

Nadia Bishai · *Egypt*

POEM

the moon is shining
on the fat man
across the street
in his white vest
scratching his bald patch
as he talks aloud to his white telephone
over the two women
in separate rooms
above one another
as they move
at times in unison
at others in opposite directions
oblivious of each other
the one fluttering
a polythene bag
the other sweeping the floor
bare legs alone visible
as they slide along
the chaos of table
legs and pails, a night-
gown fluttering over them
shedding softness
over aged skin and bones
like the moon
suddenly
she puts out the light
and the shadows of her room
are locked within the
white symmetry
of window frames
shifting, lengthening
along the moonlit wall
avoiding hers

beirut
(the civil war, 1975)