

TARAK LUCAS BACH HAMBA

Still Becoming

A Life Between Worlds

STILL BECOMING

A Life Between Worlds

TARAK LUCAS BACH HAMBA

2025

Still Becoming: A Life Between Worlds

Copyright © 2025 Tarak Lucas Bach Hamba.
All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the author.

Introduction excerpt. First published 2025.

For those who have ever stood at a threshold.

Not: what should I learn next.

But: who am I becoming.

— STILL BECOMING

CONTENTS

I	Introduction	I
----------	---------------------	----------

INTRODUCTION

Honestly, I almost didn't write this.

For a long time I thought: someone else will say this better.

Or I will understand it more clearly first, and then write.

Or the feeling I kept carrying around in conversations would eventually become legible, would organize itself into something I could explain.

But it didn't become more legible.

It became more present.

I think a lot.

I watch people closely.

I listen more than I speak.

And for the last few years I have had a growing feeling that something is happening around us that most of us are carrying privately, without naming, without sharing, without knowing that the people beside us are carrying it too.

I talk to a lot of people.

Engineers quietly wondering if their skills will still matter in three years. Not catastrophizing. Just: sitting with it. Going home at night and turning it over.

People who have been laid off and are trying to understand what identity they have left when the job is gone. Because for many people the job was not just the job. It was the answer to: who am I, and what am I for.

Young people entering a world that looks nothing like the one they were promised, and trying to figure out what to do with that.

Experienced people who built whole careers on something that is quietly being replaced. Not with announcement. Not dramatically. Just: slowly, and then suddenly.

People who look productive. Who look connected. Who look like everything is fine.

And who are privately, deeply, exhausted in a way they can't quite explain even to themselves.

I sit with these people in real conversations and I listen.

And what I notice is this.

At some point in almost every conversation, the professional question becomes a different question.

Not: what should I learn next. But: who am I becoming.

Not: how do I stay relevant. But: where do I belong.

Not: what's the best tool to use. But: why do I still feel like something is missing.

I hear these questions everywhere.

Not always in those words. Sometimes only as a quality in someone's voice. A pause that lasts a little too long. A way of looking somewhere else for a moment before coming back.

I hear them late at night in messages from people I've known for years.

I hear them between the lines of what people say in public and what they say when the group gets smaller.

Maybe you have heard them too.

Maybe you have said them.

Maybe not out loud.

Maybe only to yourself, late at night, when the screen is off and the day is done and there is nothing left to be productive about.

Something is happening.

Not just the technology. I know we all know about the technology.

Something underneath it. Something in how the speed of change is affecting the way people feel about themselves. About their place. About what they are worth and where they fit and what they are supposed to be becoming.

I keep seeing something in people's faces that the professional conversation doesn't reach. A kind of loneliness that doesn't quite have a name yet.

The faster the world moves, the more people feel they are running without knowing where they are going or who they are running with.

We have more information than any generation before us. We have less certainty about what any of it means for how to live a life.

We have more tools. We have fewer answers to the questions that actually keep us up at night.

I think a lot of people feel this.

Quietly.

And I think there is something important in saying it out loud.

What I have is a life.

Spent living between worlds. Between cultures, between countries, between languages, between versions of myself that sometimes felt contradictory and sometimes felt impossible to hold together at once.

A life spent searching for meaning in rooms where I wasn't sure I belonged.

Building things without knowing if they would hold.

Starting over, in different forms, more times than I expected to have to.

And learning some things from all of that.

Not lessons exactly. Not principles I can hand to you. More like: textures of experience that keep returning. Recognitions. Ways of understanding what it means to stay human in the middle of things that want to reduce you to something simpler.

I am telling you my story so you can recognize your own.

Not because our stories are the same.

They probably aren't.

The details will be different. The countries, the rooms, the specific words that landed in the wrong way at the wrong moment. The faces. The languages. The version of the exam, the job, the city you arrived at alone and didn't know what to do with.

But underneath the details, I think something is the same.

The searching.

The feeling of being in the right room and still somehow on its edge.

The uncertainty about whether you are becoming the right version of yourself or just the available one.

The loneliness that comes from doing something sustained and private that nobody around you is

tracking.

The question of where you belong, which returns in different forms across a whole life, and never quite resolves.

I think most of us are living inside some version of these questions.

Quietly.

Without saying so directly.

And I think there is something important in saying: you are not alone in this.

Not as reassurance.

As something more actual than that.

The fact that someone else is carrying what you are carrying changes something.

It doesn't make the carrying easier, exactly. But it makes it different. Less sealed. Less like a fact about only you.

I will be honest with you in ways that will sometimes be uncomfortable.

About fear. About identity. About the moments I didn't know who I was or where I belonged. About the things I got wrong. About what it feels like to rebuild yourself, more than once, in places that were not waiting for you.

I will not wrap this up neatly.

Because I don't think neatness is what you need.

I think what you need is someone beside you saying: this is difficult, and complicated, and unresolved, and I am inside it too.

That is what I can offer.

To understand where any of this goes, I have to take you back to where it started.

Much earlier than any of the rest of it.

A street in Tunisia.

Summer.

White walls. Blue doors. The smell of jasmine carried on the sea air. The heat arriving all at once, the way it does in that part of the Mediterranean world, total and absolute, a different kind of warmth from anything in the north.

A small child standing outside a closed door. Not knowing how to walk toward people he didn't know. About to take a few steps toward something he couldn't name.

He spent a long time trying to understand what those steps meant.

He is still trying.

That's where we begin.

Chapter One begins with a door.