

MY MOTHER SAYS THIS WOULD HAVE NEVER HAPPENED IF WE STAYED IN  
PALESTINE

MEJDULENE B. SHOMALI

i.

imagine i am 24 married to rami or fadi or even moussa  
imagine i wear the big white dress  
imagine i am 28 with two children  
imagine i am searching but not finding

maybe i am 18 in college in ramallah  
i meet rima & rauda & huda  
we drink taybeh beer in the gardens  
we smoke apple argilas & dance into the morning

or i am 32 married & infertile  
i translate arabic to english for american tourists  
i name things unspeakable  
i draw down the blinds of myself

ii.

“i guess we’ll never know” i say & the scene freezes  
laurence fishburne as edward said emerges from the pantry  
“the Orient becomes a living tableau of queerness” he says

“take the red pill & i’ll show you how deep the rabbit hole goes”  
i take the red pill on the plane with leila khaled  
we have facial reconstructions once a week

today i am um kulthum & she is abdel nasser  
we land the plane in the lap of the sphinx  
darwish & kanafani are still alive & fairuz sings “al bosta”

iii.

luti.....ma’bun.....mukkhannath  
suhaggiya.....mutathakera.....hasan subi  
naqis.....shaatha.....mutahowileen

iv.

love lace your thighs in mine  
together we are weaving a time warp  
another dimension  
where i always find you

MEJDULENE B. SHOMALI is a queer Palestinian poet and assistant professor of Gender, Women’s, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Her work can be

read in Copper Nickel, The Shade Journal, Tinderbox, Diode Press, The Pinch Journal, Mizna, and elsewhere. You can visit with Mejdulene at her [website](#) and on [Instagram](#).

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