

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.