

*three decades later...*

lush bean fields and vineyards  
cover the scars of war  
a small village  
now on the Turkish side near the Green Line  
the medieval church  
turned into a mosque  
bell towers converted  
to minarets

a strand of barbed wire  
winding up a thistle-edged path  
all that separates  
the village and its fields  
from the mountaintop  
shrine for those who were killed  
and buried there  
with no markers or ceremonies

above the wire a line stretches from post  
to post  
bits of cloth and painted cardboard  
swaying in the breeze  
as if to ward off, from the free side,  
even birds

heads emerge from the fields below  
then shoulders and backs  
as young workers move up the hill  
pulling weeds

out of the bushes nearest the fence  
dark curly hair  
appears  
a deeply tanned face  
skin glistens  
through sweat-stained jellabiyeh  
the top few buttons undone  
or missing

the man, no more than a boy,  
almost handsome,  
rushes toward the fence  
shouts and points  
to the flapping cardboard  
- sharp green eyes glare -  
then turns and stumbles  
still muttering  
into the field

a black-robed priest stands near  
the monument  
chanting, swinging  
his incense burner  
old women in black  
dresses and mantilles sob  
and cross themselves

wisps of myrrh swirl  
while swallows twitter in nearby trees  
or swoop and soar  
under an indifferent sun

*timotheos roussos*

*timotheos roussos still remembers the day his best friend's father was killed during the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. He hopes that the Green Line, which separates north from south, will one day be a faint memory.*