

The Line

Smudged pips of darkness gather. A bell drips.
The muezzin with a head-cold sends his cry
stealing round the corner and up a side-street.
Breathless, the two sounds embrace with a distant kiss.

A quiff of smoke from a palm roof.
Birds flit through the air, fetching ribbons, nets.

They've got their work cut out.
Perched on a flagpole, one divests.
The flag is pretty as a picture.

The red of the hermit moon looks on,
anchored in sandbags. Farther off,
the other flag squeezes out its yellow
in an amplitude of salt.

Suddenly, the sky fills with bobbing balloons.
Open fire.
Birds lie smoldering on its blue field.

The two sides approach to collect their dead.
They swap candy and cigarettes.

KYRIAKOS HARALAMBIDIS
(Translated by Martin McKinsey)