

GEORGE SEFERIS  
EDMUND KEELEY  
PHILIP SHERRARD

# George Seferis

*Collected Poems, 1924-1955.*  
*Bilingual Edition*



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**GEORGE SEFERIS**  
**COLLECTED POEMS**



GEORGE SEFERIS  
COLLECTED POEMS

TRANSLATED, EDITED, AND INTRODUCED BY

EDMUND KEELEY

AND

PHILIP SHERRARD

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Published by Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey

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L.C. Card: 80-8731  
I.S.B.N.: 0-691-06471-7  
I.S.B.N.: 0-691-01373-X pbk.

Supplemented Edition, 1969  
Expanded Edition, 1981

Clothbound editions of Princeton University Press books  
are printed on acid-free paper, and binding materials are  
chosen for strength and durability

Printed in the United States of America by Princeton  
University Press, Princeton, New Jersey

The frontispiece by Yannis Moralis is part of a larger painting.  
It appeared, along with nine other paintings by Mr. Moralis, in the  
Greek edition of the collected poems of George Seferis, published  
in Athens in 1965 by Ikaros.

First Princeton Paperback, 1981

## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

THIS new edition of *George Seferis: Collected Poems* both supplements and revises the two earlier editions, published in 1967 and 1969. We have here added those poems that Seferis published in volume form before his death in 1971, under the title *Three Secret Poems*. We have also included three later poems that were not collected by the poet himself but whose translation into English he authorized during his lifetime. In view of Seferis's known ambivalence regarding the posthumous publication of uncollected work found in a poet's archives—he raised some question, for example, about the publication of Cavafy's so-called Unpublished Poems—we have decided not to include those poems that appeared in Greece in the posthumous volume entitled *Book of Exercises, II* (with the exception of the three uncollected poems mentioned above). This is not to imply an evaluation of the poems in that volume beyond what the poet implied by not collecting them himself; the reader with no Greek can in any case make his own judgement regarding a number of the more substantial "exercises" included there by considering the versions published as part of the text of *A Poet's Journal: Days of 1945-1951*, trans. Athan Anagnostopoulos, Harvard University Press, 1974.

In our new edition of Seferis we have made some changes in the translations of 1924-1955 poems, this in the hope of achieving both greater accuracy and greater stylistic decorum. We have also brought the Bibliographical Note and the Biographical Note up to date, and we have added notes to the new translations offered in this edition. For notes relating in particular to the Greek text, the reader should consult the *Ikaros* collections of Seferis's poems, edited by George Savidis.

We are grateful to Maro Seferis, the poet's widow, for

granting us permission to expand our collection. We hope that this third edition of Seferis presents an image of his poetry sufficiently faithful and complete to have satisfied the poet's sharp, if gentle, scrutiny were he still alive to review our work as he did in the past.

Katounia, Limni, Evia, 1979

E. K.

P. S.

## FOREWORD

THE poetry of George Seferis, whatever relation it may have to the literature of other countries, stems first of all from a tradition that is eminently Greek. This means that it not only shares in the modern revival which has produced, during the last hundred and fifty years or so, such distinguished Greek poets as Solomos, Kalvos, Palamas, Sikelianos, and Cavafy; it also proceeds, like most of the poetry that belongs to this revival, from earlier sources. One of these is the long tradition of Greek ballads and folk songs. Both the spirit of Greek folk literature and its dominant form, the "dekapentasyllavos,"<sup>1</sup> can be traced back directly at least to the Byzantine period, and both have been consistently influential since that time, though the form has naturally been modified in keeping with new needs. Seferis's early poem, "Erotikos Logos" (1930), is a major example of such modification: a successful attempt to adapt the dekapentasyllavos line to the expression of a contemporary sensibility. Another area of the post-medieval poetic tradition that has remained equally influential is the more complex and sophisticated literature which developed on the island of Crete during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The dramatic literature of Crete includes plays such as *Abraham's Sacrifice*, a religious work, and the *Erophile*, a blood-thirsty tragedy in which all the main characters are killed or kill themselves; but the masterpiece of this more complex (and, in contrast with the folk ballads, more introspective) tradition is the epic romance, the *Erotokritos*, by Vitzentzos Kornaros, a work of 10,052 verses telling of the love of Aretousa, daughter of the king of Athens, and the valiant Erotokritos, son of one of the leading court families.

<sup>1</sup> A line of fifteen syllables, with a caesura after the eighth syllable and two main accents, one on the sixth or eighth syllable and one on the fourteenth.

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This epic became immensely popular throughout the Greek world, great sections—and sometimes even the whole of it—being recited by heart as though an ordinary folk epic: the kind of recitation that haunts Seferis's persona in "Upon a Foreign Verse," where he speaks of

. . . certain old sailors of my childhood who, leaning on their nets with winter coming on and the wind raging,  
used to recite, with tears in their eyes, the song of Erotokritos;  
it was then I would shudder in my sleep at the unjust fate of Aretousa descending the marble stairs.

Seferis has written the best Greek critical commentary on the *Erotokritos*,<sup>2</sup> and its influence, as a monument to the poetic possibilities of the demotic Greek language,<sup>3</sup> is apparent from the use he makes of it in his "Erotikos Logos," where he introduces actual phrases from the epic into the text of his poem in order to establish an analogy between his diction and that of another vital, relevant moment in his nation's literary past.

Cretan literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the folk tradition are, then, among the more important local sources of Seferis's art, particularly because of their creative exploitation of the Greek language; at the same time, however, the poetry of Seferis and that of his immediate predecessors differs in an important respect from the poetry of both these literatures: in the use made of images, characters, and myths that derive from ancient

<sup>2</sup> Included in *Δοκιμές* (see Bibliographical Note).

<sup>3</sup> Demotic Greek, as opposed to purist Greek (known as "katharevousa") is now the literary language of modern Greece, though it was not generally accepted as such until this century.

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Greece. Whether it is Palamas contrasting the "people of relics"—who reign among the temples and olive groves of the Attic landscape—with the modern crowd crawling along sluggishly, like a caterpillar over a white flower (in *Life Immovable*); or Cavafy evoking—perhaps ironically, perhaps erotically—some scene out of his poetic world of ancient Alexandria; or Sikelianos endeavoring to resurrect the whole pantheon of the ancient gods and to be a hierophant to their mysteries; or Seferis searching for the archaic king of Asine—the substantial man who fought with heroes—and finding only the unsubstantial void of contemporary existence; whichever it is, the ancient world in all its aspects preoccupies the imagination of these poets constantly. This preoccupation is only natural in a country which, like Greece, remains full of the physical remnants of antiquity; everywhere reminders of the ancient past leap to the eye and stimulate the mind:

Scattered drums of a Doric column  
Razed to the ground  
By unexpected earthquakes

as Sikelianos puts it in *The Conscience of Personal Creativeness*, or to quote Seferis himself: "fragments of a life which was once complete, disturbing fragments, close to us, ours for one moment, and then mysterious and unapproachable as the lines of a stone licked smooth by the wave or of a shell in the sea's depths."<sup>4</sup> This means that the Greek poet who draws on classical mythology in shaping the drama of his verse enjoys a large advantage over his similarly disposed contemporaries in England or America: he can evoke characters and settings that have mythological overtones with less danger of being merely literary in doing so, with less

<sup>4</sup> From *Delphi* (see Bibliographical Note).

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danger of arbitrarily imposing gods and heroes on an alien landscape—Tiresias on the Thames or Prometheus in Pennsylvania, for example—since his own natural landscape is that to which these gods and heroes themselves once belonged and in which they still confront the mind's eye plausibly.

Seferis, like most other poets of modern Greece, has fully exploited this advantage. His secret (in addition to his advantage) is that he always offers an appropriate setting—a poetically realistic setting—before he allows any legendary figures to appear on his stage; before he attempts to carry the reader to the level of myth, he earns his sympathy and belief by convincingly representing the present reality sustaining his myth—and it is a contemporary, Greek reality always. In this way the myth comes to life fully, the ancient and modern worlds meet in a metaphor without strain or contrivance as we find the legendary figures moving anachronistically onto the contemporary stage that the poet has set before our eyes. The anachronism is, of course, very much to the point: in one sense, what was then is now, but in another sense, what is now was then; the modern voyager, for instance, shares something of Odysseus's fate, while Odysseus finds a symbolic representation of his fate in the modern setting that the poet has him confront: the deserted, arid, repetitious land and the calm, embittering sea so frequently encountered in Seferis's poetry are symbolic of Odysseus's frustrating voyage, of his failure to realize the island paradise he longs for. And his fate is that of every wanderer seeking a final harbor, a spiritual fulfillment, that he can't seem to reach. The frustrations of the wanderer are perennial; as Seferis puts it in an illuminating commentary on the role of mythic characters in his verse:

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"... men of inconstancy, of wanderings and of wars, though they differ and may change in terms of greatness and value . . . always move among the same monsters and the same longings. So we keep the symbols and the names that the myth has brought down to us, realizing as we do so that the typical characters have changed in keeping with the passing of time and the different conditions of our world—which are none other than the conditions of everyone who seeks expression."<sup>5</sup>

The mythology of the ancient world thus plays a crucial role in Seferis, but it would be a mistake to regard this source in isolation, since all the various threads of the Greek tradition that we have mentioned here—folk, literary, and mythic—are tightly woven together in his work; one senses really the whole of the Greek past, as it is represented in poetry from the age of Homer down to the contemporary period, behind Seferis's maturest verse, giving it overtones and undertones sometimes too subtle for the non-Greek ear to catch (especially when they have to be caught in a language foreign to the text). But even as one does catch the sound of a richly traditional voice, a voice learned in the best poetry of previous ages, one is also aware that the voice is very much of the present age and that the poet's sensibility couldn't be farther from that of an antiquarian delving nostalgically into the past in order to escape from the bewilderments and afflictions of modern life: the past is always there to shape and illuminate an image of the present. And if this image seems inevitably to have its sorrow—that "*καημός τῆς Ρωμιοσύνης*" which is so specifically Greek that Seferis rightly regards any translation of the phrase a distortion—one can take it simply for an index of the

<sup>5</sup> From "*Ένα γράμμα γιὰ τὴν <Κίχλη>*" [A Letter on "*Thrush*"], *Ἀγγλο-ελληνικὴ Ἐπιθεώρηση*, IV (July-August 1950), 501-506.

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image's veracity, since a mature consciousness in the Greek world cannot but be aware of how much this world has achieved only to find everything suddenly ruined by the "war, destruction, exile" of constantly unpropitious times, as Seferis's persona puts it in "*Thrush*"—aware of how much and how little individual creative effort signifies in a world so vulnerable. It is the depth of this awareness, so often incomprehensible to nations with shorter and less tragic histories or with more superficial memories, that serves him for protection against those too-easily won positions, that too-readily assumed despair, from which much modern poetry issues.

If Seferis's sensibility has always been too specifically Greek to allow the easy sharing of what he himself has called "the 'Waste Land' feeling" that was common to Anglo-American and European poets after World War I,<sup>6</sup> his expression of this sensibility has been influenced by the example of several poets outside the Greek tradition. There is no doubt, for instance, that in the early phase of his career Seferis was keenly interested in the tonal and stylistic experiments of his French contemporaries, and, indeed, often seemed to be striving for a "pure" poetry in the manner of Valéry. With the appearance of *Mythistorema* in 1935, a distinct change in style became evident, in part the consequence of the poet's sympathetic reading of Eliot and Pound during the early thirties and in part the last phase of a personal stylistic catharsis that had already begun to show in *The Cistern* (1932). With *Mythistorema*, Seferis abandoned the relatively formal mode of his earlier volumes in favor of the much freer and more natural mode that is characteristic of all

<sup>6</sup> In "Letter to a Foreign Friend" (included in Rex Warner's translation of Seferis's essays, *On the Greek Style*; see Bibliographical Note).

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his mature poetry,<sup>7</sup> where we inevitably find a precisely controlled style, undecorated by embellishment, the coloring always primary and the imagery sparse. In this mature poetry Seferis also combines the modes of everyday speech with the forms and rhythms of traditional usage in a way that creates the effect of both density and economy—an effect almost impossible to reproduce in English, however carefully one may attempt to duplicate the particular character of the poet's style.

But if one discerns the influence of foreign sources in Seferis's stylistic development, one also discerns that the substance of his poetry has remained consistently individual since the start: in the finest poems of each of his volumes (often those least accessible to the Western reader because the least mythological or "classicist"), there is always that tragic sense of life which comes most forcefully out of a direct, personal experience of history—out of a poet *engagé* responding to what he has known and felt of human suffering, or at least what he has clearly seen of it at close quarters. This is not merely to repeat the frequently suggested relationship, for example, between Seferis's poetic representation of exile and his actual exile after the loss of his childhood home in the Asia Minor disaster of 1922 and during his many years away from Greece in his country's diplomatic service, valid though this relationship may be in some respects; more important, perhaps, than his capacity to make the personal poetic in this way is his capacity to capture the metaphoric significance of some event that has moved him, his capacity to transform a personal experience or insight into a metaphor that defines the

<sup>7</sup> We have chosen to open this collected edition with the poem in which Seferis's mature voice is first heard rather than with the poems of his less characteristic—and less translatable—early phase (see note to "Rhymed Poems," p. 487).

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character of our times: for example, the metaphor of that “presentable and quiet” man who walks along weeping in “Narration,” the “instrument of a boundless pain /that’s finally lost all significance”; or the couple at the end of “The Last Day” who go home to turn on the light because they are sick of walking in the dusk; or the messengers in “Our Sun” who arrive, dirty and breathless, to die with only one intelligible sentence on their lips: “We don’t have time” (all of these poems written, incidentally, either just before or just after the outbreak of World War II in Europe). These are the kind of metaphors that project Seferis’s vision beyond any strictly local or strictly personal history and that bring to the mind’s eye images as definitive, as universal, as any offered by the poetry of Seferis’s contemporaries in Europe and America.

There are also moments when an event that would seem to be only of local or personal significance becomes the occasion for a simple statement of truth about the modern experience—a statement more direct, and sometimes more precise, than the poet’s metaphoric mode allows: the second stanza of “The Last Stop” (p. 305), written on the eve of Seferis’s return to Greece at the end of World War II, is an occasion of this kind, as is the conclusion of “Helen” (pp. 53ff.), written during the Cyprus conflict of the early 1950’s. It is moments such as these, when the poet describes the corruption of war in a voice made wise and simple by the clearest vision, that raise his poems about specific historical events far above the level of political comment or propaganda and that show him to have sustained—through his poems about World War II and his volume dedicated to the people of Cyprus—the same universalizing sensibility that has shaped his image of contemporary history since *Mythistorema* and several earlier poems that anticipate it.

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The distinguishing attribute of Seferis's genius—one that he shares with Yeats and Eliot—has always been his ability to make out of a local politics, out of a personal history or mythology, some sort of general statement or metaphor; his long Odyssean voyage on rotten timbers to those islands ever slightly out of reach has the same force of definitive, general insight that we find in Yeats's voyage to Byzantium or Eliot's journey over desert country to a fragmentary salvation. Seferis's politics are never simply the restricted politics of a nationalist—though he is very much a “national” poet in his choice of themes, and though his vision is often rendered in those terms that best characterize his nation: its landscape, its literature, its historical and mythic past. His politics are those of the poet with an especially acute sensitivity to the larger implications of contemporary history. Though he is preoccupied with his tradition as few other poets of the same generation are with theirs, and though he has long been engaged, directly and actively, in the immediate political aspirations of his nation, his value as a poet lies in what he has made of this preoccupation and this engagement in fashioning a broad poetic vision—in offering insights that carry with them the weight of universal truths and that thus serve to reveal the deeper meaning of our times. This collected edition will, it is hoped, both illustrate the full range of Seferis's vision and demonstrate how consistently penetrating his insights have remained throughout his mature years.

Katounia, Limni, Euboea, 1966

E. K.  
P. S.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

OUR work on this collected edition has been facilitated throughout by Mr. Seferis's generous interest and cooperation, for which we are most grateful. We would like to thank the firm of Ikaros, Athens, publishers of the Greek text of Seferis's poems, for allowing us, in the original clothbound edition of this book, to print their text *en face* and to include the frontispiece by Yannis Moralis, with the painter's permission. We are grateful to Thames and Hudson Ltd., London, and Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, for granting us their permission to reproduce, in revised versions, those poems by Seferis which are included in our anthology *Six Poets of Modern Greece* and which were reprinted in the Penguin Ltd. (England) edition, *Four Greek Poets*. Translations from the present volume were originally published in *Poetry* (Chicago), *Shenandoah*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *Encounter*, *The Charioteer*, *Quarterly Review of Literature*, *Eighteen Texts*, *Antaeus*, *Columbia*, *The Georgia Review* and *Temenos*. Parts of the Foreword first appeared in *The Kenyon Review*, *Book Week*, and *The Charioteer*.

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# MYΘΙΣΤΟΡΗΜΑ

*Si j'ai du goût, ce n'est guères  
Que pour la terre et les pierres.*

ARTHUR RIMBAUD

# MYTHISTOREMA\*

*Si j'ai du goût, ce n'est guères  
Que pour la terre et les pierres.*

ARTHUR RIMBAUD\*

## Α΄

Τὸν ἄγγελο

τὸν περιμέναμε προσηλωμένοι τρία χρόνια

κοιτάζοντας πολὺ κοντὰ

τὰ πεῦκα τὸ γιὰλὸ καὶ τ' ἄστρα.

Σμίγοντας τὴν κόψη τ' ἀλετριοῦ ἢ τοῦ καραβιοῦ τὴν καρένα

φάχναμε νὰ βροῦμε πάλι τὸ πρῶτο σπέρμα

γιὰ νὰ ξαναρχίσει τὸ πανάρχαιο δρᾶμα.

Γυρίσαμε στὰ σπίτια μας τσακισμένοι

μ' ἀνήμπορα μέλη, μὲ τὸ στόμα ρημαγμένο

ἀπὸ τὴ γέψη τῆς σκουριᾶς καὶ τῆς ἀρμύρας.

Ὅταν ξυπνήσαμε ταξιδέψαμε κατὰ τὸ βοριά, ξένοι

βυθισμένοι μέσα σὲ καταχνιές ἀπὸ τ' ἄσπιλα φτερά τῶν

κύκνων ποὺ μᾶς πληγώναν.

Τὶς χειμωνιάτικες νύχτες μᾶς τρέλαινε ὁ δυνατὸς ἀγέρας

τῆς ἀνατολῆς

τὰ καλοκαίρια χανόμασταν μέσα στὴν ἀγωνία τῆς μέρας

ποὺ δὲ μποροῦσε νὰ ξεψυχήσει.

Φέραμε πίσω

αὐτὰ τ' ἀνάγλυφα μιᾶς τέχνης ταπεινῆς.

The angel—  
 three years we waited intently for him  
 closely watching  
 the pines the shore and the stars.  
 One with the plough's blade or the keel of the ship,  
 we were searching to rediscover the first seed  
 so that the ancient drama could begin again.

We returned to our homes broken,  
 limbs incapable, mouths cracked  
 by the taste of rust and brine.  
 When we woke we travelled towards the north, strangers  
 plunged into mists by the spotless wings of swans that  
     wounded us.  
 On winter nights the strong wind from the east maddened  
     us,  
 in the summers we were lost in the agony of days that  
     couldn't die.

We brought back  
 these carved reliefs of a humble art.

## Β'

Ἐκτόμη ἓνα πηγάδι μέσα σὲ μιὰ σπηλιά.

Ἄλλοτε μᾶς εἴταν εὐκόλο ν' ἀντλήσουμε εἶδωλα καὶ στο-  
λίδια

γιὰ νὰ χαροῦν οἱ φίλοι ποὺ μᾶς ἔμεναν ἀκόμη πιστοί.

Ἐσπασαν τὰ σκοινιά· μονάχα οἱ χαρακιές στοῦ πηγαδιοῦ  
τὸ στόμα

μᾶς θυμίζουν τὴν περασμένη μας εὐτυχία :

τὰ δάχτυλα στὸ φιλιατρό, καθὼς ἔλεγε ὁ ποιητής.

Τὰ δάχτυλα νοιώθουν τὴ δροσιὰ τῆς πέτρας λίγο

κι' ἡ θέρμη τοῦ κορμιοῦ τὴν κυριεύει

κι' ἡ σπηλιά παίζει τὴν ψυχὴ της καὶ τὴ χάνει

κάθε στιγμή, γεμάτη σιωπὴ, χωρὶς μιὰ στάλα.

Still another well inside a cave.  
 It used to be easy for us to draw up idols and ornaments  
 to please those friends who still remained loyal to us.

The ropes have broken; only the grooves on the well's lip  
 remind us of our past happiness:  
 the fingers on the rim, as the poet put it.\*  
 The fingers feel the coolness of the stone a little,  
 then the body's fever prevails over it  
 and the cave stakes its soul and loses it  
 every moment, full of silence, without a drop of water.

\* The asterisks refer to the notes.

## Γ'

*Μέμνησο λουτρῶν οἷς ἐνοσφίσθης*

Ξύπνησα μὲ τὸ μαρμάρينو τοῦτο κεφάλι στὰ χέρια  
ποῦ μοῦ ἐξαντλεῖ τοὺς ἀγκῶνες καὶ δὲν ξέρω ποῦ νὰ  
τ' ἀκουμπήσω.

Ἔπεφτε στὸ ὄνειρο καθὼς ἔβγαινα ἀπὸ τὸ ὄνειρο  
ἔτσι ἐνώθηκε ἡ ζωὴ μας καὶ θὰ εἶναι πολὺ δύσκολο νὰ  
ξαναχωρίσει.

Κοιτάζω τὰ μάτια· μήτε ἀνοιχτὰ μήτε κλειστὰ  
μιλῶ στὸ στόμα ποῦ ὅλο γυρεύει νὰ μιλήσει  
κρατῶ τὰ μάγουλα ποῦ ξεπέρασαν τὸ δέρμα.  
Δὲν ἔχω ἄλλη δύναμη·

τὰ χέρια μου χάνονται καὶ μὲ πλησιάζουν  
ἀκρωτηριασμένα.

*Remember the baths where  
you were murdered\**

I woke with this marble head in my hands;  
it exhausts my elbows and I don't know where to put it  
down.

It was falling into the dream as I was coming out of the  
dream  
so our life became one and it will be very difficult for it  
to disunite again.

I look at the eyes: neither open nor closed  
I speak to the mouth which keeps trying to speak  
I hold the cheeks which have broken through the skin.  
I don't have any more strength.

My hands disappear and come toward me  
mutilated.

Καὶ ψυχὴ  
εἰ μέλλει γινώσασθαι αὐτὴν  
εἰς ψυχὴν  
αὐτῇ βλέπτεον·  
τὸν ξένο καὶ τὸν ἐχθρὸ τὸν εἶδαμε στὸν καθρέφτη.

Εἴτανε καλὰ παιδιὰ οἱ συντρόφοι, δὲ φωνάζαν  
οὔτε ἀπὸ τὸν κάματο οὔτε ἀπὸ τῇ δίψᾳ οὔτε ἀπὸ τὴν πα-  
γωνιά,  
εἶχανε τὸ φέρσιμο τῶν δέντρων καὶ τῶν κυμάτων  
ποὺ δέχονται τὸν ἄνεμο καὶ τὴ βροχὴ  
δέχονται τὴ νύχτα καὶ τὸν ἥλιο  
χωρὶς ν' ἀλλάζουν μέσα στὴν ἀλλαγὴ.  
Εἴτανε καλὰ παιδιὰ, μέρες ὁλόκληρες  
ἴδρωναν στὸ κουπὶ μὲ χαμηλωμένα μάτια  
ἀνασαίνοντας μὲ ρυθμὸ  
καὶ τὸ αἷμα τοὺς κοκκίνιζε ἓνα δέρμα ὑποταγμένο.  
Κάποτε τραγούδησαν, μὲ χαμηλωμένα μάτια  
ὅταν περάσαμε τὸ ἐρημόνησο μὲ τὶς ἀραποσυκιᾶς  
κατὰ τὴ δύση, πέρα ἀπὸ τὸν κάβο τῶν σκύλων  
ποὺ γαυγίζουν.  
Εἰ μέλλει γινώσασθαι αὐτὴν, ἔλεγαν  
εἰς ψυχὴν βλέπτεον, ἔλεγαν  
καὶ τὰ κουπιὰ χτυπούσαν τὸ χρυσάφι τοῦ πελάγου

*Argonauts*

And if the soul  
 is to know itself  
 it must look  
 into a soul: \*  
 the stranger and enemy, we've seen him in the mirror.

They were fine, my companions, they never complained  
 about the work or the thirst or the frost,  
 they had the bearing of trees and waves  
 that accept the wind and the rain  
 accept the night and the sun  
 without changing in the midst of change.  
 They were fine, whole days  
 they sweated at the oars with lowered eyes  
 breathing in rhythm  
 and their blood reddened a submissive skin.  
 Sometimes they sang, with lowered eyes  
 as we were passing the dry island with the Barbary figs  
 to the west, beyond the cape  
 of the barking dogs.  
 If it is to know itself, they said  
 it must look into a soul, they said  
 and the oars struck the sea's gold

μέσα στὸ ἡλιόγερμα.

Περάσαμε κάβους πολλοὺς πολλὰ νησιὰ τῇ θάλασσᾳ  
ποὺ φέρνει τὴν ἄλλῃ θάλασσᾳ, γλάρους καὶ φώκιες.

Δυστυχισμένες γυναῖκες κάποτε μὲ ὀλολυγμοὺς  
κλαίγανε τὰ χαμένα τους παιδιὰ

κι' ἄλλες ἀγριεμένες γύρευαν τὸ Μεγαλέξαντρο  
καὶ δόξες βυθισμένες στὰ βάθη τῆς Ἀσίας.

Ἀράξαμε σ' ἀκρογιαλιὲς γεμάτες ἀρώματα νυχτερινὰ  
μὲ κελαϊδίσματα πουλιῶν, νερὰ ποὺ ἀφήνανε στὰ χέρια  
τῇ μνήμῃ μιᾶς μεγάλης εὐτυχίας.

Μὰ δὲν τελειῶναν τὰ ταξίδια.

Οἱ ψυχές τους ἔγιναν ἓνα μὲ τὰ κουπιὰ καὶ τοὺς σκαρμούς  
μὲ τὸ σοβαρὸ πρόσωπο τῆς πλώρης

μὲ τ' αὐλάκι τοῦ τιμονιοῦ

μὲ τὸ νερὸ ποὺ ἔσπαζε τὴ μορφὴ τους.

Οἱ σύντροφοι τέλειωσαν μὲ τὴ σειρά,

μὲ χαμηλωμένα μάτια. Τὰ κουπιὰ τους

δείχνουν τὸ μέρος ποὺ κοιμοῦνται στ' ἀκρογιάλι.

Κανεῖς δὲν τοὺς θυμᾶται. Δικαιοσύνη.

in the sunset.

We went past many capes many islands the sea  
leading to another sea, gulls and seals.

Sometimes unfortunate women wept  
lamenting their lost children  
and others raging sought Alexander the Great  
and glories buried in the heart of Asia.

We moored on shores full of night-scents  
with birds singing, waters that left on the hands  
the memory of great happiness.

But the voyages did not end.

Their souls became one with the oars and the oarlocks  
with the solemn face of the prow  
with the rudder's wake  
with the water that shattered their image.

The companions died one by one,  
with lowered eyes. Their oars  
mark the place where they sleep on the shore.\*

No one remembers them. Justice.

## Ε'

Δὲν τοὺς γνωρίζσαμε

εἴταν ἡ ἐλπίδα στὸ βάθος ποὺ ἔλεγε  
πὼς τοὺς εἴχαμε γνωρίσει ἀπὸ μικρὰ παιδιὰ.  
Τοὺς εἶδαμε ἴσως δυὸ φορές κι' ἔπειτα πήραν τὰ καράβια·  
φορτία κάρβουνο, φορτία γεννήματα, κι' οἱ φίλοι μας  
χαμένοι πίσω ἀπὸ τὸν ὠκεανὸ παντοτινά.  
'Η αὐγὴ μᾶς βρίσκει πλάι στὴν κουρασμένη λάμπα  
νὰ γράφουμε ἀδέξια καὶ μὲ προσπάθεια στὸ χαρτὶ  
πλεούμενα γοργόνες ἢ κοχύλια·  
τὸ ἀπόβραδο κατεβαίνουμε στὸ ποτάμι  
γιατὶ μᾶς δείχνει τὸ δρόμο πρὸς τὴ θάλασσα,  
καὶ περνοῦμε τὶς νύχτες σὲ ὑπόγεια ποὺ μυρίζουν κατράμι.

Οἱ φίλοι μας ἔφυγαν

ἴσως νὰ μὴν τοὺς εἶδαμε ποτέ, ἴσως  
νὰ τοὺς συναπαντήσαμε ὅταν ἀκόμη ὁ ὕπνος  
μᾶς ἔφερνε πολὺ κοντὰ στὸ κῦμα ποὺ ἀνασαίνει  
ἴσως νὰ τοὺς γυρεύουμε γιατί γυρεύουμε τὴν ἄλλη ζωὴ,  
πέρα ἀπὸ τ' ἀγάλματα.

We didn't know them  
                   deep down it was hope that said  
 we'd known them since early childhood.  
 We saw them perhaps twice and then they took to the ships;  
 cargoes of coal, cargoes of grain, and our friends  
 lost beyond the ocean forever.  
 Dawn finds us beside the tired lamp  
 drawing on paper, awkwardly, with effort,  
 ships mermaids or sea-shells;  
 at dusk we go down to the river  
 because it shows us the way to the sea;  
 and we spend the nights in cellars that smell of tar.

Our friends have left us  
                   perhaps we never saw them, perhaps  
 we met them when sleep  
 still brought us close to the breathing wave  
 perhaps we search for them because we search for the other life,  
 beyond the statues.

Τὸ περιβόλι μὲ τὰ συντριβάνια του στὴ βροχὴ  
 θὰ τὸ βλέπεις μόνο ἀπὸ τὸ χαμηλὸ παράθυρο  
 πίσω ἀπὸ τὸ θολὸ τζάμι. Ἡ κάμαρά σου  
 θὰ φωτίζεται μόνο ἀπὸ τὴ φλόγα τοῦ τζακιοῦ  
 καὶ κάποτε, στίς μακρινὲς ἀστραπὲς θὰ φαίνονται  
 οἱ ρυτίδες τοῦ μετώπου σου, παλιέ μου Φίλε.

Τὸ περιβόλι μὲ τὰ συντριβάνια ποὺ εἴταν στὸ χέρι σου  
 ρυθμὸς τῆς ἄλλης ζωῆς, ἔξω ἀπὸ τὰ σπασμένα  
 μάρμαρα καὶ τὶς κολόνες τὶς τραγικὲς  
 κι' ἓνας χορὸς μέσα στίς πικροδάφνες  
 κοντὰ στὰ καινούργια λατομεῖα,  
 ἓνα γυαλί θαμπὸ θὰ τό 'χει κόψει ἀπὸ τὶς ὥρες σου.  
 Δὲ θ' ἀνασάνεις· τὸ χῶμα κι' ὁ χυμὸς τῶν δέντρων  
 θὰ ὀρμοῦν ἀπὸ τὴ μνήμη σου γιὰ νὰ χτυπήσουν  
 πάνω στὸ τζάμι αὐτὸ ποὺ τὸ χτυπᾷ ἡ βροχὴ  
 ἀπὸ τὸν ἔξω κόσμο.

*M. R.\**

The garden with its fountains in the rain  
you will see only from behind the clouded glass  
of the low window. Your room  
will be lit only by the flames from the fireplace  
and sometimes the distant lightning will reveal  
the wrinkles on your forehead, my old Friend.

The garden with the fountains that in your hands  
was a rhythm of the other life, beyond the broken  
statues and the tragic columns  
and a dance among the oleanders  
beside new quarries—  
misty glass will have cut it off from your days.  
You won't breathe; earth and the sap of the trees  
will spring from your memory to strike  
this window struck by rain  
from the outside world.

## Ζ'

Νοτιάς

Τὸ πέλαγο σμίγει κατὰ τὴ δύση μιὰ βουνοσειρά.  
Ζερβά μας ὁ νοτιάς φυσάει καὶ μᾶς τρελαίνει,  
αὐτὸς ὁ ἀγέρας πὺν γυμνώνει τὰ κόκκαλα ἀπ' τὴ σάρκα.  
Τὸ σπίτι μας μέσα στὰ πεῦκα καὶ στὶς χαρουπιές.  
Μεγάλα παράθυρα. Μεγάλα τραπέζια  
γιὰ νὰ γράφουμε τὰ γράμματα πὺν σοῦ γράφουμε  
τόσους μῆνες καὶ τὰ ρίχνουμε  
μέσα στὸν ἀποχωρισμὸ γιὰ νὰ γεμίσει.

Ἄστρο τῆς αὐγῆς, ὅταν χαμήλωνες τὰ μάτια  
οἱ ὥρες μας εἴταν πὺν γλυκειές ἀπὸ τὸ λάδι  
πάνω στὴν πληγὴ, πὺν πρόσχαρες ἀπὸ τὸ κρῦο νερὸ  
στὸν οὐρανίσκο, πὺν γαλήνιες ἀπὸ τὰ φτερά τοῦ κύκνου.  
Κρατοῦσες τὴ ζωὴ μας στὴν παλάμη σου.  
Ἦστερα ἀπ' τὸ πικρὸ ψωμὶ τῆς ξενιτειᾶς  
τὴ νύχτα ἂν μείνουμε μπροστὰ στὸν ἄσπρο τοῖχο  
ἢ φωνὴ σου μᾶς πλησιάζει σὰν ἔλπιση φωτιᾶς  
καὶ πάλι αὐτὸς ὁ ἀγέρας ἀκονίζει  
πάνω στὰ νεῦρα μας ἓνα ξυράφι.

Σοῦ γράφουμε ὁ καθένας τὰ ἴδια πράματα  
καὶ σωπαίνει ὁ καθένας μπρὸς στὸν ἄλλον  
κοιτάζοντας, ὁ καθένας, τὸν ἴδιο κόσμο χωριστὰ  
τὸ φῶς καὶ τὸ σκοτάδι στὴ βουνοσειρά

*South Wind*

Westward the sea merges with a mountain range.  
From our left the south wind blows and drives us mad,  
the kind of wind that strips bones of their flesh.  
Our house among pines and carobs.  
Large windows. Large tables  
for writing you the letters we've been writing  
so many months now, dropping them  
into the gap of our separation to fill it up.

Star of dawn, when you lowered your eyes  
our hours were sweeter than oil  
on a wound, more joyful than cold water  
to the palate, more peaceful than a swan's wings.  
You held our life in the palm of your hand.  
After the bitter bread of exile,  
at night if we remain in front of the white wall,  
your voice approaches us like the hope of fire;  
and again this wind hones  
a razor against our nerves.

Each of us writes you the same thing  
and each falls silent in the other's presence,  
watching, each of us, the same world separately  
the light and darkness on the mountain range

κι' ἐσένα.

Ποιὸς θὰ σηκώσει τὴ θλίψη τούτη ἀπ' τὴν καρδιά μας ;  
Χτὲς βράδι μιὰ νεροποντὴ καὶ σήμερα  
βαραίνει πάλι ὁ σκεπασμένος οὐρανός. Οἱ στοχασμοί μας  
σὰν τὶς πευκοβελόνες τῆς χτεσινῆς νεροποντῆς  
στὴν πόρτα τοῦ σπιτιοῦ μας μαζεμένοι κι' ἄχρηστοι  
θέλουν νὰ χτίσουν ἕναν πύργο ποὺ γκρεμίζει.

Μέσα σὲ τοῦτα τὰ χωριὰ τ' ἀποδεκατισμένα  
πάνω σ' αὐτὸ τὸν κάβο, ξέσκεπο στὸ νοτιὰ  
μὲ τὴ βουνοσειρὰ μπροστά μας ποὺ σὲ κρύβει,  
ποιὸς θὰ μᾶς λογαριάσει τὴν ἀπόφαση τῆς λησμονιᾶς ;  
Ποιὸς θὰ δεχτεῖ τὴν προσφορὰ μας, στὸ τέλος αὐτὸ τοῦ φθι-  
νοπώρου.

and you.

Who will lift this sorrow from our hearts?

Yesterday evening a heavy rain and again today

the covered sky burdens us. Our thoughts—

like the pine needles of yesterday's downpour

bunched up and useless in front of our doorway—

would build a collapsing tower.

Among these decimated villages

on this promontory, open to the south wind

with the mountain range in front of us hiding you,

who will calculate for us the cost of our decision to forget?

Who will accept our offering, at this close of autumn?

## Η'

Μὰ τί γυρεύουν οἱ ψυχές μας ταξιδεύοντας  
πάνω σὲ καταστρώματα κατελυμένων καραβιῶν  
στριμωγμένες μὲ γυναῖκες κίτρινες καὶ μωρὰ ποὺ κλαῖνε  
χωρὶς νὰ μποροῦν νὰ ξεχαστοῦν οὔτε μὲ τὰ χελιδονόψαρα  
οὔτε μὲ τ' ἄστρα ποὺ δηλώνουν στὴν ἄκρη τὰ κατάρτια.  
Τριμμένες ἀπὸ τοὺς δίσκους τῶν φωνογράφων  
δεμένες ἄθελα μ' ἀνύπαρχτα προσκυνήματα  
μουρμουρίζοντας σπασμένες σκέψεις ἀπὸ ξένες γλῶσσες.

Μὰ τί γυρεύουν οἱ ψυχές μας ταξιδεύοντας  
πάνω στὰ σαπισμένα θαλάσσια ξύλα  
ἀπὸ λιμάνι σὲ λιμάνι ;

Μετακινώντας τσακισμένες πέτρες, ἀνασαίνοντας  
τὴ δροσιὰ τοῦ πεύκου πιδὸ δύσκολα κάθε μέρα,  
κολυμπώντας στὰ νερὰ τούτης τῆς θάλασσας  
κι' ἐκείνης τῆς θάλασσας,  
χωρὶς ἀφή  
χωρὶς ἀνθρώπους  
μέσα σὲ μιὰ πατρίδα ποὺ δὲν εἶναι πιά δική μας  
οὔτε δική σας.



What are they after, our souls, traveling  
 on the decks of decayed ships  
 crowded in with fallow women and crying babies  
 unable to forget themselves either with the flying fish  
 or with the stars that the masts point out at their tips?  
 Grated by gramophone records  
 committed to non-existent pilgrimages unwillingly,  
 they murmur broken thoughts from foreign languages.

What are they after, our souls, traveling  
 on rotten brine-soaked timbers  
 from harbor to harbor?

Shifting broken stones, breathing in  
 the pine's coolness with greater difficulty each day,  
 swimming in the waters of this sea  
 and of that sea,  
 without the sense of touch  
 without men  
 in a country that is no longer ours  
 nor yours.



Τὸ ξέραμε πὼς εἶταν ὠραῖα τὰ νησιὰ  
κάπου ἐδῶ τριγύρω ποὺ ψηλαφοῦμε  
λίγο πιὸ χαμηλὰ ἢ λίγο πιὸ ψηλὰ  
ἓνα ἐλάχιστο διάστημα.

We knew that the islands were beautiful  
somewhere round about here where we are groping  
a little lower or a little higher,  
the slightest distance.

Εἶναι παλιὸ τὸ λιμάνι, δὲ μπορῶ πιά νὰ περιμένω  
οὔτε τὸ φίλο ποὺ ἔφυγε στὸ νησί μὲ τὰ πεῦκα  
οὔτε τὸ φίλο ποὺ ἔφυγε στὸ νησί μὲ τὰ πλατάνια  
οὔτε τὸ φίλο ποὺ ἔφυγε γιὰ τ' ἀνοιχτά.  
Χαῖδεύω τὰ σκουριασμένα κανόνια, χαῖδεύω τὰ κουπιὰ  
νὰ ζωντανέψει τὸ κορμί μου καὶ ν' ἀποφασίσει.  
Τὰ καραβόπανα δίνουν μόνο τὴ μυρωδιὰ  
τοῦ ἀλατιοῦ τῆς ἄλλης τρικυμίας.

Ἄν τὸ θέλησα νὰ μείνω μόνος, γύρεψα  
τὴ μοναξιά, δὲ γύρεψα μιὰ τέτοια ἀπαντοχή,  
τὸ κομμάτιασμα τῆς ψυχῆς μου στὸν ὀρίζοντα,  
αὐτὲς τὶς γραμμές, αὐτὰ τὰ χρώματα, αὐτὴ τὴ σιγή.

Τ' ἄστρα τῆς νύχτας μὲ γυρίζουν στὴν προσδοκία  
τοῦ Ὀδυσσέα γιὰ τοὺς νεκροὺς μὲς στ' ἀσφοδίλια.  
Μὲς στ' ἀσφοδίλια σὰν ἀράξαμε ἐδῶ πέρα θέλαμε νὰ βροῦι  
τὴ λαγκαδιὰ ποὺ εἶδε τὸν Ἀδωνι λαβωμένο.

The harbor is old, I can't wait any longer  
 for the friend who left for the island of pine trees  
 or the friend who left for the island of plane trees  
 or the friend who left for the open sea.  
 I stroke the rusted cannons, I stroke the oars  
 so that my body may revive and decide.  
 The sails give off only the smell  
 of salt from the other storm.

If I chose to remain alone, what I longed for  
 was solitude, not this kind of waiting,  
 my soul shattered on the horizon,  
 these lines, these colors, this silence.

The night's stars take me back to the anticipation  
 of Odysseus waiting for the dead among the asphodels.\*  
 When we moored here among the asphodels we hoped to find  
 the gorge that saw Adonis wounded.

## I'

Ὁ τόπος μας εἶναι κλειστός, ὅλο βουνά  
πού ἔχουν σκεπή τὸ χαμηλὸ οὐρανὸ μέρα καὶ νύχτα.  
Δὲν ἔχουμε ποτάμια δὲν ἔχουμε πηγάδια δὲν ἔχουμε πηγές,  
μονάχα λίγες στέρνες, ἄδειες κι' αὐτές, πού ἤχοῦν καὶ πού  
τίς προσκυνοῦμε.

Ἦχος στεκάμενος κούφιος, ἴδιος μὲ τὴ μοναξιά μας  
ἴδιος μὲ τὴν ἀγάπη μας, ἴδιος μὲ τὰ σώματά μας.  
Μᾶς φαίνεται παράξενο πού κάποτε μπορέσαμε νὰ χτίσουμε  
τὰ σπίτια τὰ καλύβια καὶ τίς στάνες μας.  
Κι' οἱ γάμοι μας, τὰ δροσερά στεφάνια καὶ τὰ δάχτυλα  
γίνονται αἰνίγματα ἀνεξήγητα γιὰ τὴν ψυχὴ μας.  
Πῶς γεννηθῆκαν πῶς δυναμώσανε τὰ παιδιὰ μας;

Ὁ τόπος μας εἶναι κλειστός. Τὸν κλείνουν  
οἱ δυὸ μαῦρες Συμπληγάδες. Στὰ λιμάνια  
τὴν Κυριακὴ σὰν κατεβοῦμε ν' ἀνασάνουμε  
βλέπουμε νὰ φωτίζονται στὸ ἡλιόγερμα  
σπασμένα ξύλα ἀπὸ ταξίδια πού δὲν τέλειωσαν  
σώματα πού δὲν ξέρουν πιά πῶς ν' ἀγαπήσουν.

Our country is closed in, all mountains  
 that day and night have the low sky as their roof  
 We have no rivers, we have no wells, we have no springs,  
 only a few cisterns—and these empty—that echo, and that  
     we worship.

A stagnant hollow sound, the same as our loneliness  
 the same as our love, the same as our bodies.  
 We find it strange that once we were able to build  
 our houses, huts, and sheepfolds.  
 And our marriages, the cool coronals and the fingers,\*  
 become enigmas inexplicable to our soul.  
 How were our children born, how did they grow strong?

Our country is closed in. The two black Symplegades\*  
 close it in. When we go down  
 to the harbors on Sunday to breathe  
 we see, lit in the sunset,  
 the broken planks from voyages that never ended,  
 bodies that no longer know how to love.

## ΙΑ΄

Τὸ αἷμα σου πάγωνε κάποτε σὰν τὸ φεγγάρι  
μέσα στὴν ἀνεξάντλητη νύχτα τὸ αἷμα σου  
ἄπλωνε τὶς ἄσπρες του φτεροῦγες πάνω  
στοὺς μαύρους βράχους τὰ σχήματα τῶν δέντρων καὶ τὰ  
σπίτια  
μὲ λίγο φῶς ἀπὸ τὰ παιδικὰ μας χρόνια.

Sometimes your blood froze like the moon  
in the limitless night your blood  
spread its white wings over  
the black rocks, the shapes of trees and houses,  
with a little light from our childhood years.

## IB'

*Μποτίλια στο πέλαγο*

Τρεῖς βράχοι λίγα καμένα πεῦκα κι' ἓνα ρημοκλήσι  
καὶ πάρα πάνω  
τὸ ἴδιο τοπίο ἀντιγραφμμένο ξαναρχίζει·  
τρεῖς βράχοι σὲ σχῆμα πύλης, σκουριασμένοι  
λίγα καμένα πεῦκα, μαῦρα καὶ κίτρινα  
κι' ἓνα τετράγωνο σπιτάκι θαμμένο στὸν ἀσβέστη·  
καὶ πάρα πάνω ἀκόμη πολλές φορές  
τὸ ἴδιο τοπίο ξαναρχίζει κλιμακωτὰ  
ὥς τὸν ὀρίζοντα ὥς τὸν οὐρανὸ ποὺ βασιλεύει.

Ἐδῶ ἀράξαμε τὸ καράβι νὰ ματίσουμε τὰ σπασμένα κουπιά,  
νὰ πιοῦμε νερὸ καὶ νὰ κοιμηθοῦμε.  
Ἡ θάλασσα ποὺ μᾶς πίκρανε εἶναι βαθειὰ κι' ἀνεξερεύνητη  
καὶ ξεδιπλώνει μιὰν ἀπέραντη γαλήνη.  
Ἐδῶ μέσα στὰ βότσαλα βρήκαμε ἓνα νόμισμα  
καὶ τὸ παίξαμε στὰ ζάρια.  
Τὸ κέρδισε ὁ μικρότερος καὶ χάθηκε.

Ξαναμπαρκάραμε μὲ τὰ σπασμένα μας κουπιά.

*Bottle in the Sea*

Three rocks, a few burnt pines, a solitary chapel  
and farther above  
the same landscape repeated starts again:  
three rocks in the shape of a gate-way, rusted,  
a few burnt pines, black and yellow,  
and a square hut buried in whitewash;  
and still farther above, many times over,  
the same landscape recurs level after level  
to the horizon, to the twilight sky.

Here we moored the ship to splice the broken oars,  
to drink water and to sleep.  
The sea that embittered us is deep and unexplored  
and unfolds a boundless calm.  
Here among the pebbles we found a coin  
and threw dice for it.  
The youngest won it and disappeared.\*

We set out again with our broken oars.

## ΙΓ'

Υδρα

Δελφίνια φλάμπουρα καὶ κανονιές.

Τὸ πέλαγο τόσο πικρὸ γιὰ τὴν ψυχὴ σου κάποτε  
σήκωνε τὰ πολύχρωμα κι' ἀστραφτερὰ καράβια  
λύγιζε, τὰ κλυδώνιζε κι' ὅλο μαβὶ μ' ἄσπρα φτερά,  
τόσο πικρὸ γιὰ τὴν ψυχὴ σου κάποτε  
τώρα γεμάτο χρώματα στὸν ἥλιο.

Ἄσπρα πανιά καὶ φῶς καὶ τὰ κουπιὰ τὰ ὑγρά  
χτυπούσαν μὲ ρυθμὸ τυμπάνου ἓνα ἡμερωμένο κύμα.

Θά εἶταν ὠραῖα τὰ μάτια σου νὰ κοίταζαν  
θά εἶταν λαμπρὰ τὰ χέρια σου ν' ἀπλώνουνταν  
θά εἶταν σὰν ἄλλοτε ζωηρὰ τὰ χεῖλια σου  
μπρὸς σ' ἓνα τέτιο θᾶμα·  
τὸ γύρευες

τί γύρευες μπροστὰ στὴ στάχτη  
ἢ μέσα στὴ βροχὴ στὴν καταχνιὰ στὸν ἄνεμο,  
τὴν ὥρα ἀκόμη ποὺ χαλάρωναν τὰ φῶτα  
κι' ἡ πολιτεία βύθιζε κι' ἀπὸ τὶς πλάκες  
σοῦ ὅδειχνε τὴν καρδιά του ὁ Ναζωραῖος,  
τί γύρευες; γιατί δὲν ἔρχεσαι; τί γύρευες;

*Hydra\**

Dolphins banners and the sound of cannons.  
 The sea once so bitter to your soul  
 bore the many-colored and glittering ships  
 it swayed, rolled and tossed them, all blue with white wings,  
 once so bitter to your soul  
 now full of colors in the sun.

White sails and sunlight and wet oars  
 struck with a rhythm of drums on stilled waves.

Your eyes, watching, would be beautiful,  
 your eyes, reaching out, would glow,  
 your lips would come alive, as they used to,  
 at such a miracle;  
 you were searching for it  
     what were you looking for in front of ashes  
 or in the rain in the fog in the wind  
 even when the lights were growing dim  
 and the city was sinking and on the stone pavement  
 the Nazarene showed you his heart,  
 what were you looking for? why don't you come? what  
     were you looking for?

## ΙΔ΄

Τρία κόκκινα περιστέρια μέσα στὸ φῶς  
χαράζοντας τὴ μοίρα μας μέσα στὸ φῶς  
μὲ χρώματα καὶ χειρονομίες ἀνθρώπων  
ποὺ ἀγαπήσαμε.

Three red pigeons in the light  
inscribing our fate in the light  
with colors and gestures of people  
we have loved.

## ΙΕ'

*Quid πλατανών opacissimus ?*

•Ο ὕπνος σὲ τύλιξε, σὰν ἓνα δέντρο, μὲ πράσινα φύλλα  
ἀνάσαινες, σὰν ἓνα δέντρο, μέσα στὸ ἥσυχο φῶς  
μέσα στὴ διάφανη πηγὴ κοίταξα τὴ μορφὴ σου·  
κλεισμένα βλέφαρα καὶ τὰ ματόκλαδα χάραζαν τὸ νερό.  
Τὰ δάχτυλά μου στὸ μαλακὸ χορτάρι, βρήκαν τὰ δάχτυ-  
λά σου  
κράτησα τὸ σφυγμὸ σου μιὰ στιγμή  
κι' ἐνίωσα ἄλλοῦ τὸν πόνο τῆς καρδιᾶς σου.

Κάτω ἀπὸ τὸ πλατάνι, κοντὰ στὸ νερό, μέσα στὶς δάφνες  
ὁ ὕπνος σὲ μετακινοῦσε καὶ σὲ κομματίαζε  
γύρω μου, κοντὰ μου, χωρὶς νὰ μπορῶ νὰ σ' ἀγγίξω ὁλό-  
κληρη,  
ἐνωμένη μὲ τὴ σιωπὴ σου·  
βλέποντας τὸν ἴσκιό σου νὰ μεγαλώνει καὶ νὰ μικραίνει,  
νὰ χάνεται στοὺς ἄλλους ἴσκιους, μέσα στὸν ἄλλο  
κόσμο ποὺ σ' ἄφηνε καὶ σὲ κρατοῦσε.

Τὴ ζωὴ ποὺ μᾶς ἔδωσαν νὰ ζήσουμε, τὴ ζήσαμε.  
Λυπήσου ἐκείνους ποὺ περιμένουν μὲ τόση ὑπομονή  
χαμένοι μέσα στὶς μαῦρες δάφνες κάτω ἀπὸ τὰ βαριὰ  
πλατάνια  
κι' ὅσους μονάχοι τους μιλοῦν σὲ στέρνες καὶ σὲ πηγάδια  
καὶ πνίγονται μέσα στοὺς κύκλους τῆς φωνῆς.

*Quid πλατανών opacissimus?\**

Sleep wrapped you in green leaves like a tree  
 you breathed like a tree in the quiet light  
 in the limpid spring I looked at your face:  
 eyelids closed, eyelashes brushing the water.  
 In the soft grass my fingers found your fingers  
 I held your pulse a moment  
 and felt your heart's pain in another place.

Under the plane tree, near the water, among laurel  
 sleep moved you and scattered you  
 around me, near me, without my being able to touch the  
     whole of you—  
 one as you were with your silence;  
 seeing your shadow grow and diminish,  
 lose itself in the other shadows, in the other  
 world that let you go yet held you back.

The life that they gave us to live, we lived.  
 Pity those who wait with such patience  
 lost in the black laurel under the heavy plane trees  
 and those, alone, who speak to cisterns and wells  
 and drown in the voice's circles.

Λυπήσου τὸ σύντροφο ποὺ μοιράστηκε τὴ στέρησή μας καὶ  
τὸν ἰδρώτα  
καὶ βύθισε μέσα στὸν ἥλιο σὰν κοράκι πέρα ἀπ' τὰ μάρμαρα,  
χωρὶς ἐλπίδα νὰ χαρεῖ τὴν ἀμοιβή μας.

Δῶσε μας, ἔξω ἀπὸ τὸν ὕπνο, τὴ γαλήνη.

Pity the companion who shared our privation and our sweat  
and plunged into the sun like a crow beyond the ruins,  
without hope of enjoying our reward.

Give us, outside sleep, serenity.

## ΙΓ'

*ὄνομα δ' Ὀρέστης*

Στὴ σφενδόνῃ, πάλι στὴ σφενδόνῃ, στὴ σφενδόνῃ,  
πόσοι γύροι, πόσοι αἱμάτινοι κύκλοι, πόσες μαῦρες  
σειρές· οἱ ἄνθρωποι ποὺ μὲ κοιτάζουν,  
ποὺ μὲ κοιτάζαν ὅταν πάνω στὸ ἄρμα  
σῆκωσα τὸ χέρι λαμπρός, κι' ἀλάλαξαν.

● οἱ ἄφροι τῶν ἀλόγων μὲ χτυποῦν, τ' ἄλογα πότε θ' ἀπο-  
στάσουν;

Τρίζει ὁ ἄξονας, πυρίνῃ ὁ ἄξονας, πότε ὁ ἄξονας θ' ἀ-  
νάψει;

Πότε θὰ σπάσουν τὰ λουριά, πότε τὰ πέταλα  
θὰ πατήσουν μ' ὅλο τὸ πλάτος πάνω στὸ χῶμα  
πάνω στὸ μαλακὸ χορτάρι, μέσα στὶς παπαροῦνες ὅπου  
τὴν ἀνοιξὴ μάζεψες μιὰ μαργαρίτα.

Εἴταν ὠραῖα τὰ μάτια σου μὰ δὲν ἤξερες ποῦ νὰ κοι-  
τάξεις

δὲν ἤξερα ποῦ νὰ κοιτάζω μήτε κι' ἐγώ, χωρὶς πα-  
τρίδα

ἐγὼ ποὺ μάχομαι ἐδῶ-πέρα, πόσοι γύροι;  
καὶ νιώθω τὰ γόνατα νὰ λυγίζουν πάνω στὸν ἄξονα  
πάνω στὶς ρόδες πάνω στὸν ἄγριο στίβο  
τὰ γόνατα λυγίζουν εὐκόλα σὰν τὸ θέλουν οἱ θεοί,  
κανεὶς δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ ξεφύγει, τί νὰ τὴν κάνεις τὴ δύναμη,  
δὲν μπορεῖς

*The name is Orestes\**

On the track, on the track again, on the track,  
 how many times around, how many blood-stained laps, how  
     many black  
 rows; the people who watch me,  
 who watched me when, in the chariot,  
 I raised my hand glorious, and they roared triumphantly.

The froth of the horses strikes me, when will the horses tire?  
 The axle creaks, the axle burns, when will the axle burst  
     into flame?

When will the reins break, when will the hooves  
 tread flush on the ground  
 on the soft grass, among the poppies  
 where, in the spring, you picked a daisy.  
 They were lovely, your eyes, but you didn't know where  
     to look  
 nor did I know where to look, I, without a country,  
 I who go on struggling here, how many times around?  
 and I feel my knees give way over the axle  
 over the wheels, over the wild track  
 knees buckle easily when the gods so will it,  
 no one can escape, there's no point in being strong, you can't

νά ξεφύγεις τὴ θάλασσα ποὺ σὲ λίκνισε καὶ ποὺ γυρεύεις  
τούτῃ τὴν ὥρα τῆς ἀμάχης, μέσα στὴν ἀλογίσια ἀνάσα  
μὲ τὰ καλάμια ποὺ τραγουδοῦσαν τὸ φθινόπωρο σὲ τρόπο  
λυδικό

τὴ θάλασσα ποὺ δὲν μπορεῖς νὰ βρεῖς ὅσο κι' ἂν τρέχεις  
ὅσο κι' ἂν γυρίζεις μπροστὰ στὶς μαῦρες Εὐμενίδες ποὺ βα-  
ριοῦνται,  
χωρὶς συχώρεση.

escape the sea that cradled you and that you search for  
at this time of trial, with the horses panting,  
with the reeds that used to sing in autumn to the Lydian  
mode  
the sea you cannot find no matter how you run  
no matter how you circle past the black, bored Eumenides,  
unforgiven.

## ΙΖ'

Ἄστυάναξ

Τώρα πού θὰ φύγεις πάρε μαζί σου καὶ τὸ παιδὶ  
πού εἶδε τὸ φῶς κάτω ἀπὸ ἐκεῖνο τὸ πλατάνι,  
μιὰ μέρα πού ἀντηχούσαν σάλπιγγες κι' ἔλαμπαν ὅπλα  
καὶ τ' ἄλογα ἰδρωμένα σκύβανε ν' ἀγγίζουν  
τὴν πράσινη ἐπιφάνεια τοῦ νεροῦ  
στὴ γούρνα μὲ τὰ ὑγρά τους τὰ ρουθούνια.

Οἱ ἐλιές μὲ τὶς ρυτίδες τῶν γονιῶν μας  
τὰ βράχια μὲ τὴ γνώση τῶν γονιῶν μας  
καὶ τὸ αἶμα τοῦ ἀδερφοῦ μας ζωντανὸ στὸ χῶμα  
εἴτανε μιὰ γερὴ χαρὰ μιὰ πλούσια τάξη  
γιὰ τὶς ψυχές πού γνώριζαν τὴν προσευχή τους.

Τώρα πού θὰ φύγεις, τώρα πού ἡ μέρα τῆς πληρωμῆς  
χαράζει, τώρα πού κανεὶς δὲν ξέρει  
ποιὸν θὰ σκοτώσει καὶ πῶς θὰ τελειώσει,  
πάρε μαζί σου τὸ παιδὶ πού εἶδε τὸ φῶς  
κάτω ἀπ' τὰ φύλλα ἐκείνου τοῦ πλατάνου  
καὶ μάθε του νὰ μελετᾷ τὰ δέντρα.

*Astyanax\**

Now that you are leaving, take the boy with you too,  
 the boy who saw the light under that plane tree,  
 one day when trumpets resounded and weapons shone  
 and the sweating horses  
 bent to the trough to touch with wet nostrils  
 the green surface of the water.

The olive trees with the wrinkles of our fathers  
 the rocks with the wisdom of our fathers  
 and our brother's blood alive on the earth  
 were a vital joy, a rich pattern  
 for the souls who knew their prayer.

Now that you are leaving, now that the day of payment  
 dawns, now that no one knows  
 whom he will kill and how he will die,  
 take with you the boy who saw the light  
 under the leaves of that plane tree  
 and teach him to study the trees.

## ΙΗ'

Λυποῦμαι γιατί ἄφησα νὰ περάσει ἓνα πλατὺ ποτάμι μέσα  
ἀπὸ τὰ δάχτυλά μου  
χωρὶς νὰ πιῶ οὔτε μιὰ στάλα.  
Τώρα βυθίζομαι στὴν πέτρα.  
Ἕνα μικρὸ πεῦκο στὸ κόκκινο χῶμα,  
δὲν ἔχω ἄλλη συντροφιά.  
Ὅ,τι ἀγάπησα χάθηκε μαζὶ μὲ τὰ σπίτια  
ποὺ εἴταν καινούργια τὸ περασμένο καλοκαίρι  
καὶ γκρέμισαν μὲ τὸν ἀγέρα τοῦ φθινοπώρου.

I am sorry for having let a broad river pass through my  
fingers  
without drinking a single drop.  
Now I'm sinking into the stone.  
A small pine-tree in the red soil  
is all the company I have.  
Whatever I loved vanished with the houses  
that were new last summer  
and collapsed in the autumn wind.

## ΙΘ'

Κι' ἂν ὁ ἀγέρας φυσᾷ δὲ μᾶς δροσίζει  
κι' ὁ ἴσκιος μένει στενὸς κάτω ἀπ' τὰ κυπαρίσσια  
κι' ὅλο τριγύρω ἀνήφοροι στὰ βουνά·

μᾶς βαραίνουν  
οἱ φίλοι ποὺ δὲν ξέρουν πιά πῶς νὰ πεθάνουν.

Even if the wind blows it doesn't cool us  
and the shade under the cypress trees remains narrow  
and all around it's uphill to the mountains;

they're a burden for us  
the friends who no longer know how to die.

## Κ'

Στὸ στῆθος μου ἡ πληγὴ ἀνοίγει πάλι  
ὅταν χαμηλώνουν τ' ἄστρα καὶ συγγενεύουν μὲ τὸ κορμί μου  
ὅταν πέφτει σιγὴ κάτω ἀπὸ τὰ πέλματα τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

Αὐτὲς οἱ πέτρες ποὺ βουλιάζουν μέσα στὰ χρόνια ὡς ποῦ  
θὰ μὲ παρασύρουν;  
Τῇ θάλασσᾳ τῇ θάλασσᾳ, ποιὸς θὰ μπορέσει νὰ τὴν ἐξαν-  
τλήσει;  
Βλέπω τὰ χέρια κάθε αὐγὴ νὰ γνέφουν στὸ γύπα καὶ στὸ  
γεράκι  
δεμένη πάνω στὸ βράχο ποὺ ἔγινε μὲ τὸν πόνο δικός μου,  
βλέπω τὰ δέντρα ποὺ ἀνασαίνουν τῇ μαύρῃ γαλήνῃ τῶν πε-  
θαμένων  
κι' ἔπειτα τὰ χαμόγελα, ποὺ δὲν προχωροῦν, τῶν ἀγαλμάτων.

In my breast the wound opens again  
 when the stars descend and become kin to my body  
 when silence falls under human footsteps.

These stones sinking into time, how far will they drag me  
 with them?

The sea, the sea, who will be able to drain it dry?\*

I see the hands beckon each dawn to the vulture and the  
 hawk

bound as I am to the rock that suffering has made mine,  
 I see the trees breathing the black serenity of the dead  
 and then the smiles, so static, of the statues.

## ΚΑ΄

Ἐμεῖς ποὺ ξεκινήσαμε γιὰ τὸ προσκύνημα τοῦτο  
κοιτάξαμε τὰ σπασμένα ἀγάλματα  
ξεχαστήκαμε καὶ εἶπαμε πὼς δὲ χάνεται ἡ ζωὴ τόσο εὐκόλα  
πὼς ἔχει ὁ θάνατος δρόμους ἀνεξερεύνητους  
καὶ μιὰ δική του δικαιοσύνη·

πὼς ὅταν ἐμεῖς ὀρθοὶ στὰ πόδια μας πεθαίνουμε  
μέσα στὴν πέτρα ἀδερφωμένοι  
ἐνωμένοι μὲ τὴ σκληρότητα καὶ τὴν ἀδυναμία,  
οἱ παλαιοὶ νεκροὶ ξεφύγαν ἀπ' τὸν κύκλο καὶ ἀναστήθηκαν  
καὶ χαμογελᾶνε μέσα σὲ μιὰ παράξενη ἡσυχία.

We who set out on this pilgrimage  
looked at the broken statues  
we forgot ourselves and said that life is not so easily lost  
that death has unexplored paths  
and its own particular justice;

that while we, still upright on our feet, are dying,  
become brothers in stone  
united in hardness and weakness,  
the ancient dead have escaped the circle and risen again  
and smile in a strange silence.

Γιατί περάσαν τόσα και τόσα μπροστά στα μάτια μας  
 πού και τὰ μάτια μας δὲν εἶδαν τίποτε, μὰ πάρα-πέρα  
 και πίσω ἡ μνήμη σὰν τὸ ἄσπρο πανὶ μιὰ νύχτα σὲ μιὰ  
 μάντρα  
 πού εἶδαμε ὁράματα παράξενα, περισσότερο κι' ἀπὸ σένα  
 νὰ περνοῦν και νὰ χάνονται μέσα στὸ ἀκίνητο φύλλωμα  
 μιᾶς πιπεριᾶς·

γιατὶ γνωρίσαμε τόσο πολὺ τούτη τὴ μοίρα μας  
 στριφογυρίζοντας μέσα σὲ σπασμένες πέτρες, τρεῖς ἢ ἔξι  
 χιλιάδες χρόνια  
 ψάχνοντας σὲ οἰκοδομὲς γκρεμισμένες πού θὰ εἶταν ἴσως τὸ  
 δικό μας σπίτι  
 προσπαθώντας νὰ θυμηθοῦμε χρονολογίες και ἡρωικὲς  
 πράξεις·  
 θὰ μπορέσουμε ;

γιατὶ δεθήκαμε και σκορπιστήκαμε  
 και παλέψαμε μὲ δυσκολίες ἀν' παρχτες ὅπως λέγαν  
 χαμένοι, ξαναβρίσκοντας ἓνα δρόμο γεμάτο τυφλὰ συντά-  
 γματα  
 βουλιάζοντας μέσα σὲ βάλτους και μέσα στὴ λίμνη τοῦ Μα-  
 ραθώνα,  
 θὰ μπορέσουμε νὰ πεθάνουμε κανονικά ;

So very much having passed before our eyes  
 that our eyes in the end saw nothing, but beyond  
 and behind was memory like the white sheet one night in  
     an enclosure

where we saw strange visions, even stranger than you,  
 pass by and vanish into the motionless foliage of a pepper-  
     tree;

having known this fate of ours so well  
 wandering among broken stones, three or six  
     thousand years  
 searching in collapsed buildings that might have been  
     our homes  
 trying to remember dates and heroic deeds:  
 will we be able?

having been bound and scattered,  
 having struggled, as they said, with non-existent difficulties  
 lost, then finding again a road full of blind regiments  
 sinking in marshes and in the lake of Marathon,  
 will we be able to die properly?

## ΚΓ'

Λίγο ακόμα  
θα ἰδοῦμε τὶς ἀμυγδαλιές ν' ἀνθίζουν  
τὰ μάρμαρα νὰ λάμπουν στὸν ἥλιο  
τὴ θάλασσα νὰ κυματίζει

λίγο ακόμα,  
νὰ σηκωθοῦμε λίγο ψηλότερα.

A little farther  
 we will see the almond trees blossoming  
 the marble gleaming in the sun  
 the sea breaking into waves

a little farther,  
 let us rise a little higher.

## ΚΔ΄

Ἐδῶ τελειώνουν τὰ ἔργα τῆς θάλασσης τὰ ἔργα τῆς ἀγάπης.  
Ἐκεῖνοι ποῦ κάποτε θὰ ζήσουν ἐδῶ ποῦ τελειώνουμε  
ἂν τύχει καὶ μαυρίσει στὴ μνήμη τους τὸ αἶμα καὶ ξεχει-  
λίσαι  
ἃς μὴ μᾶς ξεχάσουν, τὶς ἀδύναμες ψυχὲς μέσα στ' ἀσφοδί-  
λια,  
ἃς γυρίσουν πρὸς τὸ ἔρεβος τὰ κεφάλια τῶν θυμάτων :

Ἐμεῖς ποῦ τίποτε δὲν εἶχαμε θὰ τοὺς διδάξουμε τὴ γαλήνη.

Δεκέμβρης 1933 - Δεκέμβρης 1934

Here end the works of the sea, the works of love.  
 Those who will some day live here where we end—  
 should the blood happen to darken in their memory and  
     overflow—  
 let them not forget us, the weak souls among the asphodels,  
 let them turn the heads of the victims towards Erebus:\*

We who had nothing will teach them peace.

December 1933–December 1934

## ΓΥΜΝΟΠΑΙΔΙΑ

*Ἡ Θήρα γεωλογικῶς συνίσταται ἐξ ἐλαφρόπετρας καὶ πορσελάνης, ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ δ' αὐτῆς... ἐφάνησαν καὶ κατεβυθίσθησαν νῆσοι. Ὑπῆρξε κέντρον ἀρχαιοτάτης θρησκείας ἔνθα ἐτελοῦντο λυρικοὶ χοροὶ αὐστηροῦ καὶ βαρέος ρυθμοῦ καλούμενοι γυμνοπαίδια.*

ΟΔΗΓΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ

## GYMNOPAIDIA

*Santorini is geologically composed of pumice stone and china clay; in her bay, islands have appeared and disappeared. This island was once the center of a very ancient religion. The lyrical dances, with a strict and heavy rhythm, performed here were called: Gymnopaidia.*

GUIDE TO GREECE

## Α'. ΣΑΝΤΟΠΙΝΗ

Σκύψε ἂν μπορεῖς στὴ θάλασσα τὴ σκοτεινὴ ξεχνώντας  
τὸν ἥχο μιᾶς φλογέρας πάνω σὲ πόδια γυμνά  
ποὺ πάτησαν τὸν ὕπνο σου στὴν ἄλλη ζωὴ τὴ βυθισμένη.

Γράψε ἂν μπορεῖς στὸ τελευταῖο σου ὄστρακο  
τὴ μέρα τ' ὄνομα τὸν τόπο  
καὶ ρίξε το στὴ θάλασσα γιὰ νὰ βουλιάξει.

Βρεθήκαμε γυμνοὶ πάνω στὴν ἀλαφρόπετρα  
κοιτάζοντας τ' ἀναδυόμενα νησιὰ  
κοιτάζοντας τὰ κόκκινα νησιὰ νὰ βυθίζουν  
στὸν ὕπνο τους, στὸν ὕπνο μας.  
Ἐδῶ βρεθήκαμε γυμνοὶ κρατώντας  
τὴ ζυγαριὰ ποὺ βάραινε κατὰ τὸ μέρος  
τῆς ἀδικίας.

