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Inside the memory of the Jerusalem stone, inside its whiteness and heat and the flower garden aligning the entrance to home, their apartment extended the length of the building parading itself in painted kitchen tiles and an Arab fireplace. From the park where she played she could see the porch and its railing extend from her father's study and painting studio to her brother's bedroom, often transformed into an Israeli bus with herself as the driver and her little brother commanded to take a back seat. They had simulated an airport in one of their games using left over baggage claim tickets from the family's comings and goings. But that game had been played in the den where they also played twister or invented their own brand of hopscotch, alienated and displaced onto the black and white floor rug miles away from America. Here the air was different and at night, the sounds of cats in heat wailed their way up to her bedroom window through slatted shutters that subdued the daytime heat in its peak. The strangulated rape of cats lulled her to sleep and would enter her dreams as she swung them around by a foot, watching their body parts dismember into Noachide limbs, torn and mutilated. A mess of cats everywhere; gray

patches of tail bits of which were left inside her palm. The same palm her father would tickle as they walked up the four flights of stairs to the smells of Friday night, following the service in their neighborhood synagogue. She ran after him for the singing, even when her hair was still damp from her shower and he scolded her for leaving the apartment before it had dried.

"You will catch a cold," he said.

She was humiliated for having disappointed him and daring to think he would love her even more for risking her health for the sounds of the Kabbalat Shabbat. Her gentle mother did not prevent her from chasing after her father, knowing that if the child missed the L'Chah Dodi and was not blanketed in the male voices, she would hold her breathe until the following week and die of asphyxiation. Once a week there was no one in the world but herself and her father, when she was still young enough to sit in the men's section and be counted as a present member of the people she loved. Before she grew too old and was not allowed to be seen with the men. She could only be seen by them. When she was still young enough to mingle in what later became forbidden territory, she could accidentally brush against one of them on the way to her seat. But from a distance she was gawked at and forced to look down from above, to make the climb up the

synagogue steps leading to the women's section where she was farther removed from the Holy Ark and its scrolls, and the singing and the mouths and hands that slung the fringed edges of a Tallit over a shoulder. Her younger brother was seated alongside her father and only in the confines of their games could she relegate him to a back seat.