

Lenore Paula Weiss, "Refugees: for Muriel Rukeyser"

A rubber dinghy
off the coast of Italy

cream cheesed
two hundred and fifty

Syrian refugees
29 men asphyxiated

19 women. No more treats
from the table of the dead.

Kamar wonders how to use the toilet
standing on one leg,
and those who are able, flee,
hear a battery-powered radio
from the mukhabarat police:
don't worry, my friend, you are safe now.

The speed of darkness
engulfs us in a mask of clouds
as the world waits on standby
for something to change
hoping to board
the next plane out

to where Akiba, the shepherd,
sings his Song of Songs.