Φτέρνα τῆς δύναμης θέληση ἀνίσκιωτη λογαριασμένη  
ἀγάπη  
στὸν ἥλιο τοῦ μεσημεριοῦ σχέδια ποὺ ὠριμάζουν,  
δρόμος τῆς μοίρας μὲ τὸ χτύπημα τῆς νέας παλάμης  
στὴν ὠμοπλάτη·  
στὸν τόπο ποὺ σκορπίστηκε ποὺ δὲν ἀντέχει  
στὸν τόπο ποὺ εἴταν κάποτε δικός μας  
βουλιάζουν τὰ νησιὰ σκουριὰ καὶ στάχτη.



## I. SANTORINI

Bend if you can to the dark sea forgetting  
the sound of a flute on naked feet  
that trod your sleep in the other, the sunken life.

Write if you can on your last shell  
the day the name the place  
and fling it into the sea so that it sinks.

We found ourselves naked on the pumice stone  
watching the rising islands  
watching the red islands sink  
into their sleep, into our sleep.  
Here we found ourselves naked, holding  
the scales that tipped towards  
injustice.

Instep of power, unshadowed will, considered love,  
projects that ripen in the midday sun,  
course of fate with a young hand  
slapping the shoulder;  
in the land that was scattered, that can't resist,  
in the land that was once our land  
the islands—rust and ash—are sinking.



Βωμοὶ γκρεμισμένοι  
κι' οἱ φίλοι ξεχασμένοι  
φύλλα τῆς φοινικιάς στὴ λάσπη.

Ἄφησε τὰ χέρια σου ἂν μπορεῖς, νὰ ταξιδέψουν  
ἐδῶ στὴν κόχῃ τοῦ καιροῦ μὲ τὸ καράβι  
ποὺ ἄγγιξε τὸν ὀρίζοντα.

Ὅταν ὁ κύβος χτύπησε τὴν πλάκα  
ὅταν ἡ λόγχῃ χτύπησε τὸ θώρακα  
ὅταν τὸ μάτι γνώρισε τὸν ξένο  
καὶ στέγνωσε ἡ ἀγάπη  
μέσα σὲ τρύπιες ψυχές·  
ὅταν κοιτάξεις γύρω σου καὶ βρίσκεις  
κύκλο τὰ πόδια θερισμένα  
κύκλο τὰ χέρια πεθαμένα  
κύκλο τὰ μάτια σκοτεινά·  
ὅταν δὲ μένει πιά οὔτε νὰ διαλέξεις  
τὸ θάνατο ποὺ γύρευες δικό σου,  
ἀκούγοντας μιὰ κραυγὴ  
ἀκόμῃ καὶ τοῦ λύκου τὴν κραυγὴ,  
τὸ δίκιο σου·

Ἄφησε τὰ χέρια σου ἂν μπορεῖς νὰ ταξιδέψουν  
ξεκόλλησε ἀπ' τὸν ἄπιστο καιρὸ  
καὶ βούλιαξε,  
βουλιάζει ὅποιος σηκώνει τὶς μεγάλες πέτρες.

Altars destroyed  
and friends forgotten  
leaves of the palm tree in mud.

Let your hands go traveling if you can  
here on time's curve with the ship  
that touched the horizon.  
When the dice struck the flagstone  
when the lance struck the breast-plate  
when the eye recognized the stranger  
and love went dry  
in punctured souls;  
when looking round you see  
feet harvested everywhere  
dead hands everywhere  
eyes darkened everywhere;  
when you can't any longer choose  
even the death you wanted as your own—  
hearing a cry,  
even the wolf's cry,  
your due:  
let your hands go traveling if you can  
free yourself from unfaithful time  
and sink—  
sinks whoever raises the great stones.

## Β'. ΜΥΚΗΝΕΣ

Δός μου τὰ χέρια σου, δός μου τὰ χέρια σου, δός μου τὰ  
χέρια σου.

Εἶδα μέσα στὴ νύχτα  
τὴ μυτερὴ κορυφὴ τοῦ βουνοῦ  
εἶδα τὸν κάμπο πέρα πλημμυρισμένο  
μὲ τὸ φῶς ἐνὸς ἀφανέρωτου φεγγαριοῦ  
εἶδα, γυρίζοντας τὸ κεφάλι  
τὶς μαῦρες πέτρες συσπειρωμένες  
καὶ τὴ ζωὴ μου τεντωμένη σὰ χορδὴ  
ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος  
ἡ τελευταία στιγμή·  
τὰ χέρια μου.

Βουλιάζει ὅποιος σηκώνει τὶς μεγάλες πέτρες·  
τοῦτες τὶς πέτρες τὶς ἐσήκωσα ὅσο βάσταξα  
τοῦτες τὶς πέτρες τὶς ἀγάπησα ὅσο βάσταξα  
τοῦτες τὶς πέτρες, τὴ μοίρα μου.  
Πληγωμένος ἀπὸ τὸ δικό μου χῶμα  
τυραννισμένος ἀπὸ τὸ δικό μου πουκάμισο  
καταδικασμένος ἀπὸ τοὺς δικούς μου θεούς,  
τοῦτες τὶς πέτρες.

Ξέρω πὼς δὲν ξέρουν, ἀλλὰ ἐγὼ

## II. MYCENAE

Give me your hands, give me your hands, give me  
your hands.

I have seen in the night  
the sharp peak of the mountain,  
seen the plain beyond flooded  
with the light of an invisible moon,  
seen, turning my head,  
black stones huddled  
and my life taut as a chord  
beginning and end  
the final moment:  
my hands.

Sinks whoever raises the great stones;  
I've raised these stones as long as I was able  
I've loved these stones as long as I was able  
these stones, my fate.  
Wounded by my own soil  
tortured by my own shirt  
condemned by my own gods,  
these stones.

I know that they don't know, but I

πού ἀκολουθήσα τόσες φορές  
τὸ δρόμο ἀπ' τὸ φονιά στὸ σκοτωμένο  
ἀπὸ τὸ σκοτωμένο στὴν πληρωμὴ  
κι' ἀπὸ τὴν πληρωμὴ στὸν ἄλλο φόνο,  
ψηλαφώντας  
τὴν ἀνεξάντλητη πορφύρα  
τὸ βράδι ἐκεῖνο τοῦ γυρισμοῦ  
πού ἄρχισαν νὰ σφυρίζουν οἱ Σεμνές  
στὸ λιγοστὸ χορτάρι —  
εἶδα τὰ φίδια σταυρωτὰ μὲ τὶς ὀχιές  
πλεγμένα πάνω στὴν κακὴ γενιά  
τὴ μοίρα μας.

Φωνές ἀπὸ τὴν πέτρα ἀπὸ τὸν ὕπνο  
βαθύτερες ἐδῶ πού ὁ κόσμος σκοτεινιάζει,  
μνήμη τοῦ μόχθου ριζωμένη στὸ ρυθμὸ  
πού χτύπησε τὴ γῆς μὲ πόδια  
λησμονημένα.  
Σώματα βυθισμένα στὰ θεμέλια  
τοῦ ἄλλου καιροῦ, γυμνά. Μάτια  
προσηλωμένα προσηλωμένα, σ' ἓνα σημάδι  
πού ὅσο κι' ἂν θέλεις δὲν τὸ ξεχωρίζεις·  
ἡ ψυχὴ  
πού μάχεται γιὰ νὰ γίνει ψυχὴ σου.

Μήτε κι' ἡ σιωπὴ εἶναι πιά δική σου  
ἐδῶ πού σταματήσαν οἱ μυλόπετρες.

Ὁχτώβρης 1935

who've followed so many times  
the path from killer to victim  
from victim to punishment  
from punishment to the next murder,  
groping  
the inexhaustible purple  
that night of the return  
when the Furies began whistling  
in the meager grass—  
I've seen snakes crossed with vipers  
knotted over the evil generation  
our fate.

Voices out of the stone out of sleep  
deeper here where the world darkens,  
memory of toil rooted in the rhythm  
beaten upon the earth by feet  
forgotten.  
Bodies sunk into the foundations  
of the other time, naked. Eyes  
fixed, fixed on a point  
that you can't make out, much as you want to:  
the soul  
struggling to become your own soul.

Not even the silence is now yours  
here where the millstones have stopped turning.

October 1935

## ΤΕΤΡΑΔΙΟ ΓΥΜΝΑΣΜΑΤΩΝ

# BOOK OF EXERCISES\*

## ΔΟΣΜΕΝΑ

## POEMS GIVEN

## ΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΤΟΥ ΜΑΘΙΟΥ ΠΑΣΚΑΛΗ

Οἱ οὐρανοξύστες τῆς Νέας Ὑόρκης δὲ θὰ γνωρίσουν ποτὲ  
τὴ δροσοῦλα ποὺ κατεβαίνει στὴν Κηφισιά  
μὰ οἱ δυὸ καμινάδες ποὺ μ' ἄρεσαν στὴν ξενιτεῖά πίσω ἀπ'  
τὰ κέδρα, γυρίζουν πάλι  
σὰ βλέπω τὰ δυὸ κυπαρίσσια πάνω ἀπὸ τὴ γνώριμή σου  
τὴν ἐκκλησιὰ  
ποὺ ἔχει τοὺς κολασμένους ζωγραφιστοὺς νὰ τυραννιοῦνται  
μὲς στὴ φωτιὰ καὶ στὴν ἀθάλη.

“Ὅλο τὸ Μάρτη τὰ λαγόνια σου τὰ ὠραῖα τὰ ρήμαξαν οἱ  
ρεματισμοὶ καὶ τὸ καλοκαίρι πῆγες στὴν Αἶδηψό.  
Θεοί! πῶς ἀγωνίζεται ἡ ζωὴ γιὰ νὰ περάσει, θὰ ἔλεγες  
φουσκωμένο ποτάμι ἀπὸ τὴν τρύπα βελόνας.  
Κάνει ζέστη βαθιὰ ὥς τὴ νύχτα, τ' ἄστρα πετᾶνε σκνίπες,  
πίνω ἄγουρες γκαζόζες καὶ διψῶ.  
φεγγάρι καὶ κινηματογράφος, φαντάσματα καὶ πνιγερός  
ἀνήμεπος λιμιώνας.

Βερίνα, μᾶς ἐρήμωσε ἡ ζωὴ κι' οἱ ἀττικοὶ οὐρανοὶ κι' οἱ  
διανοούμενοι ποὺ σκαρφαλώνουν στὸ ἴδιο τοὺς κεφάλι  
καὶ τὰ τοπία ποὺ κατάντησαν νὰ παίρνουν πόζες ἀπὸ τὴν  
ξεραῖλα κι' ἀπὸ τὴν πείνα  
σὰν τοὺς νέους ποὺ ξόδεψαν ὅλη τοὺς τὴν ψυχὴ γιὰ νὰ φο-  
ρέσουν ἓνα μονογυάλι

## LETTER OF MATHIOS PASKALIS

The skyscrapers of New York will never know the coolness  
that comes down on Kifisia\*  
but when I see the two cypress trees above your familiar  
church  
with the paintings of the damned being tortured in fire and  
brimstone  
then I recall the two chimneys behind the cedars I used to  
like so much when I was abroad.

All through March rheumatism wracked your lovely loins  
and in summer you went to Aidipsos.\*  
God! what a struggle it is for life to keep going, as though  
it were a swollen river passing through the eye of a  
needle.  
Heavy heat till nightfall, the stars discharging midges, I  
myself drinking bitter lemonades and still remaining  
thirsty;  
Moon and movies, phantoms and the suffocating pestiferous  
harbors.

Verina, life has ruined us, along with the Attic skies and the  
intellectuals clambering up their own heads  
and the landscapes reduced by drought and hunger to  
posing  
like young men selling their souls in order to wear a  
monocle

σάν τὶς κοπέλες ἡλιοτρόπια ρουφώντας τὴν κορφή τους γιὰ  
νὰ γίνουν κρίνα.

Ἄργοῦν οἱ μέρες· οἱ μέρες οἱ δικές μου τριγυρίζουν μέσα  
στὰ ρολόγια καὶ ρυμουλκοῦνε τὸ λεπτοδείχτη.

Γιὰ θυμήσου σὰ στρίβαμε λαχανιασμένοι τὰ σοκάκια γιὰ  
νὰ μὴ μᾶς ξεκοιλιάσουν οἱ φάροι τῶν αὐτοκινήτων.

Ἡ σκέψη τοῦ ξένου κόσμου μᾶς κύκλωνε καὶ μᾶς στένευε  
σάν ἓνα δίχτυ

καὶ φεύγαμε μ' ἓνα λεπίδι κρυμμένο μέσα μας κι' ἔλεγες  
«ὁ Ἀρμόδιος κι' ὁ Ἀριστογείτων».

Βερίνα, σκύψε τὸ κεφάλι νὰ σὲ ἰδῶ, μὰ κι' ἂ σ' ἔβλεπα θὰ  
γύρευα νὰ κοιτάξω πιὸ πέρα.

Τί ἀξίζει ἓνας ἄνθρωπος τί θέλει καὶ πῶς θὰ δικαιολογήσει  
τὴν ὑπαρξή του στὴ δευτέρα παρουσία;

Ἄ! νὰ βρισκόμουν ξυλάρμενος χαμένος στὸν Εἰρηνι-  
κὸν Ὠκεανὸ μόνος μὲ τὴ θάλασσα καὶ τὸν ἀγέρα  
μόνος καὶ χωρὶς ἀσύρματο οὔτε δύναμη γιὰ νὰ παλέψω μὲ  
τὰ στοιχεῖα.

Κοκκιναράς, 5 Αὐγούστου 1928

like young girls sucking a sunflower to make its head lily-like.

The days go by slowly; my own days circulate among the  
clocks dragging the second hand in tow.

Remember how we used to twist breathless through the  
alleys so as not to be gutted by the headlights of cars.  
The idea of the world abroad enveloped us and gathered  
us in like a net  
and we left with a sharp knife hidden within us and you  
said "Harmodios and Aristogeiton."

Verina, lower your head so that I can see you, though even  
if I were to see you I'd want to look beyond.

What's a man's value? What does he want and how will he  
justify his existence at the Second Coming?

Ah, to find myself on a derelict ship lost in the Pacific Ocean  
alone with the sea and the wind

alone and without a wireless or strength to fight the  
elements.

Kokkinaras, 5 August 1928

## ΛΕΩΦΟΡΟΣ ΣΥΓΓΡΟΥ, 1930

Στὸ Γιώργο Θεοτοκά πού τὴν ἀνακάλυψε

Ὅταν σὲ νι ἦσει  
τὸ χαμογέλιο πού ἀνασαίνει πλάι σου, πάει νὰ σκύψει καὶ  
δὲ συγκατανεύει

ὅταν ἡ ζάλη πού σοῦ ἀπόμεινε ἀρμενίζοντας στὰ βιβλία ξε-  
κολλήσῃ ἀπὸ τὸ μυαλό σου στὶς πιπεριὲς δεξιὰ κι' ἀ-  
ριστερὰ

ὅταν ἀφήσεις τὸ πετρωμένο καράβι πού ταξιδεύει πρὸς τὸ  
βυθὸ μ' ἄρμενα συντριμμένα  
τὴν καμάρα μὲ τὰ χρυσαφικά της  
τὶς κολόνες μὲ τὴν ἔνια τους πού τὶς στενεύει

ὅταν ἀφήσεις τὰ κορμιὰ τὰ πελεκημένα ἐπίτηδες γιὰ νὰ  
μετροῦν καὶ γιὰ νὰ θησαυρίζουν  
τὴν ψυχὴ πού δὲν ἐξισώνεται, ὅ,τι καὶ νὰ κάνεις, μὲ τὴν  
ψυχὴ σου  
τὸ χέρι τοῦ φόρου  
τὸ γυναίκειο ἐκεῖνο προσωπάκι στὸ λίκνο πού λάμπει στὸν  
ἥλιο

ὅταν ἀφήσεις τὴν καρδιά σου καὶ τὴ σκέψη σου νὰ γί-  
νουν ἓνα

## SYNGROU AVENUE, 1930

To George Theotokas, who discovered it\*

When the smile  
breathing beside you conquers you, tries to submit and  
doesn't consent

when the dizziness that remains from your wandering  
among books moves from your mind to the pepper-  
trees on either side

when you leave the petrified ship traveling with broken  
rigging towards the depths  
the arch with gold decoration  
the columns whose burden makes them more narrow

when you leave behind you the bodies deliberately carved  
for counting and for hoarding riches  
the soul that, whatever you do, doesn't match your own soul  
the hand of the tax  
that small feminine face in the cradle shining in the sun

when you let your heart and your thought become one

μὲ τὸ μαυριδερὸ ποτάμι πού τεντώνει ξυλιάζει καὶ φεύγει :

Σπάσε τὸ νῆμα τῆς Ἀριάδνης καὶ νά !

Τὸ γαλάζιο κορμὶ τῆς γοργόνας.

with the blackish river that stretches, stiffens and goes away:  
Break Ariadne's thread and look!  
The blue body of the mermaid.

## ΠΑΝΩ Σ' ΕΝΑΝ ΞΕΝΟ ΣΤΙΧΟ

Στην Ἑλλη, Χριστούγεννα 1931

Εὐτυχισμένος πού ἔκανε τὸ ταξίδι τοῦ Ὀδυσσέα.

Εὐτυχισμένος ἂν στὸ ξεκίνημα, ἔνιωθε γερή τὴν ἄρματωσιὰ  
μιᾶς ἀγάπης, ἀπλωμένη μέσα στὸ κορμί του, σὰν τὶς  
φλέβες ὅπου βουίζει τὸ αἷμα.

Μιᾶς ἀγάπης μὲ ἀκατέλυτο ρυθμό, ἀκατανίκητης σὰν τὴ  
μουσικὴ καὶ παντοτινῆς

γιατὶ γεννήθηκε ὅταν γεννηθήκαμε καὶ σὰν πεθαίνουμε, ἂν  
πεθαίνει, δὲν τὸ ξέρουμε οὔτε ἐμεῖς οὔτε ἄλλος κανεὶς.

Παρακαλῶ τὸ θεὸ νὰ μὲ συντρέξει νὰ πῶ, σὲ μιὰ στιγμή  
μεγάλης εὐδαιμονίας, ποιά εἶναι αὐτὴ ἡ ἀγάπη·

κάθομαι κάποτε τριγυρισμένος ἀπὸ τὴν ξενιτεία, κι' ἀκούω  
τὸ μακρινὸ βούισμά της, σὰν τὸν ἄχὸ τῆς θάλασσας  
πού ἔσμιξε μὲ τὸ ἀνεξήγητο δρολάπι.

Καὶ παρουσιάζεται μπροστά μου, πάλι καὶ πάλι, τὸ φάν-  
τασμα τοῦ Ὀδυσσέα, μὲ μάτια κοκκινισμένα ἀπὸ τοῦ  
κυμάτου τὴν ἄρμύρα

κι' ἀπὸ τὸ μεστωμένο πόθο νὰ ξαναδεῖ τὸν καπνὸ πού βγαί-  
νει ἀπὸ τὴ ζεστασιὰ τοῦ σπιτιοῦ του καὶ τὸ σκυλί του  
πού γέρασε προσμένοντας στὴ θύρα.

## REFLECTIONS ON A FOREIGN LINE OF VERSE

For Elli, Christmas 1931

Fortunate he who's made the voyage of Odysseus.\*  
Fortunate if on setting out he's felt the rigging of a love  
strong in his body, spreading there like veins where  
the blood throbs.

A love of indissoluble rhythm, unconquerable like music  
and endless  
because it was born when we were born and when we die  
whether it dies too neither we know nor does anyone  
else.

I ask God to help me say, at some moment of great happiness,  
what that love is;  
sometimes when I sit surrounded by exile I hear its distant  
murmur like the sound of sea struck by an inexplicable  
hurricane.

And again and again the shade of Odysseus appears before  
me, his eyes red from the waves' salt,  
from his ripe longing to see once more the smoke ascending  
from his warm hearth and the dog grown old  
waiting by the door.

Στέκεται μεγάλος, ψιθυρίζοντας ανάμεσα στ' άσπρισμένα  
του γένεια, λόγια τῆς γλώσσας μας, ὅπως τῇ μιλούσαν  
πρὶν τρεῖς χιλιάδες χρόνια.

Ἄπλώνει μιὰ παλάμη ροζιασμένη ἀπὸ τὰ σκοινιά καὶ τὸ  
δοιάκι, μὲ δέρμα δουλεμένο ἀπὸ τὸ ξεροβόρι ἀπὸ τὴν  
κάψα κι' ἀπὸ τὰ χιόνια.

Θά 'λεγες πὼς θέλει νὰ διώξει τὸν ὑπεράνθρωπο Κύκλωπα  
ποὺ βλέπει μ' ἓνα μάτι, τὶς Σειρῆνες ποὺ σὰν τὶς ἀ-  
κούσεις ξεχνᾷς, τῇ Σκύλλα καὶ τῇ Χάρυβδι ἀπ' ἀνά-  
μεσό μας·

τόσα περίπλοκα τέρατα, ποὺ δὲ μᾶς ἀφήνουν νὰ στοχαστοῦ-  
με, πὼς εἴταν κι' αὐτὸς ἓνας ἄνθρωπος ποὺ πάλεψε μέ-  
σα στὸν κόσμο, μὲ τὴν ψυχὴ καὶ μὲ τὸ σῶμα.

Εἶναι ὁ μεγάλος Ὀδυσσεύς· ἐκεῖνος ποὺ εἶπε νὰ γίνηι τὸ  
ξύλινο ἄλογο καὶ οἱ Ἀχαιοὶ κερδίσανε τὴν Τροία.

Φαντάζομαι πὼς ἔρχεται νὰ μ' ἀρμηνέψει πὼς νὰ φτιάξω  
κι' ἐγὼ ἓνα ξύλινο ἄλογο γιὰ νὰ κερδίσω τὴ δική μου  
Τροία.

Γιατὶ μιᾷ ταπεινᾷ καὶ μὲ γαλήνη, χωρὶς προσπάθεια, λὲς  
μὲ γνωρίζει σὰν πατέρα

εἶτε σὰν κάτι γέρους θαλασσινοὺς, ποὺ ἀκουμπισμένοι στὰ  
δίχτυα τους, τὴν ὥρα ποὺ χειμώνιαζε καὶ θύμωνε ὁ  
ἀγέρας,

μοῦ λέγανε, στὰ παιδικά μου χρόνια, τὸ τραγούδι τοῦ Ἑ-  
ρωτόκριτου μὲ τὰ δάκρυα στὰ μάτια·

A large man, whispering through his whitened beard words  
in our language spoken as it was three thousand years  
ago.

He extends a palm calloused by the ropes and the tiller, his  
skin weathered by the dry north wind, by heat and  
snow.

It's as if he wants to expel from among us the superhuman  
one-eyed Cyclops, the Sirens who make you forget  
with their song, Scylla and Charybdis:

so many complex monsters that prevent us from remembering  
that he too was a man struggling in the world with  
soul and body.

He is the mighty Odysseus: he who proposed the wooden  
horse with which the Achaeans captured Troy.

I imagine he's coming to tell me how I too may build a  
wooden horse to capture my own Troy.

Because he speaks humbly and calmly, without effort, as  
though he were my father

or certain old sailors of my childhood who, leaning on their  
nets with winter coming on and the wind raging,

used to recite, with tears in their eyes, the song of Erotocri-  
tos;\*

τότες πού τρόμαζα μέσα στὸν ύπνο μου ἀκούγοντας τὴν ἀν-  
τίδικη μοίρα τῆς Ἀρετῆς νὰ κατεβαίνει τὰ μαρμαρέ-  
νια σκαλοπάτια.

Μοῦ λέει τὸ δύσκολο πόνο νὰ νιώθεις τὰ πανιὰ τοῦ καρα-  
βιοῦ σου φουσκωμένα ἀπὸ τὴ θύμηση καὶ τὴν ψυχὴ  
σου νὰ γίνεται τιμόνι.

Καὶ νὰ 'σαι μόνος, σκοτεινὸς μέσα στὴ νύχτα καὶ ἀκυβέρ-  
νητος σὰν τ' ἄχερο στ' ἁλώνι.

Τὴν πίκρα νὰ βλέπεις τοὺς συντρόφους σου καταποντισμέ-  
νους μέσα στὰ στοιχεῖα, σκορπισμένους: ἕναν-έναν.

Καὶ πόσο παράξενα ἀντρειεύεσαι μιλώνοντας μὲ τοὺς πεθαμέ-  
νους, ὅταν δὲ φτάνουν πιά οἱ ζωντανοὶ πού σοῦ ἀπο-  
μέναν.

Μιλᾷ... βλέπω ἀκόμη τὰ χέρια του πού ξέραν νὰ δοκιμά-  
σουν ἂν εἴταν καλὰ σκαλισμένη στὴν πλώρη ἢ γοργόνα  
νὰ μοῦ χαρίζουν τὴν ἀκύμαντη γαλάζια θάλασσα μέσα στὴν  
καρδιά τοῦ χειμῶνα.

it was then I would shudder in my sleep at the unjust fate  
of Aretousa descending the marble steps.

He tells me of the harsh pain you feel when the ship's sails  
swell with memory and your soul becomes a rudder;  
of being alone, dark in the night, and helpless as chaff on  
the threshing floor;

of the bitterness of seeing your companions one by one  
pulled down into the elements and scattered;  
and of how strangely you gain strength conversing with the  
dead when the living who remain are no longer  
enough.

He speaks . . . I still see his hands that knew how to judge  
the carving of the mermaid at the prow  
presenting me the waveless blue sea in the heart of winter.

ΔΕΚΑΕΞΙ ΧΑ·Ι· - ΚΑ·Ι·

*Τοῦτο τὸ ἀκαριαῖον...*

ΜΑΡΚΟΣ ΑΥΡΗΛΙΟΣ

Α΄

Στάξε στὴ λίμνη  
μόνο μιὰ στάλα κρασι̇  
καὶ σβήνει ὁ ἥλιος.

Β΄

Στὸν κάμπο οὐτ' ἓνα  
τετράφυλλο τριφύλλι·  
ποιὸς φταίει ἀπ' τοὺς τρεῖς;

Γ΄

*Στὸν κήπο τοῦ Μουσείου*

ᾠ Αἰεὶς καρέκλες  
τ' ἀγάλματα γυρίσαν  
στ' ἄλλο μουσεῖο.

Δ΄

Νά 'ναι ἡ φωνὴ  
πεθαμένων φίλων μας  
ἡ φωνογράφος;

## SIXTEEN HAIKU

Τοῦτο τὸ ἀκαριαῖον . . .

MARCUS AURELIUS\*

1

Spill into the lake  
but a drop of wine  
and the sun vanishes.

2

In the field not one  
fourleaf clover:  
which of the three's to blame?

3

*In the Museum garden*

Empty chairs:  
the statues have gone back  
to the other museum.

4

Is it the voice  
of our dead friends or  
the gramophone?

Ε΄

Τὰ δάχτυλά της  
στοὶ θαλασσὶ μαντήλι  
κοίτα: κοράλλια.

Ζ΄

Συλλογισμένο  
τὸ στῆθος της βαρὺ  
μέσ στον καθρέφτη.

Ζ΄

Φόρεσα πάλι  
τῇ φυλλωσιὰ τοῦ δέντρου  
κι' ἐσὺ βελάζεις.

Η΄

Νύχτα, ὁ ἀγέρας  
ὁ χωρισμὸς ἀπλώνει  
καὶ κυματίζει.

5

Her fingers  
against the blue scarf—  
look: corals.

6

Meditative  
her breasts heavy  
in the looking-glass.

7

Again I put on  
the tree's foliage  
and you—you bleat.

8

Night, the wind  
separation  
spreads and undulates.

Θ'

*Νέα Μοίρα*

Γυμνή γυναίκα  
τὸ ρόδι πού ἔσπασε εἴταν  
γεμάτο ἀστέρια.

Ι'

Τώρα σηκώνω  
μιὰ νεκρὴ πεταλούδα  
χωρὶς φτιασίδι.

ΙΑ'

Ποῦ νὰ μαζεύεις  
τὰ χίλια κομματάκια  
τοῦ κάθε ἀνθρώπου.

ΙΒ'

*Ἄγονος γραμμὴ*

Τὸ δοιάκι τί ἔχει ;  
Ἡ βάρκα γράφει κύκλους  
κι' οὔτε ἓνας γλᾶρος.

*Young Fate*

Naked woman  
 the pomegranate that broke  
 was full of stars.

## 10

Now I raise  
 a dead butterfly  
 without make-up.

## 11

How can you gather together  
 the thousand fragments  
 of each person?

## 12

*Unprofitable line*

What's wrong with the rudder?  
 The boat inscribes circles  
 and there's not a single gull.

## ΙΓ'

*Ἄρρωστη Ἑρινός*

Δὲν ἔχει μάτια  
τὰ φίδια ποὺ κρατοῦσε  
τῆς τρῶν τὰ χέρια.

## ΙΔ'

Τούτη ἡ κολόνα  
ἔχει μιὰ τρύπα, βλέπεις  
τὴν Περσεφόνη;

## ΙΕ'

Βουλιάζει ὁ κόσμος  
κρατήσου, θὰ σ' ἀφήσει  
μόνο στὸν ἥλιο.

## ΙΓ'

Γράφεις·  
τὸ μελάνι λιγότεψε  
ἢ θάλασσα πληθαίνει.

13

*Sick Fury*

She has no eyes,  
the snakes she held  
devour her hands.

14

This column has a hole:  
can you see  
Persephone?

15

The world sinks:  
hang on, it'll leave you  
alone in the sun.

16

You write:  
the ink grew less,  
the sea increases.

Τοῦτο τὸ σῶμα ποὺ ἔλπιζε σὰν τὸ κλωνὶ ν' ἀνθίσει  
καὶ νὰ καρπίσει καὶ στὴν παγωνιά νὰ γίνῃ αὐλὸς  
ἢ φαντασία τὸ βύθισε σ' ἓνα βουερὸ μελίσσι  
γιὰ νὰ περνᾷ καὶ νὰ τὸ βασανίζει ὁ μουσικὸς καιρὸς.

This body that hoped to flower like a branch,  
to bear fruit, to become a flute in the frost—  
imagination has thrust it into a noisy bee-hive  
so that musical time may come and torture it.

## ΦΥΓΗ

Δέν εἴταν ἄλλη ἡ ἀγάπη μας  
ἔφευγε ξαναγύριζε καὶ μᾶς ἔφερνε  
ἓνα χαμηλωμένο βλέφαρο πολὺ μακρινὸ  
ἓνα χαμόγελο μαρμαρωμένο, χαμένο  
μέσα στὸ πρωινὸ χορτάρι  
ἓνα παράξενο κοχύλι ποὺ δοκίμαζε  
νὰ τὸ ἐξηγήσει ἐπίμονα ἡ ψυχὴ μας.

Ἡ ἀγάπη μας δέν εἴταν ἄλλη ψηλαφοῦσε  
σιγὰ μέσα στὰ πράγματα ποὺ μᾶς τριγύριζαν  
νὰ ἐξηγήσει γιατί δὲ θέλουμε νὰ πεθάνουμε  
μὲ τόσο πάθος.

Κι' ἂν κρατηθήκαμε ἀπὸ λαγόνια κι' ἂν ἀγκαλιάσαμε  
μ' ὅλη τὴ δύναμή μας ἄλλους αὐχένες  
κι' ἂν σμίξαμε τὴν ἀνάσα μας μὲ τὴν ἀνάσα  
ἐκείνου τοῦ ἀνθρώπου  
κι' ἂν κλείσαμε τὰ μάτια μας, δέν εἴταν ἄλλη  
μονάχα αὐτὸς ὁ βαθύτερος καημὸς νὰ κρατηθοῦμε  
μέσα στὴ φυγή.

## FLIGHT

Our love was not other than this:  
it left came back and brought us  
a distant eyelid lowered far away  
a stony smile, lost  
in the dawn grass  
a strange shell our soul  
insistently tried to explain.

Our love was not other than this: it groped  
silently among the things around us  
to explain why we don't want to die  
so passionately.

And if we've held on by the loins, clasped  
other necks as tightly as we could,  
mingled our breath with the breath  
of that person  
if we've closed our eyes, it was not other than this:  
simply that deep longing to hang on  
in our flight.

## ΠΕΡΙΓΡΑΦΗ

Πλησιάζει με τὰ θολά της μάτια ἐκεῖνο τὸ ἀνάγλυφο χέρι  
τὸ χέρι ποὺ κράτησε τὸ δοιάκι  
τὸ χέρι ποὺ κράτησε τὴν πένα  
τὸ χέρι ποὺ ἀπλώθηκε στὸν ἄνεμο,  
ὅλα τὴν ἀπειλοῦν τὴ σιωπὴ της.

Ἀπὸ τὰ πεῦκα μιὰ κίνηση τρέχει πρὸς τὴ θάλασσα  
παίζει μετὰ τὴν ταπεινὴ πνοὴ τοῦ ἀγέρα  
καὶ τὴν ἀναχαιτίζουν οἱ δυὸ μαῦρες Συμπληγάδες.  
Ἄνοιξα τὴν καρδιά μου κι' ἀνάσανα!  
Στὸ πέλαγο ἀνατρίχιαζε τὸ χρυσὸ δέρας.  
Δικό της τὸ χρῶμα τὸ ρίγος καὶ τὸ δέρμα  
δικές της οἱ κορυφογραμμὲς στὸν ὀρίζοντα στὴν παλάμη  
μου.  
Ἄνοιξα τὴν καρδιά μου  
γεμάτη εἰκόνες ποὺ ἔσβησαν κιόλας, τὸ σπέρμα τοῦ  
Πρωτέα.

Ἐδῶ κοίταξα τὸ φεγγάρι  
βαμμένο στὸ αἶμα  
τῆς νέας λύκαινας.

Σπέτσες, Αὐγούστος 1934

## DESCRIPTION

She draws near with her clouded eyes, that sculptured hand  
the hand that held the tiller  
the hand that held the pen  
the hand that opened in the wind,  
everything threatens her silence.

A ripple runs from the pine-trees towards the sea  
plays with the breeze's humble breath  
and is checked by the two black Symplegades.\*  
I opened my heart and breathed deeply!  
The golden fleece shivered on the sea.  
Hers the color the shudder and the skin  
hers the mountain-ridges on the horizon of my palm.  
I opened my heart  
full of images that vanished at once, the seed of Proteus.

Here I gazed at the moon  
dyed in the blood  
of a young she-wolf.

Spetses, August 1934

## ΣΙΡΟΚΟ 7 ΛΕΒΑΝΤΕ

Στὸν Δ. Ι. Ἀντωνίου

Πράγματα ποὺ ἀλλάξαν τὴ μορφὴ μας  
βαθύτερα ἀπ' τὴ σκέψη καὶ περισσότερο  
δικὰ μας ὅπως τὸ αἶμα καὶ περισσότερο  
βυθίσανε στὴν κάψα τοῦ μεσημεριοῦ  
πίσω ἀπὸ τὰ κατάρτια.

Μέσα στὶς ἀλυσίδες καὶ στὶς προσταγές  
κανεῖς δὲ θυμᾶται.

Οἱ ἄλλες μέρες οἱ ἄλλες νύχτες  
σώματα, πόνος καὶ ἡδονὴ  
ἢ πίκρα τῆς ἀνθρώπινης γύμνιας κομματιασμένη  
πιὸ χαμηλὴ κι' ἀπὸ τὶς πιπεριές σὲ σκονισμένους δρόμους  
καὶ τόσες γοητεῖες καὶ τόσα σύμβολα  
στὸ τελευταῖο κλωνάρι·  
στὸν ἴσκιο τοῦ μεγάλου караβιοῦ  
ἴσκιος ἢ μνήμη.

Τὰ χέρια ποὺ μᾶς ἄγγιξαν δὲ μᾶς ἀνέκουν, μόνο  
βαθύτερα, ὅταν σκοτεινιάζουν τὰ τριαντάφυλλα  
ἓνας ρυθμὸς στὸν ἴσκιο τοῦ βουνοῦ, τριζόνια  
νοτίζει τὴ σιωπὴ μας μὲς στὴ νύχτα

## SIROCCO 7 LEVANTE

For D. I. Antoniou\*

Things that changed our shape  
deeper than thought and more so  
our own like blood and more so  
sank into the midday heat  
behind the masts.

Among chains and commands  
no one remembers.

Other days other nights  
bodies, pain and pleasure  
the bitterness of human nakedness shattered  
lower even than the pepper-trees along dusty roads  
and so many charms and so many symbols  
on the final branch;  
in the shade of the big ship  
memory's a shade.

The hands that touched us don't belong to us, only  
deeper, when the roses darken,  
a rhythm in the mountain's shadow—crickets—  
moistens our silence in the night

γυρεύοντας τὸν ὕπνο τοῦ πελάγου  
γλιστρώντας πρὸς τὸν ὕπνο τοῦ πελάγου.

Στὸν ἴσκιο τοῦ μεγάλου καραβιοῦ  
τὴν ὥρα ποὺ σφύριξε ὁ ἐργάτης  
ἄφησα τὴ στοργὴ στοὺς ἀργυραμοιβούς.

Πήλιο, 19 Αὐγούστου 1935

seeking the sea's sleep  
slipping towards the sea's sleep.

In the shade of the big ship  
as the capstan whistled  
I abandoned tenderness to the money-changers.

Pelion, 19 August 1935

## ΜΕ ΤΟΝ ΤΡΟΠΟ ΤΟΥ Γ. Σ.

“Οπου καὶ νὰ ταξιδέψω ἢ Ἑλλάδα μὲ πληγώνει.

Στὸ Πήλιο μέσα στὶς καστανιές τὸ πουκάμισο τοῦ Κεν-  
ταύρου

γλιστροῦσε μέσα στὰ φύλλα γιὰ νὰ τυλιχτεῖ στὸ κορμί  
μου

καθὼς ἀνέβαινα τὴν ἀνηφόρα κι’ ἡ θάλασσα μ’ ἀκολου-  
θοῦσε

ἀνεβαίνοντας κι’ αὐτὴ σὰν τὸν ὑδράργυρο θερμομέτρου  
ὥς πὺ νὰ βροῦμε τὰ νερά τοῦ βουνοῦ.

Στὴ Σαντορίνη ἀγγίζοντας νησιὰ πὺ βουλιάζαν  
ἀκούγοντας νὰ παίζει ἓνα σουραύλι κάπου στὶς ἀλαφρόπε-  
τρες

μοῦ κάρφωσε τὸ χέρι στὴν κουπαστὴ

μιὰ σαῖτα τιναγμένη ξαφνικά

ἀπὸ τὰ πέρατα μιᾶς νιότης βασιλεμένης.

Στὶς Μυκῆνες σήκωσα τὶς μεγάλες πέτρες καὶ τοὺς θη-  
σαυροὺς τῶν Ἀτρειδῶν

καὶ πλάγιασα μαζί τους στὸ ξενοδοχεῖο τῆς «Ὠραίας  
Ἑλένης τοῦ Μενελάου»

χάθηκαν μόνο τὴν αὐγὴ πὺ λάλησε ἡ Κασσάντρα  
μ’ ἓναν κόκορα κρεμασμένο στὸ μαῦρο λαιμό της.

Στὶς Σπέτσες στὸν Πόρο καὶ στὴ Μύκονο  
μὲ χτίκιασαν οἱ βαρκαρόλες.



IN THE MANNER OF G. S.

Wherever I travel Greece wounds me.

On Pelion among the chestnut trees the Centaur's shirt\*  
slipped through the leaves to fold around my body  
as I climbed the slope and the sea came after me  
climbing too like mercury in a thermometer  
till we found the mountain waters.

On Santorini touching islands that were sinking\*  
hearing a pipe play somewhere on the pumice stone  
my hand was nailed to the gunwale  
by an arrow shot suddenly  
from the confines of a vanished youth.

At Mycenae I raised the great stones and the treasures of  
the house of Atreus

and slept with them at the hotel "Belle Hélène";  
they disappeared only at dawn when Cassandra crowed,  
a cock hanging from her black throat.

On Spetses, Poros, and Mykonos\*  
the barcaroles sickened me.



Τί θέλουν ὅλοι αὐτοὶ ποὺ λένε  
πὼς βρίσκονται στὴν Ἀθήνα ἢ στὸν Πειραιᾶ;  
Ὁ ἓνας ἔρχεται ἀπὸ τὴ Σαλαμίνα καὶ ρωτᾷ τὸν ἄλλο μή-  
πως «ἔρχεται ἐξ Ὀμονοίας»  
«Ὁχι ἔρχομαι ἐκ Συντάγματος» ἀπαντᾷ κι' εἶν' εὐχαρι-  
στημένος  
«βρήκα τὸ Γιάννη καὶ μὲ κέρασε ἓνα παγωτό».  
Στὸ μεταξὺ ἡ Ἑλλάδα ταξιδεύει  
δὲν ξέρουμε τίποτε δὲν ξέρουμε πὼς εἴμαστε ξέμπαρκοι  
ὅλοι ἐμεῖς  
δὲν ξέρουμε τὴν πίκρα τοῦ λιμανιοῦ σὰν ταξιδεύουν ὅλα τὰ  
καράβια·  
περιγελᾶμε ἐκείνους ποὺ τὴ νιώθουν.

Παράξενος κόσμος ποὺ λέει πὼς βρίσκεται στὴν Ἀττικὴ  
καὶ δὲ βρίσκεται πουθενά·  
ἀγοράζουν κουφέτα γιὰ νὰ παντρευτοῦνε  
κρατοῦν «σωσίτριχα» φωτογραφίζονται  
ὁ ἄνθρωπος ποὺ εἶδα σήμερα καθισμένος σ' ἓνα φόντο μὲ  
πιτσούνια καὶ μὲ λουλούδια  
δέχονταν τὸ χέρι τοῦ γέρο φωτογράφου νὰ τοῦ στρώνει  
τὶς ρυτίδες  
ποὺ εἶχαν ἀφήσει στὸ πρόσωπό του  
ὅλα τὰ πετεινὰ τ' οὐρανοῦ.

Στὸ μεταξὺ ἡ Ἑλλάδα ταξιδεύει ὁλοένα ταξιδεύει  
κι' ἂν «ὀρῶμεν ἀνθοῦν πέλαγος Αἰγαῖον νεκροῖς»

What do they want, all those who believe  
they're in Athens or Piraeus?  
Someone comes from Salamis and asks someone else whether  
    he comes "from Omonia Square?"  
"No, from Syntagma," replies the other; pleased; \*  
"I met Yianni and he treated me to an ice cream."  
In the meantime Greece is traveling  
and we don't know anything, we don't know we're all sailors  
    out of work,  
we don't know how bitter the port becomes when all the  
    ships have gone;  
we mock those who do know.

Strange people! they say they're in Attica but they're really  
    nowhere;  
they buy sugared almonds to get married  
they carry hair tonic, have their photographs taken  
the man I saw today sitting against a background of pigeons  
    and flowers  
let the hands of the old photographer smoothe away the  
    wrinkles  
left on his face  
by all the birds in the sky.

Meanwhile Greece goes on traveling, always traveling  
and if we see "the Aegean flower with corpses"\*

εἶναι ἐκεῖνοι ποὺ θέλησαν νὰ πιάσουν τὸ μεγάλο καράβι μὲ  
τὸ κολύμπι  
ἐκεῖνοι ποὺ βαρέθηκαν νὰ περιμένουν τὰ καράβια ποὺ δὲν  
μποροῦν νὰ κινήσουν  
τὴν ΕΛΣΗ τὴ ΣΑΜΟΘΡΑΚΗ τὸν ΑΜΒΡΑΚΙΚΟ.  
Σφυρίζουν τὰ καράβια τώρα ποὺ βραδιάζει στὸν Πειραιᾶ  
σφυρίζουν ὁλοένα σφυρίζουν μὰ δὲν κουνιέται κανένας ἄρ-  
γάτης  
καμμιὰ ἀλυσίδα δὲν ἔλαμψε βρεμένη στὸ στερνὸ φῶς ποὺ  
βασιλεύει  
ὁ καπετάνιος μένει μαρμαρωμένος μὲς στ' ἄσπρα καὶ στὰ  
χρυσά.

“Ὅπου καὶ νὰ ταξιδέψω ἢ Ἑλλάδα μὲ πληγώνει·  
παραπετάσματα βουνῶν ἀρχιπέλαγα γυμνοὶ γρανίτες...  
Τὸ καράβι ποὺ ταξιδεύει τὸ λένε ΑΓ ΩΝΙΑ 937.

Ἄ/π *Αὔλις*, περιμένοντας νὰ ξεκινήσει.  
Καλοκαίρι 1936

it will be with those who tried to catch the big ship by  
swimming after it  
those who got tired waiting for the ships that cannot move  
the ELSI, the SAMOTHRAKI, the AMVRAKIKOS.  
The ships hoot now that dusk falls on Piraeus,  
hoot and hoot, but no capstan moves,  
no chain gleams wet in the vanishing light,  
the captain stands like a stone in white and gold.

Wherever I travel Greece wounds me,  
curtains of mountains, archipelagos, naked granite.  
They call the one ship that sails AG ONIA 937.

M/S *Aulis*, waiting to sail. Summer 1936

## Ο ΓΕΡΟΣ

Πέρασαν τόσα κοπάδια τόσοι φτωχοὶ  
καὶ πλούσιοι καβαλάρηδες, ἄλλοι  
ἀπὸ τὰ μακρινὰ χωριὰ εἶχαν μείνει  
τῇ νύχτᾳ στὰ χαντάκια τῆς δημοσιᾶς  
ἀναψαν φωτιὲς γιὰ τοὺς λύκους, βλέπεις  
τῇ στάχτῃ; Μαυριδεροὶ κύκλοι ἐπουλωμένοι.  
Εἶναι γεμάτος σημάδια σὰν τὸ δρόμο.  
Στὸ ξεροπήγαδο πιὸ πάνω ρίχναν τὰ λυσσασμένα  
σκυλιά, δὲν ἔχει μάτια εἶναι γεμάτος  
σημάδια κι' ἀλαφρύς· φυσᾷ ὁ ἀγέρας·  
δὲν ξεχωρίζει τίποτε ξέρει τὰ πάντα,  
ἄδειο θηκάρι τζιτζικα σὲ κούφιο δέντρο  
δὲν ἔχει μάτια μήτε στὰ χέρια, ξέρει  
τὴν αὐγὴ καὶ τὸ δείλι ξέρει τ' ἀστέρια  
τὸ αἶμα τους δὲν τὸν θρέφει, μήτε νεκρὸς  
δὲν εἶναι, δὲν ἔχει φυλὴ δὲ θά πεθάνει  
θὰ τὸν ξεχάσουν ἔτσι, μήτε πρόγονος.  
Τὰ κουρασμένα νύχια στὰ δάχτυλά του  
γράφουν σταυροὺς πάνω σὲ σάπιες θύμησες  
καθὼς φυσᾷ ὁ ἀγέρας θολός. Χιονίζει.

Εἶδα τὴν πάχνη γύρω στὰ πρόσωπα  
εἶδα τὰ χεῖλια ὕγρα τὰ δάκρυα παγωμένα  
στὴν κόχῃ τοῦ ματιοῦ, εἶδα τὴ γραμμὴ

## THE OLD MAN

So many flocks have passed so many poor  
and rich riders, some  
from distant villages had spent  
the night in road-side ditches  
lighting fires against the wolves: do you see  
the ashes? Blackish circles cicatrized.  
He's full of marks like the road.  
In the dry well above they'd thrown the rabid  
dogs. He's got no eyes, he's full  
of marks, he's light; the wind blows;  
he distinguishes nothing, knows everything,  
empty sheath of a cicada on a hollow tree.  
He's got no eyes, not even in his hands, he knows  
dawn and dusk, knows the stars,  
their blood doesn't nourish him, nor is  
he dead, he has no race, he won't die,  
they'll simply forget him, he has no ancestors.  
His tired fingernails  
inscribe crosses on decayed memories  
while the wind blows darkly. It snows.

I saw the hoarfrost around the faces  
I saw the lips wet, tears frozen  
in the corner of the eye, I saw the line

τοῦ πόνου πλάι στὰ ρουθούνια καὶ τὴν προσπάθεια  
 στὶς ρίζες τοῦ χεριοῦ, εἶδα τὸ σῶμα νὰ τελειώνει.  
 Δὲν εἶναι μόνος ὁ ἴσκιος αὐτοῦς δεμένος  
 σ' ἓνα στεγνὸ ραβδὶ ποὺ δὲ λυγίζει  
 δὲ σκύβει νὰ πλαγιάσει, δὲν μπορεῖ·  
 ὁ ὕπνος θὰ σκόρπιζε τὶς κλείδωσές του  
 στὰ χέρια τῶν παιδιῶν νὰ παίζουν.  
 Προστάζει σὰν τοὺς πεθαμένους κλώνους  
 ποὺ σπᾶνε ὅταν νυχτώνει καὶ ξυπνᾷ  
 ὁ ἀγέρας μὲς σ' τὶς λαγκαδιές  
 προστάζει τοὺς ἴσκιους τῶν ἀνθρώπων  
 ὅχι τὸν ἄνθρωπο μέσα στὸν ἴσκιο  
 ποὺ δὲν ἀκούει παρὰ τὴ χαμηλὴ φωνή  
 τῆς γῆς καὶ τοῦ πελάγου ἐκεῖ ποὺ σμίγουν  
 τῆς μοίρας τὴ φωνή. Στέκεται ὁλόρθος  
 στὴν ὄχθη, μέσα σὲ κουβάρια κόκκαλα  
 μέσα σὲ στίβες κίτρινα φύλλα :  
 ἄδειο κλουβὶ προσμένοντας  
 τὴν ὥρα τῆς φωτιᾶς.

Ντρένοβο, Φλεβάρης 1937

of pain by the nostrils and the effort  
at the roots of the hand, I saw the body come to an end.  
He isn't alone, this shadow  
bound to a dry inflexible stick  
he doesn't bend to lie down, he can't:  
sleep will have scattered his joints  
as playthings into the hands of children.  
He commands like dead branches  
that break when night comes and the wind  
wakes in the ravines  
he commands the shades of men  
not the man in the shadow  
who hears nothing but the low voices  
of earth and sea there where they mix  
with the voice of destiny. He stands upright  
on the bank, among piles of bones  
among heaps of yellow leaves:  
empty cage that waits  
for the hour of fire.

Drenovo, February 1937

Ο κ. ΣΤΡΑΤΗΣ ΘΑΛΑΣΣΙΝΟΣ

*Κι' έτοιμαζότουν να φωνάξει δυνατά για να δείξει πώς  
δέν πέθανε.*

ΣΟΛΩΜΟΣ, Η ΓΥΝΑΙΚΑ ΤΗΣ ΖΑΚΥΘΟΣ

MR. STRATIS THALASSINOS\*

*And he was preparing to cry out to show that he  
wasn't dead.*

SOLOMOS, *THE WOMAN OF ZAKYNTHOS*

## ΠΕΝΤΕ ΠΟΙΗΜΑΤΑ ΤΟΥ κ. Σ. ΘΑΛΑΣΣΙΝΟΥ

### Α΄. HAMPSTEAD

Σάν ένα πουλί με σπασμένη φτερούγα  
πού θά 'χε χρόνια μέσα στὸν ἀγέρα ταξιδέψει  
σάν ένα πουλί πού δὲν μπόρεσε νὰ βαστάξει  
τὸν ἀγέρα καὶ τὴ φουρτούνα  
πέφτει τὸ βράδι.  
Πάνω στὸ πράσινο χορτάρι  
εἶχαν χορέψει ὅλη τὴ μέρα τρεῖς χιλιάδες ἀγγέλοι  
γυμνοὶ σὰν ἀτσάλι  
πέφτει τὸ βράδι χλομό·  
οἱ τρεῖς χιλιάδες ἀγγέλοι  
μαζέψαν τὰ φτερά τους καὶ γενήκαν  
ένα σκυλί  
ξεχασμένο  
πού γαυγίζει  
μοναχὸ  
καὶ γυρεύει τὸν ἀφέντη του  
ἢ τὴ δευτέρα παρουσία  
ἢ ένα κόκκαλο.  
Τώρα γυρεύω λίγη ἡσυχία  
θὰ μοῦ 'φτανε μιὰ καλύβα σ' ένα λόφο  
ἢ σὲ μιὰ ἀκρογιαλιά  
θὰ μοῦ 'φτανε μπροστὰ στὸ παράθυρό μου

## FIVE POEMS BY MR. S. THALASSINOS

### I. HAMPSTEAD

Like a bird with broken wing  
that had traveled through wind for years  
like a bird unable to endure  
tempest and wind  
the evening falls.  
On the green grass  
three thousand angels had danced the day long  
naked as steel  
the pale evening falls;  
the three thousand angels  
gathered in their wings, became  
a dog  
forgotten  
that barks  
alone  
and searches for its master  
or the Second Coming  
or a bone.  
Now I long for a little quiet  
all I want is a hut on a hill  
or near a seashore  
all I want in front of my window

Ένα σεντόνι βουτηγμένο στο λουλάκι  
άπλωμένο σάν τή θάλασσα  
θά μοῦ ἔφτανε στή γλάστρα μου  
ἔστω κι' ἓνα ψεύτικο γαρούφαλο  
ἓνα κόκκινο χαρτί σ' ἓνα τέλι  
ἔτσι πού νά μπορεῖ ὁ ἀγέρας  
ὁ ἀγέρας νά τὸ κυβερνᾷ χωρὶς προσπάθεια  
ὅσο θέλει.

Θά 'πεφτε τὸ βράδι  
τὰ κοπάδια θ' ἀντιλαλούσαν κατεβαίνοντας στὸ μαντρί τους  
σὰ μιὰ πολὺ ἀπλή κι' εὐτυχισμένη σκέψη  
καὶ θά 'πεφτα νά κοιμηθῶ  
γιατὶ δὲ θά 'χα  
οὔτε ἓνα κερί ν' ἀνάψω,  
φῶς,  
νά διαβάσω.

1931

is a sheet immersed in bluing  
spread there like the sea  
all I want in my vase  
is even a false carnation  
red paper wound on wire  
so that the wind  
the wind can control it easily  
as much as it wants to.  
The evening would fall  
the flocks would echo descending to their fold  
like some quite simple happy thought  
and I would lie down to sleep  
because I wouldn't have  
even a candle to light,  
light,  
to read.

1931

## Β'. ΨΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΑ

Ὁ κύριος αὐτός  
κάθε πρωὶ κάνει τὸ λουτρό του  
μέσα στὰ νερὰ τῆς νεκρῆς θάλασσας  
ἔπειτα φορεῖ ἓνα πικρὸ χαμόγελο  
γιὰ τὴ δουλειὰ καὶ γιὰ τοὺς πελάτες.

## II. PSYCHOLOGY

This gentleman  
takes his bath each morning  
in the waters of the Dead Sea  
then dons a bitter smile  
for business and clients.

## Γ'. ΟΛΑ ΠΕΡΝΟΥΝ

Ξεχάσαμε τὸν ἥρωικό μας ἀντίλογο μὲ τὶς Εὐμενίδες  
μᾶς πῆρε ὁ ὕπνος μᾶς πήραν γιὰ πεθαμένους κι' ἔφυγαν  
φωνάζοντας

«Γιού! Γιού! Πούουου... πάξ!»  
βρίζοντας τοὺς θεοὺς ποὺ μᾶς προστατεύουν.

### III. ALL THINGS PASS AWAY

We forgot our heroic dispute with the Eumenides  
we fell asleep, they thought we were dead and they fled  
shouting  
“Yiou! Yiou! Pououou . . . pax!”\*  
cursing the gods that protect us.

## Δ'. ΦΩΤΙΕΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΗ ΓΙΑΝΝΗ

Ἦ μοίρα μας χυμένο μολύβι δὲν μπορεῖ ν' ἀλλάξει  
δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ γίνεи τίποτε.

Ἐχυσαν τὸ μολύβι μέσα στὸ νερὸ κάτω ἀπὸ τ' ἀστέρια κι'  
ἄς ἀνάβουν οἱ φωτιές.

Ἄν μείνεις γυμνή μπροστὰ στὸν καθρέφτη τὰ μεσάνυχτα  
βλέπεις

βλέπεις τὸν ἄνθρωπο νὰ περνᾷ στὸ βάθος τοῦ καθρέφτη  
τὸν ἄνθρωπο μέσα στὴ μοίρα σου ποὺ κυβερνᾷ τὸ κορ-  
μί σου

μέσα στὴ μοναξιὰ καὶ στὴ σιωπὴ, τὸν ἄνθρωπο  
τῆς μοναξιᾶς καὶ τῆς σιωπῆς  
κι' ἄς ἀνάβουν οἱ φωτιές.

Τὴν ὥρα ποὺ τέλειωσε ἡ μέρα καὶ δὲν ἄρχισε ἡ ἄλλη  
τὴν ὥρα ποὺ κόπηκε ὁ καιρὸς  
ἐκεῖνον ποὺ ἀπὸ τώρα καὶ πρὶν ἀπὸ τὴν ἀρχὴ κυβερνοῦσε  
τὸ κορμί σου

πρέπει νὰ τὸν εὕρεις

πρέπει νὰ τὸν ζητήσεις γιὰ νὰ τὸν εὕρει τουλάχιστο  
κάποιος ἄλλος, ὅταν θά 'χεις πεθάνει.

Εἶναι τὰ παιδιὰ ποὺ ἀνάβουν τὶς φωτιές καὶ φωνάζουν  
μπροστὰ στὶς φλόγες μέσα στὴ ζεστὴ νύχτα (Μήπως

#### IV. FIRES OF ST. JOHN\*

Our fate: spilled lead; our fate can't change—  
nothing's to be done.

They spilled the lead in water under the stars, and may the  
fires burn.

If you stand naked before a mirror at midnight you see,  
you see a man moving through the mirror's depths  
the man destined to rule your body  
in loneliness and silence, the man  
of loneliness and silence  
and may the fires burn.

At the hour when one day ends and the next has not begun  
at the hour when time is suspended  
you must find the man who then and now, from the very  
beginning, ruled your body  
you must look for him so that someone else at least  
will find him, after you are dead.

It is the children who light the fires and cry out before the  
flames in the hot night

ἔγινε ποτὲς φωτιά πού νά μὴν τὴν ἀναψέ κάποιο παι-  
δί, ὦ Ἡρόστρατε)  
καὶ ρίχνουν ἀλάτι μέσα στὶς φλόγες γιὰ νὰ πλαταγίζουν  
(Πόσο παρὰ ξένα μᾶς κοιτάζουν ξαφνικὰ τὰ σπίτια, τὰ  
χωνευτήρια τῶν ἀνθρώπων, σὰν τὰ χαϊδέψει κάποια  
ἀνταύγεια).

Μὰ ἐσύ πού γνώρισες τὴ χάρη τῆς πέτρας πάνω στὸ θαλασ-  
σόδαρτο βράχο  
τὸ βράδι πού ἔπεσε ἡ γαλήνη  
ἄκουσες ἀπὸ μακριὰ τὴν ἀνθρώπινη φωνὴ τῆς μοναξιᾶς καὶ  
τῆς σιωπῆς  
μέσα στὸ κορμί σου  
τὴ νύχτα ἐκείνη τοῦ Ἁγίου Γιάνη  
ὅταν ἔσβησαν ὅλες οἱ φωτιές  
καὶ μελέτησες τὴ στάχτη κάτω ἀπὸ τ' ἀστέρια.

(Was there ever a fire that some child did not light,  
O Herostratus)\*  
and throw salt on the flames to make them crackle  
(How strangely the houses—crucibles for men—  
suddenly  
stare at us when the flame's reflection caresses them).

But you who knew the stone's grace on the sea-whipped rock  
the evening when stillness fell  
heard from far off the human voice of loneliness and silence  
inside your body  
that night of St. John  
when all the fires went out  
and you studied the ashes under the stars.

Παρουσιάστηκε καθώς κοίταζα στο τζάκι μου τ' αναμμένα κάρβουνα. Κρατοῦσε στα χέρια ένα μεγάλο κουτί κόκκινα σπέρτα. Μοῦ τό 'δειξε σάν τοὺς ταχυδακτυλουργοὺς ποὺ βγάζουν ἀπὸ τὴ μύτη τοῦ διπλανοῦ μας ἕνα ἄβγό. Τράβηξε ἕνα σπέρτο, ἔβαλε φωτιά στὸ κουτί, χάθηκε πίσω ἀπὸ μιὰ πελώρια φλόγα, κι' ὕστερα στάθηκε μπροστά μου. Θυμᾶμαι τὸ βυσσινί του χαμόγελο καὶ τὰ γυαλένια του μάτια. "Ἐνα ὄργανέτο στὸ δρόμο χτυποῦσε ὁλοένα τὴν ἴδια νότα. Δὲν ξέρω νὰ πῶ τί φοροῦσε. Μ' ἔκανε νὰ συλλογίζομαι ἐπίμονα ἕνα πορφυρὸ κυπαρίσσι. Σιγὰ - σιγὰ τὰ χέρια του ἄρχισαν νὰ ξεχωρίζουν ἀπὸ τὸ τεντωμένο του κορμί σὲ σταυρό. Ἀπὸ ποῦ μαζεύτηκαν τόσα πουλιά; Θά 'λεγες πὼς τὰ εἶχε κρυμμένα κάτω ἀπὸ τὶς φτεροῦγες του. Πετούσαν ἀδέξια, παλαβά, μὲ ὀρμή· χτυπούσαν πάνω στοὺς τοίχους τῆς στενῆς κάμαρας, πάνω στὰ τζάμια, καὶ στρώνανε τὸ πάτωμα σὰ χτυπημένα. "Ενιωθα στὰ πόδια ἕνα ζεστὸ στρώμα ἀπὸ πούπουλα καὶ σφυγμοὺς νὰ φουσκώνει. Τὸν κοίταζα μὲ μιὰ παράξενη θέρμη ποὺ κυρίευε τὸ κορμί μου σάν κυκλοφορία. "Όταν τελείωσε νὰ ὑψώνει τὰ χέρια, ὅταν οἱ παλάμες του ἄγγιξαν ἢ μιὰ τὴν ἄλλη, ἔκανε ἕνα ξαφνικὸ πήδημα, σὰ νὰ εἶχε σπάσει τὸ ἐλατήριο τοῦ ρολογιοῦ μπροστά μου. Χτύπησε στὸ ταβάνι ποὺ ἤχησε μονοκόμματα μ' ἕναν ἥχο κυμβάλου, τέντωσε τὸ δεξί του χέρι, ἔπιασε τὸ σύρμα τῆς λάμπας, κουνήθηκε λιγάκι, ἀφέθηκε, κι' ἄρχισε νὰ γράφει μέσα

## V. NIJINSKY\*

He appeared as I was staring at the lighted coals in my fireplace. He held in his hands a large box of red matches which he displayed to me like a conjuror taking an egg out of the nose of the person in the next seat. He struck a match, set fire to the box, disappeared behind an enormous flame, and then stood before me. I recall his crimson smile and his vitreous eyes. A hurdy-gurdy in the street went on repeating the same note. I don't know how to describe what he was wearing, but he kept making me think of a purple cypress. Gradually his arms began to separate from his taut body and to form a cross. Where did so many birds come from? It was as if he'd had them hidden under his wings. They flew clumsily, madly, violently, knocking against the walls of the narrow room, against the window panes, then covered the floor as though wounded. I felt a warm layer of down and pulsations growing at my feet. I gazed at him, a strange fever possessed my body like a current coursing through it. When he'd finished raising his arms and his palms were together, he gave a sudden leap, as if the spring of a watch had broken in front of me. He knocked against the ceiling, making it echo with the sound of a cymbal, extended his right arm, seized the wire of the lamp, moved slightly, relaxed, then began to describe with his body a figure of eight against the darkness. The sight made me

στο σκοτεινὸ φῶς, μὲ τὸ κορμί του, τὸν ἀριθμὸ 8. Τὸ θέαμα αὐτὸ μὲ ζάλισε καὶ σκέπασα μὲ τὰ δυὸ μου χέρια τὸ πρόσωπό μου. Ἐσφιγγα τὸ σκοτάδι πάνω στὰ βλέφαρά μου, ἀκούγοντας τὸ ὄργανέτο πού ἐξακολουθοῦσε ἀκόμη στὴν ἴδια νότα κι' ἔπειτα σταμάτησε ἀπότομα. Ἕνας ξαφνικὸς ἀέρας μὲ χτύπησε, παγωμένος. Ἐνίωσα τὰ πόδια μου ξυλιασμένα. Ἀκουσα ἀκόμη ἓνα χαμηλὸ καὶ βελουδένιο ἦχο φλογέρας, κι' ἀμέσως ἔπειτα, ἓνα στρωτὸ καὶ παχὺ πλατάγισμα. Ἀνοιξα τὰ μάτια. Τὸν εἶδα πάλι νὰ πατᾷ μὲ τὰ νύχια σὲ μιὰ κρουσταλλένια σφαῖρα, στὴ μέση τῆς κάμαρας, κρατώντας στὸ στόμα ἓνα ἀλλόκοτο πράσινο σουραύλι, πού τὸ κυβερνοῦσαν τὰ δάχτυλά του, σὰ νὰ εἶταν ἑπτὰ χιλιάδες. Τὰ πουλιὰ τώρα ξαναζωντάνευαν μὲ μιὰ ἐξωφρενικὴ τάξη, ὑψωνόντουσαν, σμίγανε, σχηματίζανε μιὰ χοντρή συνοδεία πού θὰμποροῦσες νὰ τὴν ἀγκαλιάσεις, καὶ βγαίνουν πρὸς τὴ νύχτα, ἀπὸ τὸ παράθυρο, πού δὲν ξέρω πῶς, βρέθηκε ἀνοιχτό. Ὅταν δὲν ἀπόμεινε πιά οὔτε μισὴ φτερούγα, ἐκτὸς ἀπὸ μιὰ πνιγερὴ μυρωδιὰ κυνηγιοῦ, ἀποφάσισα νὰ τὸν κοιτάξω κατὰ πρόσωπο. Πρόσωπο δὲν ὑπῆρχε· πάνω ἀπὸ τὸ πορφυρὸ κορμί, θὰ ἔλεγες ἀκέφαλο, καμάρωνε μιὰ μαλαματένια προσωπίδα, ἀπὸ ἐκεῖνες πού βρέθηκαν στοὺς μυκηναϊκοὺς τάφους, μ' ἓνα μυτερὸ γένι πού ἄγγιζε τὴν τραχηλιά. Προσπάθησα νὰ σηκωθῶ. Δὲν εἶχα κάνει τὴν πρώτη κίνηση, κι' ἓνας κατακλυσμιαῖος ἦχος, σὰ νὰ εἶχαν σωριαστεῖ μιὰ στίβα τάσια σὲ νεκρώσιμο ἐμβατήριο, μὲ κάρφωσε στὴ θέση μου. Εἶταν ἡ προσωπίδα. Τὸ πρόσωπό του φανερώθηκε πάλι, ὅπως τὸ εἶδα στὴν ἀρχή, τὰ μάτια, τὸ χαμόγελο καὶ κάτι πού τώρα παρατηροῦσα γιὰ πρώτη φορὰ: τὸ λευκὸ δέρμα τεντωμένο ἀπὸ δυὸ κατὰμαυρα τσουλούφια πού τὸ δάγκωναν μπροστὰ

dizzy and I covered my face with both hands, crushing the darkness against my eyelids, while the hurdy-gurdy went on repeating the same note and then stopped abruptly. A sudden icy wind struck me; I felt my legs go numb. Now I also heard the low velvety sound of a flute, followed immediately by a heavy and regular beating. I opened my eyes and again saw him, standing tiptoe on a crystal sphere in the middle of the room, in his mouth a strange green flute over which he was running his fingers as though there were thousands of them. The birds now came back to life in an extraordinary order, rose up, mingled, formed into a cortege as wide as my outspread arms, and went out into the night through the window that was somehow open. When the last flutter had died away and only a suffocating smell of hunting was left, I decided to look him in the face. There was no face: above the purple body, seemingly headless, he sported a golden mask, of the kind found in Mycenaean tombs, with a pointed beard reaching down to the throat. I tried to get up, but I'd hardly made the first movement when a cataclysmic sound, like a pile of kettledrums collapsing in a funeral march, rooted me to the spot. It was the mask. His face appeared again as I'd originally seen it—the eyes, the smile, and something which I now remarked for the first time: the white skin suspended from two black curls that pinned it into place at the temples. He tried to leap but no

στ' αὐτιά. Δοκίμασε νὰ πηδήξει, μὰ δὲν εἶχε πιά τὴν εὐκινησίᾳ του τὴν πρώτη. Θαρῶ μάλιστα πῶς σκόνταψε σ' ἓνα βιβλίο πεσμένο κατὰ τύχη καὶ γονάτισε μὲ τὸ ἓνα γόνατο. Μπορούσα τώρα νὰ τὸν κοιτάξω μὲ προσοχή. "Εβλεπα τοὺς πόρους στὸ δέρμα του νὰ βγάζουν ψιλὲς στάλες ἰδρώτα. Κάτι σὰ λαχάνιασμα μὲ βάραινε. Προσπάθησα νὰ ἐξηγήσω γιατί τὰ μάτια του μοῦ εἶχαν φανεῖ τόσο περίεργα. Τὰ 'κλεισε. "Εκανε νὰ σηκωθεῖ, μὰ θὰ εἴταν τρομερὰ δύσκολο, γιατί φαινόταν ν' ἀγωνίζεται νὰ μαζέψει ὅλη του τὴ δύναμη, χωρὶς νὰ μπορεῖ νὰ καταφέρει τίποτε. Ἀπεναντίας γονάτισε καὶ μὲ τὸ ἄλλο γόνατο. "Εβλεπα τὸ ἄσπρο δέρμα τρομερὰ χλομό, πρὸς ἓνα κίτρινο φιλντισί, καὶ τὰ μαῦρα μαλλιά σὰν πεθαμένα. Μολονότι βρισκόμουνα μπροστὰ σὲ μιὰν ἀγωνία, εἶχα τὸ συναίσθημα πῶς εἴμουνα καλύτερα, πῶς εἶχα κάτι νικήσει.

Δὲν πρόφταξα νὰ ἀνασάνω καὶ τὸν εἶδα, ὁλότελα πεσμένο χάμω, νὰ βυθίζεται μέσα σὲ μιὰ πράσινη παγόδα ποὺ εἶναι ζωγραφισμένη πάνω στὸ χαλί μου.

longer possessed his initial agility. I think he even stumbled against a book fallen there by accident, and he knelt down on one knee. Now I could observe him carefully. I saw the pores of his skin oozing fine beads of sweat. Something like breathlessness came over me. I tried to discover why his eyes had seemed so strange. He closed them and began to get up; but it must have been terribly difficult, for he seemed to concentrate all his strength without being able to do anything. He even knelt now on the other knee as well. The white skin seemed terribly pale, like yellow ivory, and his black hair was lifeless. Though I was witnessing an agonizing struggle, I had the feeling that I was better, that I'd triumphed over something.

