



Ordinary Lives

RANIA MATAR

Essay by ANTHONY SHADID

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Remember Lebanon? Torn by civil war, incursion, bombing, and missiles and straining with refugees, Lebanon is, in the words of award-winning photographer Rania Matar, “still standing.” In *Ordinary Lives*, Matar, born and raised in Lebanon and trained as an architect at Cornell, gracefully but powerfully illuminates lives that continue in the face of destruction and dispossession. An old man sits in his chair atop a pile of rubble, children play, young women adjust their *hijabs*; they display, in the words of *The Washington Post* journalist Anthony Shadid, “all those qualities of humanity in war—resilience, endurance and hope.” Drawing on her experiences as both insider and outsider, Rania Matar makes these lives into extraordinary art and a rebuke to those who would bring more war to anyone.

—R.K. Dickson ■

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