

## SYRIAN ROSES

O, my spy, my follower, my government shadow,  
Here is my schedule: I am going to pick the park's roses.

I will cut their slim throats, legal or illegal  
carry a bouquet to the illicit money changer,

(green leaves of bills, oval pictures of Ben Franklin;  
that old fraud would approve of saving twenty percent!)

take left-overs to my garage family—  
Five kids and parents in the single-car garage.

No window. They get water from a spigot  
outside the door in the dirt street.

She gives me tea, heavy with sugar; we sip it,  
sitting on a plastic rug she brings outside.

Her face is tattooed with blue flowers. "Qua-is,"  
she tells me, beautiful. She's pregnant again.

What can we say to her, Ben? Hard work? thrift?  
every day is hand-to-mouth, even the baby

knows this as he crawls in the dirty street,  
a piece of flat bread in each small fist.