Before I could draw breath I saw him, fallen full length now, plunge into a green pagoda portrayed on my carpet.

Ο κ. ΣΤΡΑΤΗΣ ΘΑΛΑΣΣΙΝΟΣ  
ΠΕΡΙΓΡΑΦΕΙ ΕΝΑΝ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟ

1

Μὰ τί ἔχει αὐτὸς ὁ ἄνθρωπος;  
"Ὅλο τὸ ἀπόγεμα (χτὲς προχτὲς καὶ σήμερα) κάθεται μὲ  
τὰ μάτια καρφωμένα σὲ μιὰ φλόγα  
σκόνταψε πάνω μου τὸ βράδι καθὼς κατέβαινε τὴ σκάλα  
μοῦ εἶπε:  
«Τὸ κορμὶ πεθαίνει τὸ νερὸ θολώνει ἢ ψυχὴ  
διστάζει  
κι' ὁ ἀγέρας ξεχνάει ὅλο ξεχνάει  
μὰ ἡ φλόγα δὲν ἀλλάζει».  
Μοῦ εἶπε ἀκόμη:  
«Ξέρετε ἀγαπῶ μιὰ γυναίκα ποὺ ἔφυγε ἴσως στὸν κάτω  
κόσμο· δὲν εἶναι γι' αὐτὸ ποὺ φαίνομαι τόσο ἐρημω-  
μένος  
προσπαθῶ νὰ κρατηθῶ ἀπὸ μιὰ φλόγα  
γιατὶ δὲν ἀλλάζει».  
"Υστερα μοῦ διηγήθηκε τὴν ἱστορία του.

2. ΠΑΙΔΙ

"Όταν ἄρχισα νὰ μεγαλώνω μὲ βασάνιζαν τὰ δέντρα  
γιατὶ χαμογεῶντε; πῆγε ὁ νοῦς σας στὴν ἀνοιξὴ ποὺ εἶναι  
σκληρὴ γιὰ τὰ μικρὰ παιδιὰ;

MR. STRATIS THALASSINOS  
DESCRIBES A MAN

*1*

But what's wrong with that man?  
All afternoon (yesterday the day before yesterday and  
today) he's been sitting there staring at a flame  
he bumped into me at evening as he went downstairs  
he said to me:  
"The body dies the water clouds the soul  
hesitates  
and the wind forgets always forgets  
but the flame doesn't change."  
He also said to me:  
"You know I love a woman who's gone away perhaps to the  
nether world; that's not why I seem so deserted  
I try to keep myself going with a flame  
because it doesn't change."  
Then he told me the story of his life.

*2. CHILD*

When I began to grow up the trees tormented me—  
why do you smile? Were you thinking of spring, so harsh for  
children?

μ' ἄρεσαν πολὺ τὰ πράσινα φύλλα  
νομίζω πὼς ἔμαθα λίγα γράμματα γιατίι τὸ στουπόχαρτο  
πάνω στὸ θρανίο μου εἴταν κι' ἐκεῖνο πράσινο  
μὲ βασιάνιζαν οἱ ρίζες τῶν δέντρων ὅταν μέσα στὴ ζεστασιά  
τοῦ χειμῶνα ἐρχόντανε νὰ τυλιχτοῦν γύρω στὸ κορμί μου  
δὲν ἔβλεπα ἄλλα ὄνειρα σὰν εἴμουν παιδί·  
ἔτσι γνώρισα τὸ κορμί μου.

### 3. ΕΦΗΒΟΣ

Τὸ καλοκαίρι στὰ δεκαῆξι μου χρόνια τραγούδησε μιὰ ξένη  
φωνή μέσα στ' αὐτιά μου  
εἴταν θυμοῦμαι στὴν ἀκροθαλασσιά, ἀνάμεσα στὰ κόκκινα  
δίχτυα καὶ μιὰ βάρκα ξεχασμένη στὴν ἄμμο, σκελετὸς  
δοκίμασα νὰ τὴν πλησιάσω τὴ φωνὴ ἐκείνη βάζοντας τὴν  
ἀκοή μου πάνω στὴν ἄμμο  
ἡ φωνὴ χάθηκε  
μὰ ἓνα πεφταστέρι  
σὰ νὰ 'βλεπα γιὰ πρώτη φορὰ ἓνα πεφταστέρι  
καὶ στὰ χεῖλια ἡ ἀρμύρα τοῦ κυμάτου.  
Τὴ νύχτα ἐκείνη δὲν ἤρθαν πιά οἱ ρίζες τῶν δέντρων.  
Τὴν ἄλλη μέρα ἓνα ταξίδι ἀνοίχτηκε μέσα στὸ νοῦ μου κι'  
ἐκλείσε πάλι σὰ ζωγραφισμένο βιβλίο·  
συλλογίστηκα νὰ πηγαίνω κάθε βράδι στ' ἀκρογιάλι  
νὰ μάθω πρῶτα τ' ἀκρογιάλι κι' ἔπειτα νὰ πάρω τὸ πέλαγο·  
τὴν τρίτη μέρα ἀγάπησα μιὰ κοπέλα πάνω σὲ μιὰ κορφὴ

I was very fond of the green leaves  
I think I learned a little at school simply because the  
    blotting paper on my desk was also green.  
It was the roots of the trees that tormented me when in the  
    warmth of winter they'd come and wind themselves  
    around my body.  
I had no other dreams as a child.  
That's how I got to know my body.

### 3. *ADOLESCENT*

In the summer of my sixteenth year a strange voice sang in  
    my ears;  
it was, I remember, at the sea's edge, among the red nets  
    and a boat abandoned on the sand, a skeleton  
I tried to get closer to that voice by laying my ear to the sand  
the voice disappeared  
but there was a shooting star  
as though I were seeing a shooting star for the first time  
and on my lips the salt taste of waves.  
From that night the roots of the trees no longer came to me.  
The next day a journey opened in my mind and closed  
    again, like a picture book;  
I thought of going down to the shore every evening  
first to learn about the shore and then to go to sea;  
the third day I fell in love with a girl on a hill;

εἶχε ἓνα ἄσπρο σπιτάκι σὰ ρημοκλήσι  
 μιὰ γριά μάνα στὸ παραθύρι μὲ σκυμμένα γυαλιὰ πάνω σὲ  
 βελόνες, πάντα σιωπηλὴ  
 μιὰ γλάστρα βασιλικὸ μιὰ γλάστρα γαρούφαλα  
 τὴν ἔλεγαν νομίζω Βάσω Φρόσω ἢ Μπίλιω·  
 ἔτσι ξέχασα τὴ θάλασσα.  
 Μιὰ δευτέρα τοῦ Ὁχτώβρη  
 βρήκα μιὰ σπασμένη στάμνα μπροστὰ στὸ ἄσπρο σπιτάκι  
 ἢ Βάσω (γιὰ συντομία) φάνηκε μ' ἓνα μαῦρο φουστάνι  
 ἀχτένιστα μαλλιά καὶ κόκκινα μάτια  
 ὅταν τὴ ρώτησα :  
 « Πέθανε, ὁ γιατρὸς λέει πέθανε γιατί δὲ σφάξαμε τὸ μαῦρο  
 κόκορα στὰ θεμέλια... ποῦ νὰ βρεθεῖ μαῦρος κόκορας  
 ἐδῶ-πέρα... μονάχα ἄσπρα κοπάδια... καὶ τὰ πουλιὰ  
 τὰ πουλοῦν μαδημένα στὴν ἀγορά ».

Δὲν φανταζόμουν αἴτις τὴ θλίψη καὶ τὸ θάνατο  
 ἔφυγα καὶ ξαναγύρισα στὴ θάλασσα.  
 Τὴ νύχτα πάνω στὴν κουβέρτα τοῦ « Ἀν Νικόλα » ὄνειρεύ-  
 τηκα μιὰ παμπάλαιη ἐλιά νὰ δακρύζει.

#### 4. ΠΑΛΙ ΚΑΡΤΙ

Ταξίδεψα ἓνα χρόνο μὲ τὸν Καπετὰν Δυσσέα  
 εἶμουν καλὰ  
 στὴν καλοκαιριὰ βουλευόμουν αἴτις τὴν πλώρη πλάι στὴ γορ-  
 γόνα

she had a small white cottage like a country chapel  
an old mother at the window, glasses bent low over her  
knitting, always silent  
a pot of basil a pot of carnations—  
I think she was called Vasso, Frosso, or Billio;  
so I forgot the sea.  
One Monday in October  
I found a broken pitcher in front of the white cottage  
Vasso (for short) appeared in a black dress, her hair  
uncombed, her eyes red.  
When I questioned her she said:  
“She died, the doctor said she died because we didn’t kill  
the black cock when we dug the foundations . . . Where  
could we find a black cock around here . . . ? Only  
white flocks . . . and in the market the chickens are sold  
already plucked.”  
I hadn’t imagined grief and death would be like that;  
I left and went back to sea.  
That night, on the deck of the “St. Nicholas,” I dreamt  
of a very old olive tree weeping.

#### 4. *YOUNG MAN*

I sailed for a year with Captain Odysseus  
I was fine  
in fair weather I made myself comfortable in the prow  
beside the mermaid

τραγουδούσα τὰ κόκκινα χείλια της κοιτάζοντας τὰ χελιδονόψαρα,  
στή φουρτούνα τρύπωνα σὲ μιὰ γωνιὰ στ' ἀμπάρι μαζί μὲ  
τὸ καραβόσκυλο ποὺ μὲ ζέσταινε.  
Σὰ βγῆκε ὁ χρόνος εἶδα ἓνα πρωὶ μιναρέδες  
ὁ ναύκληρος μοῦ εἶπε:  
«Εἶναι ἡ Ἀγιά Σοφιά, θὰ σὲ πάω τὸ βράδι στὶς γυναιῖκες».

Ἔτσι γνώρισα τὶς γυναῖκες ποὺ φοροῦν μονάχα κάλτσες  
ἐκεῖνες ποὺ διαλέγουμε, μάλιστα.  
Εἴταν ἓνας περίεργος τόπος  
ἓνα περιβόλι μὲ δυὸ καρυδιές μιὰ δράνα ἓνα πηγάδι  
τριγύρω ὁ τοῖχος μὲ σπασμένα γυαλιὰ στὴν ἄκρη  
ἓνα αὐλάκι τραγουδοῦσε «Εἰς τὸ ρεῦμα τῆς ζωῆς μου».  
Τότες εἶδα γιὰ πρώτη μου φορὰ μιὰ καρδιά  
τρυπημένη μὲ τὴ γνωστὴ σαῖτα  
ζωγραφισμένη στὸν τοῖχο μὲ κάρβουνο.  
Εἶδα τὰ φύλλα τῆς κληματαριᾶς κίτρινα  
πεσιμένα χάμω  
κολλημένα στὶς πλάκες στὴ φτωχὴ λάσπη  
κι' ἔκανα ἓνα βῆμα νὰ πάω πίσω στὸ καράβι.  
Τότες ὁ ναύκληρος μ' ἄρπαξε ἀπὸ τὸ γιανὰ καὶ μὲ πέταξε  
μέσα στὸ πηγάδι·  
τὸ ζεστὸ νερὸ καὶ τόση ζωὴ τριγύρω στὸ δέρμα...  
Ἐπειτα τὸ κορίτσι μοῦ εἶπε παίζοντας ἀπρόσεχτα μὲ τὸ  
δεξί του στήθος:  
«Εἶμαι ἀπὸ τὴ Ρόδο, μὲ ἄρρεβώνιασαν 13 χρονῶ γιὰ 100  
παράδες».  
Καὶ τ' αὐλάκι τραγουδοῦσε «Εἰς τὸ ρεῦμα τῆς ζωῆς μου».

I sang of her red lips as I gazed at the flying-fish,  
in storms I took refuge in a corner of the hold with the  
ship's dog who kept me warm.

One morning at the end of the year I saw minarets  
the mate told me:

"That's Saint Sophia, tonight I'll take you to the women."  
So I got to know those women who wear only stockings—  
those we select, in fact.

It was a strange place  
a garden with two walnut trees a trellis a well  
a wall with broken glass along the top surrounding it  
a gutter singing: "On the stream of my life."

Then for the first time I saw a heart  
pierced by the familiar arrow  
drawn in charcoal on the wall.

I saw the leaves of the vine yellow  
fallen to the ground  
stuck to the flagstones to the humble mud  
and I started to go back to the ship.

Then the mate seized me by the collar and threw me into  
the well:

warm water and so much life around the skin . . .

Afterwards the girl, playing idly with her right breast, told  
me:

"I'm from Rhodes, at 13 they got me engaged for a hundred  
paras."

And the gutter sang: "On the stream of my life . . ."

Θυμήθηκα τὴ σπασμένη στάμνα μέσα στὸ δροσερὸ ἀπομε-  
σήμερο καὶ συλλογίστηκα·  
«Θὰ πεθάνει κι' αὐτή, πῶς θὰ πεθάνει ; »  
Τῆς εἶπα μονάχα  
«Πρόσεξε θὰ τὸ χαλάσεις εἶναι ἡ ζωὴ σου ».  
Τὸ βράδι στὸ καράβι δὲ βάσταξα νὰ σιμώσω τὴ γοργόνα,  
τὴ ντρεπόμουνα.

## 5. Α Ν Τ Ρ Α Σ

Ἀπὸ τότες εἶδα πολλὰ καινούργια τοπία· πράσινους κάμπους ποὺ σμίγουν τὸ χῶμα μὲ τὸν οὐρανό, τὸν ἄνθρωπο μὲ τὸ σπόρο, μέσα σὲ μιὰν ἀκαταμάχητη ὑγρασία· πλατάνια καὶ ἔλατα· λίμνες μὲ τσαλακωμένες ὀπτασίες καὶ κύκνους ἀθάνατους γιατί ἔχασαν τὴ φωνή τους — σκηνικὰ ποὺ ξετύλιγε ὁ θεληματικὸς σύντροφός μου, ὁ πλανόδιος ἐκεῖνος θεατρίνος, καθὼς ἔπαιζε τὸ μακρὺ βούκινο ποὺ τοῦ εἶχε ρημάξει τὰ χεῖλια, καὶ γκρέμιζε μὲ μιὰ στριγγιὰ φωνή, ὅ,τι πρόφταινα νὰ χτίσω, σὰν τὴ σάλπιγγα στὴν Ἱερικῶ. Εἶδα καὶ μιὰ παλιὰ εἰκόνα σὲ κάποια χαμηλοτάβανη αἴθουσα· τὴ θαύμαζε πολὺς λαός. Παράστανε τὴν ἀνάσταση τοῦ Λαζάρου. Δὲ θυμᾶμαι οὔτε τὸ Χριστὸ οὔτε τὸ Λάζαρο. Μόνο, σὲ μιὰ γωνιά, τὴν ἀηδία ζωγραφισμένη σ' ἓνα πρόσωπο ποὺ κοίταζε τὰ θαῦμα σὰ νὰ τὸ μύριζε. Ἀγωνιζότανε νὰ προστατέψει τὴν ἀνάσα του μ' ἓνα πελώριο πανὶ ποὺ τοῦ κρεμότανε ἀπὸ τὸ κεφάλι. Αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος τῆς «Ἀναγέννησης» μ' ἔμαθε νὰ μὴν περιμένω πολλὰ πράγματα ἀπὸ τὴ δευτέρα παρουσία...



I recalled the broken pitcher in the cool afternoon and I  
thought:

“She’ll die too, how will she die?”

All I said to her was:

“Careful, you’ll ruin it, it’s your livelihood.”

That evening on the ship I couldn’t bear to go near the  
mermaid, I was ashamed of facing her.

## 5. *MAN*

Since then I’ve seen many new landscapes: green plains intermingling soil and sky, man and seed, in an irresistible dampness; plane-trees and fir-trees; lakes with wrinkled visions and swans immortal because they’d lost their voices—scenery unfolded by my willing companion, that strolling player, as he sounded the long horn that had ruined his lips and that destroyed with its shrill note whatever I managed to build, like the trumpet at Jericho. I saw an old picture in some low-ceilinged room; a lot of people were admiring it. It showed the raising of Lazarus. I don’t recall either the Christ in it or the Lazarus. Only, in one corner, the disgust portrayed on someone’s face as he gazed at the miracle as if he were smelling it. He was trying to protect his breathing with the huge cloth draped around his head. This “Renaissance” gentleman taught me not to expect much from the Second Coming . . .



Μᾶς ἔλεγαν θὰ νικήσετε ὅταν ὑποταχτεῖτε.  
Ὑποταχτήκαμε καὶ βρήκαμε τὴ στάχτη.  
Μᾶς ἔλεγαν θὰ νικήσετε ὅταν ἀγαπήσετε.  
Ἀγαπήσαμε καὶ βρήκαμε τὴ στάχτη.  
Μᾶς ἔλεγαν θὰ νικήσετε ὅταν ἐγκαταλείψετε τὴ ζωὴ σας.  
Ἐγκαταλείψαμε τὴ ζωὴ μας καὶ βρήκαμε τὴ στάχτη...

Βρήκαμε τὴ στάχτη. Μένει νὰ ξαναβροῦμε τὴ ζωὴ μας, τώρα πού δὲν ἔχουμε πιά τίποτα. Φαντάζομαι, ἐκεῖνος πού θὰ ξανάβρει τὴ ζωὴ, ἔξω ἀπὸ τόσα χαρτιά, τόσα συναισθήματα, τόσες διαμάχες καὶ τόσες διδασκαλίες, θὰ εἶναι κάποιος σὰν ἐμᾶς, μόνο λιγάκι πιὸ σκληρὸς στὴ μνήμη. Ἐμεῖς, δὲ μπορεῖ, θυμόμαστε ἀκόμη τί δώσαμε. Ἐκεῖνος θὰ θυμᾶται μονάχα τί κέρδισε ἀπὸ τὴν κάθε του προσφορά. Τί μπορεῖ νὰ θυμᾶται μιὰ φλόγα; Ἄ θυμηθεῖ λίγο λιγότερο ἀπ' ὅ,τι χρειάζεται, σβήνει· ἄ θυμηθεῖ λίγο περισσότερο ἀπ' ὅ,τι χρειάζεται, σβήνει. Νὰ μποροῦσε νὰ μᾶς διδάξει, ὅσο ἀνάβει, νὰ θυμόμαστε σωστά. Ἐγὼ τελείωσα· νὰ γινότανε τουλάχιστο νὰ ἀρχίσει κάποιος ἄλλος ἀπὸ κεῖ πού τελείωσα ἐγώ. Εἶναι ὥρες πού ἔχω τὴν ἐντύπωση πὼς ἔφτασα στὸ τέρμα, πὼς ὅλα εἶναι στὴ θέση τους, ἔτοιμα νὰ τραγουδήσουν συνταιριασμένα. Ἡ μηχανὴ στὸ σημεῖο νὰ ξεκινήσει. Μπορῶ μάλιστα νὰ τὴ φανταστῶ σὲ κίνηση, ζωντανή, σὰν κάτι ἀνυποψίαστα καινούργιο. Ἀλλὰ ὑπάρχει κάτι ἀκόμα· ἓνα ἀπειροελάχιστο ἐμπόδιο, ἓνα σπυρὶ τῆς ἄμμου, πού μικραίνει, μικραίνει χωρὶς νὰ εἶναι δυνατὸ νὰ ἐκμηδενιστεῖ. Δὲν ξέρω τί πρέπει νὰ πῶ ἢ τί πρέπει νὰ κάνω. Τὸ ἐμπόδιο αὐτὸ

They told us you'll conquer when you submit.  
We submitted and found ashes.  
They told us you'll conquer when you love.  
We loved and found ashes.  
They told us you'll conquer when you abandon your life.  
We abandoned our life and found ashes.

We found ashes. It remains to rediscover our life, now that we've nothing left. I imagine that he who'll rediscover life, in spite of so much paper, so many emotions, so many debates and so much teaching, will be someone like us, only with a slightly tougher memory. We ourselves can't help still remembering what we've given. He'll remember only what he's gained from each of his offerings. What can a flame remember? If it remembers a little less than is necessary, it goes out; if it remembers a little more than is necessary, it goes out. If only it could teach us, while it burns, to remember correctly. I've come to an end: if only someone else could begin at the point where I've ended. There are times when I have the impression that I've reached the limit, that everything's in its place, ready to sing together in harmony. The machine on the point of starting. I can even imagine it in motion, alive, like something unsuspectedly new. But there's still something: an infinitesimal obstacle, a grain of sand, shrinking and shrinking yet unable to disappear completely. I don't know what I ought to say or what I ought to do. Sometimes that obstacle seems

μοῦ παρουσιάζεται κάποτε σὰν ἓνας κόμπος δάκρυ χωμένος σὲ κάποια κλείδωση τῆς ὀρχήστρας ποὺ θὰ τὴν κρατᾷ βουβῇ ὥς ποὺ νὰ διαλυθεῖ. Κι' ἔχω τὸ ἀσῆκωτο συναίσθημα πῶς ὁλόκληρη ἡ ζωὴ ποῦ μοῦ ἀπομένει δὲ θὰ 'ναι ἀρκετὴ γιὰ νὰ καταλύσει αὐτὴ τὴ στάλα μέσα στὴν ψυχὴ μου. Καὶ μὲ καταδιώκει ἡ σκέψη πῶς ἂν μ' ἔκαιγαν ζωντανὸ αὐτὴ ἡ ἐπίμονη στιγμὴ θὰ παραδινότανε τελευταία.

Ποιὸς θὰ μᾶς βοηθοῦσε; Κάποτε, ὅταν εἶμουν ἀκόμη στὰ καράβια, ἓνα μεσημέρι τὸν Ἰούλιο, βρέθηκα μόνος σὲ κάποιο νησί, σακάτης μέσα στὸν ἥλιο. Ἐνα καλὸ μελτέμι μοῦ ἔφερνε στοργικοὺς στοχασμούς, ὅταν ἤρθαν καὶ κάθησαν λίγο πάρα πέρα, μιὰ νέα γυναίκα μὲ διάφανο φουστάνι, ποὺ ἄφηνε νὰ ζωγραφίζεται τὸ κορμὶ της, λιγνὸ καὶ θεληματικὸ σὰ ζαρκαδιοῦ, κι' ἓνας σιωπηλὸς ἄντρας ποὺ μιὰ ὀργιὰ μακριὰ της, τὴν κοίταζε στὰ μάτια. Μιλοῦσαν μιὰ γλώσσα ποὺ δὲν καταλάβαινα. Τὸν ἐφώναζε Τζίμ. Τὰ λόγια τοὺς ὅμως δὲν εἶχαν κανένα βάρος καὶ οἱ ματιές τοὺς σωφισμασμένες καὶ ἀκίνητες ἄφηναν τὰ μάτια τοὺς τυφλὰ. Τοὺς συλλογίζομαι πάντα γιατί εἶναι οἱ μόνοι ἄνθρωποι, ποὺ εἶδα στὴ ζωὴ μου νὰ μὴν ἔχουν τὸ ἀρπαχτικὸ ἢ τὸ κυνηγημένο ὕφος ποὺ γνώρισα σ' ὅλους τοὺς ἄλλους. Τὸ ὕφος ἐκεῖνο ποὺ τοὺς κάνει ν' ἀνήκουν στὸ κοπάδι τῶν λύκων ἢ στὸ κοπάδι τῶν ἀρνιῶν. Τοὺς συναπάντησα πάλι τὴν ἴδια μέρα σ' ἓνα ἀπὸ τὰ νησιώτικα κλησάκια ποὺ βρίσκει κανεὶς ὅπως παραπατᾷ καὶ τὰ χάνει μόλις βγεῖ. Κρατοῦσαν πάντα τὴν ἴδια ἀπόσταση κι' ἔπειτα πλησίασαν καὶ φιληθήκανε. Ἡ γυναίκα ἔγινε μιὰ θαμπὴ εἰκόνα καὶ χάθηκε, μικρὴ καθὼς εἶταν. Ρωτιόμουν ἂν ἤξεραν πῶς εἶχαν βγεῖ ἀπὸ τὰ δίχτυα τοῦ κόσμου...

to me like a teardrop wedged into some articulation of the orchestra, keeping it silent until it's been dissolved. And I have an unbearable feeling that all the rest of my life won't be sufficient to dissolve this drop within my soul. And I'm haunted by the thought that, if they were to burn me alive, this obstinate moment would be the last to surrender.

Who will help us? Once, while I was still a seaman, one June afternoon, I found myself alone on some island, crippled in the sun. A fair Etesian wind brought tender thoughts to my mind; and it was then that a young woman, her transparent dress showing the lines of her body, slender and positive like a gazelle's, and a man, silent as he gazed into her eyes across the few feet that separated them, came and sat down not far from where I was. They spoke in a language I didn't understand. But their words had no weight and their glances, mingled and motionless, left their eyes blind. I always think of them because they're the only people I've ever seen who didn't have the grasping or hunted look that I've seen in everyone else. That look that classes them either with a pack of wolves or a flock of sheep. I met them again the same day in one of those island chapels one stumbles upon only to lose again as soon as one gets out. They were still keeping the same distance from each other; but then they came together and kissed. The woman became a cloudy image and vanished, small as she was. I wondered whether they knew how they'd escaped from the world's nets . . .

Εἶναι καιρὸς νὰ πηγαίνω. Ξέρω ἓνα πεῦκο ποὺ σκύβει κοντὰ σὲ μιὰ θάλασσα. Τὸ μεσημέρι, χαρίζει στὸ κουρασμένο κορμὶ ἓναν ἴσκιό μετρημένο σὰν τὴ ζωὴ μας, καὶ τὸ βράδι, ὁ ἀγέρας περνώντας μέσα ἀπὸ τὰ βελόνια του, πιάνει ἓνα περίεργο τραγούδι, σὰν ψυχὲς ποὺ κατάργησαν τὸ θάνατο, τὴ στιγμή ποὺ ξαναρχίζουν νὰ γίνονται δέρμα καὶ χεῖλια. Κάποτε ξενύχτησα κάτω ἀπὸ αὐτὸ τὸ δέντρο. Τὴν αὐγὴ εἴμωνα καινούργιος σὰ νὰ μὲ εἶχαν κόψει τὴν ὥρα ἐκείνη ἀπὸ τὸ λατομεῖο.

”Α! νὰ ζήσει κανεὶς τουλάχιστο ἔτσι, ἀδιάφορο.

Λονδίνο, 5 Ἰουνίου 1932

It's time for me to go. I know a pine-tree that overhangs the sea. At noon it provides the tired body with a shade as measured as our life, and at evening the wind passing through its needles strikes up a strange song, like souls that have abolished death the moment they again start becoming skin and lips. Once I spent the night awake under that tree. At daybreak I was as fresh as if they'd just cut me out of the quarry.

Ah, if one could at least live like that—but it doesn't really matter.

London, 5 June 1932

## ΣΗΜΕΙΩΣΕΙΣ ΓΙΑ ΜΙΑ «ΕΒΔΟΜΑΔΑ»

*British grown daffodils*

### ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ

Μέσα στὰ σκυφτὰ ἀσφοδίλια οἱ τυφλοὶ κοιμοῦνται  
ένας λαὸς τυφλῶν καὶ τ' ἀσφοδίλια σκύβουν  
μαυρισμένα ἀπὸ τὴν πάχνη τῆς αὐγῆς.

(Θυμοῦμαι τὰ παφιοπέδιλα τὸν ἄλλο χειμῶνα  
κλεισμένα στὴ ζέστη.

Ἀρκεῖτω βίος).

Προσκέφαλά τους ὄργανα ἐξοντωμένα  
ραχιτικοὶ φωνογράφοι  
τρύπιες φουσαρμόνικες  
ἁρμόνια γονατισμένα·  
νά 'χουν πεθάνει;

Ἕνας ἀκίνητος τυφλὸς δὲν ξεχωρίζει εὐκόλα  
κάποτε ζωντανεύουν τὰ ὄνειρά τους γι' αὐτὸ λέω πὼς κοι-  
μοῦνται.

Τριγύρω στὰ σπίτια, φορέματα ἀγγέλων μοῦ γνέφουν μαρ-  
μαρωμένα

τὸ ποτάμι δὲν κυλᾷ ἔχει ξεχάσει τὴ θάλασσα  
κι' ὅμως ὑπάρχει ἡ θάλασσα καὶ ποιὸς θὰ τὴν ἐξαντλήσει;  
οἱ τυφλοὶ κοιμοῦνται,  
οἱ ἄγγελοι γυμνοὶ τρέχουν μέσα στὶς φλέβες τους  
τοὺς πίνουν τὸ αἷμα καὶ τοὺς δίνουν φρόνηση

## NOTES FOR A "WEEK"

*British grown daffodils*

### MONDAY

Among the bending asphodels the blind are sleeping  
a crowd of blind people and the asphodels bend  
blackened by the hoarfrost of dawn.

(I remember the paphiopedilums of another winter  
enclosed in the hothouse heat.

Enough of life).\*

Their pillows, demolished instruments  
rickety phonographs  
harmonicas full of holes  
organs fallen to their knees;  
are they dead?

You can't make out a motionless blind man easily.  
Sometimes their dreams come alive, that's why I say they're  
sleeping.

All around on the houses, marble robes of angels beckon me  
the river doesn't roll, it has forgotten the sea  
and yet there is the sea and who will drain it dry?\*

The blind are sleeping,  
angels run naked in their veins  
they drink their blood and they make them prudent

κι' ἡ καρδιά μὲ τὰ φριχτά της μάτια λογαριάζει  
πότε θὰ στερέψει.

Κοιτάζω τὸ ποτάμι

ἀνάλαφρες σπιλιάδες περνοῦν κάτω ἀπὸ τὸν ἀνήμερο ἥλιο

τίποτε ἄλλο, τὸ ποτάμι περιμένει·

λυπήσου ἐκείνους ποὺ περιμένουν.

Τίποτε ἄλλο· φτάνει γιὰ σήμερα.

## ΤΡΙΤΗ

*« I went down to St. James Infirmary. »*

Χάθηκα μέσα στὴν πολιτεία.

Τὰ περιβόλια τὰ σκεπάζει τὸ νοσοκομεῖο τοῦ Δὸν

Χουὰν Ταβέρα.

Δρόμοι τυλίγοντας διαφημίσεις.

Κάθε ἄνθρωπος περπατᾷ χωρὶς νὰ ξέρει

ἂν ἄρχισε ἢ ἂν τέλειωσε

ἂν πηγαίνει στὴ μητέρα του στὴν κόρη του ἢ στὴν

ἐρωμένη του

ἂν θὰ δικάσει ἢ ἂν θὰ δικαστεῖ

ἂν θ' ἀποδράσει, ἂν ἔχει διαφύγει·

δὲν ξέρει.

Κάθε γωνιὰ κι' ἓνα κατάστημα γραμμοφῶνων

κάθε κατάστημα κι' ἓκατὸ γραμμόφωνα

κάθε γραμμόφωνο κι' ἓκατὸ δίσκοι

καὶ σὲ κάθε δίσκο

ἓνας ζωντανὸς παίζει μ' ἓναν πεθαμένο.

Πάρε τὴ χαλύβδινη βελόνα καὶ ξεχώρισέ τους

ἂν μπορεῖς.

and the heart with its terrible eyes calculates  
when it will run dry.  
I look at the river  
sudden light puffs of wind pass under the impotent sun  
nothing else, the river waits;  
pity those who wait.  
Nothing else; that's enough for today.

## TUESDAY

*"I went down to St. James Infirmary."*

I got lost in the town.  
The gardens are hidden by the hospital of Don  
    Juan Tavera.\*  
Advertisements wrapping up the streets.  
Each man walks without knowing  
whether he's at a beginning or an end,  
whether he's going to his mother, his daughter, or  
    his mistress  
whether he'll judge or be judged  
whether he'll escape, whether he's escaped already;  
he doesn't know.  
At every corner a gramophone shop  
in every shop a hundred gramophones  
for each gramophone a hundred records  
on every record  
someone living plays with someone dead.  
Take the steel needle and separate them  
if you can.

Μὰ ποιὸς ποιητῆς· θυμᾶσαι ποιὸς ποιητῆς  
δοκίμασε τῇ χαλύβδινη βελόνα  
στὶς ραφές τ' ἀνθρώπινου κρανίου;

Θυμᾶσαι τὸ τραγούδι του τὸ βράδι ἐκεῖνο;  
Θυμᾶμαι πὺ μᾶς ζήτησε μιὰν ἀσπιρίνη  
τὰ μάτια του ἔπαιζαν μέσα σὲ μαύρους κρίκους  
εἶταν χλωμὸς καὶ δυὸ βαθιὲς ρυτίδες  
τυλίγανε τὸ μέτωπό του. Μήπως ὅμως  
εἴσουν ἐσύ; μήπως ἐγώ; Ἡ μήπως εἶταν  
ἡ ἀμίλητη Ἀντιγόνη μὲ τοὺς ὤμους  
τοὺς λυγισμένους πάνω ἀπὸ τὸ στῆθος;  
Τὴν κράτησα κοντά μου δέκα νύχτες  
ἔκλαιγε κάθε αὐγὴ γιὰ τὸ παιδί της.  
Θυμᾶμαι γύρευα ἓνα φαρμακεῖο.  
"Ὅλα κλειστά. Γιὰ ποιὸν εἶταν δὲν ξέρω.

Χάθηκα μέσα στὴν πολιτεία  
κανεὶς δὲ θὰ μετακινήσει τὸ νοσοκομεῖο  
γεμάτο ἀνάπηρα παιδιὰ πὺ γνέφουν  
σ' ἐμένα ἢ σ' ἄλλους πὺ μ' ἀκολουθᾶνε.  
Ὅσμες φαρμάκων μέσα στὸν ἀγέρα  
βαραίνουν ἐρωτεύονται καὶ σμίγουν  
ἀχνοὺς ἀπὸ αὐτοκίνητα πὺ φεύγουν  
στὴν ἐξοχὴ μ' ὀλόξανθα ζευγάρια  
προραφαηλιτικὰ λιγάκι ἐξατμισμένα.

Τὴν ἀνοιξη τοῦ '23 στὸ λουτρό της  
πέθανε ἡ Λίβια Ρίμινι, τ' ἀστέρι·  
τὴ βρήκανε μέσα στ' ἀρώματα νεκρῇ  
καὶ τὸ νερὸ δὲν εἶχε ἀκόμη κρυώσει.  
Ὡστόσο χτὲς στὸν κινηματογράφο  
μὲ κοίταζε μὲ τ' ἄχρηστά της μάτια.

Now what poet? Do you remember what poet  
tried out the steel needle  
on the seams of man's skull?

Do you remember his song that night?  
I remember that he asked us for an aspirin  
his eyes moved inside black rings  
he was pale, and two deep wrinkles  
bound his forehead. Or was it you  
maybe? Or me? Or was it maybe  
silent Antigone with those shoulders  
rounded over her breasts?  
I kept her with me ten nights  
and each dawn she would weep for her child.  
I remember I was looking for a pharmacy. For whom,  
    I don't know.  
They were all closed.

I got lost in the town  
no one is going to remove the hospital  
full of crippled children gesturing  
at me or at others following me.  
Odors of medicine in the air  
turn heavy, fall in love and mesh  
with vapors from cars going off  
to the country with pre-Raphaelite couples  
thoroughly blond if somehow a bit evaporated.

In the spring of 1923, Livia Rimini,  
the film star, died in her bath;  
they found her dead, perfume all around,  
and the water not yet cold.  
Yet in the movies yesterday  
she gazed at me with her useless eyes.

## ΤΕΤΑΡΤΗ

*ad vigilias albas*

- Γιατί δὲ βραδιάζει;
- Κοίταξε ἂν θέλεις, κάπου θὰ βγῆκε τὸ νέο  
φεγγάρι.
- "Ολοι κοιτάζουν τί θὰ κάνεις  
κι' ἐσύ κοιτάζεις τὰ πλήθη πού σέ κοιτάζουν·  
οἱ ματιές γράφουν ἕναν κύκλο στενὸ  
πού δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ σπάσει.
- "Αν γεννηθεῖ κάποιος ὁ κύκλος θὰ πλατύνει  
ἂν πεθάνει κάποιος ὁ κύκλος θὰ στενέψει  
ἀλλὰ τόσο λίγο, γιὰ τόσο λίγο.
- Κι' οἱ τέσσερις ἄλλες αἰσθήσεις ἀκολουθοῦνε τὴν  
ἴδια γεωμετρία.
- "Αν ἀγαπούσαμε θὰ 'σπαζε ὁ κύκλος,  
θὰ κλείναμε τὰ βλέφαρα μιὰ στιγμή.  
'Αλλὰ δὲν μπορούμε ν' ἀγαπήσουμε.
- Εἶταν ὥραῖα τὰ μάτια σου μὰ δὲν ἤξερες ποῦ νὰ  
κοιτάζεις  
κι' ὅταν εἶπες νὰ φύγουμε γιὰτὶ ἄρχισε νὰ  
σκοτεινιάζει,  
γύρισες καὶ μὲ κοιτάξες στὰ μάτια καὶ μιὰ  
νυχτερίδα  
πέταξε γράφοντας τρίγωνο...

## WEDNESDAY

*ad vigilas albas*

—Why doesn't it get dark?

—Have a look if you want to, the new moon must have  
come out somewhere.

—Everybody looks at what you're going to do  
and you look at the crowds looking at you;  
the glances inscribe a tight circle  
that can't be broken.

If someone is born the circle will widen  
if someone dies the circle will shrink  
yet so little, and for so short a time.  
And the four other senses follow the same  
geometry.

If we were to love, the circle would break,  
we'd close our eyelashes a second.  
But we can't love.

They were lovely, your eyes, but you didn't know  
where to look  
and when you said we ought to go because it was  
dark,  
you turned and looked me in the eyes and a  
bat  
flew off, inscribing triangles . . .

Ξανάρχισε πάλι τὸ γραμμόφωνο.  
 Οἱ νυχτερίδες οἱ δικές μας τώρα  
 γράφουνε κύκλους ποὺ στενεύουν ὅσο πετᾶνε  
 ἀπὸ τὸν ἄνθρωπο στὸν ἄνθρωπο, στὸν ἄλλον  
 ἄνθρωπο  
 κανεῖς δὲν ξεφεύγει  
 κι' ἡ ζωὴ εἶναι πλούσια γιατί εἴμαστε πολλοὶ  
 κι' ὅλοι μας ἴδιοι  
 κι' ἡ ζωὴ εἶναι πλούσια γιατί βρήκαμε  
 τελειοποιημένα μηχανήματα  
 ὅταν οἱ αἰσθήσεις παρακμάζουν.  
 Ἀδέρφια, μοιραστήκαμε τὸ ψωμὶ καὶ τὸν πόνο.  
 Κανένας δὲν πεινᾷ, δὲν ὑποφέρει πιά κανένας  
 κι' ἔχουμε ὅλοι μας τὸ ἴδιο ἀνάστημα. Κοιτᾶχτε  
 μας!  
 Σᾶς κοιτάζουμε. Κι' ἐμεῖς! Κι' ἐμεῖς! Κι' ἐμεῖς!  
 Δὲν εἶναι τίποτε πάρα πέρα.  
 — "Ὅμως τὴ θάλασσα  
 δὲν ξέρω νὰ τὴν ἔχουν ἐξαντλήσει.

## Π Ε Μ Π Τ Η

Τὴν εἶδα νὰ πεθαίνει πολλές φορές  
 κάποτε κλαίγοντας στὴν ἀγκαλιά μου  
 κάποτε στὴν ἀγκαλιά ἐνὸς ξένου  
 κάποτε μόνη της, γυμνή·  
 ἔτσι ἔζησε κοντά μου.  
 Τώρα πιά ξέρω πὼς δὲν εἶναι τίποτε πάρα πέρα  
 καὶ περιμένω.  
 Ἄν λυποῦμαι εἶναι μιὰ ὑπόθεση ἰδιωτική  
 ὅπως τὰ συναισθήματα γιὰ τόσο ἀπλὰ πράγματα  
 ποὺ καθὼς λένε τὰ ἔχουμε ξεπεράσει·

The gramophone started up again.  
Our bats now inscribe  
circles that shrink as they fly  
from one man to another man and on to  
another  
no one escapes  
and life is rich because we're many  
and all of us the same  
and life is rich because we come up with  
perfected devices  
when the senses decline.  
Brothers, we've shared our bread and our pain.  
No one hungers any longer, no one suffers  
and all of us have the same stature. Look at  
us!  
We look at you. We too. We too. We too.  
There is nothing beyond.  
—But the sea:  
I don't know that they've drained it dry.

#### *THURSDAY*

I saw her die many times  
sometimes crying in my arms  
sometimes in a stranger's arms  
sometimes alone, naked;  
so she lived near me.  
Now at last I know there's nothing further  
and I wait.  
If I'm sorry, it's a private matter  
like the feeling for things so simple  
that, as they say, one's passed beyond them;

κι' ὅμως λυποῦμαι ἀκόμη γιατί  
 δὲν ἔγινα κι' ἐγὼ (ὅπως θὰ τό ἤθελα)  
 σὰν τὸ χορτάρι ποὺ ἄκουσα νὰ φυτρώνει  
 μιὰ νύχτα κοντὰ σ' ἓνα πεῦκο·  
 γιατί δὲν ἀκολούθησα τῇ θάλασσᾳ  
 μιὰν ἄλλη νύχτα ποὺ τραβιούνταν τὰ νερὰ  
 πίνοντας ἀπαλὰ τὴν πίκρα τους,  
 κι' οὔτε κατὰλαβα ὅταν ψηλάφησα τὰ ὑγρὰ φύκια  
 πόση τιμὴ ἀπομένει στὶς παλάμες τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.  
 Πέρασαν ὅλα αὐτὰ βαριὰ καὶ τελειωτικὰ  
 σὰν τὶς μαοῦνες μὲ τὰ ξεθωριασμένα ὀνόματα  
 ELLENH ΤΗΣ ΣΠΑΡΤΗΣ, ΤΥΡΑΝΝΟΣ, GLORIA MUNDI  
 πέρασαν κάτω ἀπὸ τὰ γιοφύρια πέρα ἀπ' τὶς καπνοδόχες  
 μὲ δυὸ σκυφτοὺς ἀνθρώπους στὴν πλώρη καὶ στὴν πρύμη  
 γυμνοὺς ὡς τὴ μέση·  
 πέρασαν, δὲν ξεχωρίζω τίποτε, μέσα στὴν πρωινὴ καταχνιὰ  
 μόλις ξεχωρίζαν τ' ἄρνια κουλουριασμένα μηρυκάζοντας οὔτε  
 τὴ νύχτα ξεχωρίζει τὸ φεγγάρι πάνω ἀπ' τὸν ποταμὸ  
 ποὺ περιμένει·  
 μόνο ἐφτὰ λόγχεις βυθισμένες στὸ νερὸ  
 στεκάμενο καὶ χωρὶς αἶμα  
 καὶ κάποτε στὶς πλάκες φωτισμένες θλιβερὰ  
 κάτω ἀπ' τὸν πύργο τὸν ἀλλοίθωρο  
 ζωγραφιστὸς μὲ κόκκινο καὶ κίτρινο μολύβι  
 δείχνοντας τὴν πληγὴ τοῦ ὁ Ναζωραῖος.  
 «Μὴ ρίχνετε τὴν καρδιά σας στὰ σκυλιά.  
 Μὴ ρίχνετε τὴν καρδιά σας στὰ σκυλιά».  
 Βουλιάζει κι' ἡ φωνὴ της μὲ τὸ χτύπημα τοῦ ρολογιοῦ·  
 τὸ θέλημά σου, γύρεψα τὸ θέλημά σου.

and yet I'm sorry still because  
I too didn't become (as I would have wished)  
like the grass I heard sprouting  
one night near a pine-tree;  
because I didn't follow the sea  
another night when the waters were withdrawing  
gently drinking their own bitterness,  
and I didn't even understand, as I groped in the damp  
seaweed,  
how much honor remains in the hands of men.  
All this passed by slowly and conclusively  
like the barges with faded names:  
**HELEN OF SPARTA, TYRANNUS, GLORIA MUNDI**  
they passed under the bridges beyond the chimneys  
with two stooping men at the prow and stern  
naked to the waist;  
they passed, I can't distinguish anything, in the morning fog  
the sheep, curled, ruminating, barely stand out  
nor does the moon stand out above  
the waiting river;  
only seven lances plunged in the water  
stagnant, bloodless  
and sometimes on the flagstones, sadly lit  
under the squint-eyed castle,  
drawn with red and yellow pencil:  
the Nazarene, showing his wound.  
"Don't throw your heart to the dogs.  
Don't throw your heart to the dogs."  
Her voice sinks as the clock strikes;  
your will, I sought your will.

## ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ

Ἀπὸ τότες πόσες φορές πέρασε μπροστὰ στὰ μάτια μου μιὰ γυναίκα, πού τῆς ἀπόμεναν μονάχα τὰ μαλλιά, τὰ μάτια, τὸ στῆθος καὶ τίποτε ἄλλο, γοργόνα ταξιδεύοντας στὸ πέλαγο, κι' ἀνάμεσό τους κυκλοφοροῦσε τὸ φρέσκο ἀεράκι, σὰ γαλάζιο αἶμα.

## ΣΑΒΒΑΤΟ

— «Δὲν ξέχασα τίποτε  
ὅλα εἶναι στὴ θέση τους ταχτοποιημένα κατὰ σειρά περιμέ-  
νοντας τὸ χέρι νὰ διαλέξει  
μόνο δὲν μπόρεσα νὰ βρῶ τὰ παιδικὰ χρόνια  
μήτε τὸν τόπο πού γεννήθηκε ὁ ἥρωας τοῦ δράματος  
μήτε τίς πρῶτες ἐντυπώσεις  
ἐκεῖνες πού θυμᾶται στὴν πέμπτη πράξη  
στὴν κορυφὴ τῆς δυστυχίας.  
Ὅλα τ' ἄλλα, νὰ τα, κατὰ σειρά :  
οἱ προσωπίδες γιὰ τὰ τρία κύρια συναισθήματα  
καὶ τὰ ἐνδιάμεσα  
τὰ φορέματα μὲ τίς βόλτες ἔτοιμες νὰ κινηθοῦν  
τὰ παραπετάσματα, τὰ φῶτα  
τὰ σκοτωμένα παιδιά τῆς Μήδειας  
τὸ φαρμάκι καὶ τὸ μαχαίρι.  
Μέσα σ' αὐτὸ τὸ κουτί εἶναι ἡ ζωὴ ὅταν ἀρχίσει νὰ γίνεται  
ἀνυπόφορη,  
ἂν τ' ἀφουγκραστεῖς θὰ τὴν ἀκούσεις πῶς ἀνασαίνει·

## *FRIDAY*

Since then how many times has there passed before me a woman with only her hair, eyes, and breasts left, nothing else—mermaid traveling the seas—and with the fresh air circulating between them like blue blood.

## *SATURDAY*

—“I haven’t forgotten anything,  
everything’s in its place, arranged in order, waiting for the  
    hand to choose;  
only I couldn’t find the childhood years  
nor the place where the hero of the drama was born  
nor the first impressions  
those he recalls in the fifth act  
at the height of the disaster.  
All the rest, there it is, in order:  
the masks for the three main emotions  
and for the intermediary ones  
the pleated costumes ready to move,  
the curtains, the lights,  
Medea’s slaughtered children,  
the poison and the knife.  
In that box there’s life when it starts getting unbearable:  
if you put your ear close you’ll hear it breathing;

πρόσεξε μὴν τ' ἀνοίξεις προτοῦ σφυρίζουν οἱ Εὐμενίδες.  
Μέσα σ' αὐτὸ τὸ γυαλὶ βρίσκεται ὁ ἔρωτας τοῦ κορμιοῦ  
καὶ στὸ ἄλλο, ποὺ εἶναι γαλάζιο, ὁ ἔρωτας τῆς ψυχῆς·  
πρόσεξε μὴν τ' ἀναμίξεις,  
καὶ σ' αὐτὸ τὸ συρτάρι τὸ πουκάμισο τοῦ Νέσσου  
(πέμπτη πράξη, σκηνὴ τρίτη)  
τὰ λόγια τὰ θυμᾶσαι ποὺ ἀρχίζουν·  
'Αρκεῖτω βίος! 'Ιώ! 'Ιώ!  
'Εδῶ εἶναι ἡ σάλπιγγα ποὺ γκρεμίζει τὸ παλάτι  
καὶ φαίνεται ἡ βασίλισσα μέσα στὴν ἀνομία,  
αὐτὸς εἶναι ὁ διακόπτης τῶν μικροφῶνων  
θὰ σ' ἀκούσουν ὥς τὰ πέρατα τοῦ κόσμου.  
'Εμπρός! Προβολέα! Καλὴ τύχη!»

— «Μιὰ στιγμή, ποιὸς θὰ εἶμαι; ποιὸν θὰ σκοτώσω;  
κι' οἱ ἄνθρωποι τοῦτοι ποὺ μὲ κοιτάζουν  
πῶς θὰ πιστέψουν πῶς ἡ δικαιοσύνη μὲ προστατεύει;  
πῶς θὰ πιστέψουν;  
'Ω νὰ μπορούσαμε ν' ἀγαπήσουμε  
τουλάχιστο σὰν τὶς μέλισσες  
ὄχι σὰν τὰ περιστέρια  
τουλάχιστο σὰν τὰ κοχύλια  
ὄχι σὰν τὶς σειρῆνες  
τουλάχιστο σὰν τὰ μερμήγκια  
ὄχι σὰν τὰ πλατάνια...  
μὰ δὲν τοὺς βλέπεις, ὅλοι τοὺς εἶναι τυφλοὶ!  
Οἱ τυφλοὶ κοιμοῦνται...»

— «Θαυμάσια, μπορεῖς νὰ ἐξακολουθήσεις».

make sure you don't open it before the Furies whistle.  
In that glass you'll find love of the body  
and in that other glass—the blue one—love of the soul:  
make sure you don't confuse them.  
And in that drawer is Nessus' shirt  
(Act Five Scene Three);  
you remember the speech that begins:  
"Enough of life! Io! Io!"  
Here's the trumpet that destroys the palace  
revealing the queen in her iniquity;  
that's the microphone switch—  
they'll hear you at the far end of the world.  
Let's go. Lights! Good luck!"

—"Just a moment, who am I going to play? Who will I kill?  
And these people looking at me—  
what will make them believe that justice protects me?  
What will make them believe it?  
O could we only love  
like bees at least  
not like pigeons  
like shells at least  
not like sirens  
like ants at least  
not like plane-trees . . .  
But don't you see them, they're all blind!  
The blind are sleeping . . ."

—"Wonderful. You can continue."

*ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ*

Δυὸ βαριὰ ἄλογα καὶ ἓνα ἀργὸ ἀμάξι, αὐτὸ ἢ κάτι ἄλλο,  
ἔξω ἀπὸ τὸ παράθυρό μου στὸ δρόμο  
αὐτὸς ὁ θόρυβος.  
Σὲ λίγο θὰ ᾿χει νυχτώσει· βλέπω νὰ μὲ κοιτάζει ἀκόμῃ ἓνα  
ἀέτωμα γεμάτο ἀγάλματα ἀκρωτηριασμένα.  
Πόσο βαριὰ εἶναι τὰ ἀγάλματα;  
Προτιμῶ μιὰ στάλα αἷμα ἀπὸ ἓνα ποτήρι μελάνι.

Καλοκαίρι, 1933

*SUNDAY*

Two heavy horses and a slow carriage, that or something  
else,  
in the street outside my window:  
that's the noise.  
Soon it'll be dark; I see a pediment of amputated statues  
still looking at me.  
What do statues weigh?  
I prefer a drop of blood to a glass of ink.

Summer, 1933

## ΣΧΕΔΙΑ ΓΙΑ ΕΝΑ ΚΑΛΟΚΑΙΡΙ

## SKETCHES FOR A SUMMER

## ΕΝΑΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ ΓΙΑ ΤΟ ΚΑΛΟΚΑΙΡΙ

Γυρίσαμε πάλι στο φθινόπωρο, τὸ καλοκαίρι  
σάν ἓνα τετράδιο ποὺ μᾶς κούρασε γράφοντας μένει  
γεμάτο διαγραφές ἀφηρημένα σχέδια  
στὸ περιθώριο κι' ἐρωτηματικά, γυρίσαμε  
στὴν ἐποχὴ τῶν ματιῶν ποὺ κοιτάζουν  
στὸν καθρέφτη μέσα στὸ ἡλεκτρικὸ φῶς  
σφιγμένα χεῖλια κι' οἱ ἄνθρωποι ξένοι  
στὶς κάμαρες στοὺς δρόμους κάτω ἀπ' τὶς πιπεριές  
καθὼς οἱ φάροι τῶν αὐτοκινήτων σκοτώνουν  
χιλιάδες χλωμές προσωπίδες.  
Γυρίσαμε· πάντα κινᾶμε γιὰ νὰ γυρίσουμε  
στὴ μοναξιά, μιὰ φούχτα χῶμα, στὶς ἄδειες παλάμες.

Κι' ὅμως ἀγάπησα κάποτε τὴ λεωφόρο Συγγροῦ  
τὸ διπλὸ λίκνισμα τοῦ μεγάλου δρόμου  
ποὺ μᾶς ἄφηνε θαματοργὰ στὴ θάλασσα  
τὴν παντοτινὴ γιὰ νὰ μᾶς πλύνει ἀπὸ τὶς ἁμαρτίες·  
ἀγάπησα κάποιους ἀνθρώπους ἄγνωστους  
ἀπαντημένους ξαφνικὰ στὸ ἔβγα τῆς μέρας,  
μονολογώντας σάν καπετάνιοι βουλιαγμένης ἀρμάδας,  
σημάδια πὼς ὁ κόσμος εἶναι μεγάλος.  
Κι' ὅμως ἀγάπησα τοὺς δρόμους τοὺς ἐδῶ, αὐτὲς τὶς κολόνες·  
κι' ἃς γεννήθηκα στὴν ἄλλη ἀκρογιαλιά κοντὰ  
σὲ βοῦρλα καὶ σὲ καλάμια νησιὰ

## A WORD FOR SUMMER

We've returned to autumn again; summer,  
like an exercise book we're tired of writing in, remains  
full of deletions, abstract designs,  
question marks in the margin; we've returned  
to the season of eyes gazing  
into the mirror under the electric light  
closed lips and people strangers  
in rooms in streets under the pepper-trees  
while the headlights of cars massacre  
thousands of pale masks.  
We've returned; we always set out to return  
to solitude, a fistful of earth, to the empty hands.

And yet I used to love Syngrou Avenue\*  
the double rise and fall of the great road  
bringing us out miraculously to the sea  
the eternal sea, to cleanse us of our sins;  
I used to love certain unknown people  
met suddenly at the end of day  
talking to themselves like captains of a sunken armada,  
evidence that the world is large.  
And yet I used to love these roads here, these columns,  
even though I was born on the other shore, close  
to reeds and rushes, islands

πού εἶχαν νερὸ στὴν ἄμμο νὰ ξεδιψάει  
ὁ κουπολάτης, κι' ἄς γεννήθηκα κοντὰ  
στὴ θάλασσα πού ξετυλίγω καὶ τυλίγω στὰ δάχτυλά μου  
σὰν εἶμαι κουρασμένος — δὲν ξέρω πιά ποῦ γεννήθηκα.

Μένει ἀκόμα τὸ κίτρινο ἀπόσταγμα τὸ καλοκαίρι  
καὶ τὰ χέρια σου γγίζοντας μέδουσες πάνω στὸ νερὸ  
τὰ μάτια σου ξεσκεπασμένα ξαφνικά, τὰ πρῶτα  
μάτια τοῦ κόσμου, κι' οἱ θαλασσινὲς σπηλιές·  
πόδια γυμνά στὸ κόκκινο χῶμα.  
Μένει ἀκόμα ὁ ξανθὸς μαρμαρωμένος ἔφηβος τὸ καλοκαίρι  
λίγο ἀλάτι πού στέγνωσε στὴ γούβα ἐνὸς βράχου  
λίγες βελόνες πεύκου ὕστερα ἀπ' τὴ βροχὴ  
σκόρπιες καὶ κόκκινες σὰ χαλασμένα δίχτυα.

Δὲν τὰ καταλαβαίνω αὐτὰ τὰ πρόσωπα δὲν τὰ καταλαβαίνω  
μιμοῦνται κάποτε τὸ θάνατο κι' ἔπειτα ξανά  
φέγγουν μὲ μιὰ ζωὴ πυγολαμπίδας χαμηλὴ  
μὲ μιὰ προσπάθεια περιορισμένη ἀνέλπιδη  
σφιγμένη ἀνάμεσα σὲ δυὸ ρυτίδες  
σὲ δυὸ τραπεζάκια καφενεῖου κηλιδωμένα  
σκοτώνουνται τὸ ἓνα μὲ τ' ἄλλο λιγοστεύουν  
κολλοῦν σὰ γραμματόσημα στὰ τζάμια  
τὰ πρόσωπα τῆς ἄλλης φυλῆς.

Περπατήσαμε μαζὶ μοιραστήκαμε τὸ ψωμὶ καὶ τὸν ὕπνο  
δοκιμάσαμε τὴν ἴδια πίκρα τοῦ ἀποχωρισμοῦ  
χτίσαμε μὲ τίς πέτρες πού εἶχαμε τὰ σπίτια μας  
πήραμε τὰ καράβια ξενιτευτήκαμε γυρίσαμε

where water gushed from the sand to quench  
the thirst of a rower, even though I was born  
close to the sea that I unwind and wind on my fingers  
when I'm tired—I no longer know where I was born.

There still remains the yellow essence, summer,  
and your hands touching medusas on the water  
your eyes suddenly open, the first  
eyes of the world, and the sea caves:  
feet naked on the red soil.

There still remains the blond marble youth, summer,  
a little salt dried in the rock's hollow  
a few pine needles after the rain  
scattered and red like broken nets.

I don't understand these faces I don't understand them,  
sometimes they imitate death and then again  
they gleam with the low life of a glow-worm  
with a limited effort, hopeless,  
squeezed between two wrinkles,  
between two stained café tables;  
they kill one another, grow smaller,  
stick like postage stamps to window panes—  
the faces of the other tribe.

We walked together, shared bread and sleep  
tasted the same bitterness of parting  
built our houses with what stones we had  
set out in ships, knew exile, returned

βρήκαμε τὶς γυναῖκες μας νὰ περιμένουν  
μᾶς γνώρισαν δύσκολα, κανεῖς δὲ μᾶς γνωρίζει.  
Κι' οἱ σύντροφοι φόρεσαν τ' ἀγάλματα φόρεσαν τὶς γυμνές  
ἄδειες καρέκλες τοῦ φθινοπώρου, κι' οἱ σύντροφοι  
σκοτώσανε τὰ πρόσωπά τους· δὲν τὰ καταλαβαίνω.  
Μένει ἀκόμα ἡ κίτρινη ἔρημο τὸ καλοκαίρι  
κύματα τῆς ἄμμου φεύγοντας ὥς τὸν τελευταῖο κύκλο  
ἓνας ρυθμὸς τυμπάνου ἀλύπητος ἀτέλειωτος  
μάτια φλογισμένα βουλιάζοντας μέσα στὸν ἥλιο  
χέρια μὲ φερσίματα πουλιῶν χαράζοντας τὸν οὐρανὸ  
χαιρετώντας στίχους νεκρῶν σὲ στάση προσοχῆς  
χαμένα σ' ἓνα σημεῖο ποὺ δὲν τ' ὀρίζω καὶ μὲ κυβερνᾷ·  
τὰ χέρια σου γγίζοντας τὸ ἐλεύθερο κῆμα.

Φθινόπωρο, 1936

found our women waiting—  
they scarcely knew us, no one knows us.  
And the companions wore statues, wore the naked  
empty chairs of autumn, and the companions  
destroyed their own faces: I don't understand them.  
There still remains the yellow desert, summer,  
waves of sand receding to the final circle  
a drum's beat, merciless, endless,  
flaming eyes sinking into the sun  
hands in the manner of birds cutting the sky  
saluting ranks of the dead who stand at attention  
hands lost at a point beyond my control and mastering me:  
your hands touching the free wave.

Autumn, 1936

## ΕΠΙΦΑΝΙΑ, 1937

Τ' άνθισμένο πέλαγο και τὰ βουνὰ στὴ χάση τοῦ φεγ-  
γαριοῦ  
ἡ μεγάλη πέτρα κοντὰ στὶς ἀραποσυκιές και τ' ἀσφοδίλια  
τὸ σταμνὶ ποὺ δὲν ἤθελε νὰ στερέψει στὸ τέλος τῆς μέρας  
και τὸ κλειστὸ κρεβάτι κοντὰ στὰ κυπαρίσσια και τὰ μαλ-  
λιά σου  
χρυσά· τ' ἄστρα τοῦ Κύκνου κι' ἐκεῖνο τ' ἄστρο ὁ Ἀλδε-  
βαράν.

Κράτησα τὴ ζωὴ μου κράτησα τὴ ζωὴ μου ταξιδεύοντας  
ἀνάμεσα στὰ κίτρινα δέντρα κατὰ τὸ πλάγιασμα τῆς  
βροχῆς  
σὲ σιωπηλὲς πλαγιὲς φορτωμένες μὲ τὰ φύλλα τῆς ὀξιᾶς,  
καμιὰ φωτιὰ στὴν κορυφὴ τους· βραδιάζει.  
Κράτησα τὴ ζωὴ μου· στ' ἀριστερό σου χέρι μιὰ γραμμὴ  
μιὰ χαρακιὰ στὸ γόνατό σου, τάχα νὰ ὑπάρχουν  
στὴν ἄμμο τοῦ περασμένου καλοκαιριοῦ τάχα  
νὰ μένουν ἐκεῖ ποὺ φύσηξε ὁ βοριάς καθὼς ἀκούω  
γύρω στὴν παγωμένη λίμνη τὴν ξένη φωνή.  
Τὰ πρόσωπα ποὺ βλέπω δὲ ρωτοῦν μήτε ἡ γυναίκα  
περπατώντας σκυφτὴ βυζαίνοντας τὸ παιδί της.  
Ἀνεβαίνω τὰ βουνὰ· μελανιασμένες λαγκαδιές· ὁ χιονι-  
σμένος  
κάμπος, ὡς πέρα ὁ χιονισμένος κάμπος, τίποτε δὲ ρωτοῦν

## EPIPHANY, 1937

The flowering sea and the mountains in the moon's waning  
the great stone close to the Barbary figs and the asphodels  
the jar that refused to go dry at the end of day  
and the closed bed by the cypress trees and your hair  
golden; the stars of the Swan and that other star, Aldebaran.

I've kept a hold on my life, kept a hold on my life, traveling  
among yellow trees in driving rain  
on silent slopes loaded with beech leaves  
no fire on their peaks; it's getting dark.  
I've kept a hold on my life; on your left hand a line  
a scar at your knee, perhaps they exist  
on the sand of the past summer perhaps  
they remain there where the north wind blew as I hear  
an alien voice around the frozen lake.  
The faces I see do not ask questions nor does the woman  
bent as she walks giving her child the breast.  
I climb the mountains; dark ravines; the snow-covered  
plain, into the distance stretches the snow-covered plain,  
they ask nothing

μήτε ὁ καιρὸς κλειστὸς σὲ βουβὰ ἔρμοκλήσια μήτε  
τὰ χέρια ποὺ ἀπλώνονται γιὰ νὰ γυρέψουν, κι' οἱ δρό-  
μοι.

Κράτησα τὴ ζωὴ μου ψιθυριστὰ μέσα στὴν ἀπέραντη  
σιωπὴ

δὲν ξέρω πιά νὰ μιλήσω μήτε νὰ συλλογιστῶ· ψίθυροι  
σὰν τὴν ἀνάσα τοῦ κυπαρισσιοῦ τὴ νύχτα ἐκείνη  
σὰν τὴν ἀνθρώπινη φωνὴ τῆς νυχτερινῆς θάλασσας στὰ χα-  
λίκια

σὰν τὴν ἀνάμνηση τῆς φωνῆς σου λέγοντας «εὐτυχία».

Κλείνω τὰ μάτια γυρεύοντας τὸ μυστικὸ συναπάντημα  
τῶν νερῶν

κάτω ἀπ' τὸν πάγο τὸ χαμογέλιο τῆς θάλασσας τὰ κλειστὰ  
πηγάδια

ψηλαφώντας μὲ τὶς δικές μου φλέβες τὶς φλέβες ἐκεῖνες  
ποὺ μοῦ ξεφεύγουν

ἐκεῖ ποὺ τελειώνουν τὰ νερολούλουδα κι' αὐτὸς ὁ ἄνθρωπος  
ποὺ βηματίζει τυφλὸς πάνω στὸ χιόνι τῆς σιωπῆς.

Κράτησα τὴ ζωὴ μου, μαζὶ του, γυρεύοντας τὸ νερὸ ποὺ σ'  
ἀγγίζει

στάλες βαρεῖες πάνω στὰ πράσινα φύλλα, στὸ πρόσωπό σου  
μέσα στὸν ἄδειο κῆπο, στάλες στὴν ἀκίνητη δεξαμενὴ  
βρίσκοντας ἕναν κύκνο νεκρὸ μέσα στὰ κάτασπρα φτε-  
ρά του,

δέντρα ζωντανὰ καὶ τὰ μάτια σου προσηλωμένα.

Ὁ δρόμος αὐτὸς δὲν τελειώνει δὲν ἔχει ἀλλαγὴ, ὅσο γυρεύεις  
νὰ θυμηθεῖς τὰ παιδικὰ σου χρόνια, ἐκείνους ποὺ ἔφυγαν  
ἐκείνους

neither time shut up in dumb chapels nor  
hands outstretched to beg, nor the roads.  
I've kept a hold on my life whispering in a boundless silence  
I no longer know how to speak nor how to think; whispers  
like the breathing of the cypress tree that night  
like the human voice of the night sea on pebbles  
like the memory of your voice saying "happiness."  
I close my eyes looking for the secret meeting place of the  
waters  
under the ice the sea's smile, the closed wells  
groping with my veins for those veins that escape me  
there where the water-lilies end and that man  
who walks blindly across the snows of silence.  
I've kept a hold on my life, with him, looking for the water  
that touches you  
heavy drops on green leaves, on your face  
in the empty garden, drops in the motionless reservoir  
striking a swan dead in its white wings  
living trees and your eyes staring.

This road has no end, has no relief, however hard you try  
to recall your childhood years, those who left, those

ποὺ χάθηκαν μέσα στὸν ὕπνο τοὺς πελαγίσσιους τάφους,  
ὅσο ζητᾷς τὰ σώματα ποὺ ἀγάπησες νὰ σκύψουν  
κάτω ἀπὸ τὰ σκληρὰ κλωνάρια τῶν πλατάνων ἐκεῖ  
ποὺ στάθηκε μιὰ ἀχτίδα τοῦ ἡλίου γυμνωμένη  
καὶ σκίρτησε ἓνας σκύλος καὶ φτεροκόπησε ἡ καρδιά σου,  
ὁ δρόμος δὲν ἔχει ἀλλαγὴ· κράτησα τὴ ζωὴ μου.

Τὸ χιόνι  
καὶ τὸ νερὸ παγωμένο στὰ πατήματα τῶν ἀλόγων.

lost in sleep, in the graves of the sea,  
however much you ask bodies you've loved to stoop  
under the harsh branches of the plane-trees there  
where a ray of the sun, naked, stood still  
and a dog leapt and your heart shuddered,  
the road has no relief; I've kept a hold on my life.

The snow  
and the water frozen in the hoofmarks of the horses.

## RAVEN

In memoriam E. A. P.

Χρόνια σὰν τὰ φτερά. Τί θυμᾶται τ' ἀκίνητο κοράκι ;  
τί θυμοῦνται οἱ πεθαμένοι κοντὰ στὶς ρίζες τῶν δέντρων ;  
Εἶχαν ἓνα χρώμα τὰ χέρια σου σὰν τὸ μῆλο ποὺ πέφτει.  
Κι' αὐτὴ ἡ φωνὴ ποὺ ξαναγυρίζει πάντα, χαμηλὴ.

Ἐκεῖνοι ποὺ ταξιδεύουν κοιτάζουν τὸ πανὶ καὶ τ' ἀστέρια  
ἀκοῦνε τὸν ἀγέρα ἀκοῦνε πέρα ἀπ' τὸν ἀγέρα τὴν ἄλλη θά-  
λασσα

σὰν ἓνα κοχύλι κλειστὸ κοντὰ τους, δὲν ἀκοῦνε  
τίποτε ἄλλο, δὲν ψάχνουν μέσα στοὺς ἴσκιους τῶν κυπα-  
ρισσιῶν

ἓνα χαμένο πρόσωπο, ἓνα νόμισμα, δὲ γυρεύουν  
κοιτάζοντας ἓνα κοράκι σ' ἓνα ξερὸ κλωνί, τί θυμᾶται.

Μένει ἀκίνητο πάνω στὶς ὥρες μου λίγο πιὸ ψηλὰ  
σὰν τὴν ψυχὴ ἑνὸς ἀγάλματος ποὺ δὲν ἔχει μάτια  
εἶναι ἓνα πλῆθος μαζεμένο μέσα σ' αὐτὸ τὸ πουλὶ  
χίλιοι ἄνθρωποι ξεχασμένοι σβησμένες ρυτίδες  
ἐρειπωμένες ἀγκαλιές καὶ γέλια ποὺ δὲν τέλειωσαν  
ἔργα σταματημένα σιωπηλοὶ σταθμοὶ  
ἓνας ὕπνος βαρὺς ἀπὸ χρυσὰ ψιχαλίσματα.

Μένει ἀκίνητο. Κοιτάζει τίς ὥρες μου. Τί θυμᾶται ;  
Εἶναι πολλὲς πληγὲς μέσα στοὺς ἀόρατους ἀνθρώπους,  
μέσα του

## RAVEN

In memoriam E. A. P.

Years like wings. What does the motionless raven remember?  
What do the dead close to the roots of trees remember?  
Your hands had the color of an apple ready to fall,  
and that voice which always returns, that low voice.

