

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.