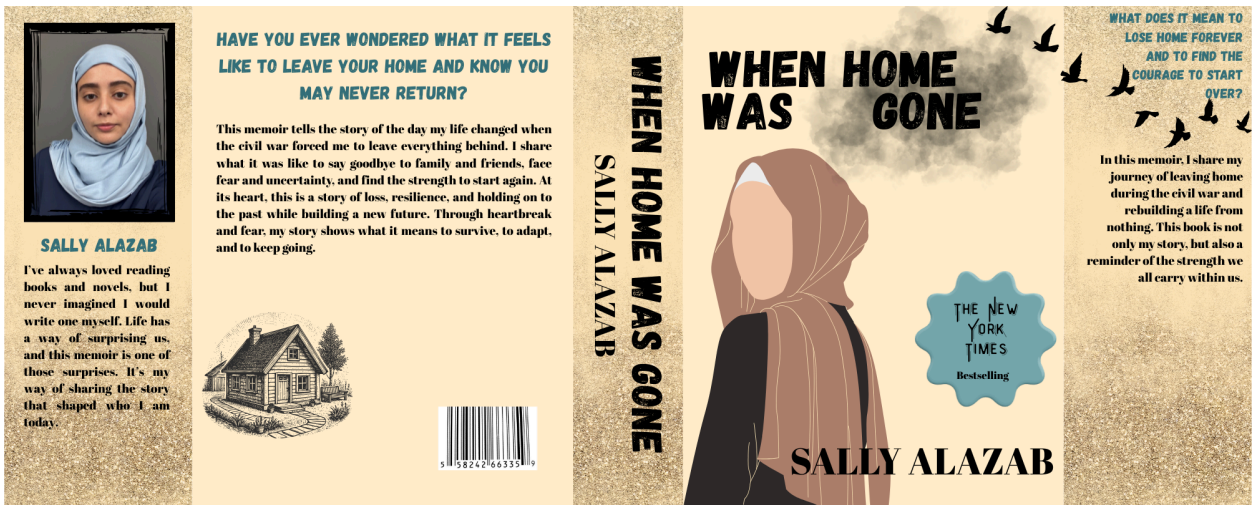




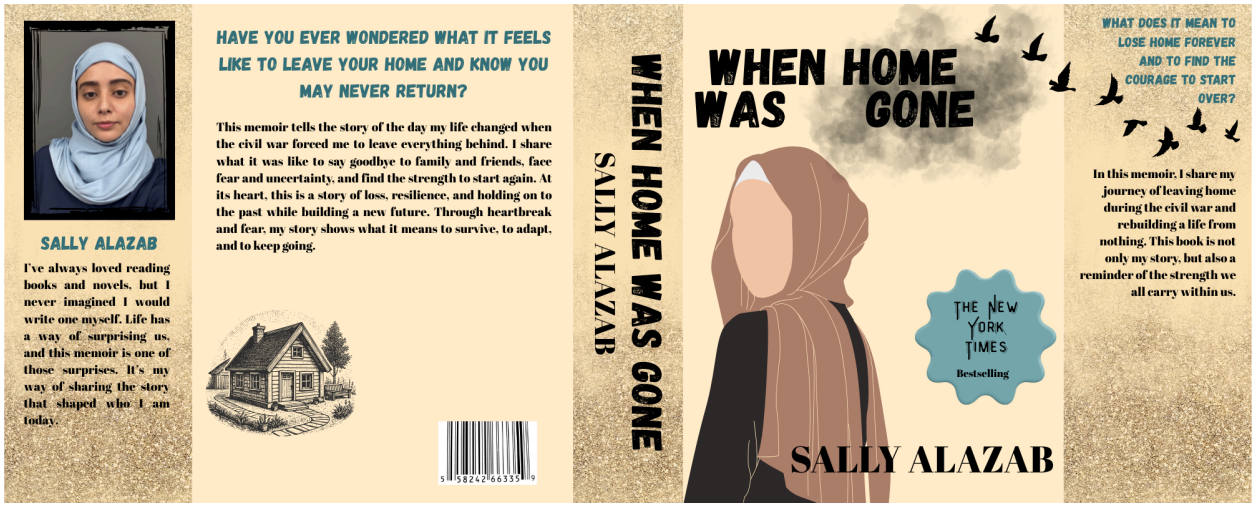






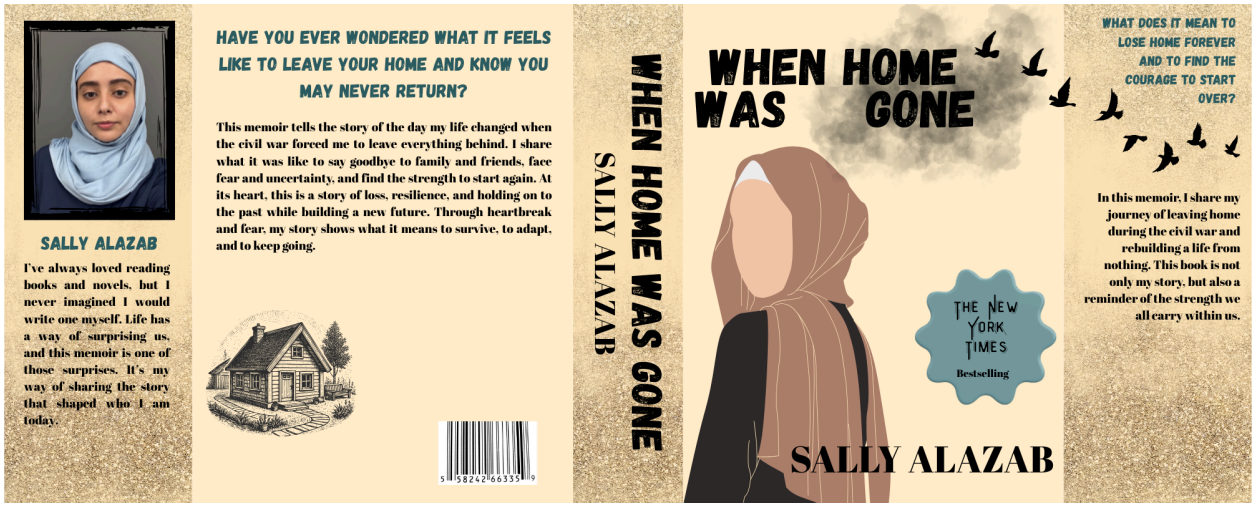


Played around with the text alignment and narrowed it down to the best I can.



I moved the barcode to the bottom and the illustrated house to the right on the back cover. I also changed the element's color behind the text “The New York Times Bestselling” to a darker blue and matched it with the blue text on the cover. I realigned the text on the front flap a little to the left to give a little room, and moved the replacement of the birds a little down and to the left, giving room for the text above and underneath them.

Final Version



I darkened the blue text color and the element on the front cover to improve readability. I also repositioned the text beneath the birds to provide them with more space.