Those who travel watch the sail and the stars  
they hear the wind they hear the other sea beyond the wind  
near them like a closed shell, they don't hear  
anything else, don't look among the cypress shadows  
for a lost face, a coin, don't ask,  
seeing a raven on a dry branch, what it remembers.  
It remains motionless just over my hours  
like the soul of an eyeless statue;  
there's a whole crowd gathered in that bird  
thousands of people forgotten, wrinkles obliterated  
broken embraces and uncompleted laughter,  
arrested works, silent stations  
a deep sleep of golden spangles.  
It remains motionless. It gazes at my hours. What does it  
remember?  
There are many wounds inside those invisible people within  
it

πάθη μετέωρα περιμένοντας τὴ δεύτερη παρουσία  
 ἐπιθυμίες ταπεινές ποὺ κόλλησαν πάνω στὸ χῶμα  
 σκοτωμένα παιδιά καὶ γυναῖκες ποὺ κουράστηκαν τὴν  
 αὐγή.  
 Τάχα νὰ βαραίνει πάνω στὸ ξερὸ κλωνι τάχα νὰ  
 βαραίνει  
 πάνω στὶς ρίζες τοῦ κίτρινου δέντρου πάνω στοὺς  
 ὤμους  
 τῶν ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων, τὶς παράξενες φυσιογνωμίες  
 ποὺ δὲν τολμοῦν νὰ γγίξουν μιὰ στάλα νερὸ βυθισμένοι στὸ  
 χῶμα  
 τάχα νὰ βαραίνει πουθενά ;  
 Εἶχαν ἓνα βάρος τὰ χέρια σου ὅπως μέσα στὸ νερὸ  
 μέσα στὶς θαλασσινὲς σπηλιές, ἓνα βάρος ἀλαφρὸ χωρὶς  
 συλλογὴ  
 μὲ τὴν κίνηση κάποτε ποὺ διώχνουμε τὴν ἄσκημη σκέψη  
 στρώνοντας τὸ πέλαγο ὡς πέρα στὸν ὀρίζοντα στὰ νησιά.  
 Εἶναι βαρὺς ὁ κάμπος ὕστερ' ἀπ' τὴ βροχή· τί θυ-  
 μᾶται  
 ἡ μαύρη στεκάμενη φλόγα πάνω στὸν γκριζο οὐρανὸ  
 σφηνωμένη ἀνάμεσα στὸν ἄνθρωπο καὶ στὴν ἀνάμνηση τοῦ  
 ἀνθρώπου  
 ἀνάμεσα στὴν πληγὴ καὶ τὸ χέρι ποὺ πλήγωσε μαύρη  
 λόγχη,  
 σκοτείνιασε ὁ κάμπος πίνοντας τὴ βροχή, ἔπεσε ὁ ἀγέρας  
 δὲ σώνει ἢ δική μου πνοή, ποιὸς θὰ τὸ μετακινήσει ;  
 ἀνάμεσα στὴ μνήμη, χάσμα — ἓνα ξαφνισμένο στῆθος  
 ἀνάμεσα στοὺς ἴσκιους ποὺ μάχονται νὰ ξαναγίνουν ἄντρας  
 καὶ γυναίκα

suspended passions waiting for the Second Coming  
humble desires cleaving to the ground  
children slaughtered and women exhausted at daybreak.  
Does it weigh the dry branch down? Does it weigh down  
the roots of the yellow tree, the shoulders  
of other men, strange figures  
sunk in the ground, not daring to touch even a drop of  
water?

Does it weigh down anywhere?  
Your hands had a weight like hands in water  
in the sea caves, a light careless weight  
pushing the sea away to the horizon to the islands  
with that movement we make sometimes when we dismiss  
an ugly thought.

The plain is heavy after the rain; what does the black  
static flame against the gray sky remember  
wedged between man and the memory of man  
between the wound and the hand that inflicted the wound  
a black lance,  
the plain darkened drinking the rain, the wind dropped  
my own breath's not enough, who will move it?  
Within memory, a gulf—a startled breast  
between the shadows struggling to become man and woman  
again

ἀνάμεσα στὸν ὕπνο καὶ στὸ θάνατο στεκάμενη ζωή.

Εἶχαν μιὰ κίνηση τὰ χέρια σου πάντα πρὸς τὸν ὕπνο τοῦ  
    πελάγου  
χαϊδεύοντας τ' ὄνειρο ποὺ ἀνέβαινε ἡσυχὰ τὴ μαλαματένια  
    ἀράχνη  
φέρονοντας μέσα στὸν ἥλιο τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἀστερισμῶν  
τὰ κλεισμένα βλέφαρα τὰ κλεισμένα φτερά...

Κοριτσά, χειμῶνας 1937

stagnant life between sleep and death.

Your hands always moved towards the sea's slumber  
caressing the dream that gently ascended the golden spider-  
web  
bearing into the sun the host of constellations  
the closed eyelids the closed wings . . .

Koritsa, winter 1937

Ἄνθη τῆς πέτρας μπροστά στὴν πράσινη θάλασσα  
μὲ φλέβες ποὺ μοῦ θύμιζαν ἄλλες ἀγάπες  
γυαλίζοντας στ' ἄργò ψιχάλισμα,  
ἄνθη τῆς πέτρας φυσιογνωμίες  
ποὺ ἦρθαν ὅταν κανέννας δὲ μιλοῦσε καὶ μοῦ μίλησαν  
ποὺ μ' ἄφησαν νὰ τὶς ἀγγίξω ὥστερ' ἀπ' τὴ σιωπὴ  
μέσα σὲ πεῦκα σὲ πικροδάφνες καὶ σὲ πλατάνια.

Flowers of the rock facing the green sea  
with veins that reminded me of other loves  
glowing in the slow fine rain,  
flowers of the rock, figures  
that came when no one spoke and spoke to me  
that let me touch them after the silence  
among pine trees, oleanders, and plane trees.

Τὸ ζεστὸ νερὸ μοῦ θυμίζει κάθε πρωὶ  
πὼς δὲν ἔχω τίποτε ἄλλο ζωντανὸ κοντά μου.

The warm water reminds me each morning  
that I have nothing else alive near me.

## ΕΠΙΤΥΜΒΙΟ

Τὰ κάρβουνα μές στην όμίχλη  
εΐτανε ρόδα ριζωμένα στην καρδιά σου  
κι' ἡ στάχτη σκέπαζε τὸ πρόσωπό σου  
κάθε πρωί.

Μαδώντας ἴσκιους ἀπὸ κυπαρίσσια  
ἔφυγες τ' ἄλλο καλοκαίρι.

## EPITAPH

Coals in the fog  
were roses rooted in your heart  
and the ashes covered your face  
each morning.

Plucking cypress shadows  
you left a summer ago.

Ἀνάμεσα σὲ δυὸ πικρὲς στιγμὲς δὲν ἔχεις καιρὸ μήτε  
ν' ἀνασάνεις  
ἀνάμεσα στὸ πρόσωπό σου καὶ στὸ πρόσωπό σου  
μιὰ τρυφερὴ μορφὴ παιδιοῦ γράφεται καὶ σβήνει.

Between two bitter moments you don't have time even to  
breathe  
between your face and your face  
the tender form of a child takes shape and vanishes.

Μέσα στὶς θαλασσινὲς σπηλιές  
ὑπάρχει μιὰ δίψα ὑπάρχει μιὰ ἀγάπη  
ὑπάρχει μιὰ ἔκσταση,  
ὅλα σκληρὰ σὰν τὰ κοχύλια  
μπορεῖς νὰ τὰ κρατήσεις στὴν παλάμη σου.

Μέσα στὶς θαλασσινὲς σπηλιές  
μέρες ὁλόκληρες σὲ κοιτάζα στὰ μάτια  
καὶ δὲ σὲ γνώριζα μήτε μὲ γνώριζες.

In the sea caves  
there's a thirst there's a love  
there's an ecstasy  
all hard like shells  
you can hold them in your palm.

In the sea caves  
for whole days I gazed into your eyes  
and I didn't know you nor did you know me.

Πάψε πιά νὰ γυρεύεις τὴ θάλασσα καὶ τῶν κυμάτων τὶς  
προβιὲς σπρώχνοντας τὰ καῖκια  
κάτω ἀπ' τὸν οὐρανὸ εἵμαστε ἑμεῖς τὰ ψάρια καὶ τὰ δέντρα  
εἶναι τὰ φύκια.

Stop looking for the sea and the waves' fleece pushing the  
caiques along  
under the sky we are the fish and the trees are the seaweed.

## Η Μ Ε Ρ Ο Λ Ο Γ Ι Ο ΚΑΤΑΣΤΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ, Α΄

*Παραμένομεν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν θέσιν ἀναμένοντες διαταγὰς.*

ΗΜΕΡΟΛΟΓΙΑ ΚΑΤΑΣΤΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ

*Στὸ μεταξὺ πολλές φορές μοῦ φαίνεται  
πὼς εἶναι πιὸ καλὰ νὰ κοιμηθεῖς παρὰ νὰ βρῖσκεσαι ἔτσι χωρὶς  
σύντροφο  
καὶ νὰ ἐπιμένεις τόσο. Καὶ τί νὰ κάνεις μέσα στὴν ἀναμονή, καὶ  
τί νὰ πεῖς ;  
Δὲν ξέρω. Κι' οἱ ποιητὲς τί χρειάζονται σ' ἓνα μικρόψυχο  
καιρό ;*

ΦΡΕΙΔΕΡΙΚΟΣ ΧΕΛΑΝΤΕΡΑΙΝ, «ΤΟ ΨΩΜΙ ΚΑΙ ΤΟ ΚΡΑΣΙ»

# LOGBOOK I

*We remain in this position awaiting orders.*

FROM LOGBOOKS

*Meanwhile it sometimes seems better to me  
to sleep than to be so completely without companions as we  
are,  
to be always waiting like this; and what's to be done or said  
in the meanwhile  
I don't know, and what is the use of poets in a mean-spirited  
time?*

FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN, "BREAD AND WINE"\*

## Ο ΜΑΘΙΟΣ ΠΑΣΚΑΛΗΣ ΑΝΑΜΕΣΑ ΣΤΑ ΤΡΙΑΝΤΑΦΥΛΛΑ

Καπνίζω χωρίς να σταματήσω απ' τὸ πρωὶ  
ἂν σταματήσω τὰ τριαντάφυλλα θὰ μ' ἀγκαλιάσουν  
μ' ἀγκάθια καὶ μὲ ξεφυλλισμένα πέταλα θὰ μὲ πνίξουν  
φυτρώνουν στραβὰ ὅλα μὲ τὸ ἴδιο τριανταφυλλὶ  
κοιτάζουν· περιμένουν νὰ ἴδουν κάποιον· δὲν περνᾷ κανεὶς·  
πίσω ἀπὸ τὸν καπνὸ τῆς πίπας μου τὰ παρακολουθῶ  
πάνω σ' ἓνα κοτσάνι βαριεστισμένο χωρίς εὐωδιά,  
στὴν ἄλλη ζωὴ μιὰ γυναίκα μοῦ ἔλεγε μπορεῖς νὰ γγίξεις  
αὐτὸ τὸ χέρι  
κι' εἶναι δικό σου αὐτὸ τὸ τριαντάφυλλο εἶναι δικό σου  
μπορεῖς νὰ τὸ πάρεις  
τώρα ἢ ἀργότερα, ὅταν θελήσεις.

Κατεβαίνω καπνίζοντας ὀλοένα, τὰ σκαλοπάτια  
τὰ τριαντάφυλλα κατεβαίνουν μαζί μου ἐρεθισμένα  
κι' ἔχουνε κάτι στὸ φέρσιμό τους ἀπ' τὴ φωνὴ  
στὴ ρίζα τῆς κραυγῆς ἐκεῖ πού ἀρχίζει  
νὰ φωνάζει ὁ ἄνθρωπος: «μᾶνα» ἢ «βοήθεια»  
ἢ τὶς μικρὲς ἄσπρες φωνὲς τοῦ ἔρωτα.

Εἶναι ἓνας μικρὸς κῆπος ὅλο τριανταφυλλιές  
λίγα τετραγωνικὰ μέτρα πού χαμηλώνουν μαζί μου  
καθὼς κατεβαίνω τὰ σκαλοπάτια, χωρίς οὐρανό·

## MATHIOS PASKALIS AMONG THE ROSES

I've been smoking steadily all morning  
if I stop the roses will embrace me  
they'll choke me with thorns and fallen petals  
they grow crookedly, each with the same rose color  
they gaze, expecting to see someone go by; no one goes by.  
Behind the smoke of my pipe I watch them  
scentless on their weary stems.  
In the other life a woman said to me: "You can touch this  
hand,  
and this rose is yours, it's yours, you can take it  
now or later, whenever you like."

I go down the steps smoking still,  
and the roses follow me down excited  
and in their manner there's something of that voice  
at the root of a cry, there where one starts shouting  
"mother" or "help"  
or the small white cries of love.

It's a small garden full of roses  
a few square yards descending with me  
as I go down the steps, without the sky;

κι' ἡ θεία της ἔλεγε: «Ἀντιγόνη ξέχασες σήμερα τὴ γυναστική σου  
στὴν ἡλικία σου δὲ φορούσα κορσέ, στὴν ἐποχή μου». Ἡ θεία της εἶταν ἓνα θλιβερὸ κορμὶ μ' ἀνάγλυφες φλέβες  
εἶχε πολλὰς ρυτίδες γύρω στ' αὐτιά μιὰ ἐτοιμοθάνατη μύτη  
ἀλλὰ τὰ λόγια της εἶταν γεμάτα φρόνηση πάντα.  
Τὴν εἶδα μιὰ μέρα νὰ γγίζει τὸ στῆθος τῆς Ἀντιγόνης  
σὰν τὸ μικρὸ παιδὶ ποὺ κλέβει ἓνα μῆλο.

Τάχα θὰ τὴ συναπαντήσω τὴ γριὰ γυναίκα ἔτσι ποὺ κατεβαίνω;

Μοῦ εἶπε σὰν ἔφυγα: «Ποιὸς ξέρει πότε θὰ ξαναβρεθοῦμε;»  
κι' ἔπειτα διάβασα τὸ θάνατό της σὲ παλιὰς ἐφημερίδες  
τὸ γάμο τῆς Ἀντιγόνης καὶ τὸ γάμο τῆς κόρης τῆς Ἀντι-  
γόνης

χωρὶς νὰ τελειώσουν τὰ σκαλοπάτια μήτε ὁ καπνὸς μου  
ποὺ μοῦ δίνει μιὰ γέψη στοιχειωμένου καραβιοῦ  
μὲ μιὰ γοργόνα σταυρωμένη τότες ποὺ εἶταν ὁμορφη, πά-  
νω στὸ τιμόνι.

Κοριτσά, καλοκαίρι '37

and her aunt would say to her: "Antigone, you forgot your  
exercises today,  
at your age I never wore corsets, not in my time."  
Her aunt was a pitiful creature: veins in relief,  
wrinkles all around her ears, a nose ready to die;  
but her words were always full of prudence.  
One day I saw her touching Antigone's breast  
like a small child stealing an apple.

Is it possible that I'll meet the old woman now as I go  
down?  
She said to me as I left: "Who knows when we'll meet  
again?"  
And then I read of her death in old newspapers  
of Antigone's marriage and the marriage of Antigone's  
daughter  
without the steps coming to an end or my tobacco  
which leaves on my lips the taste of a haunted ship  
with a mermaid crucified to the wheel while she was still  
beautiful.

Koritsa, summer '37

## ΩΡΑΙΟ ΦΘΙΝΟΠΩΡΙΝΟ ΠΡΩΙ

Γιὰ τὴν κυρία Ντονογκὸ

Νά ποὺ μ' ἄρέσουν ἐπὶ τέλους αὐτὰ τὰ βουνά μ' αὐτὸ τὸ  
φῶς

μὲ δέρμα ρυτιδωμένο σὰν τὴν κοιλιὰ τοῦ ἐλέφαντα  
ὅταν τὰ μάτια του στενεύουν ἀπ' τὰ χρόνια.

Νά ποὺ μ' ἄρέσουν αὐτὲς οἱ λεῦκες, δὲν εἶναι πολλές  
σηκώνοντας τοὺς ὤμους μέσα στὸν ἥλιο.

Οἱ ἀψηλοὶ γκέγκηδες οἱ κοντοὶ τόσκηδες  
τὸ καλοκαίρι μὲ τὰ δρεπάνια καὶ τὸ χειμῶνα μὲ τὰ τσε-  
κούρια

κι' ὅλο τὰ ἴδια ξανά καὶ ξανά, ἴδιες κινήσεις  
στὰ ἴδια σώματα: κόπηκε ἡ μονοτονία.

Τί λέει ὁ Μουεζίνης στὴν ἄκρη τοῦ μιναρέ; γιὰ πρό-  
σεξε!

Ἐσκυψε ν' ἀγκαλιάσει μιὰ ξανθὴ κούκλα στὸ πλαῖνὸ  
μπαλκόνι.

Αὐτὴ ἀνεμίζει δυὸ ρόδινα χεράκια στὸν οὐρανὸ  
δὲν παραδέχεται νὰ τὴ βιάζουν.

Ὡστόσο γέρνει ὁ μιναρὲς καὶ τὸ μπαλκόνι σὰν τὸν πύργο  
τῆς Πίζας

ἀκοῦς μονάχα ψιθυρίσματα, δὲν εἶναι τὰ φύλλα μήτε  
τὸ νερὸ

«Ἀλλάχ! Ἀλλάχ!» δὲν εἶναι μήτε τ' ἀγεράκι, παράξενη  
προσευχή.

Ἐνας κόκορας λάλησε, πρέπει νὰ 'ναι ξανθὸς

## FINE AUTUMN MORNING

For Mrs. Dononko

There, you see, at last I love these mountains with this light  
their skin wrinkled like an elephant's belly  
when his eyes shrink with age.

There, you see, I love these poplars, few as they are,  
raising their shoulders into the sun.

The tall Ghegs and the short Tosks\*  
summer with the sickle and winter with the axe  
the same things again and again, the same movements  
in the same bodies: the monotony is broken.

What's the Muezzin saying from the top of his minaret?

Listen!

He's leaned over to embrace a blond doll on a nearby  
balcony.

She waves two pink little hands at the sky  
refusing to be ravished.

But the minaret and the balcony lean like the tower of Pisa  
you hear only whispers, it isn't the leaves or the water  
"Allah! Allah!" it isn't even the breeze, a strange prayer.  
A cock crowed, he must be blond—

ὦ ψυχὴ ἐρωτευμένη πού πέταξες στὰ ὕψη!

Νά πού μ' ἀρέσουν ἐπὶ τέλους αὐτὰ τὰ βουνά, ἔτσι κουλου-  
ριασμένα

τὸ γερασμένο κοπάδι τριγύρω μου μ' αὐτὲς τὶς ρυτίδες  
σκέφτηκε κανεὶς νὰ πεῖ τὴ μοίρα ἐνὸς βουνοῦ ὅπως κοιτά-  
ζει μιὰ παλάμη

σκέφτηκε κανεὶς;... Ὡ ἐκείνη ἡ ἐπίμονη σκέψη  
κλεισμένη σ' ἓνα κουτὶ ἀδειανό, θεληματικὴ  
χτυπώντας ἀδιάκοπα τὸ χαρτόνι, ὅλη τὴ νύχτα  
σὰν ποντικὸς πού ροκανίζει τὸ πάτωμα.

Κόπηκε ἡ μονοτονία, ὦ ἐσὺ πού πέταξες στὰ ὕψη, νά πού  
μ' ἀρέσει

κι' αὐτὸ τὸ βουβάλι τοῦ μακεδονίτικου κάμπου τόσο ὑπο-  
μονετικὸ

τόσο ἀβίαστο, σὰ νὰ τὸ ξέρει πὼς δὲ φτάνει κανεὶς πουθενὰ  
θυμίζει τ' ἀγέρωχο κεφάλι τοῦ πολεμόχαρου Βερκινγετόριξ  
*Tel qu'en lui-même enfin l'éternité le change.*

Κοριτσά, 1937

O soul in love that has soared to the heights!

There, you see, at last I love these mountains hunched up  
like this,

the ancient flock about me with these wrinkles.

Has anyone thought of telling a mountain's fortune as you  
read the palm of a hand?

Has anyone thought of it? . . . O that insistent thought  
shut up in an empty box, willfully  
beating the cardboard without a pause all night long  
like a mouse gnawing the floor.

The monotony is broken, O you who've soared to the  
heights, there, you see, I love

even that buffalo on the Macedonian plain, so patient,  
so unhurried, as if knowing that no one gets anywhere,  
recalling the arrogant head of the warlike Vercingetorix\*

*Tel qu'en lui-même enfin l'éternité le change.\**

Koritsa, 1937

## PIAZZA SAN NICOLO

*Longtemps je me suis couché de bonne heure*

τὸ σπίτι  
γεμάτο γρίλιες καὶ δυσπιστία σὰν τὸ καλοκοιτάξεις στὶς  
σκοτεινὲς γωνιᾲς  
«για χρόνια πλάγιαζα νωρὶς» ψιθυρίζει  
«κοίταζα τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ Ὑλα καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τῆς Μαγδα-  
ληνῆς  
προτοῦ καλονυχτίσω κοίταζα τὸν πολυέλαιο μὲ τ' ἄσπρο  
φῶς  
τὰ μέταλλα ποὺ γυάλιζαν καὶ δύσκολα ἄφηναν  
τὶς τελευταῖες φωνὲς τῆς μέρας».  
Τὸ σπίτι σὰν τὸ καλοκοιτάξεις μέσα ἀπὸ τὶς παλιὲς κορ-  
νίζες  
ξυπνᾷ μὲ τὰ πατήματα τῆς μητέρας στὰ σκαλοπάτια  
τὸ χέρι ποὺ φτιάχνει τὰ σκεπάσματα ἢ διορθώνει τὴν κου-  
νουπιέρα  
τὰ χεῖλια ποὺ σβήνουν τὴ φλόγα τοῦ κεριοῦ.

Κι' ὅλα τοῦτα εἶναι παλιές ἱστορίες ποὺ δὲν ἐνδιαφέρουν  
 πιά κανέναν  
 δέσαμε τὴν καρδιά μας καὶ μεγαλώσαμε.  
 Ἡ δροσιὰ τοῦ βουνοῦ δὲν κατεβαίνει ποτὲ χαμηλότερα ἀπὸ  
 τὸ καμπαναριὸ  
 ποὺ μετρᾷ τὶς ὥρες μονολογώντας καὶ τὸ βλέπουμε  
 σὰν ἔρχεται τ' ἀπόγεμα στὴν αὐλὴ

## PIAZZA SAN NICOLO

*Longtemps je me suis couché de bonne heure\**

the house  
full of grilles and distrust when you examine it closely in its  
dark corners—

“For years I used to go to bed early,” it whispers

“I would gaze at the picture of Hylas and the picture of  
Mary Magdalene\*

before saying goodnight. I would gaze at the white light of  
the candelabra

the glistening metal, and it would be difficult for me to leave  
the last voices of day.”

The house, when you examine its old cornices closely,  
wakens with a mother’s footsteps on the stairs  
the hand that arranges the covers or fixes the mosquito net  
the lips that put out the candle’s flame.

And all this is an old story that no longer interests anyone;  
we’ve hardened our hearts and grown up.

The mountain’s coolness never descends lower than the  
bell-tower

that counts out the hours in monologue, as we observe

ἡ θεία Ντάρια Ντιμιετρόβνα τὸ γένος Τροφίμοβιτς.  
 Ἡ δροσιὰ τοῦ βουνοῦ δὲν ἀγγίζει ποτὲ τὸ στιβαρὸ χέρι τοῦ  
 Ἄη Νικόλα  
 μήτε τὸ φαρμακοποιὸ πού κοιτάζει ἀνάμεσα σὲ μιὰ κόκκινη  
 καὶ μιὰ πράσινη σφαίρα  
 σὰν ὑπερωκεάνειο μαρμαρωμένο.  
 Γιὰ νὰ βρεῖς τὴ δροσιὰ τοῦ βουνοῦ πρέπει ν' ἀνέβεις ψηλό-  
 τερα ἀπὸ τὸ καμπαναριὸ  
 κι' ἀπὸ τὸ χέρι τοῦ Ἄη Νικόλα  
 κάπου 70 ἢ 80 μέτρα δὲν εἶναι πολὺ.  
 Κι' ὅμως ἐκεῖ ψιθυρίζεις ὅπως σὰν πλάγιαζες νωρὶς  
 καὶ μέσα στὴν εὐκολία τοῦ ὕπνου χάνονταν ἡ πίκρα τοῦ  
 ἀποχωρισμοῦ  
 ὅχι λέξεις πολλὰς δυὸ - τρεῖς μονάχα καὶ τοῦτο φτάνει  
 ἀφοῦ κυλᾶνε τὰ νερά καὶ δὲ φοβοῦνται μὴ σταματήσουν  
 ψιθυρίζεις ἀκουμπώντας τὸ κεφάλι στὸν ὦμο ἐνὸς φίλου  
 σὰ νὰ μὴν εἶχες μεγαλώσει μέσα στὸ σπίτι τὸ σιωπηλὸ  
 μὲ φυσιογνωμίες πού βάρυναν καὶ μᾶς ἔκαμαν ἀδέξιους  
 ξένους.  
 Κι' ὅμως ἐκεῖ, λίγο ψηλότερα ἀπὸ τὸ καμπαναριό, ἀλλά-  
 ζει ἡ ζωὴ σου.  
 Δὲν εἶναι μεγάλο πράγμα ν' ἀνεβεῖς μὰ εἶναι πολὺ δύσκολο  
 ν' ἀλλάξεις  
 σὰν εἶναι τὸ σπίτι μέσα στὴν πέτρινη ἐκκλησιὰ κι' ἡ καρ-  
 διά σου μέσα στὸ σπίτι πού σκοτεινιάζει  
 κι' ὅλες οἱ πόρτες κλειδωμένες ἀπὸ τὸ μεγάλο χέρι τ' Ἄη  
 Νικόλα.

when aunt Daria Dimietrovna née Trofimovitch  
comes into the courtyard of an afternoon.  
The mountain's coolness never touches the steady hand of  
St. Nicholas  
nor the druggist who looks out between a red and black  
sphere  
like a petrified transatlantic liner.  
To find the mountain's coolness you must climb higher  
than the bell-tower  
and the hand of St. Nicholas  
about 70 or 80 meters higher, nothing really.  
Yet there you whisper as you would when going to bed early  
and in the ease of sleep the bitterness of separation would  
disappear  
not many words, one or two only and that's enough  
since the water rolls on and they're not afraid it will stop  
you whisper resting your head on a friend's shoulder  
as though you hadn't grown up in the silent house  
with faces that became heavy and made us awkward  
strangers.  
Yet there, a little higher than the bell-tower, your life  
changes.  
It's no great matter to climb up but it's very difficult for you  
to change  
when the house is in the stone church and your heart in  
the darkening house  
and all the doors locked by the huge hand of St. Nicholas.

Pelion—Koritsa, summer-fall '37

## Ο ΔΙΚΟΣ ΜΑΣ ΗΛΙΟΣ

Ὁ ἥλιος αὐτὸς εἶταν δικός μου καὶ δικός σου : τὸν μοιρα-  
στήκαμε  
ποιὸς ὑποφέρει πίσω ἀπὸ τὸ χρυσαφὶ μεταξωτὸ ποιὸς πε-  
θαίνει ;  
Μιὰ γυναῖκα φώναζε χτυπώντας τὸ στεγνὸ στῆθος της :  
«Δειλοὶ  
μοῦ πήραν τὰ παιδιὰ μου καὶ τὰ κομμάτιασαν, σεῖς τὰ  
σκοτώσατε  
κοιτάζοντας μὲ παράξενες ἐκφράσεις τὸ βράδι τὶς πυγο-  
λαμπίδες  
ἀφηρημένοι μέσα σὲ μιὰ τυφλὴ συλλογὴ».  
Τὸ αἷμα στέγωνε πάνω στὸ χέρι ποὺ τὸ πρασίνιζε ἓνα  
δέντρο  
ἓνας πολεμιστὴς κοιμότανε σφίγγοντας τὴ λόγχη ποὺ τοῦ  
φώτιζε τὸ πλευρό.

Εἶταν δικός μας ὁ ἥλιος, δὲ βλέπαμε τίποτε πίσω ἀπὸ τὰ  
χρυσὰ κεντίδια  
ἀργότερα ἤρθαν οἱ μαντατοφόροι λαχανιασμένοι βρώμικοι  
τραυλίζοντας συλλαβὲς ἀκατανόητες  
εἴκοσι μερόνυχτα πάνω στὴ στέρφα γῆς καὶ μόνο ἀγ-  
κάθια  
εἴκοσι μερόνυχτα νιώθοντας ματωμένες τὶς κοιλιὲς τῶν  
ἀλόγων

## OUR SUN

This sun was mine and yours; we shared it.  
Who's suffering behind the golden silk, who's dying?  
A woman beating her dry breasts cried out: "Cowards,  
they've taken my children and torn them to shreds, you've  
killed them  
gazing at the fire-flies at dusk with a strange look,  
lost in blind thought."  
The blood was drying on a hand that a tree made green,  
a warrior was asleep clutching the lance that flared against  
his side.

It was ours, this sun, we saw nothing behind the gold  
embroidery  
then the messengers came, dirty and breathless,  
stuttering unintelligible words  
twenty days and nights on the barren earth with thorns only  
twenty days and nights feeling the bellies of the horses  
bleeding

κι' οὔτε στιγμή νά σταματήσουν γιά νά πιοῦν τὸ νερὸ τῆς  
βροχῆς.

Εἶπες νά ξεκουραστοῦν πρῶτα κι' ἔπειτα νά μιλήσουν, σέ  
εἶχε θαμπώσει τὸ φῶς.

Ξεψύχησαν λέγοντας: «Δὲν ἔχουμε καιρὸ» γγίζοντας κάτι  
ἀχτίδες·

ξεχνοῦσες πῶς κανεῖς δὲν ξεκουράζεται.

Οὐρλιαζε μιὰ γυναίκα: «Δειλοὶ» σὰν τὸ σκυλὶ τῇ νύχτα  
θὰ εἶταν ὠραία κάποτε σὰν ἐσένα  
μὲ στόμα ὑγρό, τὶς φλέβες ζωντανὲς κάτω ἀπ' τὸ δέρμα  
μὲ τὴν ἀγάπη.

Ὁ ἥλιος αὐτὸς εἶταν δικός μας· τὸν κράτησες ὁλόκληρο δὲ  
θέλησες νὰ μ' ἀκολουθήσεις

κι' ἔμαθα τότε αὐτὰ τὰ πράγματα πίσω ἀπὸ τὸ χρυσάφι  
καὶ τὸ μετάξι·

δὲν ἔχουμε καιρό. Σωστὰ μιλήσαν οἱ μαντατοφόροι.

and not a moment's break to drink the rain water.  
You told them to rest first and then to speak, the light had  
    blinded you.  
They died saying: "We don't have time," touching some  
    rays of the sun.  
You'd forgotten that no one rests.

A woman howled "Cowards," like a dog in the night.  
Once she would have been beautiful like you  
with wet mouth, veins alive beneath the skin,  
with love.

This sun was ours; you kept all of it, you didn't want to  
    follow me.  
And it was then I found out about those things behind, the  
    gold and the silk:  
we don't have the time. The messengers were right.

## Ο ΓΥΡΙΣΜΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΞΕΝΙΤΕΜΕΝΟΥ

«Παλιέ μου φίλε τί γυρεύεις;  
χρόνια ξενιτεμένος ἦρθες  
μὲ εἰκόνες ποὺ ἔχεις ἀναθρέψει  
κάτω ἀπὸ ξένους οὐρανούς  
μακριὰ ἀπ' τὸν τόπο τὸ δικό σου».

«Γυρεύω τὸν παλιό μου κῆπο·  
τὰ δέντρα μοῦ ἔρχονται ὥς τῇ μέσῃ  
κι' οἱ λόφοι μοιάζουν μὲ πεζούλια  
κι' ὅμως σὰν εἴμουναι παιδὶ  
ἔπαιζα πάνω στὸ χορτάρι  
κάτω ἀπὸ τοὺς μεγάλους ἴσκιους  
κι' ἔτρεχα πάνω σὲ πλαγιές  
ὥρα πολλὴ λαχανιασμένος».

«Παλιέ μου φίλε ξεκουράσου  
σιγὰ σιγὰ θὰ συνηθίσεις·  
θ' ἀνηφορίσουμε μαζὶ  
στὰ γνώριμά σου μονοπάτια  
θὰ ξαποστάσουμε μαζὶ  
κάτω ἀπ' τὸ θόλο τῶν πλατάνων  
σιγὰ σιγὰ θὰ ῥθοῦν κοντά σου  
τὸ περιβόλι κι' οἱ πλαγιές σου».

## THE RETURN OF THE EXILE

“My old friend, what are you looking for?  
After years abroad you’ve come back  
with images you’ve nourished  
under foreign skies  
far from your own country.”

“I’m looking for my old garden;  
the trees come to my waist  
and the hills resemble terraces  
yet as a child  
I used to play on the grass  
under great shadows  
and I would run for hours  
breathless over the slopes.”

“My old friend, rest,  
you’ll get used to it little by little;  
together we will climb  
the paths you once knew,  
we will sit together  
under the plane trees’ dome.  
They’ll come back to you little by little,  
your garden and your slopes.”

«Γυρεύω τὸ παλιό μου σπίτι  
μέ τ' ἀψηλὰ τὰ παραθύρια  
σκοτεινιασμένα ἀπ' τὸν κισσὸ  
γυρεύω τὴν ἀρχαία κολόνη  
ποὺ κοίταζε ὁ θαλασσινός.  
Πῶς θές νὰ μπῶ σ' αὐτὴ τὴ στάνη;  
οἱ στέγες μοῦ ἔρχονται ὥς τοὺς ὤμους  
κι' ὅσο μακριὰ καὶ νὰ κοιτάξω  
βλέπω γονατιστοὺς ἀνθρώπους  
λὲς κάνουνε τὴν προσευχή τους».

«Παλιέ μου φίλε δὲ μ' ἀκοῦς;  
σιγὰ σιγὰ θὰ συνηθίσεις  
τὸ σπίτι σου εἶναι αὐτὸ ποὺ βλέπεις  
κι' αὐτὴ τὴν πόρτα θὰ χτυπήσουν  
σὲ λίγο οἱ φίλοι κι' οἱ δικοί σου  
γλυκὰ νὰ σὲ καλωσορίσουν».

«Γιατί εἶναι ἀπόμακρη ἡ φωνή σου;  
σῆκωσε λίγο τὸ κεφάλι  
νὰ καταλάβω τί μοῦ λὲς  
ὅσο μιλάς τ' ἀνάστημά σου  
ὀλοένα πάει καὶ λιγοστεύει  
λὲς καὶ βυθίζεσαι στὸ χῶμα».

«Παλιέ μου φίλε συλλογίσου  
σιγὰ σιγὰ θὰ συνηθίσεις

“I’m looking for my old house,  
the tall windows  
darkened by ivy;  
I’m looking for the ancient column  
known to sailors.  
How can I get into this coop?  
The roof comes to my shoulders  
and however far I look  
I see men on their knees  
as though saying their prayers.”

“My old friend, don’t you hear me?  
You’ll get used to it little by little.  
Your house is the one you see  
and soon friends and relatives  
will come knocking at the door  
to welcome you back tenderly.”

“Why is your voice so distant?  
Raise your head a little  
so that I understand you.  
As you speak you grow  
gradually smaller  
as though you’re sinking into the ground.’

“My old friend, stop a moment and think:  
you’ll get used to it little by little.

ἡ νοσταλγία σοῦ ἔχει πλάσει  
μιὰ χώρα ἀνύπαρχτη μὲ νόμους  
ἔξω ἀπ' τῇ γῆς κι' ἀπ' τοὺς ἀνθρώπους».

«Πιὰ δὲν ἀκούω τσιμουδιὰ  
βούλιαξε κι' ὁ στερνός μου φίλος  
παράξενο πῶς χαμηλώνουν  
ὅλα τριγύρω κάθε τόσο  
ἐδῶ διαβαίνουν καὶ θερίζουν  
χιλιάδες ἄρματα δρεπανηφόρα».

Ἀθήνα, ἀνοιξη '38

Your nostalgia has created  
a non-existent country, with laws  
alien to earth and man.”

“Now I can’t hear a sound.  
My last friend has sunk.  
Strange how from time to time  
they level everything down.  
Here a thousand scythe-bearing chariots go past  
and mow everything down.”

Athens, spring '38

## Η ΧΩΡΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΧΩΡΗΤΟΥ

*Μεγάλη Παρασκευή*

Πέφτουν όλοένα σήμερα νομίσματα πάνω στην πολιτεία  
ανάμεσα σὲ κάθε κόμπο σὰ μιὰ σταλαματιά στὸ χῶμα  
ἀνοίγει μιὰ καινούργια χώρα: ἦρθε ἡ στιγμή, σηκῶστε με.

## THE CONTAINER OF THE UNCONTAINABLE\*

*Good Friday*

Bells like coins falling sound today all over the city  
between each peal a new space opens  
like a drop of water on the earth: the moment has come,  
raise me up.

## ΔΙΑΛΕΙΜΜΑ ΧΑΡΑΣ

Εἴμασταν χαρούμενοι ὅλο ἐκεῖνο τὸ πρωὶ  
θεέ μου πόσο χαρούμενοι.  
Πρῶτα γυάλιζαν οἱ πέτρες τὰ φύλλα καὶ τὰ λουλούδια  
ἔπειτα ὁ ἥλιος  
ἓνας μεγάλος ἥλιος ὅλο ἀγκάθια μὰ τόσο ψηλὰ στὸν οὐρανό.  
Μιὰ νύμφη μάζευε τὶς ἔνιες μας καὶ τὶς κρεμονοῦσε στὰ  
    δέντρα  
ἓνα δάσος ἀπὸ δέντρα τοῦ Ἰούδα.  
Ἐρωτιδεῖς καὶ σάτυροι παίζαν καὶ τραγουδοῦσαν  
κι' ἔβλεπες ρόδινα μέλη μέσα στὶς μαῦρες δάφνες  
σάρκες μικρῶν παιδιῶν.  
Εἴμασταν χαρούμενοι ὅλο τὸ πρωί·  
ἡ ἄβυσσος κλειστὸ πηγάδι  
ὅπου χτυποῦσε τὸ τρυφερὸ πόδι ἐνὸς ἀνήλικου φαύνου  
θυμᾶσαι τὸ γέλιο του : πόσο χαρούμενοι !  
Ἐπειτα σύννεφα βροχὴ καὶ τὸ νοτισμένο χῶμα  
ἔπαψες νὰ γελᾷς σὰν ἔγειρες μέσα στὴν καλύβα  
κι' ἀνοιξες τὰ μεγάλα σου τὰ μάτια κοιτάζοντας  
τὸν ἀρχάγγελο νὰ γυμνάζεται μὲ μιὰ πύρινη ρομφαία —  
«Ἀνεξήγητο» εἶπες «ἀνεξήγητο  
δὲν καταλαβαίνω τοὺς ἀνθρώπους  
ὅσο καὶ νὰ παίζουν μὲ τὰ χρώματα  
εἶναι ὅλοι τους μαῦροι».

Πεντέλη, ἀνοιξη

## INTERLUDE OF JOY

That whole morning we were full of joy,  
my God, how full of joy.  
First, stones leaves and flowers shone  
then the sun  
a huge sun all thorns and so high in the sky.  
A nymph collected our cares and hung them on the trees  
a forest of Judas trees.  
Young loves and satyrs played there and sang  
and you could see pink limbs among the black laurels  
bodies of little children.  
The whole morning long we were full of joy;  
the abyss a closed well  
tapped by the tender hoof of a young fawn.  
Do you remember its laugh—how full of joy!  
Then clouds rain and the wet earth.  
You stopped laughing when you lay down in the hut  
and opened your large eyes as you watched  
the archangel practicing with a fiery sword—  
“Inexplicable,” you said, “inexplicable.  
I don’t understand people:  
no matter how much they play with colors  
they are all black.”

Penteli, spring

## ΤΟ ΦΥΛΛΟ ΤΗΣ ΛΕΥΚΑΣ

Ἔτρεμε τόσο πού τὸ πῆρε ὁ ἄνεμος  
ἔτρεμε τόσο πῶς νὰ μὴν τὸ πάρει ὁ ἄνεμος  
πέρα μακριὰ  
μιὰ θάλασσα  
πέρα μακριὰ  
ἓνα νησιὶ στὸν ἥλιο  
καὶ τὰ χέρια σφίγγοντας τὰ κουπιὰ  
πεθαίνοντας τὴν ὥρα πού φάνηκε τὸ λιμάνι  
καὶ τὰ μάτια κλειστὰ  
σὲ θαλασσινὲς ἀνεμῶνες.

Ἔτρεμε τόσο πολὺ  
τὸ ζήτησα τόσο πολὺ  
στὴ στέρνα μὲ τοὺς εὐκαλύπτους  
τὴν ἀνοιξὴ καὶ τὸ φθινόπωρο  
σ' ὅλα τὰ δάση γυμνά  
θεέ μου τὸ ζήτησα.

## THE LEAF OF THE POPLAR

It trembled so, the wind carried it away,  
it trembled so, how could the wind not carry it away  
in the distance  
a sea  
in the distance  
an island in the sun  
and hands grasping the oars  
dying the moment the port came into sight  
and eyes closed  
in sea anemones.

It trembled so much  
I wanted it so much  
in the cistern with the eucalyptus trees  
spring and autumn  
in all the woods naked  
my God I wanted it.

## ΑΛΛΗΛΕΓΓΥΗ

Εἶναι ἐκεῖ δὲν μπορῶ ν' ἀλλάξω  
μὲ δυὸ μεγάλα μάτια πίσω ἀπ' τὸ κῦμα  
ἀπὸ τὸ μέρος πού φουσᾷ ὁ ἀγέρας  
ἀκολουθώντας τις φτεροῦγες τῶν πουλιῶν  
εἶναι ἐκεῖ μὲ δυὸ μεγάλα μάτια  
μήπως ἄλλαξε κανεῖς ποτέ του.

Τί γυρεύετε; τὰ μηνύματά σας  
ἔρχονται ἀλλαγμένα ὥς τὸ καράβι  
ἢ ἀγάπη σας γίνεται μῖσος  
ἢ γαλήνη σας γίνεται ταραχὴ  
καὶ δὲν μπορῶ νὰ γυρίσω πίσω  
νὰ ἰδῶ τὰ πρόσωπά σας στ' ἀκρογιαλὶ.

Εἶναι ἐκεῖ τὰ μεγάλα μάτια  
κι' ὅταν μένω καρφωμένος στὴ γραμμὴ μου  
κι' ὅταν πέφτουν στὸν ὀρίζοντα τ' ἀστέρια  
εἶναι ἐκεῖ δεμένα στὸν αἰθέρα  
σὰ μιὰ τύχη πιὸ δική μου ἀπ' τὴ δική μου.

Τὰ λόγια σας συνήθεια τῆς ἀκοῆς  
βουίζουν μέσα στὰ ξάρτια καὶ περνᾶνε  
μήπως πιστεύω πιά στὴν ὕπαρξή σας  
μοιραῖοι, σύντροφοι, ἀνυπόστατοι ἴσκιοι.



## SOLIDARITY

*It's there, I can't change*  
with two large eyes behind the wave  
on the side where the wind blows  
following the wings of birds  
it's there with two large eyes  
has anyone ever changed himself?

What are you looking for? Your messages  
reach the ship altered  
your love becomes hatred  
your peace becomes tumult  
and I can't turn back  
to see your faces on the shore.

The large eyes are there  
both when I keep fixed on my course  
and when the stars fall on the horizon  
they are there tethered to space  
like a fate more mine than my own.

Your words, a habit of hearing,  
hum in the rigging and are lost  
do I still believe in your existence  
doomed companions, unsubstantial shades?



Ἦχασε πιά τὸ χρῶμα αὐτὸς ὁ κόσμος  
καθὼς τὰ φύκια στ' ἀκρογιαλὶ τοῦ ἄλλου χρόνου  
γκρίζα ξερά καὶ στὸ ἔλεος τοῦ ἀνέμου.

Ἕνα μεγάλο πέλαγο δυὸ μάτια  
εὐκίνητα καὶ ἀκίνητα σὰν τὸν ἀγέρα  
καὶ τὰ πανιά μου ὅσο κρατήσουν, κι' ὁ θεός μου.

This world has lost its color  
like last year's seaweed on the beach  
dry, gray, at the wind's mercy.

A huge sea two eyes  
swift and motionless like the wind  
and my sails as long as they last, and my god.

## Η ΤΕΛΕΥΤΑΙΑ ΜΕΡΑ

Εἴταν ἡ μέρα συννεφιασμένη. Κανείς δὲν ἀποφάσιζε  
φυσοῦσε ἕνας ἀγέρας ἀλαφρύς: «Δὲν εἶναι γρέγος εἶνα σι-  
ρόκος» εἶπε κάποιος.

Κάτι λιγνὰ κυπαρίσσια καρφωμένα στὴν πλαγιά κι' ἡ θά-  
λασσα

γκρίζα μὲ λίμνες φωτεινές, πιὸ πέρα.

Οἱ στρατιῶτες παρουσίαζαν ὅπλα σὰν ἄρχισε νὰ ψιχαλίζει.  
«Δὲν εἶναι γρέγος εἶναι σιρόκος» ἡ μόνη ἀπόφαση ποὺ  
ἀκούστηκε.

Κι' ὅμως τὸ ξέραμε πῶς τὴν ἄλλη αὐγὴ δὲ θὰ μᾶς  
ἔμενε

τίποτε πιά, μήτε ἡ γυναίκα πίνοντας πλ' ἱ μας τὸν ὕπνο  
μήτε ἡ ἀνάμνηση πῶς εἴμασταν κάποτες ἄντρες,  
τίποτε πιά τὴν ἄλλη αὐγὴ.

«Αὐτὸς ὁ ἀγέρας φέρνει στὸ νοῦ τὴν ἀνοιξή» ἔλεγε ἡ φίλη  
περπατώντας στὸ πλευρό μου κοιτάζοντας μακριὰ «τὴν  
ἀνοιξή

ποὺ ἔπεσε ξαφνικὰ τὸ χειμῶνα κοντὰ στὴν κλειστὴ θά-  
λασσα.

Τόσο ἀπροσδόκητα. Πέρασαν τόσα χρόνια. Πῶς θὰ πεθά-  
νουμε ;»

Ἕνα νεκρώσιμο ἐμβατήριο τριγύριζε μὲς στὴν ψιλὴ βροχή.

## THE LAST DAY

The day was cloudy. No one could come to a decision;  
a light wind was blowing. "Not a north-easter, the sirocco,"  
someone said.

A few slender cypresses nailed to the slope and the sea,  
gray with shining pools, beyond.

The soldiers presented arms as it began to drizzle.

"Not a north-easter, the sirocco," was the only decision  
heard.

And yet we knew that by the following dawn  
nothing would be left to us, neither the woman drinking  
sleep at our side  
nor the memory that we were once men,  
nothing at all by the following dawn.

"This wind reminds me of spring," said my friend  
as she walked beside me gazing into the distance, "the spring  
that came suddenly in winter by the closed-in sea.  
So unexpected. So many years have gone. How are we going  
to die?"

A funeral march meandered through the thin rain.

Πῶς πεθαίνει ἓνας ἄντρας; Παράξενο κανένας δὲν τὸ συλλογίστηκε.

Κι' ὅσοι τὸ σκέφτηκαν εἴταν σὰν ἀνάμνηση ἀπὸ παλιὰ χρονικὰ

τῆς ἐποχῆς τῶν Σταυροφόρων ἢ τῆς ἐν - Σαλαμῖνι - ναυμαχίας.

Κι' ὅμως ὁ θάνατος εἶναι κάτι ποὺ γίνεται· πῶς πεθαίνει ἓνας ἄντρας;

Κι' ὅμως κερδίζει κανεὶς τὸ θάνατό του, τὸ δικό του θάνατο, ποὺ δὲν ἀνῆκει σὲ κανέναν ἄλλον

καὶ τοῦτο τὸ παιχνίδι εἶναι ἡ ζωή.

Χαμήλωνε τὸ φῶς πάνω ἀπὸ τὴ συννεφιασμένη μέρα, κανεὶς δὲν ἀποφάσιζε.

Τὴν ἄλλη αὐγὴ δὲ θὰ μᾶς ἔμενε τίποτε· ὅλα παραδομένα· μήτε τὰ χέρια μας·

κι' οἱ γυναῖκες μας ξενοδουλεύοντας στὰ κεφαλόβρυσα καὶ τὰ παιδιὰ μας

στὰ λατομεῖα.

Ἡ φίλη μου τραγουδοῦσε περπατώντας στὸ πλευρό μου ἓνα τραγούδι σακατεμένο :

«Τὴν ἀνοιξή, τὸ καλοκαίρι, ραγιαδες...»

Θυμότανε κανεὶς γέροντες δασκάλους ποὺ μᾶς ἄφησαν ὀρφανούς.

Ἕνα ζευγάρι πέρασε κουβεντιάζοντας :

«Βαρέθηκα τὸ δειλινό, πᾶμε στὸ σπίτι μας

πᾶμε στὸ σπίτι μας ν' ἀνάψουμε τὸ φῶς».

How does a man die? Strange no one's thought about it.  
And for those who thought about it, it was like a recollec-  
tion from old chronicles  
from the time of the Crusades or the battle of Salamis.  
Yet death is something that happens: how does a man die?  
Yet each of us earns his death, his own death, which  
belongs to no one else  
and this game is life.  
The light was sinking over the clouded day, no one decided  
anything.  
The following dawn nothing would be left to us, everything  
surrendered, even our hands,  
and our women slaves at the springheads and our children  
in the quarries.\*  
My friend, walking beside me, was singing a disjointed song:  
"In spring, in summer, slaves . . ."  
One recalled old teachers who'd left us orphans.  
A couple passed, talking:  
"I'm sick of the dusk, let's go home,  
let's go home and turn on the light."

Athens, Feb. '39

## ΑΝΟΙΞΗ Μ.Χ.

Πάλι με τὴν ἀνοιξή  
φόρεσε χρώματα ἀνοιχτὰ  
καὶ με περπάτημα ἀλαφρὺ  
πάλι με τὴν ἀνοιξή  
πάλι τὸ καλοκαίρι  
χαμογελοῦσε.

Μέσα στοὺς φρέσκους ροδαμοὺς  
στῆθος γυμνὸ ὥς τὶς φλέβες  
πέρα ἀπ' τὴ νύχτα τὴ στεγνὴ  
πέρα ἀπ' τοὺς ἄσπρους γέροντες  
ποὺ συζητούσαν σιγανὰ  
τί θὰ ἔτανε καλύτερο  
νὰ παραδώσουν τὰ κλειδιά  
ἢ νὰ τραβήξουν τὸ σκοινὶ  
νὰ κρεμαστοῦνε στὴ θηλειὰ  
ν' ἀφήσουν ἄδεια σώματα  
κεῖ ποὺ οἱ ψυχὲς δὲν ἄντεχαν  
ἐκεῖ ποὺ ὁ νοῦς δὲν πρόφταινε  
καὶ λύγιζαν τὰ γόνατα.

Μὲ τοὺς καινούργιους ροδαμοὺς  
οἱ γέροντες ἀστόχησαν  
κι' ὅλα τὰ παραδώσανε

## SPRING A.D.

Again with spring  
she wore light colors  
and with gentle steps  
again with spring  
again in summer  
she was smiling.

Among fresh blossoms  
breast naked to the veins  
beyond the dry night  
beyond the white old men  
debating quietly  
whether it would be better  
to give up the keys  
or to pull the rope  
and hang from the noose  
to leave empty bodies  
there where souls couldn't endure  
there where the mind couldn't catch up  
and knees buckled.

With the new blossoms  
the old men failed  
and gave up everything

ἀγγόνια καὶ δισέγγονα  
καὶ τὰ χωράφια τὰ βαθιὰ  
καὶ τὰ βουνὰ τὰ πράσινα  
καὶ τὴν ἀγάπη καὶ τὸ βιὸς  
τὴ σπλάχνιση καὶ τὴ σκεπὴ  
καὶ ποταμοὺς καὶ θάλασσα·  
καὶ φύγαν σὰν ἀγάλματα  
κι' ἄφησαν πίσω τους σιγὴ  
ποὺ δὲν τὴν ἔκοψε σπαθὶ  
ποὺ δὲν τὴν πῆρε καλπασμὸς  
μήτε ἡ φωνὴ τῶν ἄγουρων·  
κι' ἦρθε ἡ μεγάλη μοναξιά  
κι' ἦρθε ἡ μεγάλη στέρηση  
μαζὶ μ' αὐτὴ τὴν ἀνοιξη  
καὶ κάθησε κι' ἀπλώθηκε  
ὡσὰν τὴν πάχνη τῆς αὐγῆς  
καὶ πιάστη ἀπ' τὰ ψηλὰ κλαδιὰ  
μὲς ἀπ' τὰ δέντρα γλίστρησε  
καὶ τὴν ψυχὴ μας τύλιξε.

Μὰ ἐκείνη χαμογέλασε  
φορώντας χρώματα ἀνοιχτὰ  
σὰν ἀνθισμένη ἀμυγδαλιά  
μέσα σὲ φλόγες κίτρινες  
καὶ περπατοῦσε ἀνάλαφρα  
ἀνοίγοντας παράθυρα  
στὸν οὐρανὸ ποὺ χαίρονταν  
χωρὶς ἐμᾶς τοὺς ἄμοιρους.  
Κι' εἶδα τὸ στῆθος της γυμνὸ

grandchildren and great-grandchildren  
the broad fields  
the green mountains  
love and life  
compassion and shelter  
rivers and sea;  
and they departed like statues  
leaving behind a silence  
that no sword could cut  
that no gallop could break  
nor the voices of the young;  
and the great loneliness came  
the great privation  
along with this spring  
and settled and spread  
like the frost of dawn  
caught hold of the high branches  
slid down the trunks of trees  
and wrapped around our soul.

But she smiled  
wearing light colors  
like a blossoming almond tree  
in yellow flames  
and walked along lightly  
opening windows  
in the delighted sky  
without us, the luckless ones.  
And I saw her breast naked

τὴ μέση καὶ τὸ γόνατο  
πῶς βγαίνει ἀπὸ τὴν παιδωμὴ  
νὰ πάει στὰ ἐπουράνια  
ὁ μάρτυρας ἀνέγγιχτος  
ἀνέγγιχτος καὶ καθαρός,  
ἔξω ἀπ' τὰ ψιθυρίσματα  
τοῦ λαοῦ τ' ἀξεδιάλυτα  
στὸν τσίρκο τὸν ἀπέραντο  
ἔξω ἀπ' τὸ μαῦρο μορφασμὸ  
τὸν ἰδρωμένο τράχηλο  
τοῦ δήμιου π' ἀγανάχτησε  
χτυπώντας ἀνωφέλευτα.

Ἔγινε λίμνη ἡ μοναξιά  
ἔγινε λίμνη ἡ στέρηση  
ἀνέγγιχτη κι' ἀχάραχτη.

16 Μαρτ. '39

the waist and the knee,  
as the inviolate martyr  
inviolat and pure  
issues from the torment  
to go to heaven,  
beyond the inexplicable  
whispering of people  
in the boundless circus  
beyond the black grimace  
the sweaty neck  
of the exasperated executioner  
striking vainly.

The loneliness now a lake  
the privation now a lake  
untouched and untraceable.

16 March '39

## ΤΟ ΓΙΑΣΕΜΙ

Εἴτε βραδιάζει  
εἴτε φέγγει  
μένει λευκὸ  
τὸ γιασεμί.

## THE JASMIN

Whether it's dusk  
or dawn's first light  
the jasmin stays  
always white.

## ΑΦΗΓΗΣΗ

Αὐτὸς ὁ ἄνθρωπος πηγαίνει κλαίγοντας  
κανεῖς δὲν ξέρει νὰ πεῖ γιατί  
κάποτε νομίζουν πὼς εἶναι οἱ χαμένες ἀγάπες  
σὰν αὐτὲς ποὺ μᾶς βασανίζουνε τόσο  
στὴν ἀκροθαλασσιὰ τὸ καλοκαίρι μὲ τὰ γραμμόφωνα.

Οἱ ἄλλοι ἄνθρωποι φροντίζουν τὶς δουλειές τους  
ἀτέλειωτα χαρτιὰ παιδιὰ ποὺ μεγαλώνουν, γυναῖκες  
ποὺ γερνοῦνε δύσκολα  
αὐτὸς ἔχει δυὸ μάτια σὰν παπαροῦνες  
σὰν ἀνοιξιάτικες κομμένες παπαροῦνες  
καὶ δυὸ βρυσοῦλες στὶς κόχες τῶν ματιῶν.

Πηγαίνει μέσα στοὺς δρόμους ποτὲ δὲν πλαγιάζει  
δρασκελώνοντας μικρὰ τετράγωνα στὴ ράχη τῆς γῆς  
μηχανὴ μιᾶς ἀπέραντης ὁδύνης  
ποὺ κατάντησε νὰ μὴν ἔχει σημασία.

”Ἄλλοι τὸν ἄκουσαν νὰ μιλᾷ  
μοναχὸ καθὼς περνοῦσε  
γιὰ σπασμένους καθρέφτες πρὶν ἀπὸ χρόνια  
γιὰ σπασμένες μορφές μέσα στοὺς καθρέφτες  
ποὺ δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ συναρμολογήσει πιά κανεῖς.  
”Ἄλλοι τὸν ἄκουσαν νὰ λέει γιὰ τὸν ὕπνο

## NARRATION

That man walks along weeping  
no one can say why  
sometimes they think he's weeping for lost loves  
like those that torture us so much  
on summer beaches with the gramophones.

Other people go about their business  
endless paper, children growing up, women  
ageing awkwardly.  
He has two eyes like poppies  
like cut spring poppies  
and two trickles in the corners of his eyes.

He walks along the streets, never lies down  
striding small squares on the earth's back  
instrument of a boundless pain  
that's finally lost all significance.

Some have heard him speak  
to himself as he passed by  
about mirrors broken years ago  
about broken forms in the mirrors  
that no one can ever put together again.  
Others have heard him talk about sleep

εἰκόνες φρίκης στὸ κατώφλι τοῦ ὕπνου  
πρόσωπα ἀνυπόφορα ἀπὸ τὴ στοργή.

Τὸν συνηθίσαμε εἶναι καλοβαλμένος καὶ ἥσυχος  
μονάχα ποὺ πηγαίνει κλαίγοντας ὁλοένα  
σὰν τὶς ἱτιᾶς στὴν ἀκροποταμιὰ ποὺ βλέπεις ἀπ' τὸ τρένο  
ξυπνώντας ἄσκημα κάποια συννεφιασμένη αὐγή.

Τὸν συνηθίσαμε δὲν ἀντιπροσωπεύει τίποτε  
σὰν ὅλα τὰ πράγματα ποὺ ἔχετε συνηθίσει  
καὶ σᾶς μιλῶ γι' αὐτὸν γιατί δὲ βρίσκω  
τίποτε ποὺ νὰ μὴν τὸ συνηθίσατε·  
προσκυνῶ.

images of horror on the threshold of sleep  
faces unbearable in their tenderness.

We've grown used to him, he's presentable and quiet  
only that he walks along weeping continually  
like willows on a riverbank you see from the train  
as you wake uncomfortably some clouded dawn.

We've grown used to him; like everything else you're used  
to  
he doesn't stand for anything  
and I talk to you about him because I can't find  
anything that you're not used to;  
I pay my respects.

## ΠΡΩΙ

Ἄνοιξε τὰ μάτια καὶ ξεδίπλωσε  
τὸ μαῦρο πανὶ πλατιά καὶ τέντωσέ το  
ἄνοιξε τὰ μάτια καλὰ στύλωσε τὰ μάτια  
προσηλώσου προσηλώσου τώρα ξέρεις  
πὼς τὸ μαῦρο πανὶ ξεδιπλώνεται  
ὄχι μέσα στὸν ὕπνο μήτε μέσα στὸ νερὸ  
μήτε σὰν πέφτουνε τὰ βλέφαρα ρυτιδωμένα  
καὶ βουλιάζουνε λοξὰ σὰν τὰ κοχύλια,  
τώρα ξέρεις πὼς τὸ μαῦρο δέρμα τοῦ τυμπάνου  
σκεπάζει ὁλόκληρο τὸν ὀρίζοντά σου  
ὅταν ἀνοίξεις τὰ μάτια ξεκούραστος, ἔτσι.  
Ἀνάμεσα στὴν ἰσημερία τῆς ἀνοιξης καὶ τὴν ἰσημερία τοῦ  
φθινοπώρου  
ἐδῶ εἶναι τὰ τρεχάμενα νερὰ ἐδῶ εἶναι ὁ κῆπος  
ἐδῶ βουίζουν οἱ μέλισσες μὲς στὰ κλωνάρια  
καὶ κουδουνίζουνε στ' αὐτιά ἐνὸς βρέφους  
καὶ ὁ ἥλιος νά! καὶ τὰ πουλιὰ τοῦ παραδείσου  
ἓνας μεγάλος ἥλιος πιὸ μεγάλος ἀπ' τὸ φῶς.

## MORNING

Open your eyes and unfold  
the black cloth fully and stretch it  
open your eyes wide fix your eyes  
concentrate concentrate now you know  
that the black cloth unfolds  
not in sleep nor in water  
nor when the eyelids close wrinkled  
and sink at an angle like shells  
now you know that the black skin of the drum  
fully covers your horizon  
when you open your eyes rested, like this.  
Between the equinox of spring and the equinox of autumn  
here the running waters here the garden  
here the bees sounding in the branches  
and buzzing in a child's ear  
and there the sun! and the birds of paradise  
a huge sun greater than the light.

## LES ANGES SONT BLANCS

Στὸν Henry Miller

*Tout à coup Louis cessa de frotter ses jambes l' une contre l' autre et dit d' une voix lente : «Les anges sont blancs».*

BALZAC

“Ὅπως ὁ ναύτης στὰ ξάρτια γλίστρησε πάνω στὸν τροπικὸ τοῦ Καρκίνου καὶ στὸν τροπικὸ τοῦ Αἰγόκερω  
κι’ εἴταν πολὺ φυσικὸ ποὺ δὲν μποροῦσε νὰ σταματήσει  
μπροστὰ μας στὸ ὕψος ἀνθρώπου  
ἀλλὰ μᾶς κοίταξε ὅλους ἀπὸ τὸ ὕψος τῆς πυγολαμπίδας ἢ  
ἀπὸ τὸ ὕψος τοῦ πεύκου  
παίρνοντας βαθιὰ τὴν ἀνάσα του στὴ δροσιὰ τῶν ἄστρων ἢ  
στὴ σκόνῃ τῆς γῆς.  
Τὸν περιστοίχιζαν γυμνὲς γυναῖκες μὲ μπρούντζινα φύλλα  
ἀραποσυκιᾶς  
σβησμένοι φανοστάτες ἀνεμίζοντας τοὺς κηλιδωμένους ἐπί-  
δεσμούς τῆς μεγάλης πολιτείας  
ἀσύμμετρα κορμιὰ γεννοβολώντας κενταύρους καὶ ἀμα-  
ζόνες  
σὰν ἄγγιζαν τὰ μαλλιά τους τὸ Γαλαξία.

Καὶ πέρασαν μέρες ἀπὸ τὴν πρώτη στιγμή ποὺ μᾶς χαιρέ-  
τησε βγάζοντας κι’ ἀκουμπώντας τὸ κεφάλι του στὸ  
σιδερένιο τραπεζάκι  
καθὼς ἡ ὄψη τῆς Πολωνίας ἄλλαζε σχῆμα σὰ μελανιὰ ποὺ  
τὴν πίνει τὸ στουπόχαρτο

## LES ANGES SONT BLANCS

To Henry Miller

*Tout à coup Louis cessa de frotter ses jambes l'une contre l'autre et dit d'une voix lente: "Les anges sont blancs."*

BALZAC\*

Like a sailor in the shrouds he slipped over the tropic of  
Cancer and the tropic of Capricorn  
and it was natural he couldn't stand before us at a man's  
height  
but looked at us all from the height of a fire-fly or from the  
height of a pine tree  
drawing his breath deeply in the dew of the stars or in the  
dust of the earth.  
Naked women with bronze leaves from a Barbary fig tree  
surrounded him  
extinguished lamp posts airing stained bandages of the  
great city  
ungainly bodies producing Centaurs and Amazons  
when their hair touched the Milky Way.

And days have passed since the first moment he greeted us  
taking his head off and placing it on the iron table  
while the shape of Poland changed like ink drunk by  
blotting-paper

και ταξιδεύαμε ανάμεσα σ' ακρογιαλιές νησιῶν γυμνές σάν  
 κόκκαλο ψαριοῦ παράξενο στὴν ἄμμο  
 κι' εἴταν ὀλάκερος ὁ οὐρανὸς ἓνα μεγάλο φτερὸ περιστε-  
 ριοῦ μ' ἓνα ρυθμὸ σιωπῆς, ἄδειος κατ'άσπρος  
 και τὰ δελφίνια κάτω ἀπὸ τὸ χρωματιστὸ νερὸ μαυρίζανε  
 γρήγορα σάν τὰ κινήματα τῆς ψυχῆς  
 ὅμοια μὲ τὰ κινήματα τῆς φαντασίας καὶ μὲ τὰ χέρια τῶν  
 ἀνθρώπων ποὺ ψηλαφοῦν καὶ σκοτώνονται μέσα στὸ  
 ὕπνο  
 μέσα στὸ μεγάλο φλούδι τοῦ ὕπνου ποὺ μᾶς τυλίγει ἀχάρα-  
 χτο, κοινὸ γιὰ ὅλους μας, ὁ κοινὸς μας τάφος  
 μὲ μικροσκοπικὰ κρύσταλλα γυαλίζοντας σπασμένα ἀπὸ τὴν  
 κίνηση τῶν ἐρπετῶν.  
 Κι' ὅμως τὰ πάντα εἴταν λευκά γιατί ὁ μεγάλος ὕπνος εἶναι  
 λευκὸς κι' ὁ μεγάλος θάνατος  
 ἥσυχος γαλήνιος ξεχωριστὸς μέσα σὲ μιὰ ἀπέραντη  
 σιγή.  
 Καὶ τὸ κακάρισμα τῆς φραγκόκοτας τὴν αὐγὴ κι' ὁ κόκορας  
 ποὺ λάλησε πέφτοντας σ' ἓνα βαθὺ πηγάδι  
 κι' ἡ φωτιὰ στὸ πλάι τοῦ βουνοῦ σηκώνοντας παλάμες ἀπὸ  
 σούρφανο καὶ φύλλα τοῦ φθινοπώρου  
 και τὸ καράβι μὲ τὶς διχαλωτὲς ὠμοπλάτες πιὸ τρυφερὲς  
 ἀπὸ τὸ πλάγιασμα τῆς πρώτης μας ἀγάπης,  
 εἴτανε πράγματα ἀπομονωμένα πιότερο ἀκόμη καὶ ἀπὸ τὸ  
 ποίημα  
 ποὺ ἄφησες σάν ἔπεσες βαρὺς μαζὶ μὲ τὴν τελευταία του  
 λέξη  
 χωρὶς νὰ ξέρεις τίποτε πιά μέσα στοὺς ἄσπρους βολβούς  
 τῶν τυφλῶν καὶ τὰ σεντόνια

and we journeyed among shores of islands bare like strange  
fish-bones on the sand  
and the whole sky, empty and white, was a pigeon's huge  
wing beating with a rhythm of silence  
and dolphins under the colored water turned dark quickly  
like the soul's movements  
like movements of the imagination and the hands of men  
who grope and kill themselves in sleep  
in the huge unbroken rind of sleep that wraps around us,  
common to all of us, our common grave  
with brilliant minute crystals crushed by the motion of  
reptiles.  
And yet everything was white because the great sleep is  
white and the great death  
calm and serene and isolated in an endless silence.  
And the cackling of the guinea-hen at dawn and the cock  
that crowed falling into a deep well  
and the fire on the mountain-side raising hands of sulphur  
and autumn leaves  
and the ship with its forked shoulder-blades more tender  
than our first lovemaking,  
all were things isolated even beyond the poem  
that you abandoned when you fell heavily along with its  
last word,  
knowing nothing any longer among the white eyeballs  
of the blind and the sheets

πού ξεδιπλώνεις μέσα στὸν πυρετὸ γιὰ νὰ σκεπάσεις τὴν  
 καθημερινὴ συνοδεία  
 τῶν ὄντων πού δὲ ματώνουν ὅσο καὶ νὰ χτυπιοῦνται μὲ τὰ  
 πελέκια καὶ μὲ τὰ νύχια·  
 εἴτανε πράγματα χωριστὰ βαλμένα ἄλλοῦ καὶ τὰ σκαλιὰ  
 τοῦ ἀσβέστη  
 κατέβαιναν ὥς τὸ κατώφλι τῶν περασμένων καὶ βρίσκανε  
 τὴ σιγὴ καὶ δὲν ἀνοιγε ἡ πόρτα  
 κι' ἔλεγε πῶς οἱ φίλοι σου χτυπούσαν δυνατὰ μὲ μιὰ με-  
 γάλῃ ἀπόγνωση κι' εἴσουν κι' ἐσύ μαζί τους  
 ἀλλὰ δὲν ἄκουγες τίποτε κι' ἀνέβαιναν γύρω σου βουβὰ δελ-  
 φίνα μέσα στὰ φύκια.  
 Καὶ στύλωνες πάλι τὰ μάτια κι' ὁ ἄνθρωπος αὐτὸς μὲ τὰ  
 δαγκώματα τῶν τροπικῶν στὸ δέρμα  
 βάζοντας τὰ μαῦρα του γυαλιὰ σὰ νὰ 'θελε νὰ δουλέψει μὲ  
 τὴ φλόγα τοῦ ὀξυγόνου  
 ἔλεγε ταπεινὰ προσέχοντας καὶ σταματώντας στὴν κάθε του  
 λέξη:  
 «Οἱ ἄγγελοι εἶναι λευκοὶ πυρωμένοι λευκοὶ καὶ τὸ μάτι μα-  
 ραίνεται πού θὰ τοὺς ἀντικρίσει  
 καὶ δὲν ὑπάρχει ἄλλος τρόπος πρέπει νὰ γίνεις σὰν τὴν πέ-  
 τρα ὅταν γυρεύεις τὴ συναναστροφή τους  
 κι' ὅταν γυρεύεις τὸ θαῦμα πρέπει νὰ σπείρεις τὸ αἶμα σου  
 στὶς ὀχτῶ γωνιᾶς τῶν ἀνέμων  
 γιατί τὸ θαῦμα δὲν εἶναι πουθενὰ παρὰ κυκλοφορεῖ μέσα  
 στὶς φλέβες τοῦ ἀνθρώπου».

