

Still Waters, Current Change

ED: "On my volcano grows the Grass"

A

You see me
sitting here
calm and relaxed
but do not be fooled.

As we speak,
the ship escapes its bottle
and prepares
to deliver its message —

behind and beyond
this placid
demeanor — Mona
Lisa smile

a current unnerves
the water's stillness,
as a storm churns within
an adapting mind —

ever so
thoughtfully
"planning"
an eruption.

Ivy

(In the voice of Iman al-Obeidi, a Libyan law student,
2011)

When I rose from the boards
bruises bloomed on my thighs
my neck blue from strangling.

For two days the sun rose and set
in their stinking breath
they came in threes laughing

caressing Kalashnikovs
and when exhausted using them
because I am from the East where the rebels fight.

When I escaped women in the street cleaned me,
clothed me, paid for a taxi
to the hotel of the foreign journalists where

I unveiled myself. But government minders
bundled me away in a flood of lies—
I tell you a tide is rising in the desert

and I dare you all to drink.