Ἦδρα-Ἀθήνα, Νοέμ. '39

that you unfolded in fever to cover the daily procession  
of people who fail to bleed even when they strike themselves  
with axes and nails;  
they were things isolated, put somewhere else, and the steps  
of whitewash  
descended to the threshold of the past and found silence and  
the door didn't open  
and it was as if your friends, in great despair, knocked  
loudly and you were with them  
but you heard nothing and dolphins rose around you  
dumbly in the seaweed.  
And again you gazed intently and that man, the teethman  
of the tropics in his skin,  
putting on his dark glasses as if he were going to work with  
a blowlamp,  
said humbly, pausing at every word:  
"The angels are white flaming white and the eye that would  
confront them shrivels  
and there's no other way you've got to become like stone if  
you want their company  
and when you look for the miracle you've got to scatter your  
blood to the eight points of the wind  
because the miracle is nowhere but circulating in the veins  
of man."

Hydra—Athens, Nov. '39

## Η ΑΠΟΦΑΣΗ ΤΗΣ ΛΗΣΜΟΝΙΑΣ

*Ποιὸς ἰθὰ μᾶς λογαριάζει τὴν ἀπόφαση τῆς λησμονιᾶς ;..*

Γ. Σ.

Στάσου διαβάτη μπροστά στὴν ἥσυχη λίμνη·  
ἡ σγουρὴ θάλασσα καὶ τὰ βασανισμένα καράβια  
οἱ δρόμοι ποὺ τυλίγαν βουνὰ καὶ γεννούσαν ἄστρα  
ὅλα τελειώνουν ἐδῶ στὴν πλατειὰ ἐπιφάνεια.

Τώρα μπορεῖς νὰ κοιτάξεις μὲ γαλήνη τοὺς κύκνους  
δές τους, εἶναι κατάσπροι σὰν τὸν ὕπνο τῆς νύχτας  
χωρὶς νὰ γγίξουν πουθενὰ γλιστροῦν σ' ἓνα λιγνὸ λεπίδι  
ποὺ τοὺς ὑψώνει ἐλάχιστα πάνω ἀπὸ τὰ νερά.

Σοῦ μοιάζουν ξένε, τὰ ἥσυχα φτερά καὶ τὰ καταλαβαίνεις  
ἐνῶ σὲ κοιτάζουν μαρμαρωμένα τὰ μάτια τῶν λιονταριῶν  
καὶ τὸ φύλλο τοῦ δέντρου μένει ἄγραφο στὰ ἐπουράνια  
καὶ τὸ κοντύλι τρύπησε τὸν τοῖχο τῆς φυλακῆς.

Κι' ὅμως δὲν εἴταν ἄλλα τὰ πουλιὰ ποὺ σφάζαν τὶς χωρια-  
τοποῦλες  
τὸ αἶμα κοκκίνιζε τὸ γάλα πάνω στὶς πλάκες τοῦ δρόμου  
καὶ τ' ἄλογά τους ἀθόρυβα σὰν τὸ λειωμένο μολύβι  
ρίχναν ἀδιάβαστα σχήματα μέσα στὶς γοῦρνες.

Κι' ἔσφιγγε ἡ νύχτα ὀλοένα τὸν κυρτὸ λαιμό τους  
ποὺ δὲν τραγουδοῦσε γιατί δὲν εἴταν τρόπος νὰ πεθάνει

## THE DECISION TO FORGET

*Who will calculate for us the cost of our decision to forget?\**

G. S.

Stop beside the still lake, passer-by;  
the curly sea and the tormented ships  
the roads that wrapped mountains and gave birth to stars  
all end here on this broad surface.

Now you can watch the swans calmly  
look at them: all white like the night's sleep  
without touching anywhere they glide on a thin blade  
that lifts them barely above the water.

They're like you, stranger, the still wings, and you under-  
stand them  
as the stony eyes of the lions stare at you  
and the tree's leaf remains uninscribed in the heavens  
and the pen pierced the prison wall.

And yet the birds that slaughtered the village girls were  
none other than these  
the blood reddened the milk on the road's flagstones  
and their horses cast noiselessly, like molten lead,  
illegible shapes into the troughs.

And night suddenly tightened around their arched necks  
which didn't sing because there was no way to die

ἀλλὰ χτυποῦσε θερίζοντας τὰ κόκκαλα τῶν ἀνθρώπων  
τυφλά. Καὶ δρόσιζαν τὰ φτερά τους τῇ φρίκῃ.

Κι' αὐτὰ ποὺ γίνονταν εἶχαν τὴν ἴδια γαλήνῃ μὲ τοῦτα ποὺ  
βλέπεις  
εἶχαν τὴν ἴδια γαλήνῃ γιατί δὲν περίσσευε ψυχὴ νὰ συλλο-  
γιστοῦμε  
ἐκτὸς ἀπ' τὴ δύναμῃ νὰ χαράξουμε λίγα σημάδια στὶς  
πέτρες  
ποὺ ἄγγιζαν τώρα πιά τὸ βυθὸ κάτω ἀπ' τὴ μνήμη.

Μαζί τους κι' ἐμεῖς μακριὰ πολὺ μακριά, στάσου διαβάτη  
μπροστὰ στὴν ἡσυχὴ λίμνῃ μὲ τοὺς ἄσπιλους κύκνους  
ποὺ ταξιδεύουν σὰν ἄσπρα κουρέλια μέσα στὸ νοῦ σου  
καὶ σὲ ξυπνᾷνε σὲ πράγματα ποὺ ἔζησες καὶ ποὺ δὲ θυ-  
μᾶσαι.

Μήτε θυμᾶσαι διαβάζοντας τὰ ψηφιά μας πάνω στὶς πέτρες·  
ὥστόσο μένεις ἐκστατικὸς μαζί μὲ τ' ἄρνια σου  
ποὺ μεγαλώνουν τὸ σῶμα σου μὲ τὸ μαλλί τους  
τώρα ποὺ κώθεις στὶς φλέβες σου μιὰ βοή θυσίας.

but beat, threshing men's bones blindly.  
And their wings cooled the horror.

And what then happened had the same tranquillity as what  
you see before you  
the same tranquillity because there wasn't a soul left for us  
to consider  
except the power for carving a few signs on the stones  
which now have touched the depths under memory.

We too with them, far away, very far away—stop, passer-by,  
beside the still lake with the spotless swans  
that travel like white tatters through your mind  
and waken you to things you lived yet don't remember.

Nor do you remember as you read our characters on the  
stones;  
even so you're astonished together with your sheep  
that enlarge your body with their wool  
now that you feel in your veins a sound of sacrifice.

## Ο ΒΑΣΙΛΙΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΣΙΝΗΣ

*Ἀσίνην τε...*

*ΙΛΙΑΔΑ*

Κοιτάξαμε ὅλο τὸ πρῶτ' ἄστρον ἄστρον  
ἀρχίζοντας ἀπὸ τὸ μέρος τοῦ Ἰσκιου ἐκεῖ ποῦ ἡ θά-  
λασσα  
πράσινη καὶ χωρὶς ἀναλαμπή, τὸ στῆθος σκοτωμένου πα-  
γονιοῦ  
μᾶς δέχτηκε ὅπως ὁ καιρὸς χωρὶς κανένα χάσμα.  
Οἱ φλέβες τοῦ βράχου κατέβαιναν ἀπὸ ψηλὰ  
στριμμένα κλήματα γυμνὰ πολὺκλωνα ζωντανεύοντας  
στ' ἄγγιγμα τοῦ νεροῦ, καθὼς τὸ μάτι ἀκολουθώντας τις  
πάλευε νὰ ξεφύγει τὸ κουραστικὸ λίκνισμα  
χάνοντας δύναμη ὁλοένα.

Ἀπὸ τὸ μέρος τοῦ ἥλιου ἓνας μακρὺς γιαλὸς ὁλάνοιχτος  
καὶ τὸ φῶς τρίβοντας διαμαντικὰ στὰ μεγάλα τείχη.  
Κανένα πλάσμα ζωντανὸ τ' ἀγριοπερίστερα φευγάτα  
κι' ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς Ἀσίνης ποῦ τὸν γυρεύουμε δυὸ χρόνια  
τώρα  
ἄγνωστος λησμονημένος ἀπ' ὅλους κι' ἀπὸ τὸν Ὅμηρο  
μόνο μιὰ λέξη στὴν Ἰλιάδα κι' ἐκείνη ἀβέβαιη  
ριγμένη ἐδῶ σὰν τὴν ἐντάφια χρυσή προσωπίδα.  
Τὴν ἄγγιζες, θυμᾶσαι τὸν ἦχο της; κούφιο μέσα στὸ  
φῶς  
σὰν τὸ στεγνὸ πιθάρι στὸ σκαμμένο χῶμα·

## THE KING OF ASINE

Ἀσίνην τε . . .

ILIAD\*

All morning long we looked around the citadel\*  
starting from the shaded side, there where the sea,  
green and without luster—breast of a slain peacock—  
received us like time without an opening in it.  
Veins of rock dropped down from high above,  
twisted vines, naked, many-branched, coming alive  
at the water's touch, while the eye following them  
struggled to escape the tiresome rocking,  
losing strength continually.

On the sunny side a long empty beach  
and the light striking diamonds on the huge walls.  
No living thing, the wild doves gone  
and the king of Asine, whom we've been trying to find for  
two years now,  
unknown, forgotten by all, even by Homer,  
only one word in the *Iliad* and that uncertain,  
thrown here like the gold burial mask.  
You touched it, remember its sound? Hollow in the light  
like a dry jar in dug earth:

κι' ὁ ἴδιος ἦχος μὲς στὴ θάλασσα μὲ τὰ κουπιά μας.  
Ὁ βασιλιάς τῆς Ἀσίνης ἓνα κενὸ κάτω ἀπ' τὴν προσω-  
πίδα  
παντοῦ μαζί μας παντοῦ μαζί μας, κάτω ἀπὸ ἓνα ὄνομα :  
« Ἀσίνην τε... Ἀσίνην τε... »

καὶ τὰ παιδιά του ἀγάλματα  
κι' οἱ πόθοι του φτερουγίσματα πουλιῶν κι' ὁ ἀγέρας  
στὰ διαστήματα τῶν στοχασμῶν του καὶ τὰ καράβια του  
ἀραγμένα σ' ἄφαντο λιμάνι·  
κάτω ἀπ' τὴν προσωπίδα ἓνα κενό.

Πίσω ἀπὸ τὰ μεγάλα μάτια τὰ καμπύλα χεῖλια τοὺς  
βοστρύχους  
ἀνάγλυφα στὸ μαλαματένιο σκέπασμα τῆς ὑπαρξῆς μας  
ἓνα σημεῖο σκοτεινὸ πού ταξιδεύει σὰν τὸ ψάρι  
μέσα στὴν αὐγινὴ γαλήνη τοῦ πελάγου καὶ τὸ βλέπεις :  
ἓνα κενὸ παντοῦ μαζί μας.  
Καὶ τὸ πουλὶ πού πέταξε τὸν ἄλλο χειμῶνα  
μὲ σπασμένη φτερούγα  
σκήνωμα ζωῆς,  
κι' ἡ νέα γυναικὴ πού ἔφυγε νὰ παίξει  
μὲ τὰ σκυλόδοντα τοῦ καλοκαιριοῦ  
κι' ἡ ψυχὴ πού γύρεψε τσιρίζοντας τὸν κάτω κόσμον  
κι' ὁ τόπος σὰν τὸ μεγάλο πλατανόφυλλο πού παρασέρνει  
\* ὁ χεῖμαρρος τοῦ ἥλιου  
μὲ τ' ἀρχαῖα μνημεῖα καὶ τὴ σύγχρονη θλίψη.

Κι' ὁ ποιητὴς ἀργοπορεῖ κοιτάζοντας τὶς πέτρες κι' ἀνα-  
ρωτιέται

the same sound that our oars make in the sea.  
The king of Asine a void under the mask  
everywhere with us everywhere with us, under a name:

“ Ἀσίωην τε . . . Ἀσίωην τε . . . ”

and his children statues  
and his desires the fluttering of birds, and the wind  
in the gaps between his thoughts, and his ships  
anchored in a vanished port:  
under the mask a void.

Behind the large eyes the curved lips the curls  
carved in relief on the gold cover of our existence  
a dark spot that you see traveling like a fish  
in the dawn calm of the sea:  
a void everywhere with us.  
And the bird that flew away last winter  
with a broken wing:  
abode of life,  
and the young woman who left to play  
with the dogteeth of summer  
and the soul that sought the lower world squeaking  
and the country like a large plane-leaf swept along by the  
torrent of the sun  
with the ancient monuments and the contemporary sorrow.

And the poet lingers, looking at the stones, and asks himself

ὑπάρχουν ἄραγε  
 ἀνάμεσα στὶς χαλασμένες τοῦτες γραμμὲς τὶς ἀκμὲς τὶς  
     αἰχμὲς τὰ κοῦλα καὶ τὶς καμπύλες  
 ὑπάρχουν ἄραγε  
 ἐδῶ πού συναντιέται τὸ πέρασμα τῆς βροχῆς τοῦ ἀγέρα  
     καὶ τῆς φθορᾶς  
 ὑπάρχουν, ἡ κίνηση τοῦ προσώπου τὸ σχῆμα τῆς στορ-  
     γῆς  
 ἐκείνων πού λιγόστεψαν τόσο παράξενα μὲς στὴ  
     ζωή μας  
 αὐτῶν πού ἀπόμειναν σκιὲς κυμάτων καὶ στοχασμοὶ μὲ τὴν  
     ἀπεραντοσύνη τοῦ πελάγου  
 ἢ μήπως ὅχι δὲν ἀπομένει τίποτε παρὰ μόνο τὸ βάρος  
 ἢ νοσταλγία τοῦ βάρους μιᾶς ὑπαρξῆς ζωντανῆς  
 ἐκεῖ πού μένουμε τώρα ἀνυπόστατοι λυγίζοντας  
 σὰν τὰ κλωνάρια τῆς φριχτῆς ἱτιᾶς σωριασμένα μέσα στὴ  
     διάρκεια τῆς ἀπελπισίας  
 ἐνῶ τὸ ρέμα κίτρινο κατεβάζει ἀργὰ βοῦρλα ξεριζωμένα  
     μὲς στὸ βοῦρκο  
 εἰκόνα μορφῆς πού μαρμάρωσε μὲ τὴν ἀπόφαση μιᾶς  
     πίκρας παντοτινῆς.  
 Ὁ ποιητὴς ἓνα κενό.

Ἀσπιδοφόρος ὁ ἥλιος ἀνέβαινε πολεμώντας  
 κι' ἀπὸ τὸ βάθος τῆς σπηλιᾶς μιὰ νυχτερίδα τρομαγμένη  
 χτύπησε πάνω στὸ φῶς σὰν τὴ σαΐτα πάνω στὸ σκου-  
     τάρι:  
 «Ἀσίνην τε Ἀσίνην τε...». Νά 'ταν αὐτὴ ὁ βασιλιάς τῆς  
     Ἀσίνης

does there really exist  
among these ruined lines, edges, points, hollows, and curves  
does there really exist  
here where one meets the path of rain, wind, and ruin  
does there exist the movement of the face, shape of the  
tenderness  
of those who've shrunk so strangely in our lives,  
those who remained the shadow of waves and thoughts with  
the sea's boundlessness  
or perhaps no, nothing is left but the weight  
the nostalgia for the weight of a living existence  
there where we now remain unsubstantial, bending  
like the branches of a terrible willow-tree heaped in  
permanent despair  
while the yellow current slowly carries down rushes up-  
rooted in the mud  
image of a form that the sentence to everlasting bitterness  
has turned to stone:  
the poet a void.

Shieldbearer, the sun climbed warring,  
and from the depths of the cave a startled bat  
hit the light as an arrow hits a shield:  
“ Ἀσίνην τε . . . Ἀσίνην τε . . . ” Would that it were the king  
of Asine

πού τὸν γυρεύουμε τόσο προσεχτικὰ σὲ τούτη τὴν ἀκρό-  
πολη  
γγίζοντας κάποτε μὲ τὰ δάχτυλά μας τὴν ἀφή του πάνω  
στὶς πέτρες.

Ἀσίνη, καλοκαίρι '38 - Ἀθήνα, Γεν. '40

we've been searching for so carefully on this acropolis  
sometimes touching with our fingers his touch upon  
the stones.

Asine, summer '38–Athens, Jan. '40

Η Μ Ε Ρ Ο Λ Ο Γ Ι Ο  
ΚΑΤΑΣΤΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ, Β΄

Στή Μαρώ

*Κάποτε συλλογίζομαι πώς τοῦτα ἐδῶ πὸν γράφω δὲν εἶναι  
ἄλλο παρὰ εἰκόνες πὸν κεντοῦν στὸ δέγμα τους φυλακισμέ-  
νοι ἢ πελαγίσιοι.*

Γ. Σ.

## LOGBOOK II

To Maró

*Sometimes it crosses my mind that the things I write here  
are nothing other than images that prisoners or sailors tattoo  
on their skin.*

G. S.

## ΜΕΡΕΣ ΤΟΥ ΙΟΥΝΙΟΥ '41

Βγήκε τὸ νέο φεγγάρι στὴν Ἀλεξάνδρεια  
κρατώντας τὸ παλιὸ στὴν ἀγκαλιά του  
κι' ἐμεῖς πηγαίνοντας κατὰ τὴν Πόρτα τοῦ Ἥλιου  
μὲς στὸ σκοτάδι τῆς καρδιάς — τρεῖς φίλοι.

Ποιὸς θέλει τώρα νὰ λουστεῖ στὰ νερὰ τοῦ Πρωτέα;  
Τὴ μεταμόρφωση τὴ γυρέψαμε στὰ νιάτα μας  
μὲ πόθους ποὺ ἔπαιζαν σὰν τὰ μεγάλα ψάρια  
σὲ πέλαγα ποὺ φύραναν ξαφνικά·  
πιστεύαμε στὴν παντοδυναμία τοῦ κορμιοῦ.  
Καὶ τώρα βγήκε τὸ νέο φεγγάρι ἀγκαλιασμένο  
μὲ τὸ παλιό· μὲ τ' ὁμορφο νησὶ ματώνοντας  
λαβωμένο· τὸ ἥρεμο νησί, τὸ δυνατὸ νησί, τὸ ἀθῶο.  
Καὶ τὰ κορμιὰ σὰν τσακισμένα κλαδιὰ  
καὶ σὰν ξεριζωμένες ρίζες.

Ἡ δίψα μας

ἐνιππος φύλακας μαρμαρωμένος  
στὴ σκοτεινὴ Πόρτα τοῦ Ἥλιου  
δὲν ξέρει νὰ ζητήσῃ τίποτε : φυλάγεται  
ξενιτεμένη ἐδῶ τριγύρω  
κοντὰ στὸν τάφο τοῦ Μεγάλου Ἀλεξάντρου.

Κρήτη - Ἀλεξάνδρεια - Νότιος Ἀφρική, Μάης - Σεπτέμ. '41

## DAYS OF JUNE '41

The new moon came out over Alexandria  
with the old moon in her arms  
while we were walking towards the Gate of the Sun\*  
in the heart's darkness—three friends.

Who wants to bathe in the waters of Proteus now?  
We looked for metamorphosis in our youth  
with desires that played like big fish  
in seas suddenly shrinking;  
we believed in the body's omnipotence.  
And now the new moon has come out embracing  
the old; and the beautiful island bleeding,  
wounded; the calm island—the strong, the innocent island.  
And the bodies like broken branches,  
like roots uprooted.

Our thirst

a guard on horseback turned to stone  
at the dark Gate of the Sun—  
he doesn't know how to ask for anything: he stands guard  
exiled somewhere around here  
near the tomb of Alexander the Great.

Crete, Alexandria, South Africa, May–Sept. '41

## ΥΣΤΕΡΟΓΡΑΦΟ

Ἄλλὰ ἔχουν μάτια κάτασπρα χωρὶς ματόκλαδα  
καὶ τὰ χέρια τους εἶναι λιγνὰ σὰν τὰ καλάμια.

Κύριε, ὄχι μ' αὐτούς. Γνώρισα  
τὴ φωνή τῶν παιδιῶν τὴν αὐγὴ  
πάνω σὲ πράσινες πλαγιές ροβολώντας  
χαρούμενα σὰν μέλισσες καὶ σὰν  
τὶς πεταλοῦδες, μὲ τόσα χρώματα.  
Κύριε, ὄχι μ' αὐτούς, ἡ φωνή τους  
δὲ βγαίνει κὰν ἀπὸ τὸ στόμα τους.  
Στέκεται ἐκεῖ κολλημένη σὲ κίτρινα δόντια.

Δικὴ σου ἡ θάλασσα κι' ὁ ἀγέρας  
μ' ἓνα ἄστρο κρεμασμένο στὸ στερέωμα,  
Κύριε, δὲν ξέρουνε πὼς εἴμαστε  
ὅ,τι μποροῦμε νὰ εἴμαστε  
γιατρεύοντας τὶς πληγές μας μὲ τὰ βότανα  
ποὺ βρίσκουμε πάνω σὲ πράσινες πλαγιές,  
ὄχι ἄλλες, τοῦτες τὶς πλαγιές κοντά μας·  
πὼς ἀνχασαίνουμε ὅπως μποροῦμε ν' ἀνασάνουμε  
μὲ μιὰ μικρούλα δέηση κάθε πρωὶ  
ποὺ βρίσκει τ' ἀκρογιάλι ταξιδεύοντας  
στὰ χάσματα τῆς μνήμης—  
Κύριε, ὄχι μ' αὐτούς. Ἄς γίνει ἀλλιῶς τὸ θέλημά σου.

11 Σεπτέμβρη '41

## POSTSCRIPT

But their eyes are all white, without lashes  
and their arms thin as reeds.

Lord, not with these people. I've known  
the voices of children at dawn  
rushing down green slopes  
happy as bees, happy as butterflies  
with so many colors.  
Lord, not with these people, their voices  
don't even leave their mouths—  
they stay glued to their yellow teeth.

Yours is the sea and the wind  
with a star hung in the firmament.  
Lord, they don't know that we are  
what we are able to be  
healing our wounds with herbs  
found on the green slopes,  
these slopes nearby, not any others;  
that we breathe as we are able to breathe  
with a little prayer each dawn  
that reaches the shore by crossing  
the chasms of memory—  
Lord, not with these people. Let your will be done in some  
other way.

11 September '41

## Η ΜΟΡΦΗ ΤΗΣ ΜΟΙΡΑΣ

*Ἱστορισμένα παραμύθια στήν καρδιά μας  
Σάν ἀσημένια σκούνα μπρὸς στὸ τέμπλο  
Μιᾶς ἄδειας ἐκκλησιᾶς, Ἰούλιο στὸ νησί.*

Γ. Σ.

Ἡ μορφή τῆς μοίρας πάνω ἀπ' τὴ γέννηση ἑνὸς παι-  
διοῦ,  
γύροι τῶν ἄστρων κι' ὁ ἄνεμος μιὰ σκοτεινὴ βραδιά τοῦ  
Φλεβάρη,  
γερόντισσες μὲ γιατροσόφια ἀνεβαίνοντας τὶς σκάλες ποὺ  
τρίζουν  
καὶ τὰ ξερὰ κλωνάρια τῆς κληματαριᾶς ὀλόγυμνα στὴν  
αὐλή.

Ἡ μορφή πάνω ἀπ' τὴν κούνια ἑνὸς παιδιοῦ μιᾶς μοίρας  
μαυρομαντηλούσας  
χαμόγελο ἀνεξήγητο καὶ βλέφαρα χαμηλωμένα καὶ στῆθος  
ἄσπρο σὰν τὸ γάλα  
κι' ἡ πόρτα ποὺ ἄνοιξε κι' ὁ караβοκύρης θαλασσοδαρ-  
μένος  
πετώντας σὲ μιὰ μαύρη κασέλα τὸ βρεμένο σκουφί του.

Αὐτὰ τὰ πρόσωπα κι' αὐτὰ τὰ περιστατικὰ σ' ἀκολου-  
θοῦσαν  
καθὼς ξετύλιγες τὸ νῆμα στὴν ἀκρογιαλιά γιὰ τὰ δίχτυα  
κι' ὅταν ἀκόμῃ ἀρμενίζοντας δευτερόπριμα κοίταζες τὸ  
λάκκο τῶν κυμάτων·

## THE FIGURE OF FATE

*Once-told fables in our heart  
Like a silver schooner offered to the icons  
Of an empty church, July on the island.*

G. S.

The figure of fate over a child's birth,  
circling of the stars and the wind on a dark night in  
February,  
old women with healing skills climbing the creaking stairs  
and the dry branches of the vine naked in the courtyard.

Over a child's crib the figure of fate black-kerchiefed  
smile inexplicable and eyelids lowered and breast white  
as milk  
and the door opening and the skipper, sea-whipped,  
throwing his wet cap onto a black chest.

These faces and these circumstances pursued you  
while you unwound the yarn for your nets on the beach  
and again while you watched the hollow of waves as you  
sailed on a broad reach;

σ' όλες τις θάλασσες, σ' όλους τούς κόρφους  
εΐταν μαζί σου, κι' εΐταν ή δύσκολη ζωή κι' εΐταν ή χαρά.

Τώρα δέν ξέρω νά διαβάσω παρακάτω,  
γιατι σέ δέσαν μέ τīs άλυσίδες, γιατι σέ τρύπησαν μέ τή  
λόγχη,  
γιατι σέ χώρισαν μιὰ νύχτα μέσα στο δάσος από τή γυ-  
ναίκα  
πού κοιτάζε στυλώνοντας τὰ μάτια και δέν ήξερε καθόλου  
νά μιλήσει,  
γιατι σου στέρησαν τὸ φῶς τὸ πέλαγο τὸ ψωμί.

Πῶς πέσαμε, σύντροφε, μέσα στο λαγούμι τοῦ φόβου ;  
Δέν εΐταν τῆς δικῆς σου μοίρας, μήτε τῆς δικῆς μου τὰ  
γραμμένα,  
ποτές μας δέν πουλήσαμε μήτε ἀγοράσαμε τέτια πρα-  
μάτεια·  
ποιὸς εἶναι ἐκεῖνος πού προστάζει και σκοτώνει πίσω  
ἀπὸ μᾶς ;  
"Αφησε μὴ ρωτᾷς· τρία κόκκινα ἄλογα στ' ἁλώνι  
γυρίζουν πάνω σ' ἀνθρώπινα κόκκαλα κι' ἔχουν τὰ μάτια  
δεμένα,  
ἄφησε μὴ ρωτᾷς, περίμενε· τὸ αἷμα, τὸ αἷμα  
ἓνα πρωὶ θὰ σηκωθεῖ σὰν τὸν "Αἰ Γιώργη τὸν καβαλάρη  
γιὰ νὰ καρφώσει μέ τὸ κοντάρι πάνω στο χῶμα τὸ δρό-  
κοντα.

1η Ὀχτώβρη '41

on all seas, in every gulf  
they were with you, and they were the hardship of life, they  
were the joy.

Now I don't know how to read on:  
why they bound you in chains, why they pierced you with  
the spear,  
why one night in the forest they parted you from the woman  
who watched with startled eyes and couldn't speak at all,  
why they deprived you of light, the open sea, bread.

How did we fall, my friend, into the pit of fear.  
It wasn't your fate, nor was it decreed for me,  
we never sold or bought this kind of merchandise;  
who is he who commands and murders behind our backs?  
Don't ask; three red horses on the threshing floor  
circle on human bones, their eyes blindfolded;  
don't ask, just wait: the blood, the blood  
will rise some morning like Saint George the rider  
to nail the dragon to earth with his lance.

1 October '41

KERK STR. OOST, PRETORIA, TRANSVAAL

Οἱ τζακαράντες παίζοντας καστανιέτες καὶ χορεύοντας  
ρίχναν γύρω στὰ πόδια τους ἓνα μενεξεδένιο χιόνι.  
Ἀδιάφορα ὅλα τ' ἄλλα, κι' αὐτὸ  
τὸ Βένουσμπεργκ τῆς γραφειοκρατίας μὲ τοὺς διπλοὺς  
του πύργους καὶ τὰ διπλά του ἐπίχρυσα ρολόγια  
ναρκωμένο βαθιὰ σὰν ἵπποπόταμος μὲς στὸ γαλάζιο.  
Καὶ τρέχαν τ' αὐτοκίνητα δείχνοντας  
γυαλιστερές πλάτες ὅπως τὰ δελφίνια.  
Στὸ τέλος τοῦ δρόμου μᾶς περίμενε  
δρασκελώντας ἀργόσχολα μὲς στὸ κλουβί του  
ὁ ἀσημένιος φασιανὸς τῆς Κίνας  
ὁ Εὐπλόκαμος Νυχθήμερος, ὅπως τὸν λένε.

Καὶ νὰ σκεφτεῖς πὼς ξεκινήσαμε ἀποχαιρετώντας  
μὲ τὴν καρδιὰ γεμάτη σκάγια  
τὸν Ὀνοκρόταλο τὸν Πελεκάνο — αὐτὸν  
ποὺ εἶχε ἓνα ὕφος τσαλαπατημένου πρωθυπουργοῦ  
στὸ ζωολογικὸ κῆπο τοῦ Καίρου.

Ἰοχτώβρης '41

KERK STR. OOST, PRETORIA, TRANSVAAL

Jacarandas playing castanets and dancing  
threw around their feet a violet snow.  
The rest's uninteresting, and that  
Venusburg of bureaucracy with its twin  
towers and its twin gilt clocks  
profoundly torpid like a hippopotamus in blue sky.  
And cars raced by showing  
backs glistening like dolphins.  
At the end of the street waiting for us—  
strutting idly about its cage—  
was the silver pheasant of China,  
the Euplocamos Nychtemerus, as they call it.

And to think we set out, the heart full of shot,  
saying goodbye  
to Onokrotalus the Pelican—he  
with the look of a trampled prime minister  
in the zoological garden of Cairo.

October '41

Ο ΣΤΡΑΤΗΣ ΘΑΛΑΣΣΙΝΟΣ ΑΝΑΜΕΣΑ  
ΣΤΟΥΣ ΑΓΑΠΑΝΘΟΥΣ

Δὲν ἔχει ἀσφοδίλια, μενεξέδες, μήτε ὑάκινθους·  
πῶς νὰ μιλήσεις μὲ τοὺς πεθαμένους.  
Οἱ πεθαμένοι ξέρουν μονάχα τῇ γλώσσα τῶν λουλουδιῶν·  
γι' αὐτὸ σωπαίνουν  
ταξιδεύουν καὶ σωπαίνουν, ὑπομένουν καὶ σωπαίνουν  
παρὰ δῆμὸν ὀνείρων, παρὰ δῆμον ὀνείρων.

Ἄν ἀρχίσω νὰ τραγουδῶ θὰ φωνάζω  
κι' ἄ φωνάξω —  
Οἱ ἀγάπανθοι προστάζουν σιωπὴ  
σηκώνοντας ἓνα χεράκι μαβιοῦ μωροῦ τῆς Ἀραβίας  
ἢ ἀκόμη τὰ πατήματα μιᾶς χήνας στὸν ἀέρα.

Εἶναι βαρὺ καὶ δύσκολο, δὲ μοῦ φτάνουν οἱ ζωντανοί·  
πρῶτα γιατί δὲ μιλοῦν, κι' ὕστερα  
γιατὶ πρέπει νὰ ρωτήσω τοὺς νεκροὺς  
γιὰ νὰ μπορέσω νὰ προχωρήσω παρακάτω.  
Ἀλλιῶς δὲ γίνεται, μόλις μὲ πάρει ὁ ὕπνος  
οἱ σύντροφοι κόβουνε τοὺς ἀσημένιους σπάγκους  
καὶ τὸ φλασκὶ τῶν ἀνέμων ἀδειάζει.  
Τὸ γεμίζω κι' ἀδειάζει, τὸ γεμίζω κι' ἀδειάζει·  
ξυπνῶ  
σὰν τὸ χρυσόψαρο κολυμπώντας  
μέσα στὰ χάσματα τῆς ἀστραπῆς,

STRATIS THALASSINOS AMONG  
THE AGAPANTHI\*

There are no asphodels, violets, or hyacinths;  
how then can you talk with the dead?  
The dead know the language of flowers only;  
so they keep silent  
they travel and keep silent, endure and keep silent,  
past the community of dreams, past the community of  
dreams.\*

If I start to sing I'll call out  
and if I call out—  
the agapanthi order silence  
raising the tiny hand of a blue Arabian child  
or even the footfalls of a goose in the air.

It's painful and difficult, the living are not enough for me  
first because they do not speak, and then  
because I have to ask the dead  
in order to go on farther.  
There's no other way: the moment I fall asleep  
the companions cut the silver strings  
and the flask of the winds empties.\*  
I fill it and it empties, I fill it and it empties;  
I wake  
like a goldfish swimming  
in the lightning's crevices

κι' ὁ ἀγέρας κι' ὁ κατακλυσμὸς καὶ τ' ἀνθρώπινα σώματα,  
κι' οἱ ἀγάπανθοι καρφωμένοι σὰν τὶς σαῖτες τῆς μοίρας  
στὴν ἀξεδίψαστη γῆς  
συγκλονισμένοι ἀπὸ σπασμωδικὰ νοήματα,  
θὰ 'λεγες εἶναι φορτωμένοι σ' ἓνα παμπάλαιο κάρο  
κατρακυλώντας σὲ χαλασμένους δρόμους, σὲ παλιὰ καλντε-  
ρίμια,  
οἱ ἀγάπανθοι τ' ἀσφοδίλια τῶν νέγρων :  
Πῶς νὰ τὴ μάθω ἐτούτῃ τῇ θρησκείᾳ ;

Τὸ πρῶτο πράγμα ποὺ ἔκανε ὁ θεὸς εἶναι ἡ ἀγάπη  
ἔπειτα ἔρχεται τὸ αἷμα  
κι' ἡ δίψα γιὰ τὸ αἷμα  
ποὺ τὴν κεντρίζει  
τὸ σπέρμα τοῦ κορμιοῦ καθὼς τ' ἀλάτι.  
Τὸ πρῶτο πράγμα ποὺ ἔκανε ὁ θεὸς εἶναι τὸ μακρινὸ τα-  
ξίδι·  
ἐκεῖνο τὸ σπίτι περιμένει  
μ' ἓνα γαλάζιο καπνὸ  
μ' ἓνα σκυλὶ γερασμένο  
περιμένοντας γιὰ νὰ ξεψυχήσῃ τὸ γυρισμό.  
Μὰ πρέπει νὰ μ' ἀρμηνέψουν οἱ πεθαμένοι·  
εἶναι οἱ ἀγάπανθοι ποὺ τοὺς κρατοῦν ἀμίλητους,  
ὅπως τὰ βάθη τῆς θάλασσας ἢ τὸ νερὸ μὲς στὸ ποτήρι.  
Κι' οἱ σύντροφοι μένουν στὰ παλάτια τῆς Κίρκης·  
ἀκριβέ μου 'Ελπὴνωρ ! 'Ηλίθιε, φτωχέ μου 'Ελπὴνωρ !  
"Ἡ, δὲν τοὺς βλέπεις ;  
— «Βοηθῆστε μας !» —  
Στῶν Ψαρῶν τὴν ὁλόμαυρη ράχῃ.

Τράνσβααλ, 14 Γενάρη '42

and the wind and the flood and the human bodies  
and the agapanthi nailed like the arrows of fate  
to the unquenchable earth  
shaken by convulsive nodding,  
as if loaded on an ancient cart  
jolting down gutted roads, over old cobblestones,  
the agapanthi, asphodels of the negroes:  
How can I grasp this religion?

The first thing God made is love  
then comes blood  
and the thirst for blood  
roused by  
the body's sperm as by salt.  
The first thing God made is the long journey;  
that house there is waiting  
with its blue smoke  
with its aged dog  
waiting for the homecoming so that it can die.  
But the dead must guide me;  
it is the agapanthi that keep them from speaking,  
like the depths of the sea or the water in a glass.  
And the companions stay on in the palaces of Circe:  
my dear Elpenor! My poor, foolish Elpenor!\*

Or don't you see them  
—"Oh help us!"—  
on the blackened ridge of Psara?\*

Transvaal, 14 January '42

## ΕΝΑΣ ΓΕΡΟΝΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΚΡΟΠΟΤΑΜΙΑ

Στὸ Νάνη Παναγιωτόπουλο

Κι' ὅμως πρέπει νὰ λογαριάσουμε πῶς προχωροῦμε.  
Νὰ αἰσθάνεσαι δὲ φτάνει μήτε νὰ σκέπτεσαι μήτε νὰ κινεῖσαι  
μήτε νὰ κινδυνεύει τὸ σῶμα σου στὴν παλιὰ πολεμίστρα,  
ὅταν τὸ λάδι ζεματιστὸ καὶ τὸ λειωμένο μολύβι αὐλακώ-  
νουνε τὰ τειχιά.

Κι' ὅμως πρέπει νὰ λογαριάσουμε κατὰ ποῦ προχω-  
ροῦμε,  
ὄχι καθὼς ὁ πόνος μας τὸ θέλει καὶ τὰ πεινασμένα παι-  
διά μας  
καὶ τὸ χάσμα τῆς πρόσκλησης τῶν συντρόφων ἀπὸ τὸν ἀντί-  
περα γιालό·  
μήτε καθὼς τὸ ψιθυρίζει τὸ μελανιασμένο φῶς στὸ πρόχει-  
ρο νοσοκομεῖο,  
τὸ φαρμακευτικὸ λαμπύρισμα στὸ προσκέφαλο τοῦ παλικα-  
ριοῦ ποὺ χειρουργήθηκε τὸ μεσημέρι·  
ἀλλὰ μὲ κάποιον ἄλλο τρόπο, μπορεῖ νὰ θέλω νὰ πῶ  
καθὼς  
τὸ μακρὺ ποτάμι ποὺ βγαίνει ἀπὸ τὶς μεγάλες λίμνες τὶς  
κλειστὲς βαθιὰ στὴν Ἀφρικὴ  
καὶ εἴτανε κάποτε θεὸς κι' ἔπειτα γένηκε δρόμος καὶ δωρη-  
τῆς καὶ δικαστῆς καὶ δέλτα·  
ποὺ δὲν εἶναι ποτές του τὸ ἴδιο, κατὰ ποὺ δίδαξαν οἱ πα-  
λαιοὶ γραμματισμένοι,

## AN OLD MAN ON THE RIVER BANK

To Nani Panayiotopoulo

And yet we should consider how we go forward.  
To feel is not enough, nor to think, nor to move  
nor to put your body in danger in front of an old loophole  
when scalding oil and molten lead furrow the walls.

And yet we should consider towards what we go forward,  
not as our pain would have it, and our hungry children  
and the chasm between us and the companions calling from  
the opposite shore;  
nor as the bluish light whispers it in an improvised  
hospital,  
the pharmaceutical glimmer on the pillow of the youth  
operated on at noon;  
but it should be in some other way, I would say like  
the long river that emerges from the great lakes enclosed  
deep in Africa,  
that was once a god and then became a road and a bene-  
factor, a judge and a delta;  
that is never the same, as the ancient wise men taught,

κι' ὥστόσο μένει πάντα τὸ ἴδιο σῶμα, τὸ ἴδιο στρῶμα, καὶ  
τὸ ἴδιο Σημεῖο,  
ὁ ἴδιος προσανατολισμός.

Δὲ θέλω τίποτε ἄλλο παρὰ νὰ μιλήσω ἀπλά, νὰ μοῦ δοθεῖ  
ἐτούτη ἡ χάρη.

Γιατὶ καὶ τὸ τραγούδι τὸ φορτώσαμε μὲ τόσες μουσικὲς  
ποὺ σιγὰ σιγὰ βουλιάζει  
καὶ τὴν τέχνη μας τὴ στολίσουμε τόσο πολὺ ποὺ φαγώθηκε  
ἀπὸ τὰ μαλάματα τὸ πρόσωπό της  
κι' εἶναι καιρὸς νὰ ποῦμε τὰ λιγοστά μας λόγια γιατί ἡ  
ψυχὴ μας αὐριο κάνει πανιά.

Ἄν εἶναι ἀνθρώπινος ὁ πόνος δὲν εἴμαστε ἄνθρωποι μόνο  
γιὰ νὰ πονοῦμε  
γι' αὐτὸ συλλογίζομαι τόσο πολὺ, τοῦτες τὶς μέρες, τὸ με-  
γάλο ποτάμι  
αὐτὸ τὸ νόημα ποὺ προχωρεῖ ἀνάμεσα σὲ βότανα καὶ σὲ  
χόρτα  
καὶ ζωντανὰ ποὺ βόσκουν καὶ ξεδιψοῦν κι' ἀνθρώπους ποὺ  
σπέρνουν καὶ ποὺ θερίζουν  
καὶ σὲ μεγάλους τάφους ἀκόμη καὶ μικρὲς κατοικίες  
τῶν νεκρῶν.  
Αὐτὸ τὸ ρέμα ποὺ τραβάει τὸ δρόμο του καὶ ποὺ δὲν εἶναι  
τόσο διαφορετικὸ ἀπὸ τὸ αἶμα τῶν ἀνθρώπων  
κι' ἀπὸ τὰ μάτια τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὅταν κοιτάζουν ἴσια πέρα  
χωρὶς τὸ φόβο μὲς στὴν καρδιά τους,  
χωρὶς τὴν καθημερινὴ τρεμούλα γιὰ τὰ μικροπράγματα ἢ  
ἔστω καὶ γιὰ τὰ μεγάλα·

and yet always remains the same body, the same bed, and  
the same Sign,  
the same orientation.

I want no more than to speak simply, to be granted that  
grace.

Because we've loaded even our songs with so much music  
that they're slowly sinking  
and we've decorated our art so much that its features have  
been eaten away by gold  
and it's time to say our few words because tomorrow our  
soul sets sail.

If pain is human we are not human beings merely to suffer  
pain;

that's why I think so much these days about the great river,  
that symbol which moves forward among herbs and  
greenery

and beasts that graze and drink, men who sow and harvest,  
great tombs even and small habitations of the dead.

That current which goes its way and which is not so  
different from the blood of men,

from the eyes of men when they look straight ahead without  
fear in their hearts,

without the daily tremor for trivialities or even for  
important things;

ὅταν κοιτάζουν ἴσια πέρα καθὼς ὁ στρατοκόπος πού συνή-  
 θισε ν' ἀναμετρᾷ τὸ δρόμο του μὲ τ' ἄστρα,  
 ὅχι ὅπως ἐμεῖς, τὴν ἄλλη μέρα, κοιτάζοντας τὸ κλειστὸ πε-  
 ριβόλι στὸ κοιμισμένο ἀράπικο σπίτι,  
 πίσω ἀπὸ τὰ καφασωτά, τὸ δροσερὸ περιβολάκι ν' ἀλλάζει  
 σχῆμα, νὰ μεγαλώνει καὶ νὰ μικραίνει·  
 ἀλλάζοντας καθὼς κοιτάζαμε, κι' ἐμεῖς, τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ πό-  
 θου μας καὶ τῆς καρδιᾶς μας,  
 στὴ στάλα τοῦ μεσημεριοῦ, ἐμεῖς τὸ ὑπομονετικὸ ζυμᾶρι  
 ἐνὸς κόσμου πού μᾶς διώχνει καὶ πού μᾶς πλάθει,  
 πιασμένοι στὰ πλουμισμένα δίχτυα μιᾶς ζωῆς πού εἵτανε  
 σωστή κι' ἔγινε σκόνη καὶ βούλιαξε μέσα στὴν ἄμμο  
 ἀφήνοντας πίσω της μονάχα ἐκεῖνο τὸ ἀπροσδιόριστο λί-  
 κνισμα πού μᾶς ζάλισε μιᾶς ἀψηλῆς φοινικιάς.

Κάιρο, 20 Ἰουνίου '42

when they look straight ahead like the traveler who is used  
to gauging his way by the stars,  
not like us, the other day, gazing at the enclosed garden of  
a sleepy Arab house,  
behind the lattices the cool garden changing shape, growing  
larger and smaller,  
we too changing, as we gazed, the shape of our desire and  
our hearts,  
at noon's precipitation, we the patient dough of a world  
that throws us out and kneads us,  
caught in the embroidered nets of a life that was as it should  
be and then became dust and sank into the sands  
leaving behind it only that vague dizzying sway of a tall  
palm-tree.

Cairo, 20 June '42

## Ο ΣΤΡΑΤΗΣ ΘΑΛΑΣΣΙΝΟΣ ΣΤΗ ΝΕΚΡΗ ΘΑΛΑΣΣΑ

*Κάποτε βλέπεις σὲ παρεκκλήσια, χτισμένα πάνω στὶς θρυλικές τοποθεσίες, τὴ σχετικὴ περιγραφὴ τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου γραμμένη ἄγγλικά καὶ ἀπὸ κάτω: «THIS IS THE PLACE GENTLEMEN!»*

ΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΤΟΥ Σ. Θ. ΑΙΙΟ ΤΗΝ ΙΕΡΟΣΑΛΗΜ

Ἱερουσαλήμ, ἀκυβέρνητη πολιτεία,  
Ἱερουσαλήμ, πολιτεία τῆς προσφυγιᾶς.

Κάποτε βλέπεις τὸ μεσημέρι  
στὴν ἄσφαλτο τοῦ δρόμου νὰ γλιστρᾷ  
ἓνα κοπάδι μαῦρα φύλλα σκορπισμένα —  
Περνοῦνε διαβατάρικα πουλιὰ κάτω ἀπ' τὸν ἥλιο  
μὰ δὲ σηκώνεις τὸ κεφάλι.

Ἱερουσαλήμ, ἀκυβέρνητη πολιτεία!

Ἄγνωστες γλῶσσες τῆς Βαβέλ,  
χωρὶς συγγένεια μὲ τὴ γραμματικὴ  
τὸ συναξάρι μήτε τὸ ψαλτήρι  
ποὺ σ' ἔμαθαν νὰ συλλαβίζεις τὸ φθινόπωρο  
σὰν ἔδεναν τὶς ψαροποῦλες στὰ μουράγια·  
ἄγνωστες γλῶσσες κολλημένες  
σὰν ἀποτσιγάρα σβηστὰ σὲ χαλασμένα χεῖλια.

## STRATIS THALASSINOS ON THE DEAD SEA\*

*Sometimes one sees in chapels built on legendary sites  
the relevant Biblical description quoted in English  
and beneath it: "THIS IS THE PLACE GENTLEMEN!"*

LETTER OF S. T. FROM JERUSALEM

Jerusalem, drifting city,  
Jerusalem, city of refugees.

Sometimes you see at noon  
a flock of scattered black leaves  
sliding across the asphalt road—  
Migratory birds are passing under the sun  
but you don't raise your head.

Jerusalem, drifting city!

Unknown tongues of Babel  
without relation to the grammar,  
to the Lives of the Saints or the Book of Psalms,  
that they taught you to spell out in autumn  
when they tied the fishing boats to the quays;  
unknown tongues glued  
like burned-out cigarette butts to decayed lips.

Ἱερουσαλήμ, πολιτεία τῆς προσφυγιάς!

Ἀλλὰ τὰ μάτια τους μιλοῦν ὅλα τὸν ἴδιο λόγο,  
ὅχι τὸ λόγο ποὺ ἔγινε ἄνθρωπος, θεέ μου συμπάθα μας,  
ὅχι ταξίδια γιὰ νὰ ἰδεῖς καινούργιους τόπους, ἀλλὰ  
τὸ σκοτεινὸ τρένο τῆς φυγῆς ὅπου τὰ βρέφη  
τρέφονται μὲ τὴ βρώμα καὶ τὶς ἁμαρτίες τῶν γονιῶν  
καὶ νιώθουν οἱ μεσόκοποι τὸ χάσμα  
νὰ μεγαλώνει ἀνάμεσα στὸ σῶμα  
ποὺ μένει πίσω σὰ γκαμήλα λαβωμένη  
καὶ τὴν ψυχὴ μὲ τὸ ἀνεξάντλητο κουράγιο, καθὼς λένε.  
Εἶναι καὶ τὰ καράβια ποὺ τοὺς ταξιδεύουν  
ὀλόρθους σὰ μπαλσαμωμένους δεσποτάδες  
μέσα στ' ἄμπάρια, γιὰ ν' ἀράξουν ἓνα βράδι  
στὰ φύκια τοῦ βυθοῦ ἀπαλά.

Ἱερουσαλήμ, ἀκυβέρνητη πολιτεία!

Στὸν ποταμὸ Γιορδάνη  
τρεῖς καλογέροι φέραν  
καὶ δέσανε στὴν ὄχτη  
κόκκινο τρεχαντήρι.  
Τρεῖς ἀπ' τ' Ἀγιονόρος  
ἄρμένισαν τρεῖς μῆνες  
καὶ δέσαν σ' ἓνα κλῶνο  
στὴν ὄχτη τοῦ Γιορδάνη  
τοῦ πρόσφυγα τὸ τάμα.  
Πεινάσανε τρεῖς μῆνες  
διψάσανε τρεῖς μῆνες,

Jerusalem, city of refugees!

But their eyes all speak the same word,  
not the word that became man, God forgive us,  
not journeys to see new places, but  
the dark train of flight where infants  
are fed on the dirt and the sins of their parents  
and the middle-aged feel the chasm  
broaden between the body—  
lagging behind like a wounded camel—  
and the soul with what they call its inexhaustible courage.  
It is also the ships that carry them,  
standing upright like embalmed bishops  
in the holds, to moor one evening  
in the seaweed of the deep, softly.

Jerusalem, drifting city!

To the River Jordan  
three monks brought  
a small red caique  
and moored it to the banks.  
Three from Mount Athos  
sailed for three months  
and moored to a branch,  
on the Jordan banks,  
a refugee's offering.  
They hungered three months  
they thirsted three months

ξαγρύπνησαν τρεῖς μῆνες  
κι' ἦρθαν ἀπ' τ' Ἀγιονόρος  
ἀπ' τῇ Θεσσαλονίκῃ  
οἱ σκλάβοι καλογέροι.

Εἵμαστε ὅλοι καθὼς ἡ Νεκρὴ θάλασσα  
πολλὰς ὀργιὰς κάτω ἀπ' τὴν ἐπιφάνεια τοῦ Αἰγαίου.  
"Ἐλα μαζί μου νὰ σοῦ δείξω τὸ τοπίο :

Στὴ Νεκρὴ θάλασσα  
δὲν εἶναι ψάρια  
δὲν εἶναι φύκια  
μήτε ἄχινοι  
δὲν ἔχει ζωὴ.  
Δὲν εἶναι ζωντανὰ  
ποὺ ἔχουν στομάχι  
γιὰ νὰ πεινοῦν  
ποὺ θρέφουν νεῦρα  
γιὰ νὰ πονοῦν,

THIS IS THE PLACE, GENTLEMEN!

Στὴ Νεκρὴ θάλασσα  
ἡ καταφρόνια  
εἶναι ἡπραμάτεια  
τοῦ κανενοῦ,  
ὅξω ἀπ' τὸ νοῦ.  
Καρδιὰ καὶ στόχαση  
πήζουν στ' ἄλάτι  
ποὺ εἶναι πικρὸ

stayed sleepless three months  
and they came from Mount Athos  
came from Thessaloniki  
the three enslaved monks.

Like the Dead Sea, we are all  
many fathoms below the level of the Aegean.  
Come with me and I will show you the setting:

In the Dead Sea  
there are no fish  
there is no seaweed  
nor any sea-urchins  
there is no life.  
There are no creatures  
that have a belly  
to suffer hunger  
that nourish nerves  
to suffer pain,

THIS IS THE PLACE, GENTLEMEN!

In the Dead Sea  
scornfulness  
is no one's trade  
no one's worry.  
Heart and thought  
congeal in salt  
that's full of bitterness

σμίγουν τὸν κόσμον  
τὸν ὀρυχτό,  
THIS IS THE PLACE, GENTLEMEN!

Στὴ Νεκρὴ θάλασσα  
ὀχτροὺς καὶ φίλους  
παιδιά, γυναῖκα  
καὶ συγγενεῖς,  
ἄει νὰ τοὺς βρεῖς.  
Εἶναι στὰ Γόμορρα  
κάτω στὸν πάτο  
πολὺ εὐτυχεῖς  
ποὺ δὲν προσμένουν  
καμμιὰ γραφή.  
GENTLEMEN,

συνεχίζουμε τὴν περιοδεία μας  
πολλὲς ὀργιὲς κάτω ἀπ' τὴν ἐπιφάνεια τοῦ Αἰγαίου.

Ἰούλιος '42

and finally join  
the mineral world,  
THIS IS THE PLACE, GENTLEMEN!

In the Dead Sea  
enemies and friends  
wife and children  
other relations  
go and find them.  
They're in Gomorrah  
down on the bottom  
very happy  
they don't expect  
any message.  
GENTLEMEN,

we continue our tour  
many fathoms below the level of the Aegean.

July '42

## ΚΑΛΛΙΓΡΑΦΗΜΑ

*Νεῖλος, «Τὰ περιστέρια»*

Πανιά στὸ Νεῖλο,  
πουλιά χωρὶς κελάιδισμα μὲ μιὰ φτερούγα  
γυρεύοντας σιωπηλὰ τὴν ἄλλη·  
ψηλαφώντας στὴν ἀπουσία τ' οὐρανοῦ  
τὸ σῶμα ἑνὸς μαρμαρωμένου ἐφήβου·  
γράφοντας μὲ συμπαθητικὸ μελάνι στὸ γαλάζιο  
μιὰν ἀπελπιστικὴ κραυγή.

## CALLIGRAPHY

*Nile, "Casino des Pigeons"*

Sails on the Nile,  
songless birds with one wing  
searching silently for the other;  
groping in the sky's absence  
for the body of a marble youth;  
inscribing on the blue with invisible ink  
a desperate cry.

## ΜΕΡΕΣ Τ' ΑΠΡΙΛΗ '43

Τρουμπέτες, τράμ, βορβορυγμοί, τρίξιμο φρένων  
χλωροφορμίζουν τὸ μυαλό του ὅπως μετῶς  
ὅσο βαστᾶς κι' ἔπειτα χάνεσαι  
στὴ νάρκη καὶ στὸ ἔλεος τοῦ χειρουργοῦ.

Στοὺς δρόμους περπατᾷ μὲ προσοχή, νὰ μὴ γλιστρήσει  
στὶς πεπονόφλουδες ποὺ ρίχνουν ἀδιαφόρετοι ἀραπάδες  
ἢ πρόσφυγες πολιτικάντηδες καὶ τὸ σινάφι,  
παραμονεύοντας: θὰ τήνε πατήσῃ; — δὲ θὰ τὴν πατήσῃ;  
"Ὅπως μαδᾶς μιὰ μαργαρίτα·

προχωρεῖ

κουνώντας μιὰν ὑπέρογκη ἀρμαθιὰ ἀνωφέλευτων κλειδιῶν·  
τὸ στεγνὸ γαλάζιο μνημονεύει  
ρεκλάμες ξεβαμμένες τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Ἀκτοπλοῦδας,  
παράθυρα μανταλωμένα πάνω σὲ πρόσωπα ἀκριβά,  
ἢ λίγο καθαρὸ νερὸ στὴ ρίζα ἐνὸς πλατάνου.

Προχωρεῖ πηγαίνοντας στὴ δουλειά του καθὼς  
χίλια λιμάρικα σκυλιὰ τοῦ κουρελιάζουν τὰ μπατζάκια  
καὶ τὸν γυμνώνουν.

Προχωρεῖ, παραπατώντας, δαχτυλοδειχτούμενος,  
κι' ἓνας πηχτὸς ἀγέρας φέρνει γύρα  
σκουπίδια, καβαλίνα, μπόχα καὶ καταλαλιά.

Κάιρο - Σάρια Ἐμάντ ἐλ Ντίν, 24 Ἰουνίου '43

## DAYS OF APRIL '43

Trumpets, trams, cars back-firing, screeching brakes  
chloroform his mind in the same way as one counts  
so long as one holds out before being lost  
in numbness, at the surgeon's mercy.

In the streets he walks carefully, not to slip  
on melon-rinds thrown by indifferent Arabs  
or refugee politicians and the clique;  
they watch him: will he step on it?—will he not?  
As one plucks a daisy.

He walks on  
swinging an enormous bunch of useless keys;  
the dry sky recalls  
faded advertisements of the Greek Coastal Steamship  
Company,  
windows locked on faces one loves  
or a little clear water at the root of a plane tree.

He walks on, going to his work, while  
a thousand starving dogs tear his pants to shreds  
and strip him naked.  
He walks on, staggering, pointed at,  
and a dense wind whirls around him  
garbage, dung, stench, and slander.

Cairo—Saria Emad-el-Din, 24 June '43

## ΑΝΑΜΕΣΑ ΣΤΑ ΚΟΚΚΑΛΑ ΕΔΩ

Ἀνάμεσα στὰ κόκκαλα  
μιά μουσική :  
περνάει τὴν ἄμμο,  
περνάει τὴ θάλασσα.  
Ἀνάμεσα στὰ κόκκαλα  
ἤχος φλογέρας  
ἤχος τυμπάνου ἀπόμακρος  
κι' ἓνα ψιλὸ κουδούνισμα,  
περνάει τοὺς κάμπους τοὺς στεγνοὺς  
περνάει τὴ θάλασσα μὲ τὰ δελφίνια.  
Ψηλὰ βουνά, δὲ μᾶς ἀκοῦτε !  
Βοήθεια ! Βοήθεια !  
Ψηλὰ βουνά θὰ λειώσουμε, νεκροὶ μὲ τοὺς νεκρούς !

Κάιρο, Αὐγούστος '43

## HERE AMONG THE BONES

Among the bones  
music:  
it crosses the sand,  
crosses the sea.  
Among the bones  
a flute's sound  
the distant sound of a drum  
and the faint ringing of bells  
crosses the dry fields  
crosses the dolphined sea.  
High mountains, can't you hear us?  
Help! Help!  
High mountains, we will dissolve, dead among the dead!

Cairo, August '43

## ΤΕΛΕΥΤΑΙΟΣ ΣΤΑΘΜΟΣ

Λίγες οί νύχτες μέ φεγγάρι ποῦ μ' ἄρέσαν.  
Τ' ἀλφαβητάρι τῶν ἄστρον ποῦ συλλαβίζεις  
ὅπως τὸ φέρει ὁ κόπος τῆς τελειωμένης μέρας  
καὶ βγάζεις ἄλλα νοήματα κι' ἄλλες ἐλπίδες,  
πιὸ καθαρά μπορεῖς νὰ τὸ διαβάσεις.  
Τώρα ποῦ κάθομαι ἄνεργος καὶ λογαριάζω  
λίγα φεγγάρια ἀπόμειναν στὴ μνήμη·  
νησιά, χρῶμα θλιμμένης Παναγίας, ἄργα στὴ χάση  
ἢ φεγγαρόφωτα σὲ πολιτεῖες τοῦ βοριᾶ ρίχνοντας κάποτε  
σὲ ταραγμένους δρόμους ποταμούς καὶ μέλη ἀνθρώπων  
βαρεῖα μιὰ νάρκη.  
Κι' ὅμως χτὲς βράδι ἐδῶ, σὲ τούτῃ τῇ στερνῇ μας σκάλα  
ὅπου προσμένουμε τὴν ὥρα τῆς ἐπιστροφῆς μας νὰ χα-  
ράξει  
σὰν ἓνα χρέος παλιό, μονέδα ποῦ ἔμεινε γιὰ χρόνια  
στὴν κάσα ἐνὸς φιλάργυρου, καὶ τέλος  
ἦρθε ἡ στιγμή τῆς πλερωμῆς κι' ἀκούγονται  
νομίσματα νὰ πέφτουν πάνω στὸ τραπέζι·  
σὲ τοῦτο τὸ τυρρηνικὸ χωριό, πίσω ἀπὸ τὴ θάλασσα τοῦ  
Σαλέρνο  
πίσω ἀπὸ τὰ λιμάνια τοῦ γυρισμοῦ, στὴν ἄκρη  
μιᾶς φθινοπωρινῆς μπόρας τὸ φεγγάρι  
ξεπέρασε τὰ σύννεφα, καὶ γίναν  
τὰ σπίτια στὴν ἀντίπερα πλαγιά ἀπὸ σμάλτο.

## LAST STOP

Few are the moonlit nights that I've cared for:  
the alphabet of the stars—which you spell out  
as much as your fatigue at the day's end allows  
and from which you gather new meaning and hope—  
you can then read more clearly.

Now that I sit here, idle, and think about it,\*  
few are the moons that remain in my memory:  
islands, color of a grieving Virgin, late in the waning  
or moonlight in northern cities sometimes casting  
over turbulent streets, rivers, and limbs of men  
a heavy torpor.

Yet here last evening, in this our final port  
where we wait for the hour of our return home to dawn  
like an old debt, like money lying for years  
in a miser's safe, and at last  
the time for payment comes  
and you hear the coins falling onto the table;  
in this Etruscan village, behind the sea of Salerno  
behind the harbors of our return, on the edge  
of an autumn squall, the moon  
outstripped the clouds, and houses  
on the slope opposite became enamel:

Σιωπὲς ἀγαπημένες τῆς σελήνης.

Εἶναι κι' αὐτὸς ἓνας εἰρμὸς τῆς σκέψης ἓνας τρόπος  
ν' ἀρχίσεις νὰ μιλάς γιὰ πράγματα πού ὁμολογεῖς  
δύσκολα, σέ ὥρες ὅπου δὲ βαστάς σέ φίλο  
πού ξέφυγε κρυφὰ καὶ φέρνει  
μαντάτα ἀπὸ τὸ σπίτι κι' ἀπὸ τοὺς συντρόφους,  
καὶ βιάζεσαι ν' ἀνοίξεις τὴν καρδιά σου  
μὴ σέ προλάβει ἡ ξενιτειὰ καὶ τὸν ἀλλάξει.  
'Ερχόμαστε ἀπ' τὴν Ἀραπιά, τὴν Αἴγυπτο τὴν Παλαιστίνη  
τὴ Συρία·  
τὸ κρατίδιο  
τῆς Κοιμμαγηνῆς πού 'σβησε σὰν τὸ μικρὸ λυχνάρι  
πολλὲς φορές γυρίζει στὸ μυαλό μας,  
καὶ πολιτεῖες μεγάλες πού ἔζησαν χιλιάδες χρόνια  
κι' ἔπειτα ἀπόμειναν τόπος βοσκῆς γιὰ τὶς γκαμουῦζες  
χωράφια γιὰ ζαχαροκάλαμα καὶ καλαμπόκια.  
'Ερχόμαστε ἀπ' τὴν ἄμμο τῆς ἔρημος ἀπ' τὶς θάλασσες τοῦ  
Πρωτέα,  
ψυχὲς μαραγκιασμένες ἀπὸ δημόσιες ἀμαρτίες,  
καθένας κι' ἓνα ἀξίωμα σὰν τὸ πουλὶ μὲς στὸ κλουβί του.  
Τὸ βροχερὸ φθινόπωρο σ' αὐτὴ τὴ γούβα  
κακοφορμίζει τὴν πληγὴ τοῦ καθενός μας  
ἢ αὐτὸ πού θά 'λεγες ἀλλιῶς, νέμεση μοίρα  
ἢ μοναχὰ κακὲς συνήθειες, δόλο καὶ ἀπάτη,  
ἢ ἀκόμη ἰδιοτέλεια νὰ καρπωθεῖς τὸ αἶμα τῶν ἄλλων.  
Εὐκόλα τρίβεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος μὲς στοὺς πολέμους·  
ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἶναι μαλακός, ἓνα δεμάτι χόρτο·  
χείλια καὶ δάχτυλα πού λαχταροῦν ἓνα ἄσπρο στῆθος

Amica silentia lunae.\*

This is a train of thought, a way  
to begin to speak of things you confess  
uneasily, at times when you can't hold back, to a friend  
who escaped secretly and who brings  
word from home and from the companions,  
and you hurry to open your heart  
before exile forestalls you and alters him.  
We come from Arabia, Egypt, Palestine, Syria;  
the little state  
of Kommagene, which flickered out like a small lamp,  
often comes to mind,  
and great cities that lived for thousands of years  
and then became pasture land for cattle,  
fields for sugar-cane and corn.  
We come from the sand of the desert, from the seas of  
Proteus,  
souls shriveled by public sins,  
each holding office like a bird in its cage.  
The rainy autumn in this gorge  
festers the wound of each of us  
or what you might term differently: nemesis, fate,  
or simply bad habits, fraud and deceit,\*  
or even the selfish urge to reap reward from the blood of  
others.  
Man frays easily in wars;  
man is soft, a sheaf of grass,  
lips and fingers that hunger for a white breast

μάτια πού μισοκλείνουν στο λαμπύρισμα τῆς μέρας  
καὶ πόδια πού θὰ τρέχανε, κι' ἄς εἶναι τόσο κουρασμένα  
στο παραμικρὸ σφύριγμα τοῦ κέρδους.

Ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἶναι μαλακὸς καὶ διψασμένος σὰν τὸ χόρτο,  
ἅπληστος σὰν τὸ χόρτο, ρίζες τὰ νεῦρα του κι' ἀπλώνουν  
σὰν ἔρθει ὁ θέρος

προτιμᾷ νὰ σφυρίξουν τὰ δρεπάνια στ' ἄλλο χωράφι·  
σὰν ἔρθει ὁ θέρος

ἄλλοι φωνάζουνε γιὰ νὰ ξορκίσουν τὸ δαιμονικὸ  
ἄλλοι μπερδεύονται μὲς στ' ἀγαθὰ τους, ἄλλοι ρητο-  
ρεύουν.

Ἀλλὰ τὰ ξόρκια τ' ἀγαθὰ τίς ρητορεῖες,  
σὰν εἶναι οἱ ζωντανοὶ μακριά, τί θὰ τὰ κάνεις;

Μήπως ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἶναι ἄλλο πράγμα;

Μὴν εἶναι αὐτὸ πού μεταδίνει τῇ ζωῇ;

Καιρὸς τοῦ σπεῖρειν, καιρὸς τοῦ θερίζειν.

Πάλι τὰ ἴδια καὶ τὰ ἴδια, θὰ μοῦ πεῖς, φίλε.

Ὅμως τῇ σκέψῃ τοῦ πρόσφυγα τῇ σκέψῃ τοῦ αἰχμάλωτου  
τῇ σκέψῃ

τοῦ ἀνθρώπου σὰν κατάντησε κι' αὐτὸςπραμάτεια  
δοκίμασε νὰ τὴν ἀλλάξεις, δὲν μπορεῖς.

Ἴσως καὶ νὰ 'θελε νὰ μείνει βασιλιάς ἀνθρωποφάγων  
ξοδεύοντας δυνάμεις πού κανεῖς δὲν ἀγοράζει

νὰ σεργιανᾷ μέσα σὲ κάμπους ἀγαπάνθων

ν' ἀκούει τὰ τουμπελέκια κάτω ἀπ' τὸ δέντρο τοῦ μπαμποῦ,  
καθὼς χορεύουν οἱ αὐλικοὶ μὲ τερατώδεις προσωπίδες.

Ὅμως ὁ τόπος πού τὸν πελεκοῦν καὶ πού τὸν καῖνε σὰν  
τὸ πεῦκο, καὶ τὸν βλέπεις

eyes that half-close in the radiance of day  
and feet that would run, no matter how tired,  
at the slightest call of profit.  
Man is soft and thirsty like grass,  
insatiable like grass, his nerves roots that spread;  
when the harvest comes  
he would rather have the scythes whistle in some other field;  
when the harvest comes  
some call out to exorcise the demon  
some become entangled in their riches, others deliver  
speeches.  
But what good are exorcisms, riches, speeches  
when the living are far away?  
Is man ever anything else?  
Isn't it this that confers life?  
A time for planting, a time for harvesting.

"The same thing over and over again," you'll tell me,  
friend.  
But the thinking of a refugee, the thinking of a prisoner,  
the thinking  
of a person when he too has become a commodity—  
try to change it; you can't.  
Maybe he would have liked to stay king of the cannibals  
wasting strength that nobody buys,  
to promenade in fields of agapanthi\*  
to hear the drums with bamboo overhead,  
as courtiers dance with prodigious masks.  
But the country they're chopping up and burning like a  
pine-tree—you see it

εἴτε στὸ σκοτεινὸ βαγόνι, χωρὶς νερό, σπασμένα τζάμια,  
νύχτες καὶ νύχτες  
εἴτε στὸ πυρωμένο πλοῖο ποὺ θὰ βουλιάξει καθὼς τὸ δεί-  
χνουν οἱ στατιστικές,  
ἐτοῦτα ρίζωσαν μὲς στὸ μυαλὸ καὶ δὲν ἀλλάζουν  
ἐτοῦτα φύτεψαν εἰκόνες ἴδιες μὲ τὰ δέντρα ἐκεῖνα  
ποὺ ρίχνουν τὰ κλωνάρια τους μὲς στὰ παρθένα δάση  
κι' αὐτὰ καρφώνουνται στὸ χῶμα καὶ ξαναφυτρώνουν·  
ρίχνουν κλωνάρια καὶ ξαναφυτρώνουν δρασκελώνοντας  
λεῦγες καὶ λεῦγες·  
ἓνα παρθένο δάσος σκοτωμένων φίλων τὸ μυαλὸ μας.  
Κι' ἂ σοῦ μιλῶ μὲ παραμύθια καὶ παραβολές  
εἶναι γιατί τ' ἀκοῦς γλυκότερα, κι' ἡ φρίκη  
δὲν κουβεντιάζεται γιατί εἶναι ζωντανή  
γιατί εἶναι ἀμίλητη καὶ προχωράει·  
Στάζει τὴ μέρα στάζει στὸν ὕπνο  
μνησιπήμων πόνος.

Νὰ μιλήσω γιὰ ἥρωες νὰ μιλήσω γιὰ ἥρωες: ὁ Μιχάλης  
ποὺ ἔφυγε μ' ἀνοιχτὲς πληγὲς ἀπ' τὸ νοσοκομεῖο  
ἴσως μιλοῦσε γιὰ ἥρωες ὅταν, τὴ νύχτα ἐκείνη  
ποὺ ἔσερνε τὸ ποδᾶρι του μὲς στὴ συσκοτισμένη πολιτεία,  
οὐρλιαζε ψηλαφώντας τὸν πόνο μας: «Στὰ σκοτεινὰ  
πηγαίνουμε στὰ σκοτεινὰ προχωροῦμε...»  
Οἱ ἥρωες προχωροῦν στὰ σκοτεινὰ.

Λίγες οἱ νύχτες μὲ φεγγάρι ποὺ μ' ἀρέσουν.

Cava dei Tirreni, 5 Ὀκτωβρίου '44

either in the dark train, without water, the windows broken,  
    night after night  
or in the burning ship that according to the statistics is  
    bound to sink—  
this is riveted in the mind and doesn't change  
this has planted images like those trees  
that cast their branches in virgin forests  
so that they take root in the earth and sprout again;  
they cast their branches that sprout again, striding mile  
    after mile;  
our mind's a virgin forest of murdered friends.  
And if I talk to you in fables and parables  
it's because it's more gentle for you that way; and horror  
really can't be talked about because it's alive,  
because it's mute and goes on growing:  
memory-wounding pain  
drips by day drips in sleep.\*

To speak of heroes to speak of heroes: Michael  
who left the hospital with his wounds still open,  
perhaps he was speaking of heroes—the night  
he dragged his foot through the darkened city—  
when he howled, groping over our pain: “We advance in  
    the dark,  
we move forward in the dark . . .”  
Heroes move forward in the dark.

Few are the moonlit nights that I care for.

Cava dei Tirreni, 5 October '44

## «ΚΙΧΛΗ»

*Δαίμονος ἐπιπόνου καὶ τύχης χαλεπῆς ἐφήμερον σπέρμα, τί με  
βιάζεσθε λέγειν, ἃ ὑμῖν ἄρειον μὴ γνῶναι.*

Ο ΣΕΙΛΗΝΟΣ ΣΤΟΝ ΜΙΔΑ

“THRUSH”\*

*Ephemeral issue of a vicious daemon and a harsh fate, why  
do you force me to speak of things that it would be better  
for you not to know.*

*SILENUS TO MIDAS\**

## Α΄

*Τὸ σπίτι κοντὰ στὴ θάλασσα*

Τὰ σπίτια πού εἶχα μοῦ τὰ πήραν. Ἔτυχε  
νά 'ναι τὰ χρόνια δίσεχτα· πολέμοι χαλασμοὶ ξενιτεμοί·  
κάποτε ὁ κυνηγὸς βρίσκει τὰ διαβατάρικα πουλιὰ  
κάποτε δὲν τὰ βρίσκει· τὸ κυνήγι  
εἶταν καλὸ στὰ χρόνια μου, πήραν πολλοὺς τὰ σκάγια·  
οἱ ἄλλοι γυρίζουν ἢ τρελαίνονται στὰ καταφύγια.

Μὴ μοῦ μιλάς γιὰ τ' ἀηδόνι μήτε γιὰ τὸν κορυδαλὸ  
μήτε γιὰ τὴ μικρούλα σουσουράδα  
πού γράφει νούμερα στὸ φῶς μὲ τὴν οὐρά της·  
δὲν ξέρω πολλὰ πράγματα ἀπὸ σπίτια  
ξέρω πῶς ἔχουν τὴ φυλὴ τους, τίποτε ἄλλο.  
Καινούργια στὴν ἀρχή, σὰν τὰ μωρὰ  
πού παίζουν στὰ περβόλια μὲ τὰ κρόσια τοῦ ἡλίου,  
κεντοῦν παραθυρόφυλλα χρωματιστὰ καὶ πόρτες  
γυαλιστερές πάνω στὴ μέρα·  
ὅταν τελειώσει ὁ ἀρχιτέκτονας ἀλλάζουν,  
ζαρώνουν ἢ χαμογελοῦν ἢ ἀκόμη πεισματῶνουν  
μ' ἐκείνους πού ἔμειναν μ' ἐκείνους πού ἔφυγαν  
μ' ἄλλους πού θὰ γυρίζανε ἂν μπορούσαν  
ἢ πού χαθήκαν, τώρα πού ἔγινε  
ὁ κόσμος ἓνα ἀπέραντο ξενοδοχεῖο.

Δὲν ξέρω πολλὰ πράγματα ἀπὸ σπίτια,  
θυμᾶμαι τὴ χαρά τους καὶ τὴ λύπη τους

# I

## *The house near the sea\**

The houses I had they took away from me. The times  
happened to be unpropitious: war, destruction, exile;  
sometimes the hunter hits the migratory birds,  
sometimes he doesn't hit them. Hunting  
was good in my time, many felt the pellet;  
the rest circle aimlessly or go mad in the shelters.

Don't talk to me about the nightingale or the lark  
or the little wagtail  
inscribing figures with his tail in the light;  
I don't know much about houses  
I know they have their own nature, nothing else.  
New at first, like babies  
who play in gardens with the tassels of the sun,  
they embroider colored shutters and shining doors  
over the day.  
When the architect's finished, they change,  
they frown or smile or even grow stubborn  
with those who stayed behind, with those who went away  
with others who'd come back if they could  
or others who disappeared, now that the world's become  
an endless hotel.

I don't know much about houses,  
I remember their joy and their sorrow

καμιά φορά, σὰ σταματήσω·

ἀκόμη

καμιά φορά, κοντὰ στὴ θάλασσα, σὲ κάμαρες γυμνές  
μ' ἓνα κρεβάτι σιδερένιο χωρὶς τίποτε δικό μου  
κοιτάζοντας τὴ βραδινὴν ἀράχνη συλλογιέμαι  
πὼς κάποιος ἐτοιμάζεται νὰ ῥθεῖ, πὼς τὸν στολίζουν  
μ' ἄσπρα καὶ μαῦρα ροῦχα μὲ πολύχρωμα κοσμήματα  
καὶ γύρω του μιλοῦν σιγὰ σεβάσμιες δέσποινες  
γκρίζα μαλλιά καὶ σκοτεινὲς δαντέλες,  
πὼς ἐτοιμάζεται νὰ ῥθεῖ νὰ μ' ἀποχαιρετήσῃ·  
ἦ, μιὰ γυναίκα ἐλικοβλέφαρη βαθύζωνη  
γυρίζοντας ἀπὸ λιμάνια μεσημβρινά,  
Σμύρνη Ρόδο Συρακοῦσες Ἀλεξάντρεια,  
ἀπὸ κλειστὲς πολιτεῖες σὰν τὰ ζεστὰ παραθυρόφυλλα,  
μὲ ἀρώματα χρυσῶν καρπῶν καὶ βότανα,  
πὼς ἀνεβαίνει τὰ σκαλιὰ χωρὶς νὰ βλέπει  
ἐκείνους ποὺ κοιμήθηκαν κάτω ἀπ' τὴ σκάλα.

Ξέρεις τὰ σπίτια πεισματώνουν εὐκόλα, σὰν τὰ γυμνώσεις.

sometimes, when I stop to think;

again

sometimes, near the sea, in naked rooms  
with a single iron bed and nothing of my own,  
watching the evening spider, I imagine  
that someone is getting ready to come, that they dress  
him up\*

in white and black robes, with many-colored jewels,  
and around him venerable ladies,  
gray hair and dark lace shawls, talk softly,  
that he is getting ready to come and say goodbye to me;  
or that a woman—eyelashes quivering, slim-waisted,  
returning from southern ports,  
Smyrna Rhodes Syracuse Alexandria,  
from cities closed like hot shutters,  
with perfume of golden fruit and herbs—  
climbs the stairs without seeing  
those who've fallen asleep under the stairs.

Houses, you know, grow stubborn easily when you strip  
them bare.

## B'

*Ὁ ἡδονικός Ἑλπηνωρ*

Τὸν εἶδα χτὲς νὰ σταματᾷ στὴν πόρτα  
 κάτω ἀπὸ τὸ παράθυρό μου· θά 'ταν  
 ἑφτὰ περίπου· μιὰ γυναίκα εἶταν μαζί του.  
 Εἶχε τὸ φέρεσιμο τοῦ Ἑλπηνωρα, λίγο πρὶν πέσει  
 νὰ τσακιστεῖ, κι' ὅμως δὲν εἶταν μεθυσμένος.  
 Μιλοῦσε πολὺ γρήγορα, κι' ἐκεῖνη  
 κοίταζε ἀφηρημένη πρὸς τοὺς φωνογράφους·  
 τὸν ἔκοβε καμιὰ φορὰ νὰ πεῖ μιὰ φράση  
 κι' ἔπειτα κοίταζε μ' ἀνυπομονησία  
 ἐκεῖ πού τηγανίζουν ψάρια· σὰν τὴ γάτα.  
 Αὐτὸς ψιθύριζε μ' ἓνα ἀποτσιγάρο σβηστὸ στὰ χεῖλια :

— «Ἀκουσε ἀκόμη τοῦτο. Στὸ φεγγάρι  
 τ' ἀγάλματα λυγίζουν κάποτε σὰν τὸ καλάμι  
 ἀνάμεσα σὲ ζωντανούς καρπούς — τ' ἀγάλματα·  
 κι' ἡ φλόγα γίνεται δροσερὴ πικροδάφνη,  
 ἡ φλόγα πού καίει τὸν ἄνθρωπο, θέλω νὰ πῶ».

— «Εἶναι τὸ φῶς... ἴσκιοι τῆς νύχτας...».

— «Ἴσως ἡ νύχτα πού ἀνοιξε, γαλάζιο ρόδι,  
 σκοτεινὸς κόρφος, καὶ σὲ γέμισε ἄστρα  
 κόβοντας τὸν καιρό.

**Κι' ὅμως τ' ἀγάλματα**

## II

### *Sensual Elpenor*

I saw him yesterday standing by the door  
below my window; it was about  
seven o'clock; there was a woman with him.  
He had the look of Elpenor just before he fell  
and smashed himself, yet he wasn't drunk.  
He was speaking fast, and she  
was gazing absently toward the gramophones;  
now and then she cut him short to say a word  
and then would glance impatiently  
toward where they were frying fish: like a cat.  
He muttered with a cigarette butt between his lips:

— “Listen. There's this too. In the moonlight  
the statues sometimes bend like reeds  
in the midst of ripe fruit—the statues;  
and the flame becomes a cool oleander,  
the flame that burns you, I mean.”

— “It's just the light . . . shadows of the night.”

— “Maybe the night that split open, a blue pomegranate,  
a dark breast, and filled you with stars,  
cleaving time.

And yet the statues

λυγίζουν κάποτε, μοιράζοντας τὸν πόθο  
στὰ δυό, σὰν τὸ ροδάκινο· κι' ἡ φλόγα  
γίνεται φίλημα στὰ μέλη κι' ἀναφυλλητὸ  
κι' ἔπειτα φύλλο δροσερὸ ποὺ παίρνει ὁ ἄνεμος·  
λυγίζουν· γίνονται ἀλαφριά μ' ἓνα ἀνθρώπινο βάρος.  
Δὲν τὸ ξεχνᾷς».

— «Τ' ἀγάλματά εἶναι στὸ μουσεῖο».

— «Ὁχι, σὲ κυνηγοῦν, πῶς δὲν τὸ βλέπεις;  
θέλω νὰ πῶ μὲ τὰ σπασμένα μέλη τους,  
μὲ τὴν ἄλλοτινὴ μορφὴ τους ποὺ δὲ γνώρισες  
κι' ὅμως τὴν ξέρεις.

Ὅπως ὅταν

στὰ τελευταῖα τῆς νιότης σου ἀγαπήσεις  
γυναίκα ποὺ ἔμεινε ὁμορφὴ, κι' ὅλο φοβᾶσαι,  
καθὼς τὴν κράτησες γυμνὴ τὸ μεσημέρι,  
τὴ μνήμη ποὺ ξυπνᾷ στὴν ἀγκαλιά σου·  
φοβᾶσαι τὸ φιλὶ μὴ σὲ προδώσει  
σ' ἄλλα κρεββάτια περασμένα τώρα  
ποὺ ὥστόσο θὰ μπορούσαν νὰ στοιχειώσουν  
τόσο εὐκόλα τόσο εὐκόλα καὶ ν' ἀναστήσουν  
εἰδῶλα στὸν καθρέφτη, σώματα ποὺ εἴταν μιὰ φορὰ·  
τὴν ἡδονή τους.

Ὅπως ὅταν

γυρίζεις ἀπ' τὰ ξένα καὶ τύχει ν' ἀνοίξεις  
παλιὰ κασέλα κλειδωμένη ἀπὸ καιρὸ  
καὶ βρεῖς κουρέλια ἀπὸ τὰ ροῦχα ποὺ φοροῦσες  
σὲ ὁμορφες ὥρες, σὲ γιορτὲς μὲ φῶτα

bend sometimes, dividing desire in two,  
like a peach; and the flame  
becomes a kiss on the limbs, a sobbing,  
and then a cool leaf carried off by the wind;  
they bend; they become light with a human weight.  
You don't forget it."

—"The statues are in the museum."

— "No, they pursue you, why can't you see it?  
I mean with their broken limbs,  
with their shape from another time, a shape you don't  
recognize  
yet know.

It's as though  
in the last days of your youth you loved  
a woman who was still beautiful, and you were always afraid,  
as you held her naked at noon,  
of the memory aroused by your embrace;  
were afraid the kiss might betray you  
to other beds now of the past  
which nevertheless could haunt you  
so easily, so easily, and bring to life  
images in the mirror, bodies once alive:  
their sensuality.

It's as though  
returning home from some foreign country you happen  
to open  
an old trunk that's been locked up a long time  
and find the tatters of clothes you used to wear  
on happy occasions, at festivals with many-colored lights,

πολύχρωμα, καθρεφτισμένα, πού ὅλο χαμηλώνουν  
καὶ μένει μόνο τὸ ἄρωμα τῆς ἀπουσίας  
μιᾶς νέας μορφῆς.

Ἀλήθεια, τὰ συντρίμμια  
δὲν εἶναι ἐκεῖνα· ἐσύ 'σαι τὸ ρημάδι·  
σὲ κυνηγοῦν μὲ μιὰ παράξενη παρθενιά  
στὸ σπίτι στὸ γραφεῖο στὶς δεξιώσεις  
τῶν μεγιστάνων, στὸν ἀνομολόγητο φόβο τοῦ ὕπνου·  
μιλοῦν γιὰ περιστατικὰ πού θά ἤθελες νὰ μὴν ὑπάρ-  
χουν  
ἢ νὰ γινόντουσαν χρόνια μετὰ τὸ θάνατό σου,  
κι' αὐτὸ εἶναι δύσκολο γιὰτι...»

— «Τ' ἀγάλματά εἶναι στὸ μουσεῖο.

Καληνύχτα».

— «...γιατί τ' ἀγάλματα δὲν εἶναι πιὰ συντρίμμια,  
εἴμαστε ἐμεῖς. Τ' ἀγάλματα λυγίζουν ἀλαφριά... καλη-  
νύχτα».

Ἐδῶ χωρίστηκαν. Αὐτὸς ἐπῆρε  
τὴν ἀνηφόρα πού τραβάει κατὰ τὴν Ἄρκτο  
κι' αὐτὴ προχώρεσε πρὸς τὸ πολύφωτο ἀκρογιάλι  
ὅπου τὸ κύμα πνίγεται στὴ βοή τοῦ ραδιοφώνου :

*Τὸ ραδιόφωνο*

— «Πανιὰ στὸ φύσημα τοῦ ἀγέρα  
ὁ νοῦς δὲν κράτησε ἄλλο ἀπὸ τὴ μέρα.  
Ἄρωμα πεύκου καὶ σιγὴ

mirrored, now becoming dim,  
and all that remains is the perfume of the absence  
of a young form.

Really, those statues are not  
the fragments. You yourself are the relic;  
they haunt you with a strange virginity  
at home, at the office, at receptions for the celebrated,  
in the unconfessed terror of sleep;  
they speak of things you wish didn't exist  
or would happen years after your death,  
and that's difficult because . . ."

— "The statues are in the museum.  
Good night."

— ". . . because the statues are no longer  
fragments. We are. The statues bend lightly . . . Good  
night."

At this point they separated. He took  
the road leading uphill toward the North  
and she moved on toward the light-flooded beach  
where the waves are drowned in the noise from the radio:

*The radio*

— "Sails puffed out by the wind  
are all that stay in the mind.  
Perfume of silence and pine

εὐκόλα θ' ἀπαλύνουν τὴν πληγὴν  
ποῦ ἔκαμαν φεύγοντας ὁ ναύτης  
ἢ σουσουράδα ὁ κοκοβιδὸς κι' ὁ μυγοχάφτης.  
Γυναίκα ποῦ ἔμεινες χωρὶς ἀφή,  
ἄκουσε τῶν ἀνέμων τὴν ταφή.

Ἄδειασε τὸ χρυσὸ βαρέλι  
ὁ γῆλιος ἔγινε κουρέλι  
σὲ μιᾷς μεσόκοπης λαιμὸ  
ποῦ βήχει καὶ δὲν ἔχει τελειωμό·  
τὸ καλοκαίρι ποῦ ταξίδεψε τὴ θλίβει  
μὲ τὰ μαλάματα στοὺς ὤμους καὶ στὴν ἦβη.  
Γυναίκα ποῦ ἔχασες τὸ φῶς,  
ἄκουσε, τραγουδᾷ ὁ τυφλός.

Σκοτεΐνιασε· κλεῖσε τὰ τζάμια·  
κάνε σουραύλια μὲ τὰ χτεσινὰ καλάμια,  
καὶ μὴν ἀνοίγεις ὅσο κι' ἃ χτυποῦν·  
φωνάζουν μὰ δὲν ἔχουν τί νὰ ποῦν.  
Πάρε κυκλάμινα, πευκοβελόνες,  
κρίνα ἀπ' τὴν ἄμμο, κι' ἀπ' τὴ θάλασσα ἀνεμῶνες·  
γυναίκα ποῦ ἔχασες τὸ νοῦ,  
ἄκου, περνᾷ τὸ ξόδι τοῦ νεροῦ...

— Ἀθῆναι. Ἀνελίσσονται ραγδαίως  
τὰ γεγονότα ποῦ ἤκουσε μὲ δέος  
ἢ κοινὴ γνώμη. Ὁ κύριος ὑπουργὸς  
ἐδήλωσεν, Δὲν μένει πλέον καιρὸς...  
—...πάρε κυκλάμινα... πευκοβελόνες...

will soon be an anodyne  
now that the sailor's set sail,  
flycatcher, catfish, and wagtail.  
O woman whose touch is dumb,  
hear the wind's requiem.

"Drained is the golden keg  
the sun's become a rag  
round a middle-aged woman's neck—  
who coughs and coughs without break;  
for the summer that's gone she sighs,  
for the gold on her shoulders, her thighs.  
O woman, O sightless thing,  
hear the blindman sing.

"Close the shutters: the day recedes;  
make flutes from yesteryear's reeds  
and don't open, knock how they may:  
they shout but have nothing to say.  
Take cyclamen, pine-needles, the lily,  
anemones out of the sea;  
O woman whose wits are lost,  
listen, the water's ghost . . .

—"Athens. The public has heard  
the news with alarm; it is feared  
a crisis is near. The prime  
minister declared: 'There is no more time .  
Take cyclamen . . . needles of pine . . .

κρίνα ἀπ' τὴν ἄμμο... πευκοβελόνες..  
γυναίκα...  
—... ὑπερτερεῖ συντριπτικῶς.  
‘Ο πόλεμος...»  
ΨΥΧΑΜΟΙΒΟΣ.

the lily . . . needles of pine . . .  
O woman . . .  
— . . . is overwhelmingly stronger  
The war . . .”

SOULMONGER\*

## Γ'

*Τὸ ναυάγιο τῆς «Κίχλης»*

«Τὸ ξύλο αὐτὸ ποὺ δρόσιζε τὸ μέτωπό μου  
τὶς ὥρες ποὺ τὸ μεσημέρι πύρωνε τὶς φλέβες  
σὲ ξένα χέρια θέλει ἀνθίσει, Πάρ' το, σοῦ τὸ χαρίζω·  
δές, εἶναι ξύλο λεμονιάς...»

Ἦκουσα τὴ φωνή  
καθὼς ἐκοίταζα στὴ θάλασσα νὰ ξεχωρίσω  
ἓνα καράβι ποὺ τὸ βούλιαξαν ἐδῶ καὶ χρόνια·  
τὸ ἔλεγε «Κίχλη»· ἓνα μικρὸ ναυάγιο· τὰ κατάρτια,  
σπασμένα, κυματίζανε λοξὰ στὸ βάθος, σὰν πλοκάμια  
ἢ μνήμη ὀνείρων, δείχνοντας τὸ σκαρί του  
στόμα θαμπὸ κάποιου μεγάλου κήτους νεκροῦ  
σβησμένο στὸ νερό. Μεγάλη ἀπλώνουνταν γαλήνη.

Κι' ἄλλες φωνές σιγὰ σιγὰ μὲ τὴ σειρά τους  
ἀκολουθήσαν· ψίθυροι φτενοὶ καὶ διψασμένοι  
ποὺ βγαίνουν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἥλιου τ' ἄλλο μέρος, τὸ σκοτεινὸ·  
θά ἔλεγε γύρευαν νὰ πιοῦν αἶμα μιὰ στάλα·  
εἶτανε γνώριμες μὰ δὲν μπορούσα νὰ τὶς ξεχωρίσω.  
Κι' ἦρθε ἡ φωνὴ τοῦ γέρου, αὐτὴ τὴν ἔνιωσα  
πέφτοντας στὴν καρδιὰ τῆς μέρας  
ἡσυχῇ, σὰν ἀκίνητη·  
«Κι' ἂ μὲ δικάσετε νὰ πιῶ φαρμάκι, εὐχαριστῶ·  
τὸ δίκιο σας θὰ ἔναι τὸ δίκιο μου· ποῦ νὰ πηγαίνω  
γυρίζοντας σὲ ξένους τόπους, ἓνα στρογγυλὸ λιθάρι.

### III

#### *The wreck "Thrush"*

"This wood that cooled my forehead  
at times when noon burned my veins  
will flower in other hands. Take it, I'm giving it to you;  
look, it's wood from a lemon-tree . . ."

I heard the voice  
as I was gazing at the sea trying to make out  
a ship they'd sunk there years ago;  
it was called "Thrush," a small wreck; the masts,  
broken, swayed at odd angles deep underwater, like  
tentacles,  
or the memory of dreams, marking the hull:  
vague mouth of some huge dead sea-monster  
extinguished in the water. Calm spread all around.

And gradually, in turn, other voices followed,\*  
whispers thin and thirsty  
emerging from the other side of the sun, the dark side;  
you might say they longed for a drop of blood to drink;\*  
familiar voices, but I couldn't distinguish one from the  
other.

And then the voice of the old man reached me; I felt it  
quietly falling into the heart of day,  
as though motionless:  
"And if you condemn me to drink poison, I thank you.  
Your law will be my law; how can I go  
wandering from one foreign country to another, a rolling  
stone.

Τὸ θάνατο τὸν προτιμῶ·  
ποιοὺς πάει γιὰ τὸ καλύτερο ὁ θεὸς τὸ ξέρει».

Χῶρες τοῦ ἡλίου καὶ δὲν μπορεῖτε ν' ἀντικρίσετε τὸν ἡλιο.  
Χῶρες τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ δὲν μπορεῖτε ν' ἀντικρίσετε τὸν  
ἄνθρωπο.

*Τὸ φῶς*

Καθὼς περνοῦν τὰ χρόνια  
πληθαίνουν οἱ κριτὲς ποὺ σὲ καταδικάζουν·  
καθὼς περνοῦν τὰ χρόνια καὶ κουβεντιάξεις μὲ λιγότερες  
φωνές,

βλέπεις τὸν ἡλιο μ' ἄλλα μάτια·  
ξέρεις πὼς ἐκεῖνοι ποὺ ἔμειναν, σὲ γελοῦσαν,  
τὸ παραμίλημα τῆς σάρκας, ὁ ὁμορφος χορὸς  
ποὺ τελειώνει στὴ γύμνια.

“Ὅπως, τὴ νύχτα στρίβοντας στὴν ἔρμη δημοσιά,  
ἄξαφνα βλέπεις νὰ γυαλίζουν τὰ μάτια ἐνὸς ζώου  
ποὺ ἔφυγαν κιόλας, ἔτσι νιώθεις τὰ μάτια σου·  
τὸν ἡλιο τὸν κοιτᾷς, ἔπειτα χάνεσαι μὲς στὸ σκοτάδι·

ὁ δωρικός χιτώνας  
ποὺ ἀγγίζανε τὰ δάχτυλά σου καὶ λύγισε σὰν τὰ βουνά,  
εἶναι ἓνα μάρμαρο στὸ φῶς, μὰ τὸ κεφάλι του εἶναι στὸ  
σκοτάδι.

Κι' αὐτοὺς ποὺ ἀφήσαν τὴν παλαίστρα γιὰ νὰ πάρουν τὰ  
δοξάρια

καὶ χτύπησαν τὸ θεληματικὸ μαραθωνοδρόμο  
κι' ἐκεῖνος εἶδε τὴ σφενδόνη ν' ἀρμενίζει στὸ αἶμα  
ν' ἀδειάζει ὁ κόσμος ὅπως τὸ φεγγάρι

I prefer death.  
Who'll come out best only God knows."

Countries of the sun yet you can't face the sun.  
Countries of men yet you can't face man.

*The light*

As the years go by  
the judges who condemn you grow in number;  
as the years go by and you converse with fewer voices,  
you see the sun with different eyes:  
you know that those who stayed behind were deceiving you  
the delirium of flesh, the lovely dance  
that ends in nakedness.

It's as though, turning at night into an empty highway,  
you suddenly see the eyes of an animal shine,  
eyes already gone; so you feel your own eyes:  
you gaze at the sun, then you're lost in darkness.

The doric chiton  
that swayed like the mountains when your fingers touched it  
is a marble figure in the light, but its head is in darkness.  
And those who abandoned the stadium to take up arms  
struck the obstinate marathon runner  
and he saw the track sail in blood,  
the world empty like the moon,

καὶ νὰ μαραίνονται νὰ νικηφόρα περιβόλια·  
τοὺς βλέπεις μὲς στὸν ἥλιο, πίσω ἀπὸ τὸν ἥλιο.  
Καὶ τὰ παιδιὰ ποὺ κάναν μακροβούτια ἀπ' τὰ μπαστούνια  
πηγαίνουν σὰν ἀδράχτια γνέθοντας ἀκόμη,  
σώματα γυμνὰ βουλιάζοντας μέσα στὸ μαῦρο φῶς  
μ' ἓνα νόμισμα στὰ δόντια, κολυμπώντας ἀκόμη,  
καθὼς ὁ γήλιος ράβει μὲ βελονιές μαλαματένιες  
πανιὰ καὶ ξύλα ὑγρὰ καὶ χρώματα πελαγίσια·  
ἀκόμη τώρα κατεβαίνουνε λοξὰ  
πρὸς τὰ χαλίκια τοῦ βυθοῦ  
οἱ ἄσπρες λήκυθοι.

Ἄγγελικὸ καὶ μαῦρο, φῶς,  
γέλιο τῶν κυμάτων στὶς δημοσιές τοῦ πόντου,  
δακρυσμένο γέλιο,  
σὲ βλέπει ὁ γέροντας ἱκέτης  
πηγαίνοντας νὰ δρασκελίσει τὶς ἀόρατες πλάκες  
καθρεφτισμένο στὸ αἶμα του  
ποὺ γέννησε τὸν Ἑτεοκλῆ καὶ τὸν Πολυνείκη.  
Ἄγγελικὴ καὶ μαύρη, μέρα·  
ἡ γλυφὴ γέψη τῆς γυναίκας ποὺ φαρμακώνει τὸ φυλακι-  
σμένο  
βγαίνει ἀπ' τὸ κῦμα δροσερὸ κλωνάρι στολισμένο στάλες.  
Τραγούδησε μικρὴ Ἀντιγόνη, τραγούδησε, τραγούδησε...  
δὲ σοῦ μιλῶ γιὰ περασμένα, μιλῶ γιὰ τὴν ἀγάπη·  
στόλισε τὰ μαλλιά σου μὲ τ' ἀγκάθια τοῦ ἥλιου,  
σκοτεινὴ κοπέλλα·  
ἡ καρδιά τοῦ Σκορπιοῦ βασίλεψε,  
ὁ τύραννος μέσα ἀπ' τὸν ἄνθρωπο ἔχει φύγει,

the gardens of victory wither:  
you see them in the sun, behind the sun.  
And the boys who dived from the bow-sprits  
go like spindles twisting still,  
naked bodies plunging into black light  
with a coin between the teeth, swimming still,  
while the sun with golden needles sews  
sails and wet wood and colors of the sea;  
even now they're going down obliquely,  
the white lekythoi,  
toward the pebbles on the sea floor.

Light, angelic and black,  
laughter of waves on the sea's highways,  
tear-stained laughter,  
the old suppliant sees you  
as he moves to cross the invisible fields—\*  
light mirrored in his blood,  
the blood that gave birth to Eteocles and Polynices.  
Day, angelic and black;  
the brackish taste of woman that poisons the prisoner  
emerges from the wave a cool branch adorned with drops.  
Sing little Antigone, sing, O sing . . .  
I'm not speaking to you about things past, I'm speaking  
about love;  
decorate your hair with the sun's thorns,  
dark girl;  
the heart of the Scorpion has set,\*  
the tyrant in man has fled,

κι' ὅλες οἱ κόρες τοῦ πόντου, Νηρηίδες, Γραῖες  
τρέχουν στὰ λαμπυρίσματα τῆς ἀναδυομένης·  
ὅποιος ποτέ του δὲν ἀγάπησε θ' ἀγαπήσει,  
στὸ φῶς·

καὶ εἶσαι

σ' ἓνα μεγάλο σπίτι μὲ πολλὰ παράθυρα ἀνοιχτά  
τρέχοντας ἀπὸ κάμαρα σὲ κάμαρα, δὲν ξέροντας ἀπὸ ποῦ  
νὰ κοιτάξεις πρῶτα,  
γιατὶ θὰ φύγουν τὰ πεῦκα καὶ τὰ καθρεφτισμένα βουνὰ καὶ  
τὸ τιτίβισμα τῶν πουλιῶν  
θ' ἀδειάσει ἢ θάλασσα, θρυμματισμένο γυαλί, ἀπὸ βοριὰ  
καὶ νότο  
θ' ἀδειάσουν τὰ μάτια σου ἀπ' τὸ φῶς τῆς μέρας  
πὼς σταματοῦν ξαφνικὰ κι' ὅλα μαζί τὰ τζίτζικια.

Πόρος, «Γαλήνη», 31 τοῦ Ὀχτώβρη 1946



Η Μ Ε Ρ Ο Λ Ο Γ Ι Ο  
ΚΑΤΑΣΤΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ, Γ΄

Στὸν κόσμο τῆς Κύπρου,  
Μνήμη καὶ Ἀγάπη

*..Κύπρον, σὺ μ' ἐθέσπισεν..*

## LOGBOOK III\*

*To the People of Cyprus,  
in Memory and Love*

*Cyprus, where it was decreed by  
Apollo that I should live . . .”\**

7

## ΑΓΙΑΝΑΠΑ, Α΄

Καὶ βλέπεις τὸ φῶς τοῦ ἡλίου καθὼς ἔλεγαν οἱ παλαιοί.  
Ὡστόσο νόμιζα πῶς ἔβλεπα τόσα χρόνια  
περπατώντας ἀνάμεσα στὰ βουνὰ καὶ στὴ θάλασσα  
συντυχαίνοντας ἀνθρώπους μὲ τέλειες πανοπλίες·  
παράξενο, δὲν πρόσεχα πῶς ἔβλεπα μόνο τὴ φωνή τους.  
Εἶταν τὸ αἶμα ποὺ τοὺς ἀνάγκαζε νὰ μιλοῦν, τὸ κριάρι  
ποὺ ἔσφαζα κι' ἔστρωνα στὰ πόδια τους·  
μὰ δὲν εἶταν τὸ φῶς ἐκεῖνο τὸ κόκκινο χαλί.  
Ὅ,τι μοῦ λέγαν ἔπρεπε νὰ τὸ ψηλαφήσω  
ὅπως ὅταν σὲ κρύψουν κυνηγημένο νύχτα σὲ στάβλο  
ἢ φτάσεις τέλος τὸ κορμὶ βαθύκολπης γυναίκας  
κι' εἶναι γεμάτη ἡ κάμαρα πνιγερὲς μυρωδιές·  
ὅ,τι μοῦ λέγαν δορὰ καὶ μετάξι.

Παράξενο, τὸ βλέπω ἐδῶ τὸ φῶς τοῦ ἡλίου· τὸ χρυσὸ δίχτυ  
ὅπου τὰ πράγματα σπαρταροῦν σὰν τὰ ψάρια  
ποὺ ἓνας μεγάλος ἄγγελος τραβᾷ  
μαζὶ μὲ τὰ δίχτυα τῶν ψαράδων.

## AGIANAPA I\*

And you see the light of the sun, as the ancients used to say.  
And yet I thought I was seeing all these years  
walking between the mountains and the sea  
talking by chance with men in perfect armour;  
strange, I didn't notice that I saw their voices only.  
It was the blood that forced them to talk, the ram  
that I slaughtered and spread at their feet;  
but that red carpet was not the light.  
Whatever they told me I had to recognize by touch  
as when they hide you at night, hunted, in a stable  
or when you finally reach the body of a full-breasted woman  
and the room is thick with suffocating odors;  
whatever they told me: fur and silk.

Strange, here I see the light of the sun; the gold net  
where things quiver like fish  
that a huge angel draws in  
along with the nets of the fisherman.

## ONEIPO

Κοιμοῦμαι κι' ἡ καρδιά μου ξαγρυπνᾷ·  
κοιτάζει τ' ἄστρα στὸν οὐρανὸ καὶ τὸ δοιάκι  
καὶ πῶς ἀνθοβολᾷ τὸ νερὸ στὸ τιμόνι.

## DREAM

I sleep and my heart stays awake;  
it gazes at the stars, the sky, and the helm,  
and at how the water blossoms on the rudder.

## ΛΕΠΤΟΜΕΡΕΙΕΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΚΥΠΡΟ

Στὸ ζωγράφο Διαμαντῆ

Ἡ μικρὴ κουκουβάγια εἵτανε πάντα ἐκεῖ  
σκαρφαλωμένη στ' ἀνοιχτάρι τ' Ἀγίου Μάμα,  
παραδομένη τυφλὰ στὸ μέλι τοῦ ἥλιου  
ἐδῶ ἢ ἀλλοῦ, τώρα, στὰ περασμένα : χόρευε  
μ' ἓνα τέτοιο ρυθμὸ τὸ φθινόπωρο.

Ἄγγελοι ξετυλίγανε τὸν οὐρανὸ  
καὶ χάζευε ἓνας πέτρινος καμαροφρύδης  
σὲ μιὰ γωνιὰ τῆς στέγης.

Τότες ἦρθε ὁ καλόγερος· σκουφί, κοντόρασο, πέτσινη  
ζώνη

κι' ἔπιασε νὰ πλουμίζει τὴν κολόκα.

Ἀρχισε ἀπ' τὸ λαιμό : φοινικιές, λέπια, καὶ δαχτυλίδια.

Ἐπειτα, κρατώντας στὴν πλατεῖα παλάμη τὴ στρογγυλὴ  
κοιλιά,

ἔβαλε τὸν παραυλακιστὴ, τὸν παραζυγιαστὴ, τὸν παραμυ-  
λωνά, καὶ τὸν κατάλαλο·

ἔβαλε τὴν ἀποστρέφουσα τὰ νήπια καὶ τὴν ἀποκαλόγρια·  
καὶ στὴν ἄκρη, σχεδὸν ἀπόκρυφο, τ' ἀκοίμητο σκου-  
λήκι.

Εἵταν ὥραῖα ὅλ' αὐτά, μιὰ περιδιάβαση.

Ὅμως τὸ ξύλινο μαγγανοπήγαδο — τ' ἀλακάτιν,  
κοιμισμένο στὸν ἴσκιο τῆς καρυδιᾶς

## DETAILS ON CYPRUS

To the painter Diamandí

The little owl was always there  
perched on the doorkey to St. Máma,  
given blindly to the honey of the sun  
here or elsewhere, now, in the past:  
it danced to that kind of rhythm in autumn.  
Angels unwound the heavens  
and a stone figure with arched eyebrows  
stared idly from a corner of the roof.

Then the monk appeared: skullcap, frock, leather belt,  
and went to work decorating the gourd.\*  
He began at the neck: palm-trees, fish-scales, rings.  
Then, cupping its round belly with a broad palm,  
he added the cheating farmer, the cheating merchant, the  
cheating miller, and the slanderer;  
then the infant-hater and the defrocked nun;  
and at the bottom, almost hidden, the sleepless worm.

All this was fine, a casual stroll.  
But the wooden well-wheel—the “alakátin”—\*  
asleep in the shade of the walnut tree

μισὸ στὸ χῶμα καὶ μισὸ μέσα στὸ νερό,  
γιατί δοκίμασες νὰ τὸ ξυπνήσεις;  
Εἶδες πῶς βόγγηξε. Κι' ἐκείνη τὴν κραυγὴ  
ῥγαλμένη ἀπ' τὰ παλιὰ νεῦρα τοῦ ξύλου  
γιατί τὴν εἶπες φωνὴ πατρίδας;

half in the earth and half in the water,  
why did you try to wake it?  
You saw how it moaned. And that cry,  
brought forth from the wood's ancient nerves,  
why did you call it the voice of our country?

## ΕΠΙΚΑΛΕΩ ΤΟΙ ΤΗΝ ΘΕΟΝ...

Λάδι στὰ μέλη,  
ἴσως ταγγή μυρωδιά  
ὅπως ἐδῶ στὸ λιόμυλο  
τῆς μικρῆς ἐκκλησιᾶς  
στοὺς χοντροὺς πόρους  
τῆς σταματημένης πέτρας.

Λάδι στὴν κόμη  
στεφανωμένη με σκoinί,  
ἴσως καὶ ἄλλα ἀρώματα  
ποὺ δὲ γνωρίσαμε  
φτωχὰ καὶ πλούσια  
κι' ἀγαλματάκια στὰ δάχτυλα  
προσφέροντας μικροὺς μαστούς.

Λάδι στὸν ἥλιο·  
τρόμαξαν τὰ φύλλα  
στοῦ ξένου τὸ σταμάτημα  
καὶ βάρυνε ἡ σιγή  
ἀνάμεσα στὰ γόνατα.  
Ἔπεσαν τὰ νομίσματα·  
«Ἐπικαλέω τοι τὴν θεόν...».

Λάδι στοὺς ὠμους

IN THE GODDESS' NAME  
I SUMMON YOU . . . \*

Oil on limbs,  
maybe a rancid smell  
as on the chapel's  
oil-press here,  
as on the rough pores  
of the unturning stone.

Oil on hair  
wreathed in rope  
and maybe other scents  
unknown to us  
poor and rich  
and statuettes offering  
small breasts with their fingers.

Oil in the sun  
the leaves shuddered  
when the stranger stopped  
and the silence weighed  
between the knees.  
The coins fell:  
"In the goddess' name I summon you .

Oil on the shoulders

καὶ στή μέση πού λύγισε  
γρίβα σφυρὰ στή χλόη,  
κι' αὐτὴ ἡ πληγὴ στὸν ἥλιο  
καθὼς σημαίνουν τὸν ἑσπερινὸ  
καθὼς μιλοῦσα στὸν αὐλόγυρο  
μ' ἓνα σακάτη.

and the flexing waist  
legs grass-dappled,  
and that wound in the sun  
as the bell rang for vespers  
as I spoke in the church yard  
with a crippled man.

## ΕΛΕΝΗ

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ : ... ἐς γῆν ἐναλίαν Κύπρον, οὐ μ' ἐθέσπισεν  
οἰκέϊν Ἀπόλλων, ὄνομα νησιωτικὸν  
Σαλαμῖνα θέμενον τῆς ἐκεῖ χάριν πάτρας.

ΕΛΕΝΗ : Οὐκ ἤλθον ἐς γῆν Τρωάδ', ἀλλ' εἶδωλον ἦν.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ : Τί φῆς ;  
Νεφέλης ἄρ' ἄλλως εἶχομεν πόνοους πέρι ;  
ΕΥΡΥΠΙΔΗΣ, ΕΛΕΝΗ

«Τ' ἀηδόνια δὲ σ' ἀφήνουνε νὰ κοιμηθεῖς στὶς Πλάτρες».

Ἀηδόνι ντροπαλό, μὲς στὸν ἀνασασμὸ τῶν φύλλων,  
σὺ ποὺ δωρίζεις τὴ μουσικὴ δροσιὰ τοῦ δάσους  
στὰ χωρισμένα σώματα καὶ στὶς ψυχές  
αὐτῶν ποὺ ξέρουν πῶς δὲ θὰ γυρίσουν.  
Τυφλὴ φωνή, ποὺ ψηλαφεῖς μέσα στὴ νυχτωμένη μνήμη  
βήματα καὶ χειρονομίες· δὲ θὰ τολμούσα νὰ πῶ φιλήματα·  
καὶ τὸ πικρὸ τρικύμισμα τῆς ξαγριεμένης σκλάβας.

«Τ' ἀηδόνια δὲ σ' ἀφήνουνε νὰ κοιμηθεῖς στὶς Πλάτρες».

Ποιὲς εἶναι οἱ Πλάτρες; Ποιὸς τὸ γνωρίζει τοῦτο τὸ νησί;  
Ἐζῆσα τὴ ζωὴ μου ἀκούγοντας ὀνόματα πρωτάκουστα :

## HELEN

TEUCER: . . . *in sea-girt Cyprus, where it was decreed  
by Apollo that I should live, giving the city  
the name of Salamis in memory of my island home.*

. . . . .

HELEN: *I never went to Troy; it was a phantom.*

. . . . .

SERVANT: *What? You mean it was only for a cloud that we  
struggled so much?*

EURIPIDES, HELEN\*

“The nightingales won’t let you sleep in Platres.”\*

Shy nightingale, in the breathing of the leaves,  
you who bestow the forest’s musical coolness  
on the sundered bodies, on the souls  
of those who know they will not return.  
Blind voice, you who grope in the darkness of memory  
for footsteps and gestures—I wouldn’t dare say kisses—  
and the bitter raging of the slavewoman grown wild.

“The nightingales won’t let you sleep in Platres.”

Platres: where is Platres? And this island: who knows it?  
I’ve lived my life hearing names I’ve never heard before:

καινούργιους τόπους, καινούργιες τρέλες τῶν ἀνθρώπων  
ἢ τῶν θεῶν·

ἡ μοίρα μου ποὺ κυματίζει  
ἀνάμεσα στὸ στερνὸ σπαθὶ ἐνὸς Αἴαντα  
καὶ μιὰν ἄλλη Σαλαμίνα  
μ' ἔφερε ἐδῶ σ' αὐτὸ τὸ γυρογιάλι.

Τὸ φεγγάρι

βγῆκε ἀπ' τὸ πέλαγο σὰν Ἀφροδίτη·  
σκέπασε τ' ἄστρα τοῦ Τοξότη, τώρα πάει νά 'βρει  
τὴν καρδιά τοῦ Σκορπιοῦ, κι' ὅλα τ' ἀλλάζει.  
Ποῦ εἶν' ἡ ἀλήθεια ;  
Εἴμουν κι' ἐγὼ στὸν πόλεμο τοξότης·  
τὸ ριζικό μου, ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου ποὺ ξαστόχησε.

Ἀηδόνι ποιητάρη,  
σὰν καὶ μιὰ τέτοια νύχτα στ' ἀκροθαλάσσι τοῦ Πρωτέα  
σ' ἄκουσαν οἱ σκλάβες Σπαρτιάτισσες κι' ἔσυραν τὸ θρῆνο,  
κι' ἀνάμεσό τους — ποιὸς θὰ τό 'λεγε ; — ἡ Ἑλένη !  
Αὐτὴ ποὺ κυνηγούσαμε χρόνια στὸ Σκάμαντρο.  
Εἶταν ἐκεῖ, στὰ χεῖλια τῆς ἐρήμου· τὴν ἄγγιξα, μοῦ μίλησε:  
«Δὲν εἶν' ἀλήθεια, δὲν εἶν' ἀλήθεια» φώναζε.  
«Δὲν μπήκα στὸ γαλαζόπλωρο καράβι.  
Ποτὲ δὲν πάτησα τὴν ἀντρειωμένη Τροία».

Μὲ τὸ βαθὺ στηθόδεσμο, τὸν ἥλιο στὰ μαλλιά, κι' αὐτὸ τὸ  
ἀνάστημα  
ἴσκιοι καὶ χαμόγελα παντοῦ  
στοὺς ὤμους στοὺς μηροὺς στὰ γόνατα·  
ζωντανὸ δέρμα, καὶ τὰ μάτια

new countries, new idiocies of men  
or of the gods;

                    my fate, which wavers  
between the last sword of some Ajax  
and another Salamis,  
brought me here, to this shore.

                                            The moon  
rose from the sea like Aphrodite,  
covered the Archer's stars, now moves to find  
the Heart of Scorpio, and changes everything.  
Truth, where's the truth?  
I too was an archer in the war;  
my fate: that of a man who missed his target.

Lyric nightingale,  
on a night like this, by the shore of Proteus,  
the Spartan slave girls heard you and began their lament,  
and among them—who would have believed it?—Helen!  
She whom we hunted so many years by the banks of the  
Scamander.

She was there, at the desert's lip; I touched her; she spoke  
to me:

“It isn't true, it isn't true,” she cried.

“I didn't board the blue-bowed ship.

I never went to valiant Troy.”

Breasts girded high, the sun in her hair, and that stature  
shadows and smiles everywhere,  
on shoulders, thighs, and knees;  
the skin alive, and her eyes

μὲ τὰ μεγάλα βλέφαρα,  
εἴταν ἐκεῖ, στήν ὄχθη ἐνὸς Δέλτα.

Καὶ στήν Τροία;

Τίποτε στήν Τροία — ἓνα εἶδωλο.

Ἔτσι τὸ θέλαν οἱ θεοί.

Κι' ὁ Πάρης, μ' ἓναν ἴσκιο πλάγιαζε σὰ νά εἴταν πλάσμα  
ἀτόφιο·

κι' ἐμεῖς σφαζόμεσταν γιὰ τὴν Ἑλένη δέκα χρόνια.

Μεγάλος πόνος εἶχε πέσει στήν Ἑλλάδα.

Τόσα κορμιὰ ριγμένα

στὰ σαγόνια τῆς θάλασσας στὰ σαγόνια τῆς γῆς·

τόσες ψυχές

δοσμένες στὶς μυλόπετρες, σὰν τὸ σιτάρι.

Κι' οἱ ποταμοὶ φουσκῶναν μὲς στὴ λάσπη τὸ αἶμα

γιὰ ἓνα λινὸ κυμάτισμα γιὰ μιὰ νεφέλη

μᾶς πεταλούδας τίναγμα τὸ πούπουλο ἐνὸς κύκνου

γιὰ ἓνα πουκάμισο ἀδειανό, γιὰ μιὰν Ἑλένη.

Κι' ὁ ἀδερφός μου;

Ἀηδόνι ἀηδόνι ἀηδόνι,

τ' εἶναι θεός; τί μὴ θεός; καὶ τί τ' ἀνάμεσό τους;

«Τ' ἀηδόνια δὲ σ' ἀφήνουνε νὰ κοιμηθεῖς στὶς Πλάτρες».

Δακρυσμένο πουλί,

στήν Κύπρο τὴ θαλασσοφίλητη

ποὺ ἔταξαν γιὰ νὰ μοῦ θυμίζει τὴν πατρίδα,

ἄραξα μοναχὸς μ' αὐτὸ τὸ παραμῦθι,

ἂν εἶναι ἀλήθεια πὼς αὐτό εἶναι παραμῦθι,

with the large eyelids,  
she was there, on the banks of a Delta.

And at Troy?

At Troy, nothing: just a phantom image.

The gods wanted it so.

And Paris, Paris lay with a shadow as though it were a  
solid being;

and for ten whole years we slaughtered ourselves for Helen.

Great suffering had fallen on Greece.

So many bodies thrown

into the jaws of the sea, the jaws of the earth\*

so many souls

fed to the millstones like grain.

And the rivers swelling, blood in their silt,

all for a linen undulation, a filmy cloud,

a butterfly's flicker, a whisp of swan's down,

an empty tunic—all for a Helen.

And my brother?

Nightingale nightingale nightingale,

what is a god? What is not a god? And what is there in-  
between them?

“The nightingales won't let you sleep in Platres.”

Tearful bird,

on sea-kissed Cyprus

consecrated to remind me of my country,

I moored alone with this fable,

if it's true that it is a fable,

ἂν εἶναι ἀλήθεια πῶς οἱ ἀνθρώποι δὲ θὰ ξαναπιάσουν  
τὸν παλιὸ δόλο τῶν θεῶν·

ἂν εἶναι ἀλήθεια

πῶς κάποιος ἄλλος Τεῦκρος, ὕστερα ἀπὸ χρόνια,  
ἢ κάποιος Αἴαντας ἢ Πρίαμος ἢ Ἑκάβη  
ἢ κάποιος ἄγνωστος, ἀνώνυμος, πού ὥστόσο  
εἶδε ἓνα Σκάμαντρο νὰ ξεχειλάει κουφάρια,  
δὲν τό 'χει μὲς στὴ μοίρα του ν' ἀκούσει  
μαντατοφόρους πού ἔρχονται νὰ ποῦνε  
πῶς τόσος πόνος τόση ζωὴ  
πήγαν στὴν ἄβυσσο  
γιὰ ἓνα πουκάμισο ἀδειανὸ γιὰ μιὰν Ἑλένη.

if it's true that mortals will not again take up  
the old deceit of the gods;

if it's true  
that in future years some other Teucer,  
or some Ajax or Priam or Hecuba,  
*or someone unknown and nameless who nevertheless saw*  
a Scamander overflow with corpses,  
isn't fated to hear  
messengers coming to tell him  
that so much suffering, so much life,  
went into the abyss  
all for an empty tunic, all for a Helen.

## MNHMH, A'

καὶ ἡ θάλασσα οὐκ ἔστιν ἔτι

Κι' ἐγὼ στὰ χέρια μου μόνο μ' ἓνα καλάμι·  
εἴταν ἔρημη ἡ νύχτα τὸ φεγγάρι στὴ χάση  
καὶ μύριζε τὸ χῶμα ἀπὸ τὴν τελευταία βροχή.  
Ψιθύρισα· ἡ μνήμη ὅπου καὶ νὰ τὴν ἀγγίξεις πονεῖ.  
ὁ οὐρανὸς εἶναι λίγος, θάλασσα πιά δὲν ὑπάρχει,  
ὅ,τι σκοτώνουν τὴ μέρα τ' ἀδειάζουν μὲ κára πίσω ἀπ' τὴ  
ράχη.

Τὰ δάχτυλά μου παίζανε ξεχασμένα μ' αὐτὴ τὴ φλογέρα  
ποῦ μοῦ χάρισε ἓνας γέροντας βοσκὸς ἐπειδὴ τοῦ εἶπα κα-  
λησπέρα·  
οἱ ἄλλοι ξέγραψαν κάθε χαιρετισμό·  
ξυπνοῦν, ξυρίζονται κι' ἀρχίζουν μεροκάματο τὸ σκοτωμό,  
ὅπως κλαδεύεις ἢ χειρουργεῖς, μεθοδικά, χωρὶς πάθος·  
ὁ πόνος νεκρὸς σὰν τὸν Πάτροκλο καὶ κανεὶς δὲν κάνει  
λάθος.

Συλλογίστηκα νὰ φουσήξω ἓνα σκοπὸ κι' ἔπειτα ντράπηκα  
τὸν ἄλλο κόσμο  
αὐτὸν ποῦ μὲ βλέπει πέρ' ἀπ' τὴ νύχτα μὲς ἀπ' τὸ φῶς  
μου  
ποῦ ὑφαίνουν τὰ κορμιὰ ζωντανά, οἱ καρδιὲς γυμνές  
κι' ἡ ἀγάπη ποῦ ἀνήκει καὶ στίς Σεμνές  
καθὼς καὶ στὸν ἄνθρωπο καὶ στὴν πέτρα καὶ στὸ νερὸ καὶ  
στὸ χορτάρι

## MEMORY I

*And there was no more sea.\**

And I with only a reed in my hands.  
The night was deserted, the moon waning,  
earth smelled of the last rain.  
I whispered: memory hurts wherever you touch it,  
there's only a little sky, there's no more sea,  
what they kill by day they carry away in carts and dump  
behind the ridge.

My fingers were running idly over this flute  
that an old shepherd gave to me because I said good-evening  
to him.

The others have abolished every kind of greeting:  
they wake, shave, and start the day's work of slaughter  
as one prunes or operates, methodically, without  
passion;  
sorrow's dead like Patroclus, and no one makes a mistake.

I thought of playing a tune and then I felt ashamed in front  
of the other world  
the one that watches me from beyond the night from within  
my light  
woven of living bodies, naked hearts  
and love that belongs to the Furies  
as it belongs to man and to stone and to water and to grass

καὶ στὸ ζῶο ποὺ κοιτάει κατὰματα τὸ θάνατο ποὺ ἔρχεται  
νὰ τὸ πάρει.

Ἔτσι προχώρεσα στὸ σκοτεινὸ μονοπάτι  
κι' ἔστριψα στὸ περβόλι μου κι' ἔσκαψα κι' ἔθαψα τὸ κα-  
λάμι  
καὶ πάλι ψιθύρισα· θὰ γίνει ἡ ἀνάσταση μιὰν αὐγή,  
πὼς λάμπουν τὴν ἀνοιξή τὰ δέντρα θὰ ροδαμίσει τοῦ ὄρ-  
θρου ἡ μαρμαρυγή,  
θὰ ξαναγίνει τὸ πέλαγο καὶ πάλι τὸ κύμα θὰ τινάξει τὴν  
'Αφροδίτη·  
εἴμαστε ὁ σπóρος ποὺ πεθαίνει. Καὶ μπήκα στ' ἀδειανό μου  
τὸ σπίτι.

and to the animal that looks straight into the eye of its  
approaching death.

So I continued along the dark path  
and turned into my garden and dug and buried the reed  
and again I whispered: some morning the resurrection will  
come,

dawn's light will blossom red as trees glow in spring,  
the sea will be born again, and the wave will again fling  
forth Aphrodite.

We are the seed that dies. And I entered my empty house.

## Ο ΔΑΙΜΩΝ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΡΝΕΙΑΣ

*... Nicosia e Famagosta  
per la lor bestia si lamenti e garra...*

PARADISO

*... ὥς γίον ἡξεύρετε καὶ ὁ δαίμων τῆς πορνείας ὅλον τὸν κόσμον πλημμελᾷ τὸν ἐκόμπωσε τὸν ρήγαν καὶ ἔπесεν εἰς ἀμαρτίαν...*

ΧΡΟΝΙΚΟ ΤΟΥ ΜΑΧΑΙΡΑ

Ὁ Τζουὰν Βισκούντης εἶχε γράψει τὴν ἀλήθεια.  
Πῶς πλέρωσε μαυλίστρες ὁ κούντη Τερουχᾶς  
πῶς βρέθηκαν ἀντάμα αὐτὸς κι' ἡ ρήγαινα  
πῶς ἄρχισε τὸ πράμα, πῶς ξετέλειωσε,  
ὅλα τῆς Λευκωσίας τὰ κοπέλια  
τὸ διαλαλούσαν στὰ στενὰ καὶ στὶς πλατεῖες.  
Πῶς εἶταν ἡ γραφή σωστή ποὺ ἔστειλε στὴ Φραγκιά στὸ  
ρήγα  
τὸ ξέραν οἱ συμβουλατόροι.

Ὅμως τώρα  
συνάχτηκαν καὶ συντυχαῖναν γιὰ νὰ συμβουλέψουν  
τὴν Κορώνα τῆς Κύπρου καὶ τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων·  
τώρα εἶταν διαταμένοι γιὰ νὰ κρίνουν  
τὴ ρήγαινα Λινόρα ποὺ κρατοῦσε  
ἀπ' τὴ μεγάλη τὴ γενιὰ τῶν Καταλάνων·  
κι' εἶναι ἀνελέημονες οἱ Καταλάνοι  
κι' ἂν τύχαινε κι' ὁ ρήγας ἐκδικιοῦνταν  
τίποτε δὲ θὰ τό 'χαν ν' ἄρματώσουν καὶ νὰ 'ρθοῦνε

## THE DEMON OF FORNICATION

*. . . Nicosia e Famagosta  
per la lor bestia si lamenti e garra . . .*

*PARADISO\**

*. . . even as you know that the demon of fornication  
assails the whole world, so he beguiled the king, and  
the good king fell into sin . . .*

*CHRONICLE OF MAKHAIRAS\**

Juan Visconti had written the truth.  
How the Count of Rochas had pimps in his pay,  
how he and the queen were in it together,  
how the thing started and how it ended  
was hawked in the streets and squares  
by every boy in Nicosia.

That the letter he sent to the king in France  
was accurate, the counselors knew well enough.

But now

they had come together to discuss the issue and advise  
the Crown of Cyprus and Jerusalem;  
now they had been ordered to judge  
Queen Eleanora, descended from  
a great family among the Catalans;  
and the Catalans are merciless men,  
so that if the king chose to avenge himself  
it would be nothing for the Catalans to take up arms

καὶ νὰ τοὺς ξολοθρέψουν αὐτοὺς καὶ τὸ βιό τους.  
Εἶχαν εὐθύνες τρομερὲς εὐθύνες·  
ἀπὸ τὴ γνώμη τους κρέμουνταν τὸ ρηγάτο.

Πὼς ὁ Βισκούντης εἶταν τίμιος καὶ πιστὸς  
βέβαια τὸ ξέραν· ὅμως βιάστηκε,  
φέρθηκε ἀστόχαστα ἄμοιαστα ἄτσαλα.  
Εἶταν ἀψὺς ὁ ρήγας, πῶς δὲν τὸ λογάριασε ;  
καὶ μπρούμουτα στὸν πόθο τῆς Λινόρας.  
Πάντα μαζί του στὰ ταξίδια τὸ πουκάμισό της  
καὶ τὸ 'παιρνε στὴν ἀγκαλιά του σὰν κοιμούνταν·  
καὶ πῆγε νὰ τοῦ γράψει ὁ ἀθεόφοβος  
πὼς βρήκαν μὲ τὴν ἄρνα του τὸ κριάρι·  
γράφονται τέτια λόγια σ' ἓναν ἄρχοντα ;  
Εἶταν μωρός. Τουλάχιστο ἄς θυμούνταν  
πὼς ἔσφαλε κι' ὁ ρήγας· ἔκανε τὸ λιγωμένο  
μὰ εἶχε στὸ πισωπόρτι καὶ δυὸ καῦχες.  
'Αναστατώθη τὸ νησιὶ σὰν ἡ Λινόρα  
πρόσταξε καὶ τῆς ἔφεραν τὴ μιά, τὴ γκαστρωμένη  
κι' ἄλεθαν μὲ τὸ χερομύλι πάνω στὴν κοιλιὰ της  
πινάκι τὸ πινάκι τὸ σιτᾶρι.  
Καὶ τὸ χειρότερο — δὲν τὸ χωράει ὁ νοῦς —  
ἀφοῦ τὸ ξέρει ὁ κόσμος ὅλος πὼς ὁ ρήγας  
γεννήθηκε στὸ ζώδιο τοῦ Αἰγόκερω,  
πῆρε στὰ χέρια του ὁ ταλαίπωρος καλάμι  
τὴ νύχτα ποὺ εἶταν στὸν Αἰγόκερω ἡ σελήνη  
νὰ γράψει τί ; γιὰ κέρατα καὶ κριάρια !  
'Ο φρόνιμος τὴ μοίρα δὲν τὴνε ξαγριεύει.  
"Οχι· δὲν εἴμαστε ταγμένοι γιὰ νὰ ποῦμε

and come to wipe out everyone of them and their fortunes  
too.

They had responsibilities, terrible responsibilities;  
the very kingdom depended on their judgment.

That Visconti was honest and loyal  
of course they knew; but he hurried things,  
acted thoughtlessly, indecorously, extravagantly.  
The king was irascible—how had Visconti failed  
to keep that in mind?—irascible  
and prostrate to Eleanora's desire:  
her shift always with him when he traveled  
so that he could take it in his arms at night;  
and impious Visconti went and wrote him  
that they'd found the ram with his ewe—  
how can you write a thing like that to a ruler?  
He was a fool. At least he should have remembered  
that the king too had made mistakes:  
pretending to be so enraptured  
while two mistresses hovered at the back door.  
What an uproar on the island when Eleanora  
ordered one of the two—the pregnant one—to be brought  
before her  
and had them lay a handmill on her belly  
to grind out flour measure by measure.  
And worst of all—the mind boggles—  
when the whole world knows that the king  
was born under the sign of Capricorn,  
that luckless Visconti takes pen in hand  
the very night the moon comes under Capricorn  
to write what: about horns and rams!  
The prudent man never tempts fate.  
No; we aren't sworn to say

ποῦ εἶναι τὸ δίκιο. Τὸ δικό μας χρέος  
εἶναι νὰ βροῦμε τὸ μικρότερο κακό.  
Κάλλιο ἕνας νὰ πεθάνει ἀπὸ τὸ ριζικό του  
παρὰ σὲ κίντυνο νὰ μποῦμε ἐμεῖς καὶ τὸ ρηγάτο.

Ἔτσι συμβουλευόντουσαν ὅλη τὴ μέρα  
καὶ κατὰ τὸ βασίλειμα πήγαν στὸ ρήγα  
προσκύνησαν καὶ τοῦ εἶπαν πῶς ὁ Τζουὰν Βισκούντης  
εἶναι ἕνας διαστρεμμένος ψεματάρης.

Κι' ὁ Τζουὰν Βισκούντης πέθανε ἀπ' τὴν πείνα σὲ μιὰ γούφα.  
Μὰ στὴν ψυχὴ τοῦ ρήγα ὁ σπόρος τῆς ντροπῆς του  
ἄπλωνε τὰ πλοκάμια του καὶ τὸν ἐκίνα  
τό 'παθε νὰ τὸ πράξει καὶ στοὺς ἄλλους.  
Κερά δὲν ἔμεινε πού νὰ μὴ βουλευθεῖ νὰ τὴν πορνέψει·  
τὶς ντρόπιασε ὅλες. Φόβος κι' ἔχτρα ζευγαρώναν  
καὶ γέμιζαν τὴ χώρα φόβο κι' ἔχτρα.

Ἔτσι, μὲ τὸ «μικρότερο κακό», βάδιζε ἡ μοίρα  
ὥς τὴν αὐγὴ τ' Ἅγι' Ἀντωνιοῦ, μέρα Τετάρτη  
πού ἤρθαν οἱ καβαλάρηδες καὶ τὸν ἐσύραν  
ἀπὸ τῆς καύχας του τὴν ἀγκαλιὰ καὶ τὸν ἐσφάζαν.  
«Καὶ τᾶπισα παρὰ οὕλους ὁ τουρκοπουλιέρης  
ἠῦρεν τον τυλιμένον τὸ αἶμα» λέει ὁ χρονογράφος  
«κι' ἔβγαλεν τὴν μαχαίραν του καὶ κόβγει  
τὰ λυμπά του μὲ τὸν αὐλὸν καὶ τοῦ εἶπε :  
Γιὰ τοῦτα ἔδωκες θάνατον!».

Αὐτὸ τὸ τέλος  
ὄρισε γιὰ τὸ ρήγα Πιερ ὁ δαίμων τῆς πορνείας.

where justice lies. Our duty  
is to find the lesser of evils.  
Better for one man to die because he was fated to,  
than for us to put ourselves and the kingdom in danger.

So they argued through the day  
and then, towards sunset, they approached the king,  
bowed before him and said that Juan Visconti  
was an infamous, perverted liar.

And Juan Visconti died of hunger in a dungeon.  
But in the king's soul the seed of his shame  
spread tentacles, and this made him long  
to serve others as he had been served.  
No woman escaped his ambition to fornicate;  
he shamed them all. Fear and hate coupled  
and filled the land with fear and hate.

In this way, with the "lesser evil," fate marched on  
until the dawn of St. Anthony's day, a Wednesday,  
when the knights came and dragged the king  
from his mistress' embrace to slaughter him.  
"And after all the others came the Turkopolier\*  
and found him lying in his own blood" says the Chronicler,  
"And drew his sword and cut his member off  
and his testicles, and said to him: For these  
you paid with your death."

This was the end  
allotted King Peter by the demon of fornication.

## ΤΡΕΙΣ ΜΟΥΛΕΣ

Καὶ ἐκαβαλλίκευεν ἡ ρήγαινα ἀπάνω τῆς θαυμαστῆς  
μούλας τοῦ ἀνδρός της ρὲ Πιέρ, ὀνόματι Μαργαρίτα,  
καὶ ἔκατсен ἀπάνω τῆς θαυμαστῆς μούλας γυναικεῖα,  
καὶ ἐπαράγγειλεν τοῦ σκουτιέρη της, ὀνόματι Ποντζου-  
ρέλλο, νὰ κρατῇ μετὰ του τὰ φτερνιστηρία της, καὶ ἅντα  
τοῦ νέψη, νὰ γυρίσῃ τὸ πόδι της νὰ κάτση ἀνθρωπινά...

ΧΡΟΝΙΚΟ ΤΟΥ ΜΑΧΑΙΡΑ

*Γράμμα στὸ Μάστορ*

Στὴ Δαμασκὸ μιὰ νύχτα ἀγρύπνιας  
μοῦ φάνηκε τὸ πέρασμα τῆς Οὐμ Χαράμ  
τῆς βαθυσέβαστης γενιᾶς τοῦ Προφήτη.  
Ἄκουγα πέταλα σὰν ἀργυρὰ δηνάρια  
κι' ἐκείνη λὲς καὶ διάβαινε λόφους ἀλάτι  
κατὰ τὴ Λάρνακα, στὴ μούλα της καβάλα.  
Περίμενα μέσα σὲ δροσερὰ κλωνάρια  
δαγκώνοντας τὸν καρπὸ τῆς μυρτιᾶς·  
τὰ μάτια μου τ' ἀγκύλωνε μιὰ ἀσπράδα  
ἴσως τ' ἀλάτι ἴσως τὸ φάσμα της. Καὶ τότε  
στοὺς θάμνους ἕνας ψίθυρος:

«Ἐδῶ εἴταν

ποὺ γλίστρησε τὸ ζό μου. Τούτη ἡ πέτρα  
μοῦ τσάκισε τὸ διάφωτον αὐχένα  
κι' ἔδωσα τὴν ψυχὴ μου νικηφόρα.  
Ἄπ' τὴ βουλὴ τοῦ θεοῦ εἴμουν γεμάτ ·

### THREE MULES

*And the Queen mounted on the wonderful mule called Margarita, which had belonged to her husband King Peter, and she sat upon the wonderful mule as women do; and she ordered her squire who was called Putsurello to bring her spurs with him. And she said to him: "When I make a sign to you, turn my foot over so that I sit like a man and put on my spurs."*

THE CHRONICLE OF MAKHAIRAS\*

*Letter to Mastro*

In Damascus one sleepless night  
I saw the shade of Oum Haram pass by,  
the venerable kinswoman of the Prophet.  
I heard the clatter of hooves like silver dinars,  
then I saw her, seemingly crossing hills of salt  
towards Larnaca, astride her mule.  
I waited there among cool branches  
biting the fruit of a myrtle bush;  
a whiteness stung my eyes,  
maybe the salt, maybe her ghost. And then  
in the shrubs, a whisper:

    "It was here  
that my animal slipped. This stone  
struck the nape of my pelucid neck  
and I yielded up my victorious soul.  
I was full of the will of God;

μιὰ μούλα δὲ σηκώνει τέτοιο βάρος·  
μὴν τὸ ξεχνᾷς καὶ μὴν τὴν ἀδικήσεις ».

Εἶπε κι' ἐχάθη. Ὡστόσο ἀκόμη τώρα  
ἡ μούλα της ὀλοένα βόσκει στὸ μυαλό μου,  
καθὼς καὶ ἡ ἄλλη ὅπου σταμάτησε ἡ καρδιά της  
ὅταν τὴν ξεφορτώσαν ἀπ' τὰ δυὸ κιβούρια,  
τοὺς δυὸ ἀδερφοὺς τοὺς ἀδικοσφαγμένους  
ἀπ' τὸν τζελάτη ἐκεῖ στὸν Κουτσοβέντη.

Μὰ ἡ πιὸ τρανή, πῶς νὰ τὴν πῶ ; Στὸν τόπο  
πού ὅσοι ἔζησαν πιὸ χαμηλὰ ἀπὸ τὰ καστέλια  
λησμονηθῆκαν σὰν τὸ χῶμα τοῦ ἄλλου χρόνου,  
αὐτὴ ἀρμενίζει ἀκόμη στὰ φτερά τῆς φήμης·  
τὸ ξακουσμένο ζωντανὸ τῆς ρήγαινας Λινόρας.  
Στὴν κοιλιά της τὰ χρυσὰ φτερνιστήρια,  
στὴ σέλα της τ' ἀξεδίψαστα λαγόνια,  
στὸ γλάκι της τραντὰ τὰ στήθια ἐκεῖνα  
γεμάτα σὰν τὰ ρόδια φονικό.

Κι' ὅταν Ναπολιτάνοι Γενοβέζοι καὶ Λομπάρδοι  
φέραν ἀπάνω στὸ βασιλικὸ τραπέζι  
σ' ἓνα ἀσημένιο δίσκο, ματωμένο  
τοῦ σκοτωμένου ρήγα τὸ πουκάμισο  
καὶ ξέκαμαν τὸν ἐλεεινὸν Ἰωάννη·  
λογιάζω πῶς χιχίνισε τὴ νύχτα ἐκείνη,  
ἔξω ἀπὸ τὴν ἀπάθεια τῆς φυλῆς της,  
καθὼς οὐρλιάζει τὸ σκυλί,  
διπλοεντέληνη, χρυσοκάπουλη, στὸ στάβλο,  
ἡ μούλα Μαργαρίτα.

a mule can't bear that much weight;  
don't forget it, and don't wrong the mule."

She spoke and disappeared. Yet, even now  
her mule still grazes in my mind,  
as does that other mule, whose heart stopped dead  
when they freed her of the two coffins,  
the two brothers unjustly executed  
by the hangman there in Koutsovendi.\*

But the greatest of them all, what can I say of her? In a  
country  
where those who lived below the castles  
were forgotten like last year's earth,  
she still sails free on the wings of fame,  
the celebrated beast of Queen Eleanora.  
Against her belly, the golden spurs;  
on her saddle, those insatiable loins;  
at her trotting, those jolting breasts  
ripe as pomegranates with murder.  
And when Neapolitans, Genoese, and Lombards  
brought to the royal table  
on a silver tray, all bloody,  
the shirt of the murdered king  
and did in his wretched brother John,  
I imagine how she must have neighed that night,  
beyond the apathy of her race,  
as a dog howls,  
rich in trappings, golden-crouped, in the stable,  
Margarita the mule.

## ΠΕΝΘΕΥΣ

Ὁ ὕπνος τὸν γέμιζε ὄνειρα καρπῶν καὶ φύλλων·  
ὁ ξύπνος δὲν τὸν ἄφηνε νὰ κόψει οὔτε ἓνα μοῦρο.  
Κι' οἱ δυὸ μαζὶ μοιράσανε τὰ μέλη του στίς Βάκχες.

## PENTHEUS

Sleep filled him with dreams of fruit and leaves;  
wakefulness kept him from picking even a mulberry.  
And the two together divided his limbs among the  
Bacchae.\*

## ΜΝΗΜΗ, Β΄

Ἑφεσος

Μιλοῦσε καθισμένος σ' ἓνα μάρμαρο  
ποῦ ἔμοιαζε ἀπομεινάρι ἀρχαίου πυλώνα·  
ἀπέραντος δεξιά κι' ἄδειος ὁ κάμπος  
ζερεβά κατέβαιναν ἀπ' τὸ βουνὸ τ' ἀπόσκια :  
« Εἶναι παντοῦ τὸ ποίημα. Ἡ φωνή σου  
καμιὰ φορὰ προβαίνει στὸ πλευρό του  
σὰν τὸ δελφίνι ποῦ γιὰ λίγο συντροφεύει  
μαλαματένιο τρεχαντήρι μὲς στὸν ἥλιο  
καὶ πάλι χάνεται. Εἶναι παντοῦ τὸ ποίημα  
σὰν τὰ φτερά τοῦ ἀγέρα μὲς στὸν ἀγέρα  
ποῦ ἄγγιξαν τὰ φτερά τοῦ γλάρου μιὰ στιγμή.  
Ἰδιο καὶ διάφορο ἀπὸ τὴ ζωὴ μας, πὼς ἀλλάζει  
τὸ πρόσωπο κι' ὥστόσο μένει τὸ ἴδιο  
γυναίκας ποῦ γυμνώθηκε. Τὸ ξέρει  
ὅποιος ἀγάπησε· στὸ φῶς τῶν ἄλλων  
ὁ κόσμος φθείρεται· μὰ ἐσύ θυμήσου  
Ἄδης καὶ Διόνυσος εἶναι τὸ ἴδιο ».  
Εἶπε καὶ πῆρε τὸ μεγάλο δρόμο  
ποῦ πάει στ' ἄλλοτινὸ λιμάνι, χωνεμένο τώρα  
πέρα στὰ βοῦρλα. Τὸ λυκόφως  
θὰ ἔλεγε γιὰ τὸ θάνατο ἐνὸς ζώου,  
τόσο γυμνό.

Θυμαῖμαι ἀκόμη·

## MEMORY II

Ephesus

He spoke while sitting on what seemed to be  
the marble remnant of an ancient gate;  
endless the plain on the right and empty,  
on the left the last shadows moved down the mountain:  
“The poem is everywhere. Your voice  
sometimes travels beside it  
like a dolphin keeping company for a while  
with a golden sloop in the sunlight,  
then vanishing again. The poem is everywhere,  
like the wings of the wind moved by the wind  
to touch for a moment the sea gull’s wings.  
The same as our lives yet different too,  
as a woman’s face changes yet remains the same  
after she strips naked. He who has loved  
knows this; in the light that other people see things,  
the world spoils; but you remember this:  
Hades and Dionysus are the same.”\*  
He spoke and then took the main road  
that leads to the old harbor, devoured now  
under the rushes there. The twilight  
as if ready for the death of some animal,  
so naked was it.

I remember still:

ταξίδευε σ' ἄκρες ἰωνικές, σ' ἄδεια κοχύλια θεάτρων  
ὅπου μονάχα ἡ σαύρα σέρνεται στὴ στεγνὴ πέτρα,  
κι' ἐγὼ τὸν ρώτησα: «Κάποτε θὰ ξαναγεμίσουν;»  
Καὶ μ' ἀποκρίθηκε: «Μπορεῖ, τὴν ὥρα τοῦ θανάτου».  
Κι' ἔτρεξε στὴν ὀρχήστρα οὐρλιάζοντας:  
«Ἀφῆστε με ν' ἀκούσω τὸν ἀδερφό μου!»  
Κι' εἴταν σκληρὴ ἡ σιγὴ τριγύρω μας  
κι' ἀχάραχτη στὸ γυαλὶ τοῦ γαλάζιου.

he was traveling to Ionian shores,  
to empty shells of theaters  
where only the lizard slithers over the dry stones,  
and I asked him: "Will they be full again some day?"  
and he answered: "Maybe, at the hour of death."  
And he ran across the orchestra howling  
"Let me hear my brother!"  
And the silence surrounding us was harsh,  
leaving no trace at all on the glass of the blue.

## ΣΑΛΑΜΙΝΑ ΤΗΣ ΚΥΠΡΟΣ

... Σαλαμίνα τε  
τᾶς νῦν ματρόπολις τῶνδ'  
αἰτία στεναγμῶν.

ΛΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ, ΠΕΡΣΕΣ

Κάποτε ὁ ἥλιος τοῦ μεσημεριοῦ, κάποτε φοῦχτες ἡ ψιλὴ  
βροχὴ  
καὶ τ' ἀκρογιαλὴ γεμάτῳ θρύψαλα παλιὰ πιθάρια.  
Ἀσήμεντες οἱ κολόνες· μονάχα ὁ Ἅγιος Ἐπιφάνιος  
δείχνοντας μουντά, χωνεμένη τῇ δύναμει τῆς πολύχρυσης  
αὐτοκρατορίας.

Τὰ νέα κορμιὰ περάσαν ἀπ' ἐδῶ, τὰ ἐρωτευμένα·  
παλμοὶ στοὺς κόλπους, ρόδινα κοχύλια καὶ τὰ σφυρὰ  
τρέχοντας ἄφοβα πάνω στὸ νερὸ  
κι' ἀγκάλες ἀνοιχτές γιὰ τὸ ζευγάρωμα τοῦ πόθου.  
Κύριος ἐπὶ ὑδάτων πολλῶν,  
πάνω σ' αὐτὸ τὸ πέρασμα.

Τότες ἄκουσα βήματα στὰ χαλίγια.  
Δὲν εἶδα πρόσωπα· σὰ γύρισα εἶχαν φύγει.  
Ὅμως βαρεῖα ἡ φωνὴ σὰν τὸ περπάτημα καματεροῦ,  
ἔμεινε ἐκεῖ στὶς φλέβες τ' οὐρανοῦ στὸ κύλισμα τῆς θά-  
λασσας  
μέσα στὰ βότσαλα πάλι καὶ πάλι :

«Ἡ γῆς δὲν ἔχει κρικέλια

## SALAMIS IN CYPRUS

*. . . and Salamis,  
whose mother-city is now  
the cause of our troubles.*

AESCHYLUS, *THE PERSIANS*\*

Sometimes the midday sun, sometimes handfuls of light rain  
and the beach covered with fragments of ancient jars.  
The columns insignificant; only the ruined church of St.  
Epiphanios  
revealing—dark, sunken—the might of the golden Empire.

Young bodies, loved and loving, have passed by here;  
throbbing breasts, shells rose-pink, feet  
fearlessly skimming the water,  
and arms open for the coupling of desire.  
The Lord upon many waters,\*  
here upon this crossing.

Then I heard footsteps on the stones.  
I didn't see any faces; they'd gone by the time I turned.  
But the voice, heavy like the tread of oxen,  
remained there in the sky's veins, in the sea's roll  
over the pebbles, again and again:

"Earth has no handles

για νὰ τὴν πάρουν στὸν ὦμο καὶ νὰ φύγουν  
μῆτε μποροῦν, ὅσο κι' ἂν εἶναι διψασμένοι  
νὰ γλυκάνουν τὸ πέλαγο μὲ νερὸ μισὸ δράμι.

Καὶ τοῦτα τὰ κορμιὰ

πλασμένα ἀπὸ ἓνα χῶμα ποὺ δὲν ξέρουν,  
ἔχουν ψυχές.

Μαζεύουν σύνεργα γιὰ νὰ τὶς ἀλλάξουν,  
δὲ θὰ μπορέσουν· μόνο θὰ τὶς ξεκάνουν  
ἂν ξεγίνονται οἱ ψυχές.

Δὲν ἀργεῖ νὰ καρπίσει τ' ἀστάχυ

δὲ χρειάζεται μακρὸ καιρὸ

γιὰ νὰ φουσκώσει τῆς πίκρας τὸ προζύμι,

δὲ χρειάζεται μακρὸ καιρὸ

τὸ κακὸ γιὰ νὰ σηκώσει τὸ κεφάλι,

κι' ὁ ἄρρωστος νοῦς ποὺ ἀδειάζει

δὲ χρειάζεται κακρὸ καιρὸ

γιὰ νὰ γεμίσει μὲ τὴν τρέλα,

νῆσός τις ἔστι...».

Φίλοι τοῦ ἄλλου πολέμου,

σ' αὐτὴ τὴν ἔρημη συννεφιασμένη ἀκρογιαλιά

σᾶς συλλογίζομαι καθὼς γυρίζει ἡ μέρα —

Ἐκεῖνοι ποὺ ἔπесαν πολεμώντας κι' ἐκεῖνοι ποὺ ἔπесαν  
χρόνια μετὰ τὴ μάχη·

ἐκεῖνοι ποὺ εἶδαν τὴν αὐγὴ μὲς ἀπ' τὴν πάχνη τοῦ θανάτου

ἢ, μὲς στὴν ἄγρια μοναξιά κάτω ἀπὸ τ' ἄστρα,

νιώσανε πάνω τους μαβιὰ μεγάλα

τὰ μάτια τῆς ὀλόκληρης καταστροφῆς·

κι' ἀκόμη ἐκεῖνοι ποὺ προσεύχονταν

for them to shoulder her and carry her off,  
nor can they, however thirsty,  
sweeten the sea with half a dram of water.

And those bodies,  
formed of a clay they know not,  
have souls.

They gather tools to change them;  
they won't succeed: they'll only unmake them  
if souls can be unmade.

Wheat doesn't take long to ripen,  
it doesn't take much time  
for the yeast of bitterness to rise,  
it doesn't take much time  
for evil to raise its head,  
and the sick mind emptying  
doesn't take much time  
to fill with madness:  
there is an island . . . ”\*

Friends from the other war,  
on this deserted and cloudy beach  
I think of you as the day turns—  
those who fell fighting and those who fell years after the  
    battle,  
those who saw dawn through the mist of death  
or, in wild solitude under the stars,  
felt upon them the huge dark eyes  
of total disaster;  
and those again who prayed

ὅταν τὸ φλογισμένο ἄτσάλι πριόνιζε τὰ καράβια :

«Κύριε, βόηθα νὰ θυμόμαστε

πῶς ἔγινε τοῦτο τὸ φονικό·

τὴν ἄρπαγὴ τὸ δόλο τὴν ἰδιοτέλεια,

τὸ στέγνωμα τῆς ἀγάπης·

Κύριε, βόηθα νὰ τὰ ξεριζώσουμε...».

— Τώρα καλύτερα νὰ λησμονήσουμε πάνω σὲ τοῦτα τὰ χα-  
λίκια·

δὲ φελᾷ νὰ μιλάμε·

τὴ γνώμη τῶν δυνατῶν ποιὸς θὰ μπορέσει νὰ τὴ γυρίσει ;

ποιὸς θὰ μπορέσει ν' ἀκουστεῖ ;

Καθένας χωριστὰ ὀνειρεύεται καὶ δὲν ἀκούει τὸ βραχνὰ  
τῶν ἄλλων.

— Ναί· ὅμως ὁ μαντατοφόρος τρέχει

κι' ὅσο μακρὺς κι' ἂν εἶναι ὁ δρόμος του, θὰ φέρει

σ' αὐτοὺς ποὺ γύρευαν ν' ἄλυσοδέσουν τὸν Ἑλλήσποντο

τὸ φοβερὸ μῆνυμα τῆς Σαλαμίνας.

Φωνὴ Κυρίου ἐπὶ τῶν ὑδάτων.

Νῆσός τις ἔστι.

Σαλαμίνα, Κύπρος, Νοέμβρης '53

when flaming steel sawed the ships:  
“Lord, help us to keep in mind  
the causes of this slaughter:  
greed, dishonesty, selfishness,  
the desiccation of love;  
Lord, help us to root these out . . . ”\*

— Now, on this pebbled beach, it's better to forget;  
talking doesn't do any good;  
who can change the attitude of those with power?  
Who can make himself heard?  
Each dreams separately without hearing anyone else's  
nightmare.

— True. But the messenger moves swiftly,  
and however long his journey, he'll bring  
to those who tried to shackle the Hellespont  
the terrible news from Salamis.

Voice of the Lord upon the waters.  
There is an island.

Salamis, Cyprus, November '53

## ΕΥΡΥΠΠΙΔΗΣ, ΑΘΗΝΑΙΟΣ

Γέρασε ανάμεσα στη φωτιά τῆς Τροίας  
καὶ στὰ λατομεῖα τῆς Σικελίας.

Τοῦ ἄρεσαν οἱ σπηλιές στὴν ἀμμουδιὰ κι' οἱ ζωγραφιές τῆς  
θάλασσας.

Εἶδε τὶς φλέβες τῶν ἀνθρώπων  
σὰν ἓνα δίχτυ τῶν θεῶν, ὅπου μᾶς πιάνουν σὰν τ' ἀγρίμια·  
προσπάθησε νὰ τὸ τρυπήσει.

Εἶταν στρυφνός, οἱ φίλοι του εἶταν λίγοι·  
ἦρθε ὁ καιρὸς καὶ τὸν σπαράξαν τὰ σκυλιά.

## EURIPIDES THE ATHENIAN

He grew old between the fires of Troy  
and the quarries of Sicily.

He liked seashore caves and pictures of the sea.  
He saw the veins of men  
as a net the gods made to catch us in like wild beasts:  
he tried to break through it.  
He was a sour man, his friends were few;  
when his time came he was torn to pieces by dogs.\*

## ἝΓΚΩΜΗ

Εἶταν πλατὺς ὁ κάμπος καὶ στρωτός· ἀπὸ μακριὰ φαι-  
νόταν

τὸ γύρισμα χειρῶν ποῦ σκάβαν.

Στὸν οὐρανὸ τὰ σύννεφα πολλὰς καμπύλες, κάπου κάπου  
μιὰ σάλπιγγα χρυσή καὶ ρόδινη· τὸ δεῖλι.

Στὸ λιγοστὸ χορτάρι καὶ στ' ἀγκάθια τριγυρίζαν  
ψιλὰς ἀποβροχάρισσες ἀνάσες· θά 'χε βρέξει  
πέρα στὶς ἄκρες τὰ βουνὰ ποῦ ἔπαιρναν χρῶμα.

Κι' ἐγὼ προχώρεσα πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ποῦ δουλεύαν,  
γυναῖκες κι' ἄντρες μὲ τ' ἀξίνια σὲ χαντάκια.

Εἶταν μιὰ πολιτεία παλιά· τειχιὰ δρόμοι καὶ σπίτια  
ξεχώριζαν σὰν πετρωμένοι μυῶνες κυκλώπων,  
ἡ ἀνατομία μιᾶς ξοδεμένης δυνάμης κάτω ἀπ' τὸ μάτι  
τοῦ ἀρχαιολόγου τοῦ ναρκοδότη ἢ τοῦ χειρουργοῦ.

Φαντάσματα καὶ ὑφάσματα, χλιδὴ καὶ χεῖλια, χωνεμένα  
καὶ τὰ παραπετάσματα τοῦ πόνου διάπλατα ἀνοιχτὰ  
ἀφήνοντας νὰ φαίνεται γυμνὸς κι' ἀδιάφορὸς ὁ τάφος.

Κι' ἀνάβλεψα πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ποῦ δουλεύαν  
τοὺς τεντωμένους ὤμους καὶ τὰ μπράτσα ποῦ χτυπούσαν  
μ' ἓνα ρυθμὸ βαρὺ καὶ γρήγορο τούτη τὴ νέκρα  
σὰ νὰ περνοῦσε στὰ χαλάσματα ὁ τροχὸς τῆς μοίρας.

ἝΑξαφνα περπατοῦσα καὶ δὲν περπατοῦσα

## ENGOMI\*

The plain was broad and level; from a distance you could see  
arms in motion as they dug.

In the sky, the clouds all curves, here and there  
a trumpet golden and rose: the sunset.

In the thin grass and the thorns  
a light after-shower breeze stirred: it had rained  
there on the peaks of the mountains that now took on color.

And I moved on toward those at work,  
women and men digging with picks in trenches.  
It was an ancient city; walls, streets, and houses  
stood out like the petrified muscles of cyclopes,  
the anatomy of spent strength under the eye  
of the archaeologist, anaesthetist, or surgeon.  
Phantoms and fabrics, luxury and lips, buried  
and the curtains of pain spread wide open  
to reveal, naked and indifferent, the tomb.

And I looked up toward those at work,  
the taut shoulders, the arms that struck  
this dead silence with a rhythm heavy and swift  
as though the wheel of fate were passing through the ruins.

Suddenly I was walking and did not walk

κοίταζα τὰ πετούμενα πουλιά, κι' εἶταν μαρμαρωμένα  
κοίταζα τὸν αἰθέρα τ' οὐρανοῦ, κι' εἶτανε θαμπωμένος  
κοίταζα τὰ κορμιὰ ποὺ πολεμοῦσαν, κι' εἶχαν μείνει  
κι' ἀνάμεσό τους ἓνα πρόσωπο τὸ φῶς ν' ἀνηφορίζει.  
Τὰ μαλλιά μαῦρα χύνουνταν στὴν τραχηλιά, τὰ φρύδια  
εἶχανε τὸ φτερούγισμα τῆς χελιδόνας, τὰ ρουθούνια  
καμαρωτὰ πάνω ἀπ' τὰ χεῖλια, καὶ τὸ σῶμα  
ἔβγαινε ἀπὸ τὸ χεροπάλεμα ξεγυμνωμένο  
μέ τ' ἄγουρα βυζιά τῆς ὁδηγήτρας,  
χορὸς ἀκίνητος.

Κι' ἐγὼ χαμήλωσα τὰ μάτια μου τριγύρω:  
κορίτσια ζύμωναν, καὶ ζύμη δὲν ἀγγίζαν  
γυναῖκες γνέθανε, τ' ἀδράχτια δὲ γυρίζαν  
ἄρνια ποτίζονταν, κι' ἡ γλῶσσα τους στεκόταν  
πάνω ἀπὸ πρᾶσ να νερά ποὺ ἔμοιαζαν κοιμισμένα  
κι' ὁ ζευγὰς ἔμεινε μ' ἀνᾶερη τῇ βουκέντρα.  
Καὶ ξανακοίταξα τὸ σῶμα ἐκεῖνο ν' ἀνεβαίνει·  
εἶχανε μαζευτεῖ πολλοί, μερμήγκια,  
καὶ τὴ χτυπούσαν μὲ κοντάρια καὶ δὲν τὴ λαβώναν.  
Τώρα ἡ κοιλιά της ἔλαμπε σὰν τὸ φεγγάρι  
καὶ πίστευα πῶς ὁ οὐρανὸς εἶταν ἡ μήτρα  
ποὺ τὴν ἐγέννησε καὶ τὴν ξανάπαιρνε, μάνα καὶ βρέφος.  
Τὰ πόδια της μείναν ἀκόμη μαρμαρένια  
καὶ χάθηκαν· μιὰ ἀνάληψη.

‘Ο κόσμος

ξαναγινόταν ὅπως εἶταν, ὁ δικός μας  
μὲ τὸν καιρὸ καὶ μὲ τὸ χῶμα.

Ἀρώματα ἀπὸ σκίνο

I looked at the flying birds, and they had stopped stone dead  
I looked at the sky's air, and it was full of wonder  
I looked at the bodies laboring, and they were still  
and among them a face climbing the light.  
The black hair spilled over the collar, the eyebrows  
had the motion of a swallow's wings, the nostrils  
arched above the lips, and the body  
emerged from the struggling arms stripped  
with the unripe breasts of the Virgin,  
a motionless dance.

And I lowered my eyes to look all around:  
girls kneaded, but they didn't touch the dough  
women spun, but the spindles didn't turn  
lambs were drinking, but their tongues hung still  
above green waters that seemed asleep  
and the ploughman transfixed with his staff poised.\*  
And I looked again at that body ascending;  
people had gathered like ants,  
and they struck her with lances but didn't wound her.  
Her belly now shone like the moon  
and I thought the sky was the womb  
that bore her and now took her back, mother and child.  
Her feet were still visible, adamant  
then they vanished: an Assumption.

The world

became again as it had been, ours:  
the world of time and earth.

Aromas of terebinth

πήραν νὰ ξεκινήσουν στὶς παλιές πλαγιές τῆς μνήμης  
κόρφοι μέσα στὰ φύλλα, χεῖλια ὑγρά·  
κι' ὅλα στεγνώσαν μονομιᾶς στὴν πλατωσιὰ τοῦ κάμπου  
στῆς πέτρας τὴν ἀπόγνωση στὴ δύναμη τὴ φαγωμένη  
στὸν ἄδειο τόπο μὲ τὸ λιγοστὸ χορτάρι καὶ τ' ἀγκάθια  
ὅπου γλιστροῦσε ξέγνοιαστο ἓνα φίδι,  
ὅπου ξοδεύουνε πολὺ καιρὸ γιὰ νὰ πεθάνουν.

began to stir on the old slopes of memory  
breasts among leaves, lips moist;  
and all went dry at once on the length of the plain,  
in the stone's despair, in eroded power,  
in that empty place with the thin grass and the thorns  
where a snake slithered heedless,  
where they take a long time to die.

## ΤΡΙΑ ΚΡΥΦΑ ΠΟΙΗΜΑΤΑ

## THREE SECRET POEMS

## ΠΑΝΩ ΣΕ ΜΙΑ ΧΕΙΜΩΝΙΑΤΙΚΗ ΑΧΤΙΝΑ

### Α'

Φύλλα από σκουριασμένο τενεκέ  
για τὸ φτωχὸ μυαλὸ ποὺ εἶδε τὸ τέλος·  
τὰ λιγοστὰ λαμπυρίσματα.  
Φύλλα ποὺ στροβιλίζονται μὲ γλάρους  
ἀγριεμένους μὲ τὸ χειμῶνα.

Ὅπως ἐλευθερώνεται ἓνα στῆθος  
οἱ χορευτὲς ἔγιναν δέντρα  
ἓνα μεγάλο δάσος γυμνωμένα δέντρα.

### Β'

Καίγονται τ' ἄσπρα φύκια  
Γραῖες ἀναδυόμενες χωρὶς βλέφαρα  
σχήματα ποὺ ἄλλοτε χορεῦαν  
μαρμαρωμένες φλόγες.  
Τὸ χιόνι σκέπασε τὸν κόσμος.

### Γ'

Οἱ σύντροφοι μ' εἶχαν τρελάνει  
μὲ θεοδόλιχους ἐξάντες πετροκαλαμῆθρες  
καὶ τηλεσκόπια ποὺ μεγαλῶναν πράγματα—  
καλύτερα νὰ μέναν μακριά.  
Ποῦ θὰ μᾶς φέρουν τέτοιοι δρόμοι;  
Ὅμως ἡ μέρα ἐκείνη ποὺ ἄρχισε  
μπορεῖ δὲν ἔσβησε ἀκόμη  
μὲ μιὰ φωτιά σ' ἓνα φαράγγι σὰν τριαντάφυλλο  
καὶ μιὰ θάλασσα ἀνέρεη στὰ πόδια τοῦ Θεοῦ.

## ON A RAY OF WINTER LIGHT

### 1

Leaves like rusty tin  
for the desolate mind that has seen the end—  
the barest glimmerings.  
Leaves aswirl with gulls  
made wild by winter.

The way the heart finds release  
the dancers turned into trees,  
into a huge forest of trees stripped bare.

### 2

White seaweed burns,  
gray-haired sea-nymphs, eyes lidless, rise from the waves—\*  
shapes that once danced,  
flames now cristallized.  
Snow has covered the world.

### 3

My companions had driven me mad  
with theodolites, sextants, lodestones,  
with telescopes that enlarge things—  
better if they kept at a distance.  
Where will roads like these lead us?  
But maybe the day which began then  
has not yet died out  
with a rose-like fire in a ravine,  
with a sea ethereal at the feet of God.

Εἶπες ἐδῶ καὶ χρόνια:  
 «Κατὰ βάθος εἶμαι ζήτημα φωτός».  
 Καὶ τώρα ἀκόμη σὰν ἀκουμπᾶς  
 στὶς φαρδιὲς ὠμοπλάτες τοῦ ὕπνου  
 ἀκόμη κι' ὅταν σὲ ποντίζουν  
 στὸ ναρκωμένο στῆθος τοῦ πελάγου  
 ψάχνεις γωνιὲς ὅπου τὸ μαῦρο  
 ἔχει τριφεῖ καὶ δὲν ἀντέχει  
 ἀναζητᾷς ψηλαφητὰ τῇ λόγχῃ  
 τὴν ὀρισμένη νὰ τρυπήσει τὴν καρδιά σου  
 γιὰ νὰ τὴν ἀνοίξει στὸ φῶς.

## Ε'

Ποιὸς βουρκωμένος ποταμὸς μᾶς πῆρε;  
 Μείναμε στὸ βυθό.  
 Τρέχει τὸ ρέμα πάνω ἀπ' τὸ κεφάλι μας  
 λυγίζει τ' ἀναρθρα καλάμια·

οἱ φωνὲς  
 κάτω ἀπ' τὴν καστανιά γίναν χαλίκια  
 καὶ τὰ πετᾶνε τὰ παιδιά.

## ΣΤ'

Μικρὴ πνοὴ κι' ἄλλη πνοή, σπιλιάδα  
 καθὼς ἀφήνεις τὸ βιβλίο  
 καὶ σκίζεις ἄχρηστα χαρτιά τῶν περασμένων  
 ἢ σκύβεις νὰ κοιτάξεις στὸ λιβάδι  
 ἀγέρωχους κενταύρους ποὺ καλπάζουν  
 ἢ ἄγουρες ἀμαζόνες ἰδρωμένες  
 σ' ὅλα τ' αὐλάκια τοῦ κορμιοῦ  
 ποὺ ἔχουν ἀγώνα τὸ ἄλμα καὶ τὴν πάλη.

Ἀναστάσιμες σπιλιάδες μιὰν αὐγὴ  
 ποὺ νόμισες πὼς βγῆκε ὁ ἥλιος.

Years ago you said:

“Essentially I’m a matter of light.”

And still today when you lean  
on the broad shoulders of sleep  
or even when they anchor you  
to the sea’s drowsy breast  
you look for crannies where the blackness  
has worn thin and has no resistance,  
groping you search for the lance—  
the lance destined to pierce your heart  
and lay it open to the light.

What turbid river took us under?

We stayed in the depths.

The current flows above our heads,  
bending inarticulate reeds;

the voices

under the chestnut tree turned into pebbles—  
pebbles that children throw.

A breath of air, then another, a gust  
as you put down the book  
and tear up useless bygone papers  
or lean forward to watch in the meadow  
arrogant centaurs galloping  
or nubile Amazons with sweat  
in all the runnels of the body  
as they compete at jumping and wrestling.

Gusts of resurrection one dawn  
when you thought it was the sun that had risen.

## Z'

Τὴ φλόγα τὴ γιατρεύει ἡ φλόγα  
ὄχι μὲ τῶν στιγμῶν τὸ στάλαγμα  
ἀλλὰ μιὰ λάμψη, μονομιᾶς·  
ὅπως ὁ πόθος ποὺ ἔσμιξε τὸν ἄλλο πόθο  
κι' ἀπόμειναν καθηλωμένοι  
ἢ ὅπως  
ρυθμὸς τῆς μουσικῆς ποὺ μένει  
ἐκεῖ στὸ κέντρο σὰν ἄγαλμα

ἀμετάθετος.

Δὲν εἶναι πέρασμα τούτῃ ἡ ἀνάσα  
οἰακισμὸς κεραυνοῦ.

## 7

Flame is healed by flame,  
not in the slow trickle of moments  
but in a single flash, at once;  
like the longing that merges with another longing  
so that the two remain transfixed  
or like  
the rhythm in music that stays  
there at the center like a statue  
  
immovable.

This breath of life is not a transition:  
the thunderbolt rules it.\*

## ΕΠΙ ΣΚΗΝΗΣ

### Α΄

Ἦλιε παίζεις μαζί μου  
κι' ὅμως δὲν εἶναι τοῦτο χορὸς  
ἢ τόση γύμνια  
αἶμα σχεδὸν  
γι' ἄγριο κανένα δάσο·  
τότε—

### Β΄

Σήμαντρα ἀκούστηκαν  
κι' ἤρθαν οἱ μαντατοφόροι·  
δὲν τοὺς περίμενα  
λησμονημένη κι' ἡ λαλιά τους·  
ξεκούραστοι φρεσκοντυμένοι  
κρατώντας κἀνιστρα τοὺς καρπούς.  
Θαύμασα καὶ ψιθύρισα:  
«Μ' ἀρέσουν τ' ἀμφιθέατρα».  
Ἡ ἀχιβάδα γέμισε ἀμέσως  
καὶ χαμήλωσε τὸ φῶς στὴ σκηνή  
ὅπως γιὰ κάποιο περιώνυμο φονικό.

### Γ΄

Ἐσὺ τί γύρευες; Τραυλὴ στὴν ὄψη.  
Μόλις ποὺ εἶχες σηκωθεῖ  
ἀφήνοντας τὰ σεντόνια νὰ παγώσουν  
καὶ τὰ ἐκδικητικὰ λουτρά.  
Στάλες κυλοῦσαν στοὺς ὤμους σου  
στὴν κοιλιά σου  
τὰ πόδια σου κατὰσαρκα στὸ χῶμα  
στὸ θερισμένο χόρτο.

## ON STAGE

### 1

Sun, you are playing with me  
but this is no dance—  
such extreme nakedness  
is blood almost,  
or some savage forest;  
then . . .

### 2

Gongs were heard  
and the messengers arrived—  
I wasn't expecting them,  
even the way they spoke beyond recollection—  
rested, their clothes freshly changed,  
carrying fruit in baskets.  
I was amazed and whispered:  
"I love these amphitheatres."  
The concave shell filled immediately  
and on the stage the light dimmed  
as though for some celebrated murder.

### 3

What were you after? Your look a stammer.  
You had just woken up  
leaving the sheets to grow ice cold  
and the baths of revenge.  
Drops of water ran down your shoulders,  
over your belly,  
your feet bare on the soil,  
on the cut grass.

Ἐκεῖνοι, τρεῖς  
 τὰ πρόσωπα τῆς τολμηρῆς Ἑκάτης.  
 Γύρευαν νὰ σὲ πάρουν μαζί τους.  
 Τὰ μάτια σου δυὸ τραγικὰ κοχύλια  
 κι' εἶχες στὶς ρῶγες στὰ βυζιά  
 δυὸ βυσσινιά μικρὰ χαλίκια—  
 σύνεργα τῆς σκηνῆς, δὲν ξέρω.  
 Ἐκεῖνοι ἀλάλαζαν  
 ἔμενες ριζωμένῃ στὸ χῶμα,  
 σκίζαν τὸν ἀέρα τὰ νοήματά τους.  
 Δοῦλοι τοὺς ἔφεραν τὰ μαχαίρια·  
 ἔμενες ριζωμένῃ στὸ χῶμα,  
 κυπαρίσσι.  
 Ἐσυραν τὰ μαχαίρια ἀπ' τὰ θηκάρια  
 κι' ἔψαχναν ποῦ νὰ σὲ χτυπήσουν.  
 Τότε μονάχα φώναζες:  
 «Ἄς ἔρθει νὰ μὲ κοιμηθεῖ ὅποιος θέλει,  
 μήπως δὲν εἶμαι ἡ θάλασσα;»

#### Δ'

Ἡ θάλασσα· πῶς ἔγινε ἔτσι ἡ θάλασσα;  
 Ἀργησα χρόνια στὰ βουνά·  
 μὲ τύφλωσαν οἱ πυγολαμπίδες.  
 Τώρα σὲ τοῦτο τ' ἀχρογιάλι περιμένω  
 ν' ἀράξει ἓνας ἄνθρωπος  
 ἓνα ὑπόλειμμα, μιὰ σχεδία.

Μὰ μπορεῖ νὰ κακοφορμίσει ἡ θάλασσα;  
 Ἐνα δελφίνι τὴν ἔσκισε μιὰ φορὰ  
 κι' ἀκόμῃ μιὰ φορὰ  
 ἡ ἄκρῃ τοῦ φτεροῦ ἐνὸς γλάρου.

The other three—  
the faces of brazen Hecate—\*  
tried to take you with them.  
Your eyes were two tragic shells,  
two small purple stones  
covered your nipples—  
stage properties perhaps.  
The three bellowed,  
you stood rooted to the soil.  
Their gesticulations rent the air.  
Slaves brought them knives,  
you stood rooted to the soil,  
a cypress.  
They drew the knives from the sheaths,  
looked for a place to stab you.  
Only then did you cry out:  
“Let anyone come and sleep with me who wants to:  
am I not the sea?”

4

The sea: how did the sea get like this?  
I lingered for years in the mountains;  
the fireflies blinded me.  
Now, on this beach,  
I’m waiting for someone to land,  
or a piece of flotsam, a raft.

\*

But is it possible for the sea to fester?  
A dolphin once cut through it,  
as did once  
the tip of a gull’s wing.

Κι' ὅμως ἦταν γλυκὸ τὸ κύμα  
ὅπου ἔπεφτα παιδὶ καὶ κολυμποῦσα  
κι' ἀκόμη σὰν ἤμουν παλικάρι  
καθὼς ἔψαχνα σχήματα στὰ βότσαλα,  
γυρεύοντας ρυθμούς,  
μοῦ μίλησε ὁ Θαλασσινὸς Γέρος:  
«Ἐγὼ εἶμαι ὁ τόπος σου·  
ἴσως νὰ μὴν εἶμαι κανεὶς  
ἀλλὰ μπορῶ νὰ γίνω αὐτὸ ποὺ θέλεις».

## Ε'

Ποιὸς ἄκουσε καταμεσήμερα  
τὸ σύρσιμο τοῦ μαχαιριοῦ στὴν ἀκονόπετρα;  
Ποιὸς καβαλάρης ἦρθε  
μὲ τὸ προσάναιμμα καὶ τὸ δαυλό;  
Καθένας νίβει τὰ χέρια του  
καὶ τὰ δροσίζει.  
Καὶ ποιὸς ξεκοίλιασε  
τὴ γυναίκα τὸ βρέφος καὶ τὸ σπíti;  
Ἕνοχος δὲν ὑπάρχει, καπνός.  
Ποιὸς ἔφυγε  
χτυπώντας πέταλα στὶς πλάκες;  
Κατάργησαν τὰ μάτια τους· τυφλοί.  
Μάρτυρες δὲν ὑπάρχουν πιά, γιὰ τίποτε.

## ΣΤ'

Πότε θὰ ξαναμιλήσεις;  
Εἶναι παιδιὰ πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων τὰ λόγια μας.  
Σπέρνουνται γεννιοῦνται σὰν τὰ βρέφη  
ριζώνουν θρέφονται μὲ τὸ αἶμα.  
"●πως τὰ πεῦκα  
κρατοῦνε τὴ μορφή τοῦ ἀγέρα  
ἐνῶ ὁ ἀγέρας ἔφυγε, δὲν εἶναι ἐκεῖ  
τὸ ἴδιο τὰ λόγια

Yet the sea was sweet  
where I plunged in and swam as a child,  
and later, as a young man,  
while searching for shapes in the pebbles,  
trying to discover rhythms,  
the Old Sea-god said to me: \*  
“I am the place you belong to;  
I may be nobody,  
but I can become whatever you want.”

5

Who heard, at the stroke of noon,  
the knife hiss on the whetstone?  
What rider was it that came  
with kindling, with a firebrand?  
Everyone washes his hands,  
cools them.  
And who disembowelled  
the woman, the child, the house?  
There's no culprit, not a trace.  
Who fled,  
horseshoes striking the flagstones?  
They have annihilated their eyes, gone blind.  
There are no witnesses now, to anything.

6

When will you speak again?  
Our words are the children of many people.  
They are sown, are born like infants,  
take root, are nourished with blood.  
As pine trees  
hold the wind's imprint  
after the wind has gone, is no longer there,  
so words

φυλάγουν τὴ μορφὴ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου  
κι' ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἔφυγε, δὲν εἶναι ἐκεῖ.  
Ἴσως γυρεύουν νὰ μιλήσουν τ' ἄστρα  
ποὺ πάτησαν τὴν τόση γύμνια σου μιὰ νύχτα  
ὁ Κύκνος ὁ Τοξότης ὁ Σκορπιὸς  
ἴσως ἐκεῖνα.  
Ἄλλὰ ποῦ θὰ εἶσαι τὴ στιγμὴ ποὺ θὰ ῥθει  
ἐδῶ σ' αὐτὸ τὸ θέατρο τὸ φῶς;

## Ζ'

Κι' ὅμως ἐκεῖ, στὴν ἄλλην ὄχθη  
κάτω ἀπ' τὸ μαῦρο βλέμμα τῆς σπηλιᾶς  
ἥλιοι στὰ μάτια πουλιὰ στοὺς ὠμούς  
ἤσουν ἐκεῖ· πονοῦσες  
τὸν ἄλλο μόχθο τὴν ἀγάπη  
τὴν ἄλλη αὐγὴ τὴν παρουσία  
τὴν ἄλλη γέννα τὴν ἀνάσταση·  
κι' ὅμως ἐκεῖ ξαναγινόσουν  
στὴν ὑπέρογκη διαστολὴ τοῦ καιροῦ  
στιγμὴ-στιγμὴ σὰν τὸ ρετσίνι  
τὸ σταλαχτίτη τὸ σταλαγμίτη.

retain a man's imprint  
after the man has gone, is no longer there.  
Perhaps the stars are trying to speak,  
those that stamped your total nakedness one night—  
the Swan, the Archer, the Scorpion—  
perhaps those.  
But where will you be the moment  
the light comes, here, to this theatre?

7

Yet there, on the other shore,  
under the cave's black stare,  
suns in your eyes, birds on your shoulders,  
you were there; you suffered  
the other labor, love,  
the other dawn, the reappearance  
the other birth, the resurrection.  
Yet there, in the vast dilation of time,  
you were remade  
drop by drop, like resin,  
like the stalactite, the stalagmite.

## Α΄

Ὁ μεγαλύτερος ἥλιος ἀπὸ τὴ μιὰ μεριά  
 κι' ἀπὸ τὴν ἄλλη τὸ νέο φεγγάρι  
 ἀπόμακρα στὴ μνήμη σὰν ἐκεῖνα τὰ στήθη.  
 Ἀνάμεσό τους χάσμα τῆς ἀστερωμένης νύχτας  
 κατακλυσμός τῆς ζωῆς.  
 Τ' ἄλογα στ' ἁλώνια  
 καλπάζουν καὶ ἰδρώνουν  
 πάνω σὲ σκόρπια κορμιά.  
 Ὅλα πηγαίνουν ἐκεῖ  
 καὶ τούτῃ ἡ γυναῖκα  
 ποὺ τὴν εἶδες ὁμορφη, μιὰ στιγμή  
 λυγίζει, δὲν ἀντέχει πιά γονάτισε.  
 Ὅλα τ' ἀλέθουν οἱ μυλόπετρες  
 καὶ γίνονται ἄστρα.

Παραμονὴ τῆς μακρύτερης μέρας.

## Β΄

Ὅλοι βλέπουν ὁράματα  
 κανεῖς ὥστόσο δὲν τ' ὁμολογεῖ.  
 πηγαίνουν καὶ θαρροῦν πῶς εἶναι μόνοι.  
 Τὸ μεγάλο τριαντάφυλλο  
 ἦτανε πάντα ἐδῶ  
 στὸ πλευρό σου βαθιὰ μέσα στὸν ὕπνο  
 δικό σου καὶ ἄγνωστο.  
 Ἀλλὰ μονάχα τώρα ποὺ τὰ χεῖλια σου τ' ἄγγιξαν  
 στ' ἀπώτατα φύλλα  
 ἐνιωσες τὸ πυκνὸ βάρος τοῦ χορευτῆ  
 νὰ πέφτει στὸ ποτάμι τοῦ καιροῦ—  
 τὸ φοβερὸ παφλασμό.

Μὴ σπαταλᾷς τὴν πνοὴ ποὺ σοῦ χάρισε  
 τούτῃ ἡ ἀνάσα.

## 1

On one side the sun at its grandest,  
 on the other the new moon,  
 distant in memory like those breasts.  
 Between them the chasm of a night full of stars,  
 life's deluge.  
 The horses on the threshing floors  
 gallop and sweat  
 over scattered bodies.  
 Everything finds its way there,  
 and this woman  
 whom you saw when she was beautiful, suddenly  
 sags, gives way, kneels.  
 The millstones grind up everything  
 and everything turns into stars.

Eve of the longest day.

## 2

Everyone sees visions  
 but no one admits to it;  
 they continue to live thinking they're alone.  
 The huge rose  
 was always here  
 beside you, sunk deep in sleep,  
 yours and unknown.  
 But only now that your lips have touched  
 its innermost petals  
 have you known the dancer's dense weight  
 fall into time's river—  
 the terrible splash.

Don't dissipate the vitality  
 that this breath of life has given you.

## Γ'

Κι' ὅμως σ' αὐτὸ τὸν ὕπνο  
τ' ὄνειρο ξεπέφτει τόσο εὐκόλα  
στὸ βραχνά.  
"Ὅπως τὸ ψάρι ποὺ ἄστραψε κάτω ἀπ' τὸ κύμα  
καὶ χώθηκε στὸ βοῦρκο τοῦ βυθοῦ  
ἢ χαμαιλέοντας ὅταν ἀλλάζει χρῶμα.  
Στὴν πολιτεία ποὺ ἔγινε πορνεῖο  
μαστροποὶ καὶ πολιτικιῆς  
διαλαλοῦν σάπια θέλγητρα·  
ἢ κυματόφερτη κόρη  
φορεῖ τὸ πετσὶ τῆς γελάδας  
γιά νὰ τὴν ἀνεβεῖ τὸ ταυρόπουλο·  
ὁ ποιητῆς  
χαμίνια τοῦ πετοῦν μαγαρισιῆς  
καθὼς βλέπει τ' ἀγάλματα νὰ στάζουν αἶμα.  
Πρέπει νὰ βγεῖς ἀπὸ τοῦτο τὸν ὕπνο·  
τοῦτο τὸ μαστιγωμένο δέρμα.

## Δ'

Στὸ τρελὸ ἀνεμοσκόρπισμα  
δεξιὰ ζερβὰ πάνω καὶ κάτω  
στροβιλίζονται σαρίδια.  
Φτενοὶ θανατεροὶ καπνοὶ  
λύνουν τὰ μέλη τῶν ἀνθρώπων.  
Οἱ ψυχές  
βιάζονται ν' ἀποχωριστοῦν τὸ σῶμα  
διψοῦν καὶ δὲ βρίσκουν νερὸ πουθενά·  
κολνοῦν ἐδῶ κολνοῦν ἐκεῖ στὴν τύχη  
πουλιὰ στὶς ξόβεργες·  
σπαράζουν ἀνωφέλευτα  
ὅσο ποὺ δὲ σηκώνουν ἄλλο τὰ φτερά τους.

Φυραίνει ὁ τόπος ὀλοένα  
χωματένιο σταμνί.

Yet in sleep of this kind  
 dreams degenerate so readily  
 into nightmares.  
 Like a fish gleaming under the waves,  
 then burying itself in the slimy depths,  
 or the chameleon when it changes color.  
 In the city now turned into a brothel  
 pimps and whores  
 hawk putrid charms;  
 the girl who rose from the sea  
 puts on a cow's hide  
 to make the bull-calf mount her;\*  
 as for the poet—  
 urchins pelt him with turds  
 while he watches the statues dripping blood.  
 You've got to break out of this sleep,  
 out of this flagellated skin.

Litter swirls  
 in the mad scattering wind  
 right left, up down.  
 Fine lethal fumes  
 dissolve men's limbs.  
 Souls  
 longing to leave the body  
 thirst, but they can't find water anywhere:  
 they stick here, stick there, haphazardly,  
 birds caught in lime—  
 in vain they struggle  
 until their wings fail completely.

This place—earthen pitcher—  
 gets dryer and dryer.

## Ε΄

Ὁ κόσμος τυλιγμένος στὰ ναρκωτικὰ σεντόνια  
δὲν ἔχει τίποτε ἄλλο νὰ προσφέρει  
παρὰ τοῦτο τὸ τέρμα.

Στὴ ζεστὴ νύχτα

ἡ μαραμμένη ἱέρεια τῆς Ἑκάτης  
μὲ γυμνωμένα στήθη ψηλὰ στὸ δῶμα  
παρακαλᾷ μιὰ τεχνητὴ πανσέληνο, καθὼς  
δυὸ ἀνήλικες δοῦλες ποὺ χασμουριοῦνται  
ἀναδεύουν σὲ μπακιρένια χύτρα  
ἀρωματισμένες φαρμακεῖες.  
Αὔριο θὰ χορτάσουν ὅσοι ἀγαποῦν τὰ μυρωδικά.

Τὸ πάθος τῆς καὶ τὰ φτιασίδια  
εἶναι ὅμοια μὲ τῆς τραγωδοῦ  
ὁ γύψος τοὺς μάδησε κιόλας.

This world wrapped in soporific sheets  
has nothing to offer  
but this ending.

    In the hot night  
Hecate's withered priestess  
up on the roof, breasts bared,  
supplicates an artificial full moon,  
while two adolescent slave girls, yawning,  
mix aromatic potions  
in a large copper pot.  
Those who relish perfumes will have their fill tomorrow.

Her passion and her make-up  
are those of the tragic actress—  
their plaster has peeled off already.

Κάτω στὶς δάφνες  
 κάτω στὶς ἄσπρες πικροδάφνες  
 κάτω στὸν ἀγκαθερό βράχο  
 κι' ἡ θάλασσα στὰ πόδια μας γυάλινη.  
 Θυμήσου τὸ χιτῶνα ποὺ ἔβλεπες  
 ν' ἀνοίγει καὶ νὰ ξεγλιστρᾷ πάνω στὴ γύμνια  
 κι' ἔπεσε γύρω στοὺς ἀστραγάλους  
 νεκρὸς—  
 ἂν ἔπεφτε ἔτσι αὐτὸς ὁ ὕπνος  
 ἀνάμεσα στὶς δάφνες τῶν νεκρῶν.

## Ζ'

Ἡ λεύκα στὸ μικρὸ περιβόλι  
 ἡ ἀνάσα της μετρᾷ τὶς ἔυρες σου  
 μέρα καὶ νύχτα·  
 κλεψύδρα ποὺ γεμίζει ὁ οὐρανός.  
 Στὴ δύναμη τοῦ φεγγαριοῦ τὰ φύλλα της  
 σέρνουν μαῦρα πατήματα στὸν ἄσπρο τοῖχο.  
 Στὸ σύνορο εἶναι λιγοστὰ τὰ πεῦκα  
 ἔπειτα μάρμαρα καὶ φωταψίες  
 κι' ἄνθρωποι καθὼς εἶναι πλασμένοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι.  
 Ὁ κότσυφας ὅμως τιτιβίζει  
 σὰν ἔρχεται νὰ πιεῖ  
 κι' ἀκοῦς καμιὰ φορὰ φωνὴ τῆς δεκοχτούρας.

Στὸ μικρὸ περιβόλι δέκα δρασκειλιές  
 μπορεῖς νὰ ἴδεῖς τὸ φῶς τοῦ ἥλιου  
 νὰ πέφτει σὲ δυὸ κόκκινα γαρούφαλα  
 σὲ μιὰν ἐλιά καὶ λίγο ἀγιόκλημα.  
 Δέξου ποιὸς εἶσαι.

## Τὸ ποίημα

μὴν τὸ καταποντίζεις στὰ βαθιὰ πλατάνια  
 θρέψε το μὲ τὸ χῶμα καὶ τὸ βράχο ποὺ ἔχεις.  
 Τὰ περισσότερα—  
 σκάψε στὸν ἴδιο τόπο νὰ τὰ βρεῖς.

## 6

Down among the laurels,  
 down among the white oleanders,  
 down on the jagged rock,  
 the sea like glass at our feet.  
 Remember the tunic that you saw  
 come open, slip down over nakedness,  
 fall around the ankles,  
 dead—  
 if only this sleep had fallen like that  
 among the laurels of the dead.

## 7

The poplar's breathing in the little garden  
 measures your time  
 day and night—  
 a water-clock filled by the sky.  
 In strong moonlight its leaves  
 trail black footprints across the white wall.  
 Along the border the pine trees are few,  
 and beyond, marble and beams of light  
 and people the way people are made.  
 Yet the blackbird sings  
 when it comes to drink  
 and sometimes you hear the turtle-dove's call.

In the little garden—this tiny patch—  
 you can see the light of the sun  
 striking two red carnations,  
 an olive tree and a bit of honeysuckle.  
 Accept who you are.

Don't

drown the poem in deep plane trees;  
 nurture it with what earth and rock you have.  
 For things beyond this—  
 to find them dig in this same place.\*

## Η'

Τ' ἄσπρο χαρτὶ σκληρὸς καθρέφτης  
ἐπιστρέφει μόνον ἐκεῖνο ποῦ ἦσουν.

Τ' ἄσπρο χαρτὶ μιᾶ με τὴ φωνή σου,  
τὴ δική σου φωνή  
ὄχι ἐκείνη ποῦ σ' ἀρέσει·  
μουσική σου εἶναι ἡ ζωὴ  
αὐτὴ ποῦ σπατάλησες.  
Μπορεῖ νὰ τὴν ξανακερδίσεις ἂν τὸ θέλεις  
ἂν καρφωθεῖς σὲ τοῦτο τ' ἀδιάφορο πράγμα  
ποῦ σὲ ρίχνει πίσω  
ἐκεῖ ποῦ ξεκίνησες.

Ταξίδεψες, εἶδες πολλὰ φεγγάρια πολλοὺς ἥλιους  
ἄγγιζες νεκροὺς καὶ ζωντανούς  
ἐνίωσες τὸν πόνο τοῦ παλικαριοῦ  
καὶ τὸ βογγητὸ τῆς γυναίκας  
τὴν πίκρα τοῦ ἄγουρου παιδιοῦ—  
ὅ,τι ἐνίωσες σωριάζεται ἀνυπόστατο  
ἂν δὲν ἐμπιστευτεῖς τοῦτο τὸ κενό.  
Ἴσως νὰ βρεῖς ἐκεῖ ὅ,τι νόμισες χαμένο·  
τὴ βλάβστηση τῆς νιότης, τὸ δίκαιο καταποντισμὸ τῆς  
ἡλικίας.

Ζωὴ σου εἶναι ὅ,τι ἔδωσες  
τοῦτο τὸ κενὸ εἶναι ὅ,τι ἔδωσες  
τὸ ἄσπρο χαρτί.

The white sheet of paper, harsh mirror,  
gives back only what you were.

The white sheet talks with your voice,  
your very own,  
not the voice you'd like to have;  
your music is life,  
the life you wasted.  
If you want to, you can regain it:  
concentrate on this blank object  
that throws you back  
to where you started.

You travelled, saw many moons, many suns,  
touched dead and living,  
felt the pain young men know,  
the moaning of woman,  
a boy's bitterness—  
what you've felt will fall away to nothing  
unless you commit yourself to this void.  
Maybe you'll find there what you thought was lost:  
youth's burgeoning, the justified shipwreck of age.

Your life is what you gave,  
this void is what you gave:  
the white sheet of paper.

Θ'

Μιλοῦσες γιὰ πράγματα ποὺ δὲν τὰ ᾽βλεπαν  
κι' αὐτοὶ γελοῦσαν.

“Ὅμως νὰ λάμνεις στὸ σποτεινὸ ποταμὸ  
πάνω νερά·

νὰ πηγαίνεις στὸν ἀγνοημένο δρόμο  
στὰ τυφλά, πεισματάρης  
καὶ νὰ γυρεύεις λόγια ριζωμένα  
σὰν τὸ πολύροζο λιόδεντρο—  
ἄφησε κι' ἄς γελοῦν.

Καὶ νὰ ποθεῖς νὰ κατοικήσει κι' ὁ ἄλλος κόσμος  
στὴ σημερινή πνιγερὴ μοναξιά  
στ' ἀφανισμένο τοῦτο παρὸν—  
ἄφησέ τους.

‘Ο θαλασσινὸς ἄνεμος κι' ἡ δροσιὰ τῆς αὐγῆς  
ὑπάρχουν χωρὶς νὰ τὸ ζητήσῃ κανένας.

Ι'

Τὴν ὥρα ποὺ τὰ ὀνειράτα ἀληθεύουν  
στὸ γλυκοχάραμα τῆς μέρας  
εἶδα τὰ χεῖλια ποὺ ἀνοιγαν  
φύλλο τὸ φύλλο.

Ἔλαμπε ἓνα λιγνὸ δρεπάνι στὸν οὐρανό.  
Φοβήθηκα μὴν τὰ θερίσει.

## 9

You spoke about things they couldn't see  
and so they laughed.

Yet to row up the dark river  
against the current,  
to take the unknown road  
blindly, stubbornly,  
and to search for words rooted  
like the knotted olive tree—  
let them laugh.  
And to yearn for the other world to inhabit  
today's suffocating loneliness,  
this ravaged present—  
let them be.

The sea-breeze and the freshness of dawn  
exist whether or not we want them to.

## 10

At that time of dawn  
when dreams come true  
I saw lips opening  
petal by petal.

A slender sickle shone in the sky.  
I was afraid it might cut them down.

## ΙΑ'

Ἡ θάλασσα ποὺ ὀνομάζουν γαλήνη  
πλεούμενα κι' ἄσπρα πανιά  
μπάτης ἀπὸ τὰ πεῦκα καὶ τ' Ὀρος τῆς Αἴγινας  
λαχανιασμένη ἀνάσα·  
τὸ δέρμα σου γλιστροῦσε στὸ δέρμα της  
εὐκόλο καὶ ζεστὸ  
σκέψη σχεδὸν ἀκάμωτη κι' ἀμέσως ξεχασμένη.

Μὰ στὰ ρηχὰ  
ἓνα καμακωμένο χταπόδι τίναξε μελάνι  
καὶ στὸ βυθὸ—  
ἂν συλλογιζόσουν ὥς ποῦ τελειώνουν τὰ ὅμορφα νησιά.  
  
Σὲ κοίταζα μ' ὅλο τὸ φῶς καὶ τὸ σκοτάδι ποὺ ἔχω.

## ΙΒ'

Τὸ αἷμα τώρα τινάζεται  
καθὼς φουσκώνει ἢ κάψα  
στὶς φλέβες τ' οὐρανοῦ τ' ἀφορμισμένου.  
Γυρεύει νὰ περάσει ἀπὸ τὸ θάνατο  
γιὰ νὰ ἴβρει τὴ χαρά.

Τὸ φῶς εἶναι σφυγμὸς  
ὀλοένα πιὸ ἀργὸς καὶ πιὸ ἀργὸς  
θαρρεῖς πῶς πάει νὰ σταματήσει.

11

The sea that they call tranquility,  
ships and white sails,  
the breeze off the pine trees and Aegina's mountain,  
panting breath;  
your skin glided over her skin,  
easy and warm,  
thought barely formed and forgotten at once.

But in the shallow sea  
a speared octopus spurted ink,  
and in the depths—  
only consider how far down the beautiful islands go.

I looked at you with all the light and the darkness I possess.

12

The blood surges now  
as heat swells  
the veins of the inflamed sky.  
It is trying to go beyond death,  
to discover joy.  
The light is a pulse  
beating ever more slowly  
as though about to stop.

## ΙΓ'

Λίγο ακόμη και θὰ σταματήσει ὁ ἥλιος.  
Τὰ ξωτικά τῆς αὐγῆς  
φύσηξαν στὰ στεγνά κοχύλια·  
τὸ πουλὶ κελάγηδ' ἔσπευε τρεῖς φορὲς τρεῖς φορὲς μόνο·  
ἡ σαύρα πάνω στὴν ἄσπρη πέτρα  
μένει ἀκίνητη  
κοιτάζοντας τὸ φρυγμένο χόρτο  
ἐκεῖ πού γλίστρησε ἡ δοντογαλιά.  
Μαύρη φτερούγα σέρνει ἓνα βαθὺ χαράκι  
ψηλὰ στὸ θόλο τοῦ γαλάζιου—  
δέξ τον, θ' ἀνοίξει.

Ἀναστάσιμη ὠδίνη.

## ΙΔ'

Τώρα,  
μὲ τὸ λυωμένο μολύβι τοῦ κλήδονα  
τὸ λαμπύρισμα τοῦ καλοκαιρινοῦ πελάγου,  
ἡ γύμνια ὁλόκληρης τῆς ζωῆς·  
καὶ τὸ πέρασμα καὶ τὸ σταμάτημα καὶ  
τὸ πλάγιασμα καὶ τὸ τίναγμα  
τὰ χεῖλια τὸ χαϊδεμένο δέρας,  
ὅλα γυρεύουν νὰ καοῦν.

Ὅπως τὸ πεῦκο καταμεσήμερα  
κυριεμένο ἀπ' τὸ ρετσίνι  
βιάζεται νὰ γεννήσει φλόγα  
καὶ δὲ βαστᾷ πιά τὴν παιδωμὴ—

φώναξε τὰ παιδιὰ νὰ μαζέψουν τὴ στάχτη  
καὶ νὰ τὴ σπείρουν.

Ὅ,τι πέρασε πέρασε σωστά.

## 13

Soon now the sun will stop.  
 Dawn's ghosts  
 have blown into the dry shells;  
 a bird sang three times, three times only;  
 the lizard on a white stone  
 motionless  
 stares at the parched grass  
 where a tree snake slithered away.  
 A black wing makes a deep gash  
 high in the sky's blue dome—  
 look at it, you'll see it break open.

Birth-pang of resurrection.

## 14

Now  
 with the lead melted for divination,\*  
 with the brilliance of the summer sea,  
 all life's nakedness,  
 the transition and the standing still, the subsidence and the  
     upsurge,  
 the lips, the gently touched skin—  
 all are longing to burn.

As the pine tree at the stroke of noon  
 mastered by resin  
 strains to bring forth flame  
 and can't endure the pangs any longer—

summon the children to gather the ash,  
 to sow it.  
 Everything that has passed has fittingly passed.

Κι' ἐκεῖνα ἀκόμῃ ποὺ δὲν πέρασαν  
πρέπει νὰ καοῦν  
τοῦτο τὸ μεσημέρι ποὺ καρφώθηκε ὁ ἥλιος  
στὴν καρδιά τοῦ ἐκατόφυλλου ρόδου.

And even what has not yet passed  
must burn  
this noon when the sun is riveted  
to the heart of the many-petalled rose.

ΤΕΤΡΑΔΙΟ  
ΓΥΜΝΑΣΜΑΤΩΝ, Β΄

*FROM BOOKS OF EXERCISES II*

ΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΣΤΟΝ REX WARNER  
ΠΑΡΟΙΚΟ ΤΟΥ STORRS, CONNECTICUT, U.S.A.  
ΓΙΑ ΤΑ ΕΞΗΝΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΟΝΙΑ

Τὸν καιρὸ ποὺ συναντηθήκαμε  
ἔλεγες τὸ κυνήγι τῆς ἀγριόχηνας  
στὸ Δεσποτάτο τῶν ἑρμαφροδίτων·  
ἐκεῖ τὸ γήπεδο τοῦ ποδόσφαιρου  
εἶχε γνωρίσει τὴν ἀδιάντροπη σφαγή.  
Γύριζα ἀπὸ ἓνα καλλιμάρμαρο στάδιο  
ὅπου ὁ θεληματικὸς μαραθωνοδρόμος λαβωμένος  
ἔβλεπε τὴ σφενδόνη ν' ἀρμενίζει στό αἷμα.  
Ἔτσι σ' ἐνίωσα καὶ γίναμε φίλοι.

Πηγαίναμε σ' ἓναν τόπο ρημαγμένο ἀπὸ τὸν πόλεμο  
ὥς καὶ τὶς κοῦκλες τῶν παιδιῶν τὶς εἶχαν σακατέψει.  
Τὸ φῶς ταχὺ καὶ δυνατὸ  
δάγκωνε κι' ἀπολίθωνε τὰ πάντα.  
Περπατούσαμε ἀνάμεσα  
σὲ ποδήλατα καὶ χαρταετοὺς  
βλέπαμε τὰ χρώματα μὰ ἡ κουβέντα μας  
παραστρατοῦσε σ' ἐκείνη τὴν ἀνεπούλωτη φρίκη.

Πέρασαν χρόνια καὶ σὲ ξαναβρῆκα  
στὰ χώματα μὲ τὴν πλούσια βλάστηση  
ὅπου παραμονεύει κάποτε ὁ φαρμακερὸς κισσὸς  
καὶ τὰ μελετηρὰ παιδιὰ μαθαίνουν  
νὰ συλλαβίζουν τὰ σοφὰ βιβλία  
καὶ τὸ λαβύρινθο τοῦ ἔρωτα.  
Πάντα μνημόνευες τὸν Ὅμηρο καὶ τὴ γενιά του.  
Σ' ἓνα τεράστιο δέντρο ὁ σκίουρος,  
σπασμωδική περισπωμένη, σκαρφάλωνε  
ὀλοένα πιὸ ψηλὰ καὶ τὸν ἐκοίταζες  
γελώντας.

## LETTER TO REX WARNER\*

Resident of Storrs, Connecticut, U.S.A.  
On his Sixtieth Birthday

At the time we met  
you were telling the story of the wild goose chase  
in the kingdom of hermaphrodites;  
there the football field  
had witnessed barefaced slaughter.  
I was returning from a marble stadium  
where the obstinate marathon runner, wounded,  
saw the track sailing in blood.\*  
That way I sensed who you were and we became friends.

We were in a country devastated by the war—  
they'd crippled even the dolls of children.  
The light, quick and strong,  
bit into everything, turned it to stone.  
We walked among bicycles and kites,  
watched the colors, but our talk  
strayed to that festering horror.

Years went by and I found you again  
on soil lush with vegetation,  
where poison ivy sometimes lies in wait  
and studious children learn  
to unravel wise books  
and the labyrinth of love.  
You always celebrated Homer and his breed.  
A squirrel—spasmodic circumflex—  
climbed higher and higher up a giant tree  
and you watched it  
laughing.

Ζωή μας εἶναι πάντα ὁ ἀποχωρισμὸς  
κι' ἡ πιδὺ δὺσκολη παρουσία.

Τώρα σὲ ξανασυλλογίζομαι ἐδῶ  
στὴν πολυπλόκαμη μητρόπολη.  
"Ὅλα τηλεόραση  
δύσκολα ᾿γγίζεις κάτι ἀπὸ κοντά.  
Μέσα στὴ ζέστη τῆς ἡλεκτρικῆς νύχτας  
σὲ μιὰν ἀράγιστη μοναξιὰ βυθοῦ  
οἱ φωταγωγημένοι οὐρανοζύστες  
δείχνουν τὰ τζάμια τοὺς γυαλιστερά  
σὰν τὸ πετσεῖ μεγάλου κήτους  
καθὼς τινάχτηκε στὸν ἀφρό.  
Ἵ πολὺχρῶνος λαὸς ποὺ τοὺς γέμιζε  
ὁ ἄμετρος συνωστισμένος λαὸς  
ἔφυγε τέτοιαν ὥρα  
γι' ἄλλες χαρὲς καὶ γι' ἄλλα καρδιοχτύπια.  
Τοὺς ἄδειασε, δὲν ἀπόμεινε ψυχὴ  
σὰν τὶς φωλιὲς ἐκείνου τοῦ σπουργίτη  
ποὺ ἐπονομάζεται φιλέταιρος  
—Philetaerus Socius—, τὶς πολυκύτταρες·  
τὶς βλέπεις στὴν ἀγκαθερὴ ἀκακία  
ἢ στὸ μουσεῖο, ἂν τὶς γυρέψεις.  
«Λελύπημαι ἐπὶ τῇ κολοκύνθῃ»  
μουρμούριζε ὁ προφήτης Ἰωνᾶς  
κοιτάζοντας τὴ μεγάλη Νινευή.  
Τοῦτος ὁ λόγος φέρνει τὸ μυαλὸ  
σὲ ξυπνημένα ὄνειρατα ποὺ μάζεψε  
στὸ μεροκάματό του:  
Ταῦροι καὶ ἄλογα μ' ὀρθάνοιχτο στόμα  
καὶ γλώσσα ξαφνικὸ πουνιᾶλο.  
ἽΕνας ἀπόδημος Θεοτοκόπουλος ὡσὰν τὸ βάραθρο τῆς  
ἀνάστασης  
μιλώντας μιὰ λαλιά  
ἀκατάληπτη γιὰ ὅλους.

Our life is always a separation  
and a more difficult presence.

Now, in this many-tentacled city,  
I think about you once again.  
Everything's television,  
you can't touch things easily at close quarters.  
In the heat of this electric night,  
in the unbroken loneliness of the sea-floor,  
the luminous skyscrapers  
show their windows gleaming  
like the skin of a huge sea monster  
as it breaks clear of the waves.  
The many-colored people filling them,  
countless jostling people,  
were leaving at this time  
for other pleasures, other anxieties.  
They were emptied—not a soul remaining—  
like the multicelled nests of that sparrow  
called philetaerus  
—Philetaerus Socius;\*  
you find them in the thorny acacia  
or in the museum, if you look for them.  
“I grieve for the gourd”  
murmured the prophet Jonah  
gazing at the great city of Nineveh.\*  
His words turn the mind  
toward the wakeful dreams  
it gathered during its day's work:  
bulls and horses with mouths wide-open  
and tongues like sudden daggers;  
an immigrant El Greco like the pit of hell  
speaking a language  
incomprehensible to everyone;

Κι' αὐτὸς ὁ γλύπτης  
ποῦ ἔβλεπε κόκκινο τὸν οὐρανὸ  
καὶ πάλευε μὲ τὸν ἀδηφάγο χῶρο  
ποῦ γριτσάνιζε τὸ ἄγαλμα μέσα στὰ χέρια του  
μικρὸ κι' ἀκόμῃ πιὸ μικρὸ καὶ πιὸ λιγνὸ  
ὥς τὸ τίποτε.

Βουλιάζανε βαθιὰ τὰ χρόνια ποῦ τὸ παλικάρι ὁ Μεγακλῆς  
μὲ τὸ παγουράκι τοῦ ἀθλητῆ κρεμασμένο στὸ ζερβί του χέρι  
κρατώντας στὰ τρία του δάχτυλα  
ἕναν καρπὸ τῆς ροδιᾶς  
πῆγε νὰ τὸν προσφέρει τρυφερὰ  
στὴν Περσεφόνῃ.

Τώρα τὰ ἐξήντα σου καὶ δὲν μπορῶ  
νὰ σοῦ χαρίσω τίποτε  
παρὰ τοῦτο τ' ἀνώφελο τιτίβισμα.  
Ὡστόσο λέω πῶς μ' ἔζωσαν καὶ μὲ παρακινουῖν  
πυκνὸ κοπάδι τὰ φιλέταιρα σπουργίτια.

Νέα Ὑόρκη, Ν.Υ., Ἰούνιος 1965-  
Princeton, Ν.Υ., χειμῶνας 1968

and that sculptor  
who believed the sky was red  
and struggled with the voracious space  
that was devouring the sculpture in his hands:  
smaller and smaller still and thinner  
to the point of nothingness.

The years have gone by since gallant young Megacles,  
the athlete's oil flask hanging from his left arm,  
went and offered Persephone with such tenderness  
the pomegranate he was holding  
in his three fingers.

Now you are sixty  
and I can't offer you anything  
except this idle chirping.  
Still, I feel that I'm encircled and goaded on  
by a dense flock of philetaerus sparrows.

New York, N.Y., June 1965—  
Princeton, N.J., Winter 1968

## ΟΙ ΓΑΤΕΣ Τ' Α·Ι·-ΝΙΚΟΛΑ

*Τὸν δ' ἄνευ λύρας ὅμως ὕμνωδεῖ  
θρῆνον Ἑρινύος  
αὐτοδίδακτος ἔσωθεν  
θυμός, οὐ τὸ πᾶν ἔχων  
ἐλπίδος φίλον θράσος.*

*ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ, 990 ἐπ.*

«Φαίνεται ὁ Κάβο-Γάτα...», μοῦ εἶπε ὁ καπετάνιος  
δείχνοντας ἓνα χαμηλὸ γιαλὸ μέσα στὸ πούσι  
τ' ἄδειο ἀκρογιαλὶ ἀνήμερα Χριστούγεννα,  
«...καὶ κατὰ τὸν Πουνέντε ἀλάργα τὸ κύμα γέννησε  
τὴν Ἀφροδίτη·

λένε τὸν τόπο Πέτρα τοῦ Ρωμιοῦ.

Τρία καρτίνια ἀριστερά!»

Εἶχε τὰ μάτια τῆς Σαλώμης ἡ γάτα ποὺ ἔχασα τὸν  
ἄλλο χρόνο

κι' ὁ Ραμαζάν πῶς κοίταζε κατὰματα τὸ θάνατο,

μέρες ὀλόκληρες μέσα στὸ χιόνι τῆς Ἀνατολῆς

στὸν παγωμένον ἥλιο

κατὰματα μέρες ὀλόκληρες ὁ μικρὸς ἐφέστιος θεός.

Μὴ σταθεῖς ταξιδιώτη.

«Τρία καρτίνια ἀριστερά» μουρμούρισε ὁ τιμονιέρης.

...ἴσως ὁ φίλος μου νὰ κοντοστέκουνταν,

ξέμπαρκος τώρα

κλειστὸς σ' ἓνα μικρὸ σπῖτι με εἰκόνες

γυρεύοντας παράθυρα πίσω ἀπ' τὰ κάδρα.

Χτύπησε ἡ καμπάνα τοῦ караβιοῦ

σὰν τὴ μονέδα πολιτείας ποὺ χάθηκε

κι' ἦρθε νὰ ζωντανέψει πέφτοντας

ἀλλοτινὲς ἐλεημοσύνες.

## THE CATS OF SAINT NICHOLAS\*

But deep inside me sings  
the Fury's lyreless threnody;  
my heart, self-taught, has lost  
the precious confidence of hope . . .  
Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*

"That's the Cape of Cats ahead," the captain said to me,  
pointing through the mist to a low stretch of shore,  
the beach deserted; it was Christmas day—  
". . . and there, in the distance to the west, is where Aphro-  
dite rose out of the waves;  
they call the place 'Greek's Rock.'  
Left ten degrees rudder!"  
She had Salome's eyes, the cat I lost a year ago;  
and old Ramazan, how he would look death square in the  
eyes,\*  
whole days long in the snow of the East,  
under the frozen sun,  
days long square in the eyes: the young hearth god.  
Don't stop, traveler.  
"Left ten degrees rudder," muttered the helmsman.

. . . maybe my friend was close by,\*  
now between ships,  
shut up in a small house with pictures,  
searching for windows behind the frames.  
The ship's bell struck  
like a coin from some vanished city  
that brings to mind, as it falls,  
alms from another time.

«Παράξενο», ξανάειπε ὁ καπετάνιος.  
«Τούτη ἡ καμπάνα—μέρα ποῦ εἶναι—  
μοῦ θύμισε τὴν ἄλλη ἐκείνη, τὴ μοναστηρίσια.  
Διηγότανε τὴν ἱστορία ἑνας καλόγερος  
ἕνας μισότρελος, ἕνας ὄνειροπόλος.

»Τὸν καιρὸ τῆς μεγάλης στέγνιας,  
—σαράντα χρόνια ἀναβροχιά—  
ρηνάχτηκε ὅλο τὸ νησί·  
πέθαινε ὁ κόσμος καὶ γεννιοῦνταν φίδια.  
Μιλιούνια φίδια τοῦτο τ' ἀκρωτήρι,  
χοντρά σὰν τὸ ποδᾶρι ἀνθρώπου  
καὶ φαρμακερά.  
Τὸ μοναστήρι τ' Ἀι-Νικόλα τό εἶχαν τότε  
Ἀγιοβασιλεῖτες καλογέροι  
κι' οὔτε μποροῦσαν νὰ δουλέψουν τὰ χωράφια  
κι' οὔτε νὰ βγάλουν τὰ κοπάδια στὴ βοσκή·  
τοὺς ἔσωσαν οἱ γάτες ποὺ ἀναθρέφαν.  
Τὴν κάθε αὐγὴ χτυποῦσε μιὰ καμπάνα  
καὶ ξεκινοῦσαν τσοῦρμο γιὰ τὴ μάχη.  
"Ὅλη μέρα χτυπιοῦνταν ὥς τὴν ὥρα  
ποὺ σήμαιναν τὸ βραδινὸ ταγίνι.  
'Απόδειπνα πάλι ἡ καμπάνα  
καὶ βγαῖναν γιὰ τὸν πόλεμο τῆς νύχτας.  
"Ἦτανε θαῦμα νὰ τίς βλέπεις, λένε,  
ἄλλη κουτσή, κι' ἄλλη στραβή, τὴν ἄλλη  
χωρὶς μύτη, χωρὶς αὐτί, προβιά κουρέλι.  
"Ἔτσι μὲ τέσσερεις καμπάνες τὴν ἡμέρα  
πέρασαν μῆνες, χρόνια, καιροὶ κι ἄλλοι καιροί.  
"Αγρια πεισματικὲς καὶ πάντα λαβωμένες  
ξολόθρεψαν τὰ φίδια μὰ στὸ τέλος  
χαθῆκανε· δὲν ἄντεξαν τόσο φαρμάκι.

“It’s strange,” the captain said.  
“That bell—given what day it is—  
reminded me of another, the monastery bell.  
A monk told me the story,  
a half-mad monk, a kind of dreamer.

“It was during the great drought,  
forty years without rain,  
the whole island devastated,  
people died and snakes were born.  
This cape had millions of snakes  
thick as a man’s legs  
and full of poison.  
In those days the monastery of St. Nicholas  
was held by the monks of St. Basil,  
and they couldn’t work their fields,  
couldn’t put their flocks to pasture.  
In the end they were saved by the cats they raised.  
Every day at dawn a bell would strike  
and an army of cats would move into battle.  
They’d fight the day long,  
until the bell sounded for the evening feed.  
Supper done, the bell would sound again  
and out they’d go to battle through the night.  
They say it was a marvelous sight to see them,  
some lame, some twisted, others missing  
a nose, an ear, their hides in shreds.  
So to the sound of four bells a day  
months went by, years, season after season.  
Wildly obstinate, always wounded,  
they annihilated the snakes; but in the end they disappeared;  
they just couldn’t take in that much poison.

Ὡσὰν καράβι καταποντισμένο  
τίποτε δὲν ἀφῆσαν στὸν ἀφρὸ  
μήτε νιαούρισμα, μήτε καμπάνα.  
Γραμμή!

Τί νὰ σοῦ κάνουν οἱ ταλαίπωρες  
παλεύοντας καὶ πίνοντας μέρα καὶ νύχτα  
τὸ αἷμα τὸ φαρμακερὸ τῶν ἐρπετῶν.  
Αἰῶνες φαρμάκι· γενιὲς φαρμάκι».  
«Γραμμή!» ἀντιλάλησε ἀδιάφορος ὁ τιμονιέρης.

Τετάρτη, 5 Φεβρουαρίου 1969

Like a sunken ship  
they left no trace on the surface:  
not a meow, not a bell even.  
Steady as you go!  
Poor devils, what could they do,  
fighting like that day and night, drinking  
*the poisonous blood of those snakes?*  
Generations of poison, centuries of poison.”  
“Steady as you go,” indifferently echoed the helmsman.

Wednesday, 5 February, 1969

## «ΕΠΙ ΑΣΠΑΛΑΘΩΝ...»

Ήταν ώραῖο τὸ Σούνιο τῇ μέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ τοῦ Εὐαγγελισμοῦ  
πάλι μὲ τὴν ἄνοιξη.

Λιγοστὰ πράσινα φύλλα γύρω στὶς σκουριασμένες πέτρες  
τὸ κόκκινο χῶμα κι' ἀσπάλαθοι

δείχνοντας ἔτοιμα τὰ μεγάλα τους βελόνια  
καὶ τοὺς κίτρινους ἀνθούς.

Ἀπόμακτρα οἱ ἀρχαῖες κολόνες, χορδῆς μιᾶς ἄρπας ἀντη-  
χοῦν ἀκόμῃ...

Γαλήνη.

—Τί μπορεῖ νὰ μοῦ θύμιση τὸν Ἀρδιαῖο ἐκεῖνον;

Μιὰ λέξη στὸν Πλάτωνα θαρρῶ, χαμένη στοῦ μυαλοῦ τ'  
αὐλάκια·

τ' ὄνομα τοῦ κίτρινου θάμνου

δὲν ἀλλάξε ἀπὸ ἐκείνους τοὺς καιρούς.

Τὸ βράδυ βρῆκα τὴν περικοπή:

«Τὸν ἔδεσαν χειροπόδαρα» μᾶς λέει

«τὸν ἔριξαν χάμω καὶ τὸν ἔγδαραν

τὸν ἔσυραν παράμερα τὸν καταξέσκισαν

ἀπάνω στοὺς ἀγκαθεροὺς ἀσπάλαθους

καὶ πῆγαν καὶ τὸν πέταξαν στὸν Τάρταρο, κουρέλι».

Ἔτσι στὸν κάτω κόσμῳ πλέρωνε τὰ κρίματά του

ὁ Παμφύλιος Ἀρδιαῖος ὁ πανάθλιος Τύραννος.

31 τοῦ Μάρτη 1971

“ON ASPALATHOI . . .”\*

Sounion was lovely that spring day—  
the Feast of the Annunciation.  
Sparse green leaves around rust-colored stone,  
red earth, and aspalathoi  
with their huge thorns and their yellow flowers  
already out.  
In the distance the ancient columns, strings of a harp still  
vibrating . . .

Peace.

What could have made me think of Ardiaios?  
Possibly a word in Plato, buried in the mind's furrows:  
the name of the yellow bush  
hasn't changed since his time.  
That evening I found the passage:  
“They bound him hand and foot,” it says,  
“they flung him down and flayed him,  
they dragged him along  
gashing his flesh on thorny aspalathoi,  
and they went and threw him into Tartarus, torn to shreds.”

In this way Ardiaos, the terrible Pamphylian tyrant,  
paid for his crimes in the nether world.

31 March 1971



RHYMED POEMS  
(1924-1953)\*

## ΣΤΡΟΦΗ

Σὴν χάριν

## TURNING POINT

*Σὴν χάρι*

## ΚΟΧΥΛΙΑ, ΣΥΝΝΕΦΑ

*Μὰ ὅλα γιὰ μένα σφάλασι καὶ πάσιν ἄνω κάτω,  
γιὰ μὲ ξαναγεννήθηκεν ἡ φύσις τῶν πραγμάτων.*

Ο ΕΡΩΤΟΚΡΙΤΟΣ

## SHELLS, CLOUDS

*But everything went wrong for me and upside down,  
the nature of things was reborn for me.*

*THE EROKOKRITOS\**

## ΣΤΡΟΦΗ

Στιγμή, σταλμένη από ένα χέρι  
πού είχα τόσο αγαπήσει  
μέ πρόφταξες ίσια στη δύση  
σά μαῦρο περιστέρι.

Ὁ δρόμος ἄσπριζε μπροστά μου,  
ἀπαλὸς ἄχνος ὕπνου  
στο γέρμα ἑνὸς μυστικοῦ δείπνου..  
Στιγμή σπυρὶ τῆς ἄμμου,

πού κράτησες μονάχη σου ὅλη  
τὴν τραγικὴ κλεψύδρα  
βουβή, σὰ νὰ εἶχε δεῖ τὴν Ὑδρα  
στο οὐράνιο περιβόλι.

## TURNING POINT

Moment, sent by a hand  
I had loved so much,  
you reached me just at sunset  
like a black pigeon.

The road whitened before me,  
soft breath of sleep  
at the close of a last supper . . .  
Moment, grain of sand,

alone you kept the whole  
tragic clepsydra dumb,  
as though it had seen the Hydra\*  
in the heavenly garden.

## ΑΡΓΑ ΜΙΛΟΥΣΕΣ

Ἄργα μιλοῦσες μπρὸς στὸν ἥλιο  
καὶ τώρα εἶναι σκοτάδι  
κι' εἴσουν τῆς μοίρας μου τὸ ὕφάδι  
σύ, ποῦ θὰ λέγαν Μπίλιω.

Πέντε στιγμές· καὶ τί ἔχει γίνει  
γύρω στὴν οἰκουμένη ;  
Μιά ἄγραφτη ἀγάπη ξεγραμμένη  
κι' ἓνα στεγνὸ λαγὴνι

κι' εἶναι σκοτάδι... Ποῦ εἶναι ὁ τόπος  
κι' ἡ γύμνια σου ὥς τὴ μέση,  
θεέ μου, κι' ἡ πιὸ ἀκριβὴ μου θέση  
καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς σου ὁ τρόπος !

## SLOWLY YOU SPOKE

Slowly you spoke before the sun  
and now it's dark  
and you were my fate's woof  
you, whom they'd call Billio.

Five seconds; and what's happened  
in the wide world?  
An unwritten love rubbed out  
and a dry pitcher

and it's dark . . . Where is the place  
and your nakedness to the waist,  
my God, and my favorite spot  
and the style of your soul!

## Η ΛΥΠΗΜΕΝΗ

Στὴν πέτρα τῆς ὑπομονῆς  
κάθησες πρὸς τὸ βράδι  
μὲ τοῦ ματιοῦ σου τὸ μαυράδι  
δείχνοντας πὼς πονεῖς·

κι' εἶχες στὰ χεῖλια τὴ γραμμὴ  
ποὺ εἶναι γυμνὴ καὶ τρέμει  
σὰν ἡ ψυχὴ γίνεται ἀνέμη  
καὶ δέονται οἱ λυγμοί·

κι' εἶχες στὸ νοῦ σου τὸ σκοπὸ  
ποὺ ξεκινᾷ τὸ δάκρυ  
κι' εἴσουν κορμὶ ποὺ ἀπὸ τὴν ἄκρη  
γυρίζει στὸν καρπὸ·

μὰ τῆς καρδιᾶς σου ὁ σπαραγμὸς  
δὲ βόγγηξε κι' ἐγίνη  
τὸ νόημα ποὺ στὸν κόσμον δίνει  
ἕναστρος οὐρανός.

## THE SORROWING GIRL

On the stone of patience  
you sat at nightfall,  
the black of your eye  
revealing your pain;

on your lips the line  
that's naked and trembles  
when the soul spins  
and sobs plead;

in your mind the motive  
that starts tears  
and you were a body that from the verge  
returns to fruitfulness;

but your heart's anguish  
didn't cry out, became  
what gives the world  
a starfilled sky.

## ΑΥΤΟΚΙΝΗΤΟ

Στή δημοσιὰ σὰν ἀγκαλιὰ  
δίκλωνη ἐνὸς διαβήτη,  
τοῦ ἀγέρα δάχτυλα στή χήτη  
καὶ μίλια στήν κοιλιά,

οἱ δύο μας φεύγαμε ἀδειανοὶ  
βιτσιὰ γιὰ τὸ ἥπιο βλέμμα·  
φτιασίδι ὁ νοῦς, φτιασίδι τὸ αἷμα  
γυμνοί ! γυμνοί ! γυμνοί !

... Σ' ἓνα κρεβάτι μ' ἀψηλὸ  
κι' ἀλαφρὸν προσκεφάλι  
πῶς ξεγλιστροῦσε ἀλάργα ἡ ζάλη  
σὰν ψάρι στὸ γιαιλό...

Στή δίκλωνη τὴ δημοσιὰ  
φεύγαμε κορμιὰ μόνο  
μὲ τὶς καρδιές στὸν κάθε κλῶνο  
χώρια, ζερβὰ-δεξιά.

## AUTOMOBILE

On the highway like the forked embrace  
of a pair of compasses,  
fingers of wind in the hair  
and miles in the belly,

the two of us were leaving, empty,  
whiplash for the mild gaze;  
the mind make-up, the blood make-up  
naked, naked, naked!

*. . . On a bed, the pillow  
high and light,  
how the dizziness slipped away  
like a fish in the sea . . .*

On the two-branched highway  
we were leaving, bodies only,  
with our hearts on each branch  
separate, one right, one left.

## ΑΡΝΗΣΗ

Στὸ περιγιάλι τὸ κρυφὸ  
κι' ἄσπρο σὰν περιστέρι  
διψάσαμε τὸ μεσημέρι·  
μὰ τὸ νερὸ γλυφό.

Πάνω στὴν ἄμμο τὴν ξανθὴ  
γράψαμε τ' ὄνομά της·  
ώραῖα ποὺ φύσηξεν ὁ μπάτης  
καὶ σβήστηκε ἡ γραφή.

Μὲ τί καρδιά, μὲ τί πνοή,  
τί πόθους καὶ τί πάθος  
πήραμε τὴ ζωὴ μας· λάθος!  
κι' ἀλλάξαμε ζωή.

## DENIAL

On the secret seashore  
white like a pigeon  
we thirsted at noon:  
but the water was brackish.

On the golden sand  
we wrote her name;  
but the sea-breeze blew  
and the writing vanished.

With what spirit, what heart,  
what desire and passion  
we lived our life: a mistake!  
So we changed our life.

## ΟΙ ΣΥΝΤΡΟΦΟΙ ΣΤΟΝ ΑΔΗ

*νήπιοι, οἳ κατὰ βοῦς Ὑπερίονος Ἡελίοιο  
ἥσθιον· αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἥμαρ.*

### ΟΔΥΣΣΕΙΑ

Ἄφοῦ μᾶς μέναν παξιμάδια  
τί κακοκεφαλιά  
νὰ φᾶμε στήν ἀκρογιαλιά  
τοῦ Ἥλιου τ' ἀργὰ γελάδια

πού τὸ καθένα κι' ἓνα κάστρο  
γιὰ νὰ τὸ πολεμᾶς  
σαράντα χρόνους καὶ νὰ πᾶς  
νὰ γίνεις ἥρωας κι' ἄστρο!

Πεινούσαμε στῆς γῆς τὴν πλάτη,  
σὰ φάγαμε καλὰ  
πέσαμε ἐδῶ στὰ χαμηλὰ  
ἀνίδεοι καὶ χορτάτοι.

## THE COMPANIONS IN HADES

*fools, who ate the cattle of Helios Hyperion;  
but he deprived them of the day of their return.*

ODYSSEY\*

Since we still had some hardtack  
how stupid of us  
to go ashore and eat  
the Sun's slow cattle,

for each was a castle  
you'd have to battle  
forty years, till you'd become  
a hero and a star!

On the earth's back we hungered,  
but when we'd eaten well  
we fell to these lower regions  
mindless and satisfied.

## F O G

*Say it with a ukulele*

«Πές της το μ' ένα γιουκαλίλι...»  
γρινιάζει κάποιος φωνογράφος·  
πές μου τί νά τῆς πῶ, Χριστέ μου,  
τώρα συνήθισα μονάχος.

Μὲ φουσαρμόνικες ποὺ σφίγγουν  
φτωχοὶ μὴ βρέξει καὶ μὴ στάξει  
ὅλο καὶ κράζουν τοὺς ἀγγέλους  
κι' εἶναι οἱ ἀγγέλοι τους μαράζι.

Κι' οἱ ἀγγέλοι ἀνοίξαν τὰ φτερά τους  
μὰ χάμω χνώτισαν ὁμίχλες  
δόξα σοι ὁ θεός, ἀλλιῶς θὰ πιάναν  
τὶς φτωχιές μας ψυχές σὰν τσίχλες.

Κι' εἶναι ἡ ζωὴ ψυχρὴ φαρίσια  
—'Ετσι ζεῖς; — Ναί! Τί θές νὰ κάνω·  
τόσοι καὶ τόσοι εἶναι οἱ πνιμένοι  
κάτω στῆς θάλασσας τὸν πάτο.

Τὰ δέντρα μοιάζουν μὲ κοράλλια  
ποὺ κάπου ξέχασαν τὸ χρῶμα  
τὰ κára μοιάζουν μὲ καράβια  
ποὺ βούλιαξαν καὶ μείναν μόνα...

## FOG

*Say it with a ukulele\**

“Say it with a ukulele. . .”  
grumbles some gramophone;  
Christ, tell me what to say to her  
now that I’m used to my loneliness?

With accordions squeezed  
by well-dressed beggars  
they call on the angels  
and their angels are hell.

And the angels opened their wings  
but, below, the mists condensed,  
thank God, for otherwise they’d catch  
our poor souls like thrushes.

And life’s cold as a fish  
—Is that how you live?—Yes, how else?  
So many are the drowned  
down on the sea’s bed.

Trees are like corals  
their color gone,  
carts are like ships  
sunken and lonely. . .

«Πές της το μ' ἓνα γιουκαλίλι...»  
Λόγια γιὰ λόγια, κι' ἄλλα λόγια;  
Ἀγάπη, ποῦ 'ναι ἡ ἐκκλησιά σου  
βαρέθηκα πιά στὰ μετόχια.

Ἄ! νά 'ταν ἡ ζωὴ μας ἴσια  
πῶς θὰ τὴν παίρναμε κατόπι  
μ' ἄλλιῶς ἡ μοίρα τὸ βουλήθη  
πρέπει νὰ στρίψεις σὲ μιὰ κόχη.

Καὶ ποιὰ εἶν' ἡ κόχη; Ποιὸς τὴν ξέρει;  
Τὰ φῶτα φέγγουνε τὰ φῶτα  
ἄχνα! δὲ μᾶς μιλοῦν οἱ πάχνες  
κι' ἔχουμε τὴν ψυχὴ στὰ δόντια.

Τάχα παρηγοριὰ θὰ βροῦμε;  
Ἡ μέρα φόρεσε τὴ νύχτα  
ὅλα εἶναι νύχτα, ὅλα εἶναι νύχτα  
κάτι θὰ βροῦμε ζήτα - ζήτα...

«Πές της το μ' ἓνα γιουκαλίλι...»  
Βλέπω τὰ κόκκινά της νύχια  
μπρὸς στὴ φωτιά πῶς θὰ γυαλίζουν  
καὶ τὴ θυμᾶμαι μὲ τὸ βήχα.

Λονδίνο, Χριστούγεννα 1924

“Say it with a ukulele. . .”  
Words for words, and more words?  
Love, where’s your church,  
I’m tired of this hermitage.

Ah, were life but straight  
how we’d live it then!  
But it’s fated otherwise,  
you have to turn in a small corner.

And what corner is it? Who knows?  
Lights shine on lights  
pallidly, the hoarfrosts are dumb,  
and our soul’s in our teeth.

Will we find consolation?  
Day put on night—  
everything is night, everything is night—  
we’ll find something, if we search. . .

“Say it with a ukulele. . .”  
I see her red nails—  
how they must glow in firelight—  
and I remember her with her cough.

London, Christmas 1924

## ΤΟ ΥΦΟΣ ΜΙΑΣ ΜΕΡΑΣ

*We plainly saw that not a soul lived in that fated vessel !*

EDGAR ALLAN POE

Τὸ ὕφος μιᾶς μέρας ποὺ ζήσαμε πρὶν δέκα χρόνια σὲ ξένο  
τόπο  
ὁ αἰθέρας μιᾶς παμπάλαιης στιγμῆς ποὺ φτερούγισε κι' ἐχά-  
θη σὰν ἄγγελος Κυρίου  
ἡ φωνὴ μιᾶς γυναίκας λησμονημένης μὲ τόση φρόνηση καὶ  
μὲ τόσο κόπο·  
ἓνα τέλος ἀπαρηγόρητο, μαρμαρωμένο βασίλειμα κάποιου  
Σεπτεμβρίου.

Καινούργια σπίτια σκονισμένες κλινικὲς ἐξανθηματικὰ πα-  
ράθυρα φερετροποιεῖα...  
Συλλογίστηκε κανένας τί ὑποφέρει ἓνας εὐαίσθητος φαρμα-  
κοποιὸς ποὺ διανυχτερεύει ;  
Ἀκαταστασία στὴν κάμαρα : συρτάρια παράθυρα πόρτες  
ἀνοίγουν τὸ στόμα τους σὰν ἄγρια θηρία·  
ἓνας ἀπαυδισμένος ἄνθρωπος ρίχνει τὰ χαρτιὰ ψάχνει  
ἀστρονομίζεται γυρεύει.

Στενοχωριέται : ἂ χτυπήσουν τὴν πόρτα ποιοὺς θ' ἀνοίξει ;  
Ἄν ἀνοίξει βιβλίον ποιὸν θὰ κοιτάξει ; Ἄν ἀνοίξει τὴν  
ψυχὴν τοῦ ποιοὺς θὰ κοιτάξει ; Ἀλυσίδα.  
Ποῦ ἔναι ἡ ἀγάπη ποὺ κόβει τὸν καιρὸ μονοκόμματα στὰ  
δυὸ καὶ τὸν ἀποσβολώνει ;

## THE MOOD OF A DAY

*We plainly saw that not a soul lived in that fated vessel!*

EDGAR ALLAN POE\*

The mood of a day that we lived ten years ago in a foreign  
country  
the airy spirit of an ancient moment that took on wings  
and vanished like an angel of the Lord  
the voice of a woman forgotten with such care and such pain  
an end inconsolable, the marble setting of some September.

New houses dusty clinics exanthematic windows coffin-  
shops . . .

Has anyone considered the suffering of a sensitive  
pharmacist on night duty?

The room in a mess: drawers windows doors open their  
mouths like wild animals;

a tired man lays out the cards, searches, astrologizes,  
scrutinizes.

He worries: if they knock at the door who will open it? If  
he opens a book whom will he look at? If he opens his  
soul who will look? Chain.

Where is love that with one stroke cuts time in two and  
stuns it?

Λόγια μονάχα καὶ χειρονομίες. Μονότροπος μονόλογος  
μπροστὰ σ' ἓναν κηθρέφτη κάτω ἀπὸ μιὰ ρυτίδα.  
Σὰ μιὰ στάλα μελάνι σὲ μαντήλι ἢ πλήξη ἀπλώνει.

Πέθαναν ὅλοι μέσα στὸ καράβι, μὰ τὸ καράβι ἀκολουθαί  
τὸ στοχασμὸ τοῦ ποῦ ἄρχισε σὰν ἄνοιξε ἀπὸ τὸ λιμάνι  
πῶς μεγαλώσαν τὰ νύχια τοῦ καπετάνιου... κι' ὁ ναύκληρος  
ἄξούριστος ποῦ 'χε τρεῖς ἐρωμένες σὲ κάθε σκάλα...  
'Η θάλασσα φουσκώνει ἄργά, τ' ἄρμενα καμαρώνουν κι'  
ἡ μέρα πᾶει νὰ γλυκάνει.  
Τρία δελφίνια μαυρολογοῦν γυαλίζοντας, χαμογελᾷ ἡ γορ-  
γόνα, κι' ἓνας ναύτης γνέφει ξεχασμένος στὴ γάμπια  
καβάλα.

Words only and gestures. A monotonous monologue in  
front of a mirror under a wrinkle.

Like a drop of ink on a handkerchief, the boredom spreads.

Everyone in the ship is dead, but the ship keeps going the  
way it was heading when it put out from the harbor  
how the captain's nails grew . . . and the boatswain, who  
had three mistresses in every port, unshaven . . .

The sea swells slowly, the rigging fills with pride, and the  
day is turning mild.

Three dolphins flash black, glistening; the mermaid smiles,  
and a forgotten sailor waves astride the yardarm.

## ΡΟΥΚΕΤΑ

Δέν εἶναι οὔτε ἡ θάλασσα  
δέν εἶναι οὔτε ὁ κόσμος  
τὸ γαλάζιο αὐτὸ φῶς  
στὰ δάχτυλά μας

κάτω ἀπὸ τὰ βλέφαρα  
χίλιες ἀντένες  
ψάχνουν ζαλισμένες  
τὸν οὐρανὸ

κόκκινο γαρούφαλο  
μοναχὸ στὴ γλάστρα  
στάθηκες σὰν ἔγραφα  
μπρὸς μου σὰν ἀγάπη

εἶταν μιὰ ἐλαφίνα  
κίτρινη σὰ θειάφι  
κι' εἶταν ἓνας πύργος  
ἀπὸ χρυσάφι

μέτρησαν τὰ χρόνια τους  
πέντε κοράκια  
μάλωσαν καὶ σκόρπισαν  
σὰν πεντάλφα

## ROCKET

It isn't the sea  
it isn't the world  
this blue light  
on our fingers

under the eyelids  
a thousand antennae  
grope giddily  
to find the sky

red carnation  
alone in your vase  
as I wrote you stood  
before me like love

there was a deer  
yellow as sulphur  
there was a tower  
built of gold

five crows  
counted their years  
quarrelled and scattered  
like a pentacle

τὰ μαλλιά τῆς ὁμορφης  
τ' ἄσπρισαν τὰ κρίνα  
στὸ κορμὶ τῆς ὁμορφης  
ἔγραψα βιβλία.

Δὲν μπορῶ νὰ ζῶ  
ὅλο μὲ παγόνια  
μήτε νὰ ταξιδεύω μερόνυχτα  
μέσα στὰ μάτια τῆς γοργόνας.

lilies whitened  
the beloved's hair  
on the beloved's body  
I wrote whole books.

I can't live  
only with peacocks,  
nor travel always  
in the mermaid's eyes.

## PIMA

Χείλια, φρουροὶ τῆς ἀγάπης μου ποὺ εἴταν νὰ σβήσει  
χέρια, δεσμὰ τῆς νιότης μου ποὺ εἴταν νὰ φύγει  
χρῶμα προσώπου χαμένου κάπου στὴ φύση  
δέντρα.. πουλιά.. κυνήγι..

Κορμί, μαῦρο μὲς στὸ λιοπύρι σὰν τὸ σταφύλι  
κορμὶ πλούσιο καράβι μου, ποῦ ταξιδεύεις;  
Εἶναι ἡ ὥρα ποὺ πνίγεται τὸ δεῖλι  
καὶ κουράζομαι ψάχνοντας τὰ ἐρέβη...

(Ἡ ζωὴ μας κάθε μέρα λιγοστεύει).

## RHYME

Lips, guardians of my love that was to fade  
hands, bonds of my youth that was to go  
color of a face lost in nature somewhere  
trees . . . birds . . . hunting . . .

Body, black in the sun's heat like a grape  
body, my rich ship, where are you traveling?  
It's the hour when twilight drowns  
and I tire searching the darkness . . .

(Our life shrinks every day).

## ΕΡΩΤΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ

*Ἔστι δὲ φύλον ἐν ἀνθρώποισι ματαιότατον,  
δοτις αἰσχύνων ἐπιχώρια παπταίνει τὰ πόρσω,  
μεταμόνια θηρεύων ἀκράντοις ἐλπίσιν.*

ΠΙΝΔΑΡΟΣ

## EROTIKOS LOGOS

*There is a most vain class among men which,  
despising ordinary things, fixes its eyes on  
distant things, pursuing empty air with idle  
hopes . . .*

PINDAR\*

## Α'

Ρόδο τῆς μοίρας, γύρευες νὰ βρεῖς νὰ μᾶς πληγώσεις  
μὰ ἔσκυβες σὰν τὸ μυστικὸ ποὺ πάει νὰ λυτρωθεῖ  
κι' εἴταν ὥραϊο τὸ πρόσταγμα ποὺ δέχτηκες νὰ δώσεις  
κι' εἴταν τὸ χαμογέλιο σου σὰν ἔτοιμο σπαθί.

Τοῦ κύκλου σου τὸ ἀνέβασμα ζωντάνευε τὴ χτίση  
ἀπὸ τ' ἀγκάθι σου ἔφευγε τοῦ δρόμου ὁ στοχασμὸς  
ἡ ὁρμή μας γλυκοχάραζε γυμνὴ νὰ σ' ἀποχτήσει  
ὁ κόσμος εἴταν εὐκολὸς ἕνας ἀπλὸς παλμός.

## Β'

Τὰ μυστικὰ τῆς θάλασσας ξεχνιοῦνται στ' ἀκρογιάλια  
ἡ σκοτεινάγρα τοῦ βυθοῦ ξεχνιέται στὸν ἀφρό·  
λάμπουνε ξάφνου πορφυρὰ τῆς μνήμης τὰ κοράλλια..  
ὦ μὴν ταράξεις.. πρόσεξε ν' ἀκούσεις τ' ἀλαφρὸ

ξεκίνημά της... τ' ἄγγιζες τὸ δέντρο μὲ τὰ μῆλα  
τὸ χέρι ἀπλώθη κι' ἡ κλωστή δείχνει καὶ σὲ ὁδηγεῖ..  
ὦ σκοτεινὸ ἀνατρίχιασμα στὴ ρίζα καὶ στὰ φύλλα  
νά 'σουν ἐσὺ ποὺ θά 'φερνες τὴν ξεχασμένη αὐγή!

## I

Rose of fate, you looked for ways to wound us  
yet you bent like the secret about to be released  
and the command you chose to give us was beautiful  
and your smile was like a ready sword.

The ascent of your cycle livened creation  
from your thorn emerged the way's thought  
our impulse dawned naked to possess you  
the world was easy: a simple pulsation.

## II

The secrets of the sea are forgotten on the shores  
the darkness of the depths is forgotten in the surf;  
the corals of memory suddenly shine purple . . .  
O do not stir . . . listen to hear its light  
motion . . . you touched the tree with the apples  
the hand reached out, the thread points the way and guides  
you . . .  
O dark shivering in the roots and the leaves  
if it were but you who would bring the forgotten dawn!

Στὸν κάμπο τοῦ ἀποχωρισμοῦ νὰ ξανανθίζουν κρίνα  
μέρες ν' ἀνοίγουνται ὠριμες, οἱ ἀγκάλες τ' οὐρανοῦ  
νὰ φέγγουν στὸ ἀντηλάρισμα τὰ μάτια μόνο ἐκεῖνα  
ἀγνή ἢ ψυχὴ νὰ γράφεται σὰν τὸ τραγούδι αὐλοῦ..

Ἡ νύχτα νὰ 'ταν ποὺ ἔκλεισε τὰ μάτια ; Μένει ἀθάλη,  
σὰν ἀπὸ δοξαριοῦ νευρὰ μένει πνιχτὸ βουητό,  
μιὰ στάχτη κι' ἓνας ἱλιγγος στὸ μαῦρο γυρογιάλι  
κι' ἓνα πυκνὸ φτερούγισμα στὴν εἰκασία κλειστό.

Ρόδο τοῦ ἀνέμου, γνώριζες μὰ ἀνέγνωρους μᾶς πῆρες  
τὴν ὥρα ποὺ θεμέλιωνε γιοφύρια ὁ λογισμὸς  
νὰ πλέξουνε τὰ δάχτυλα καὶ νὰ διαβοῦν δυὸ μοῖρες  
καὶ νὰ χυθοῦν στὸ χαμηλὸ κι' ἀναπαμένο φῶς.

### Γ'

Ὡ σκοτεινὸ ἀνατρίχιασμα στὴ ρίζα καὶ στὰ φύλλα !  
Πρόβαλε ἀνάστημα ἄγρυπνο στὸ πλῆθος τῆς σιωπῆς  
σῆκωσε τὸ κεφάλι ἀπὸ τὰ χέρια τὰ καμπύλα  
τὸ θέλημά σου νὰ γενεῖ καὶ νὰ μοῦ ξαναπεῖς

τὰ λόγια ποὺ ἄγγιζαν καὶ σμίγαν τὸ αἷμα σὰν ἀγκάλη·  
κι' ἄς γεῖρει ὁ πόθος σου βαθὺς σὰν ἴσκιος καρυδιᾶς  
καὶ νὰ μᾶς πλημμυράει μὲ τῶν μαλλιῶν σου τὴ σπατάλη  
ἀπὸ τὸ χνούδι τοῦ φιλιοῦ στὰ φύλλα τῆς καρδιᾶς.

May lilies blossom again on the meadow of separation  
may days open mature, the embrace of the heavens,\*  
may those eyes alone shine in the glare  
the pure soul be outlined like the song of a flute.

Was it night that shut its eyes? Ashes remain,  
as from the string of a bow a choked hum remains,  
ash and dizziness on the black shore  
and dense fluttering imprisoned in surmise.

Rose of the wind, you knew but took us unknowing  
at a time when thought was building bridges  
so that fingers would knit and two fates pass by  
and spill into the low and rested light.

### III

O dark shivering in the roots and the leaves!  
Come forth sleepless form in the gathering silence  
raise your head from your cupped hands  
so that your will be done and you tell me again

the words that touched and merged with the blood like an  
embrace;  
and let your desire, deep like the shade of a walnut tree,  
bend  
and flood us with your lavish hair  
from the down of the kiss to the leaves of the heart.

Χαμήλωναν τὰ μάτια σου κι' εἶχες τὸ χαμογέλιο  
ποὺ ἀνιστορούσαν ταπεινὰ ζωγράφοι ἄλλοτινοί.  
Λησμονημένο ἀνάγνωσμα σ' ἓνα παλιὸ εὐαγγέλιο  
τὸ μίλημά σου ἀνάσαινε κι' ἡ ἀνάλαφρη φωνή:

«Εἶναι τὸ πέρασμα τοῦ χρόνου σιγαλὸ κι' ἀπόκοσμο  
κι' ὁ πόνος ἀπαλὰ μὲς στὴν ψυχὴ μου λάμνει  
χαράζει ἡ αὐγὴ τὸν οὐρανό, τ' ὄνειρο μένει ἀπόντιστο  
κι' εἶναι σὰ νὰ διαβαίνουν μυρωμένοι θάμνοι.

Μὲ τοῦ ματιοῦ τ' ἀλάφιασμα, μὲ τοῦ κορμιοῦ τὸ ρόδισμα  
ξυπνοῦν καὶ κατεβαίνουν σμάρι περιστέρια  
μὲ περιπλέκει χαμηλὸ τὸ κυκλωτὸ φτερούγισμα  
ἀνθρώπινο ἄγγιγμα στὸν κόρφο μου τ' ἀστέρια.

Τὴν ἀκοή μου ὡς νὰ 'σμιξε κοχύλι βουίζει ὁ ἀντίδικος  
μακρινὸς κι' ἀξεδιάλυτος τοῦ κόσμου ὁ θρῆνος  
μὰ εἶναι στιγμὲς καὶ σβήνουνται καὶ βασιλεύει δίκλωνος  
ὁ λογισμὸς τοῦ πόθου μου, μόνος ἐκεῖνος.

Λὲς κι' εἶχα ἀναστηθεῖ γυμνὴ σὲ μιὰ παρμένη θύμηση  
σὰν ἥρθες γνώριμος καὶ ξένος, ἀκριβέ μου  
νὰ μοῦ χαρίσεις γέροντας τὴν ἀπέραντη λύτρωση  
ποὺ γύρευα ἀπὸ τὰ γοργὰ σείστρα τοῦ ἀνέμου...»

Τὸ ραγισμένο ἡλιόγερμα λιγότεψε κι' ἐχάθη  
κι' ἔμοιαζε πλάνη νὰ ζητᾷς τὰ δῶρα τ' οὐρανοῦ.  
Χαμήλωναν τὰ μάτια σου. Τοῦ φεγγαριοῦ τ' ἀγκάθι  
βλάστησε καὶ φοβήθηκες τοὺς ἴσκιους τοῦ βουνοῦ.

You lowered your eyes and you had the smile  
that masters of another time humbly painted.  
Forgotten reading from an ancient gospel,  
your words breathed and your voice was gentle:

“The passing of time is soft and unworldly  
and pain floats lightly in my soul  
dawn breaks in the heavens, the dream remains afloat  
and it’s as if scented shrubs were passing.

“With my eyes’ startling, with my body’s blush  
a flock of doves awakens and descends  
their low, circling flight entangles me  
the stars are a human touch on my breast.

“I hear, as in a sea shell, the distant  
adverse and confused lament of the world  
but these are moments only, they disappear,  
and the two-branched thought of my desire reigns alone.

“It seemed I’d risen naked in a vanished recollection  
when you came, strange and familiar, my beloved  
to grant me, bending, the boundless deliverance  
I was seeking from the wind’s quick sistrum . . .”

The broken sunset declined and was gone  
and it seemed a delusion to ask for the gifts of the sky.  
You lowered your eyes. The moon’s thorn blossomed  
and you became afraid of the mountain’s shadows.

..Μὲς στὸν καθρέφτη ἡ ἀγάπη μας, πῶς πάει καὶ λιγοστεύει  
μέσα στὸν ὕπνο τὰ ὄνειρα, σκολεῖδ' τῆς λησμονιᾶς  
μέσα στὰ βάθη τοῦ καιροῦ, πῶς ἡ καρδιά στενεύει  
καὶ χάνεται στὸ λίκνισμα μιᾶς ξένης ἀγκαλιᾶς..

## Δ'

Δυὸ φίδια ὠραῖα κι' ἀλαργινά, τοῦ χωρισμοῦ πλοκάμια  
σέρνονται καὶ γυρεύουν αἱ στὴ νύχτα τῶν δεντρῶν,  
γιὰ μιὰν ἀγάπη μυστική σ' ἀνεύρετα θολάμια  
ἀκοίμητα γυρεύονται δὲν πίνουν καὶ δὲν τρῶν.

Μὲ γύρους μὲ λυγίσματα κι' ἡ ἀχόρταγὴ τους γνώμη  
κλώθει, πληθαίνει, στρίβει, ἀπλώνει κρίκους στὸ κορμὶ  
ποὺ κυβερνοῦν ἀμίλητοι τοῦ ἑναστρου θόλου οἱ νόμοι  
καὶ τοῦ ἀναδεύουν τὴν πυρὴ κι' ἀσίγαστη ἀφορμή.

Τὸ δάσος στέκει ριγηλὸ τῆς νύχτας ἀντιστύλι  
κι' εἶναι ἡ σιγὴ τάσι ἀργυρὸ ὅπου πέφτουν οἱ στιγμὲς  
ἀντίχτυποι ξεχωρισμένοι, ὁλόκληροι, μιὰ σμίλη  
προσεχτική ποὺ δέχονται πελεκητὲς γραμμές..

Αὐγάζει ξάφνου τὸ ἄγαλμα. Μὰ τὰ κορμιὰ ἔχουν σβήσει  
στὴ θάλασσα στὸν ἄνεμο στὸν ἥλιο στὴ βροχή.  
Ἔτσι γεννιοῦνται οἱ ὁμορφιὲς ποὺ μᾶς χαρίζει ἡ φύση  
μὰ ποιὸς νὰ ξέρει ἂν πέθανε στὸν κόσμο μιὰ ψυχὴ.

*. . In the mirror how our love diminishes  
in sleep the dreams, school of forgetfulness  
in the depths of time, how the heart contracts  
and vanishes in the rocking of a foreign embrace . .*

#### IV

Two serpents, beautiful, apart, tentacles of separation  
crawl and search, in the night of the trees,  
for a secret love in hidden bowers;  
sleepless they search, they neither drink nor eat.

Circling, twisting, their insatiable intent  
spins, multiplies, turns, spreads rings on the body  
which the laws of the starry dome silently govern,  
stirring its hot, irrepressible frenzy.

The forest stands as a shivering pillar for night  
and the silence is a silver cup where moments fall  
echoes distinct, whole, a careful chisel  
sustained by carved lines . . .

The statue suddenly dawns. But the bodies have vanished  
in the sea in the wind in the sun in the rain.  
So the beauties nature grants us are born  
but who knows if a soul hasn't died in the world.

Στὴ φαντασία θὰ γύριζαν τὰ χωρισμένα φίδια  
(Τὸ δάσος λάμπει μὲ πουλιὰ βλαστοὺς καὶ ροδαμοὺς)  
μένουν ἀκόμῃ τὰ σγουρὰ γυρέματά τους, ἴδια  
τοῦ κύκλου τὰ γυρίσματα ποὺ φέρνουν τοὺς καημοὺς.

## Ε΄

Ποῦ πῆγε ἡ μέρα ἡ δίκοπη ποὺ εἶχε τὰ πάντα ἀλλάξει;  
Δὲ θὰ βρεθεῖ ἓνας ποταμὸς νὰ ᾽ναι γιὰ μᾶς πλωτός;  
Δὲ θὰ βρεθεῖ ἓνας οὐρανὸς τῇ δρόσο νὰ σταλάξει  
γιὰ τὴν ψυχὴ ποὺ νάρκωσε κι' ἀνάθρεψε ὁ λωτός;

Στὴν πέτρα τῆς ὑπομονῆς προσμένουμε τὸ θαῆμα  
ποὺ ἀνοίγει τὰ ἐπουράνια κι' εἶν' ὅλα βολετὰ  
προσμένουμε τὸν ἄγγελο σὰν τὸ πανάρχαιο δρᾶμα  
τὴν ὥρα ποὺ τοῦ δειλινοῦ χάνονται τ' ἀνοιχτὰ

τριαντάφυλλα... Ρόδο ἄλικο τοῦ ἀνέμου καὶ τῆς μοίρας,  
μόνο στὴ μνήμη ἀπόμεινες, ἓνας βαρὺς ρυθμὸς  
ρόδο τῆς νύχτας πέρασες, τρικύμισμα πορφύρας  
τρικύμισμα τῆς θάλασσας... Ὁ κόσμος εἶναι ἀπλός.

\*Ἀθήνα, \*Οχτώβρης \*29 - Δεκέμβρης \*30

The parted serpents must have circled in fantasy  
(the forest shimmers with birds, shoots, blossoms)  
their wavy searching still remains,  
like the turnings of the cycle that bring sorrow.

## V

Where is the double-edged day that had changed every-  
thing?

Won't there be a navigable river for us?

Won't there be a sky to drop refreshing dew  
for the soul benumbed and nourished by the lotus?

On the stone of patience we wait for the miracle  
that opens the heavens and makes all things possible  
we wait for the angel as in the primordial drama  
at the moment when the open roses of twilight

disappear . . . Red rose of the wind and of fate,  
you remained in memory only, a heavy rhythm  
rose of the night, you passed, undulating purple  
undulation of the sea . . . The world is simple.

Athens, October '29–December '30

## Η ΣΤΕΡΝΑ

Στὸ Γιώργο Ἀποστολίδη

*Βρέθηκα στὴν ἀνάγκη νὰ βάλω τὸ νοσοκομεῖο τοῦ Δὸν Χουὰν Ταβέρα μὲ τὴ μορφὴ μοντέλου, γιατί ὄχι μόνο ἐρχότανε νὰ σκεπάσει τὴν πύλη τοῦ Βισάγκρα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ θόλος του ἀνέβαινε μὲ τρόπο πὺν ξεπερνοῦσε τὴν πόλη, κι' ἔτσι μιὰ πὺν τό'βαλα σὰ μοντέλο καὶ τὸ μετακίνησα ἀπὸ τὸν τόπο του, μὺ φαίνεται προτιμότερο νὰ δείξω τὴν πρόσοψή του παρὰ τίς ἄλλες του μεριές. Ὅσο γιὰ τὴ θέση του μέσα στὴν πόλη φαίνεται στὸ χάρτη.*

ΔΟΜΗΝΙΚΟΣ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ

## THE CISTERN

To George Apostolidis

*I found I had to put the hospital of Don Juan Tavera in the form of a model, because not only did it nearly cover the gate of Visagra, but also its dome rose so that it dominated the town; and once I'd put it in to look like a model and had shifted it from its place, it seemed to me preferable to show its façade rather than its other sides. As for its position in the town, that appears on the map.*

DOMENIKOS THEOTOKOPOULOS\*

Ἐδῶ, στὸ χῶμα ρίζωσε μιὰ στέρνα  
μονιὰ κρυφοῦ νεροῦ ποὺ θησαυρίζει.  
Σκεπή της βήματα ἤχερά. Τ' ἀστέρια  
δὲ σμίγουν τὴν καρδιά της. Κάθε μέρα  
πληθαίνει, ἀνοιγοκλεῖ, δὲν τὴν ἀγγίζει.

Ἀνοίγει ὁ πάνω κόσμος σὰ ριπίδι  
καὶ παίζει μὲ τὸ φύσημα τοῦ ἀνέμου  
μ' ἓνα ρυθμὸ ποὺ ξεψυχάει στὸ δεῖλι  
φτεροκοπάει ἀνέλπιδα καὶ σφύζει  
στὸ σφύριγμα τοῦ πόνου τοῦ γραμμένου.

Στὸ πύργωμα τοῦ θόλου ἀνέλεης νύχτας  
πατοῦνε οἱ ἔνιες κι' οἱ χαρὲς διαβαίνουν  
μὲ τὸ γοργὸ κροτάλισμα τῆς μοίρας  
πρόσωπα ἀνάβουν λάμπουν μιὰ στιγμή  
καὶ σβήνουνται σ' ἓνα σκοτάδι ἐβένου.

Μορφὲς ποὺ φεύγουν! Ὀρμαθοὶ τὰ μάτια  
κυλοῦν βαλμένα σ' ἓνα αὐλάκι πίκρα  
καὶ τῆς μεγάλης μέρας τὰ σημάδια  
τίς παίρνουν καὶ τίς φέρνουν πιὸ σιμὰ  
στὴ μαύρη γῆς ποὺ δὲ γυρεύει λύτρα.

Here, in the earth, a cistern has taken root  
den of secret water that gathers there.  
Its roof, resounding steps. The stars  
don't blend with its heart. Each day  
grows, opens and shuts, doesn't touch it.

The world above opens like a fan  
and plays with the wind's breath  
in a rhythm that expires at sunset  
flaps its wings hopelessly and throbs  
at the whistling of a destined suffering.

On the curve of the dome of a pitiless night  
cares tread, joys move by  
with fate's quick rattle  
faces light up, shine a moment  
and die out in an ebony darkness.

Faces that go! In rows, the eyes  
roll in a gutter of bitterness  
and the signs of the great day  
take them up and bring them closer  
to the black earth that asks no ransom.

Στὸ χῶμα γέρνει τὸ κορμὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου  
γιὰ ν' ἀπομείνει ἡ διψασμένη ἀγάπη·  
μαρμαρωμένο στ' ἄγγιγμα τοῦ χρόνου  
τὸ ἄγαλμα πέφτει γυμνὸ στὸν ἄδρῶ  
κόρφο ποὺ τὸ γλυκαίνει ἀγάλι-ἀγάλι.

Δάκρυα γυρεύει ἡ δίψα τῆς ἀγάπης  
τὰ τριαντάφυλλα σκύβουν — ἡ ψυχὴ μας  
στὰ φύλλα ἀκούγεται ὁ παλμὸς τῆς πλάσης  
τὸ ἀπόβραδο σιμώνει σὰ διαβάτης  
ὕστερα ἡ νύχτα κι' ὕστερα τὸ μνημα.

Μὰ ἐδῶ στὸ χῶμα ρίζωσε μιὰ στέρνα  
κρυφὴ μονιά, ζεστή, ποὺ θησαυρίζει  
κάθε κορμιοῦ τὸ βόγγο στὸν ἀγέρα  
τῇ μάχῃ μὲ τῇ νύχτῃ μὲ τῇ μέρῃ  
πληθαίνει ὁ κόσμος, πάει, δὲν τὴν ἀγγίζει.

Περνοῦνε οἱ ὦρες, ἥλιοι καὶ φεγγάρια,  
μὰ τὸ νερὸ ἔχει δέσει σὰν καθρέφτης·  
ἡ ἀπαντοχὴ μὲ τὰ ὀρθάνοιχτα μάτια  
ὅταν βυθίσουν ὅλα τὰ πανιὰ  
στὴν ἄκρῃ τοῦ πελάγου ποὺ τὴ θρέφει.

Μόνη, καὶ στὴν καρδιά της τόσο πλῆθος  
μόνη, καὶ στὴν καρδιά της τόσοσ μόχθος  
καὶ τόσοσ πόνος, στάλα-στάλα μόνος  
τὰ δίχτυα ρίχνοντας μακριὰ στὸν κόσμο  
ποὺ ζεῖ μ' ἓνα κυμάτισμα πικρό.

Man's body bends to earth  
so that thirsty love remain;  
turned into marble at time's touch,  
the statue falls naked on the ripe breast  
that softly sweetens it.

The thirst of love looks for tears  
the roses bend—our soul;  
the pulse of nature sounds on the leaves  
dusk approaches like a passer-by  
then night, then the grave.

But here in the earth a cistern has taken root  
warm, secret den that hoards  
the groan of each body in the air  
the battle with night, with day  
the world grows, passes, does not touch it.

Time goes by, suns and moons,  
but the water has hardened like a mirror:  
expectation open-eyed  
when all the sails sink  
at the edge of the sea that nourishes it.

Alone, and in its heart such a crowd  
alone, and in its heart such labor  
and such pain, drop by drop alone  
casting its nets far into a world  
that lives with bitter undulation.

Σὰν ἄνοιξε τὸ κῦμα ἀπ' τὴν ἀγκάλη  
νά 'τανε στὴν ἀγκάλη νὰ τελειώσει  
νά 'τανε τὴν ἀγάπη στ' ἀκρογιαλὶ  
πρὶν σπάσει τὴ γραμμὴ του νὰ μᾶς δώσει  
τὸ κῦμα ὡς ἔμεινε στὴν ἄμμο ἀφρός.

Μιὰ ζεστασιὰ ἀπλωμένη σὰν προβιά  
ἡμερὴ σὰν τὸ κοιμισμένο ἀγρίμι  
ποὺ ξέφυγε ἡσυχὰ τὸ καρδιοχτύπι  
καὶ χτύπησε στὸν ὕπνο νὰ ζητήσει  
τὸ περιβόλι ὅπου σταλάζει ἀσήμε.

Κι' ἓνα κορμὶ κρυφό, βαθειὰ κραυγὴ  
βγαλμένη ἀπὸ τὸ σπῆλαιο τοῦ θανάτου  
σὰν τὸ νερὸ ζωηρὸ μέσα στ' αὐλάκι  
σὰν τὸ νερὸ ποὺ λάμπει στὸ χορτάρι  
μονάχο καὶ μιλεῖ στίς μαῦρες ρίζες...

”ὦ! πιὸ κοντὰ στὴ ρίζα τῆς ζωῆς μας  
ἀπὸ τὴ σκέψη μας κι' ἀπὸ τὴν ἔνια!  
”ὦ πιὸ κοντὰ ἀπὸ τὸ σκληρὸ ἀδερφό μας  
ποὺ μᾶς κοιτάει μὲ βλέφαρα κλεισμένα  
κι' ἀπὸ τὴ λόγχη ἀκόμα στὸ πλευρό μας!

”ὦ! ν' ἀπαλύνει ξάφνω στὴν ἀφῆ μας  
τὸ δέρμα τῆς σιωπῆς ποὺ μᾶς στενεύει,  
νὰ λησμονήσουμε, θεοί, τὸ κρῖμα  
ποὺ ὅλο πληθαίνει κι' ὅλο μᾶς βαραίνει,  
νὰ βγοῦμε ἀπὸ τὴ γνώση κι' ἀπ' τὴν πείνα!

When the wave moved out of the embrace  
would that it ended in the embrace  
would that it gave us love on the shore  
before breaking its line  
the wave, as it remained foam on the sand.

A warmth stretched out like hide  
tame like a sleeping beast  
that calmly avoided fear  
and knocked on sleep to ask  
for the garden where silver drops.

And a body hidden, deep cry  
let out from the cave of death  
like water lively in the ditch  
like water shining on the grass  
alone, talking to the black roots . . .

O nearer the root of our life  
than our thoughts and our anxiety!  
O nearer than our stern brother  
who looks at us with eyelids closed,  
and nearer than the spear still in our side!

O if the skin of silence now constricting us  
would only soften suddenly at our touch  
so that we might forget, O gods, the crime  
that daily grows and weighs upon us,  
so that we might escape the knowledge and the hunger!

Μαζεύοντας τὸν πόνο τῆς πληγῆς μας  
νὰ βγοῦμε ἀπὸ τὸν πόνο τῆς πληγῆς μας  
μαζεύοντας τὴν πίκρα τοῦ κορμιοῦ μας  
νὰ βγοῦμε ἀπὸ τὴν πίκρα τοῦ κορμιοῦ μας  
ρόδα ν' ἀνθίσουν στὸ αἶμα τῆς πληγῆς μας.

“Ὅλα νὰ γίνουνε ξανὰ σὰν πρῶτα  
στὰ δάχτυλα στὰ μάτια καὶ στὰ χεῖλια  
ν' ἀφήσουμε τὴ γερασμένη ἀρρώστια  
πουκάμισο ποὺ ἀφήσανε τὰ φίδια  
κίτρινο μὲς στὰ πράσινα τριφύλλια.

Μεγάλη ἀγάπη κι' ἄχραντη, γαλήνη!  
Μέσα στὴ ζωντανὴ θέρμη ἓνα βράδι  
λύγισες ταπεινά, γυμνὴ καμπύλη,  
λευκὴ φτερούγα πάνω ἀπ' τὸ κοπάδι  
σὰν ἀπαλὴ στὸν κρόταφο παλάμη.

Τὸ πέλαγο ποὺ σ' ἔφερε σὲ πῆρε  
πέρα στὶς λεμονιές τὶς ἀνθισμένες  
• τῶρα ποὺ γλυκοξύπνησαν οἱ μοῖρες  
χίλιες μορφές μὲ τρεῖς ἀπλές ρυτίδες  
στὸν ἐπιτάφιο συνοδεία βαλμένες.

Σέρνουνε μοιρολόγια οἱ μυροφόρες  
ν' ἀκολουθήσει ἡ ἐλπίδα τῶν ἀνθρώπων  
στὰ μάτια σφηνωμένη μὲ τὶς φλόγες  
φωτίζοντας τὸ χῶμα τὸ τυφλὸ  
ποὺ ἰδρώνει ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνοιξης τὸν κόπο.

Gathering up the pain of our wound  
so that we may escape the pain of our wound  
gathering up the body's bitterness  
so that we may escape the body's bitterness  
so that roses may bloom in the blood of our wound.

May everything become as it was at first  
to fingers eyes and lips  
may we throw off the aged sickness,  
skin shed by snakes  
yellow in the green clover.

Great and immaculate love, serenity!  
In the lively fever one night  
you bent humbly, naked curve,  
white wing over the flock,  
like a light palm on the temple.

The sea that brought you carried you away  
to the blossoming lemon-trees  
now that the fates have woken gently,  
a thousand faces with three plain wrinkles,  
placed in escort to the epitaph.\*

The myrrh-bearers drag their dirges  
so that man's hope may follow  
wedged in the eyes by flames  
lighting the blind earth  
that sweats from the effort of spring.

Φλόγες τοῦ πέρα κόσμου, πυροφάνια  
πάνω στὴν ἄνοιξη ποὺ σήμερα ἀναβλύζει,  
ἴσκιοι θλιμμένοι στὰ νεκρὰ στεφάνια  
βήματα... βήματα... ἡ ἀργὴ καμπάνα  
μιὰ σκοτεινὴ ἀλυσίδα ξετυλίγει —

«Πεθαίνουμε! Πεθαίνουν οἱ θεοὶ μας!...»  
Τὰ μάρμαρα τὸ ξέρουν ποὺ κοιτάζουν  
σὰν ἄσπρη χαραυγὴ πάνω στὸ θῦμα  
ξένα, γεμάτα βλέφαρα, συντρίμμια  
καθὼς περνοῦν τὰ πλήθη τοῦ θανάτου.

. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . .

Περάσανε μακριά, μὲ τὸν καημό τους  
ζεστό κοντὰ στὰ χαμηλὰ ἀγιοκέρια  
ποὺ γράφανε στὸ σκυφτὸ μέτωπό τους  
τὴ ζωὴ πασίχαρη στὰ μεσημέρια  
ὅταν σβηστοῦν τὰ μάγια καὶ τ' ἀστέρια.

Μὰ ἡ νύχτα δὲν πιστεύει στὴν αὐγὴ  
κι' ἡ ἀγάπη ζεῖ τὸ θάνατο νὰ ὑφαίνει  
ἔτσι, σὰν τὴν ἐλεύθερη ψυχὴ,  
μιὰ στέρνα ποὺ διδάσκει τὴ σιγὴ  
μέσα στὴν πολιτεία τὴ φλογισμένη.

Flames of the world beyond, candles  
over Spring surging forth today,  
mournful shadows on dead wreaths  
footsteps . . . footsteps . . . the slow bell  
unwinds a dark chain.

“We are dying! Our gods are dying! . . .”  
The marble statues know it, looking down  
like white dawn upon the victim  
alien, full of eyelids, fragments,  
as the crowds of death pass by.

. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . .

They passed into the distance, their sorrow  
hot near the lowered church candles  
that inscribed on their bent foreheads  
the life full of joy at noon  
when magic spells and the stars expire

But night does not believe in dawn  
and love lives to weave death  
thus, like a free soul,  
a cistern that teaches silence  
in the flaming city.

## ΠΑΝΤΟΥΜ

Τ' ἀστέρια κρατοῦν ἕναν κόσμο δικό τους  
στο πέλαγο σέρνουν φωτιές τὰ καράβια  
ψυχὴ μου λυτρώσου ἀπ' τὸν κρίκο τοῦ σκοτόους  
πικρὴ φλογισμένη πού δέεσαι μ' εὐλάβεια.

Στὸ πέλαγο σέρνουν φωτιές τὰ καράβια  
ἡ νύχτα στενεύει καὶ στέκει σὰν ξένη  
πικρὴ φλογισμένη πού δέεσαι μ' εὐλάβεια  
ψυχὴ μου γνωρίζεις ποιὸς νόμος σὲ δένει.

Ἡ νύχτα στενεύει καὶ στέκει σὰν ξένη  
στὸ μαῦρο μετάξι τὰ φῶτα ἔχουν σβήσει  
ψυχὴ μου γνωρίζεις ποιὸς νόμος σὲ δένει  
καὶ τί θὰ σοῦ μείνει καὶ τί θὰ σ' ἀφήσει.

Στὸ μαῦρο μετάξι τὰ φῶτα ἔχουν σβήσει  
ἀκούγονται μόνο τοῦ χρόνου τὰ σεῖστρα·  
καὶ τί θὰ σοῦ μείνει καὶ τί θὰ σ' ἀφήσει  
ἂν τύχει κι' ἀστράψει ἡ βουβὴ πολεμίστρα.

Ἀκούγονται μόνο τοῦ χρόνου τὰ σεῖστρα  
μετάλλινη στήλη στοῦ πόνου τὴν ἄκρη  
ἂν τύχει κι' ἀστράψει ἡ βουβὴ πολεμίστρα  
οὔτε ὄνειρο θὰ ἔβρεις νὰ δώσει ἕνα δάκρυ.

## PANTOUM

The stars contain a world of their own  
ships drag fires over the sea  
my soul, inflamed and bitter as you pray devoutly,  
free yourself from the link of darkness.

Ships drag fires over the sea  
night shrinks and stays still as though a stranger  
my soul, inflamed and bitter as you pray devoutly,  
you recognize the law that binds you.

Night shrinks and stays still as though a stranger  
the lights have gone out over the black silk  
my soul, you recognize the law that binds you,  
and what will stay with you, what abandon you.

The lights have gone out over the black silk  
there's no sound but the rattle of time;  
what will stay with you, what abandon you  
should the dumb loophole explode with a flash.

There's no sound but the rattle of time  
metallic column at the limit of pain  
should the dumb loophole explode with a flash  
you won't find even a dream to shed a tear.

Μετάλλινη στήλη στοῦ πόνου τὴν ἄκρη  
ψηλώνει ἢ στιγμὴ σὰ μετέωρο λεπίδι  
οὔτε ὄνειρο θά' βρεις νὰ δώσει ἓνα δάκρυ  
στὸ πλῆθος σου τὸ ἄυλο ποὺ σφίγγει σὰ φίδι.

Ψηλώνει ἢ στιγμὴ σὰ μετέωρο λεπίδι  
σὰν τί νὰ προσμένει νὰ πέσει ἢ γαλήνη;  
στὸ πλῆθος σου τὸ ἄυλο ποὺ σφίγγει σὰ φίδι  
δὲν εἶναι οὐρανὸς μηδὲ ἀγγέλου εὐφροσύνη.

Σὰν τί νὰ προσμένει νὰ πέσει ἢ γαλήνη;  
Σ' ἀνθρώπους κλειστοὺς ποὺ μετροῦν τὸν καημὸ τους  
δὲν εἶναι οὐρανὸς μηδὲ ἀγγέλου εὐφροσύνη  
τ' ἀστέρια κρατοῦν ἓναν κόσμον δικό τους.

Metallic column at the limit of pain  
the moment rises like a suspended blade  
you won't find even a dream to shed a tear  
among your immaterial throng that constricts like a snake.

The moment rises like a suspended blade  
why does peace delay its coming?  
Among your immaterial throng that constricts like a snake  
there's no heaven nor angelic happiness.

Why does peace delay its coming?  
Among the taciturn counting their sorrow  
there's no heaven nor angelic happiness:  
the stars contain a world of their own.

## ΤΡΙΖΟΝΙΑ

Τὸ σπῖτι γέμισε τριζόνια  
χτυποῦν σὰν ἄρρυθμα ρολόγια  
λαχανιασμένα. Καὶ τὰ χρόνια

ποὺ ζοῦμε σὰν αὐτὰ χτυποῦν  
καθὼς οἱ δίκαιοι σιωποῦν  
σὰ νὰ μὴν εἶχαν τί νὰ ποῦν.

Κάποτε τ' ἄκουσα στὸ Πήλιο  
νὰ σκάβουνε γοργὰ ἓνα σπήλαιο  
μέσα στὴ νύχτα. Ἀλλὰ τὸ φύλλο

τῆς μοίρας τώρα τὸ γυρίσαμε  
καὶ μᾶς γνωρίσατε καὶ σᾶς γνωρίσαμε  
ἀπὸ τοὺς ὑπερβόρειους ἴσαμε

τοὺς νέγρους τοῦ ἰσημερινοῦ  
ποὺ ἔχουνε σῶμα χωρὶς νοῦ  
καὶ ποὺ φωνάζουν σὰν πονοῦν.

Κι' ἐγὼ πονῶ κι' ἐσεῖς πονεῖτε  
μὰ δὲ φωνάζουμε καὶ μήτε  
κὰν ψιθυρίζουμε, γιατί

## CRICKETS

The house is full of crickets  
beating like rhythmless clocks  
out of breath. And the times

we live beat that way too  
while the just remain silent  
as though they had nothing to say.

Once in Pelion I heard them  
swiftly digging a cave  
in the night. But now

we've flipped the leaf of fate  
and you've known us as we've known you  
from those who live in the north

to the negroes at the equator  
all body without mind  
who bellow when in pain.

I suffer and you suffer  
but we don't yell or cry  
or whisper even, because

ἡ μηχανὴ εἶναι βιαστικὴ  
στὴ φρίκη καὶ στὴν καταφρόνια  
στὸ θάνατο καὶ στὴ ζωὴ.

Τὸ σπίτι γέμισε τριζόνια.

Πρετόρια, 16 Γενάρη '42

the machine is very quick  
at horror and contempt  
at death and life,

The house is full of crickets.

Pretoria, 16 January '42

## ΘΕΑΤΡΙΝΟΙ, Μ.Α.

Στήνουμε θέατρα καὶ τὰ χαλνοῦμε  
ὅπου σταθοῦμε κι' ὅπου βρεθοῦμε  
στήνουμε θέατρα καὶ σκηνικά,  
ὅμως ἡ μοίρα μας πάντα νικᾷ

καὶ τὰ σαρώνει καὶ μᾶς σαρώνει  
καὶ τοὺς θεατρίνους καὶ τὸ θεατρῶν  
ὑποβολέα καὶ μουσικοὺς  
στοὺς πέντε ἀνέμους τοὺς βιαστικούς.

Σάρκες, λινάτσες, ξύλα, φτιασίδια,  
ρίμες, αἰσθήματα, πέπλα, στολίδια,  
μάσκες, λιογέρματα, γόοι καὶ κραυγές  
κι' ἐπιφωνήματα καὶ χαραυγές

ριγμένα ἀνάκατα μαζὶ μ' ἐμᾶς  
( πές μου ποῦ πᾶμε; πές μου ποῦ πᾶς; )  
πάνω ἀπ' τὸ δέρμα μας γυμνὰ τὰ νεῦρα  
σὰν τὶς λουρίδες ὀνάγρου ἢ ζέβρα

γυμνὰ κι' ἀνέρα, στεγνὰ στὴν κάψα  
( πότε μᾶς γέννησαν; πότε μᾶς θάψαν; )  
καὶ τεντωμένα σὰν τὶς χορδές  
μιᾶς λύρας πού ὀλοένα βουίζει. Δὲς

## ACTORS, MIDDLE EAST

We put up theaters and tear them down  
wherever we happen to find ourselves  
we put up theaters and set the stage  
but our fate always triumphs in the end

and sweeps them away as it sweeps us too  
actors and the actors' manager  
prompter and musicians all disappear  
scattered to the five hungry winds.

Bodies, mats, wood, make-up  
rhymes, feelings, veils, jewelry  
masks, sunsets, wails and howls  
exclamations and suns rising

cast off helter-skelter along with us  
(where are we going? where are you going?)  
nerves naked upon our skin  
like the stripes of an onager or zebra

exposed and naked, dry and burning  
(when were we born? when buried?)  
and taut like the strings of a lyre  
incessantly humming. Look also

καὶ τὴν καρδιά μας· ἓνα σφουγγάρι,  
στὸ δρόμο σέρνεται καὶ στὸ παζάρι  
πίνοντας τὸ αἷμα καὶ τὴ χολή  
καὶ τοῦ τετράρχη καὶ τοῦ ληστῆ.

Μέση Ἀνατολή, Αὐγούστος '43

at our heart: a sponge  
ambling through the street and market place  
soaking up the blood and bile  
of both the tetrarch and the thief.

Middle East, August '43

## ΑΓΙΑΝΑΠΑ, Β΄

᾽Ανοιξη 1156

*Στίχοι για μουσική*

Κάτω ἀπ' τὴ γέρικη συκομουριά  
τρελὸς ὁ ἀγέρας ἔπαιζε  
μὲ τὰ πουλιά μὲ τὰ κλωνιά  
καὶ δὲ μᾶς ἔκραινε.

Ὡρα κκλή σου ἀνάσα τῆς ψυχῆς  
ἀνοίξαμε τὸν κόρφο μας  
ἔλα νὰ μπεῖς ἔλα νὰ πιεῖς  
ἀπὸ τὸν πόθο μας.

Κάτω ἀπ' τὴ γέρικη συκομουριά  
ὁ ἀγέρας σκώθη κι' ἔφυγε  
κατὰ τὰ κάστρα τοῦ βοριᾶ  
καὶ δὲ μᾶς ἔγγιξε.

Θυμάρι μου καὶ δεντρολιβανιά,  
δέσε γερὰ τὸ στῆθος σου  
καὶ βρὲς σπηλιά καὶ βρὲς μονιά  
κρύψε τὸ λύχνο σου.

Δὲν εἶναι ἀγέρας τοῦτος τοῦ Βαγιοῦ  
δὲν εἶναι τῆς Ἀνάστασης  
μὰ εἶν' τῆς φωτιᾶς καὶ τοῦ καπνοῦ

## AGIANAPA II

Spring 1156\*

*Verses for music*

Under the aging sycamore  
madly the wind was playing  
with the birds with the branches  
but it never spoke to us.

Welcome and good luck O breath of the soul  
we opened our hearts to you  
do come in, do drink in  
your fill of our desire.

Under the aging sycamore  
the wind rose up and left,  
gone to the northern castles,  
and never touched us even.

O my rosemary, O my thyme,  
bind your breast tightly  
and find a cave, find a lair  
and hide away your light.

This is no Palm Sunday wind  
no wind of the Resurrection  
but a wind of fire, a wind of smoke,

τῆς ζωῆς τῆς ἀχαρης.

Κάτω ἀπ' τῇ γέρικῃ συκομουριᾷ  
στεγνὸς ὁ ἀγέρας γύρισε·  
ὁσμίζονταν παντοῦ φλουριᾷ  
καὶ μᾶς ἐπούλησε.

a wind of joyless life.

Under the aging sycamore  
the wind returned dry,  
reeking of florins everywhere,  
and bartered us for gold.

## ΣΤΑ ΠΕΡΙΧΩΡΑ ΤΗΣ ΚΕΡΥΝΕΙΑΣ

*But I'm dying and done for  
What on earth was all the fun for?  
For God's sake keep that sunlight out of sight.*

JOHN BETJEMAN

*Homer's world, not ours.*

W. H. AUDEN

*Σχέδιο για ένα «ειδύλλιο»*

- . . . . .
- Τῆς τηλεγράφησα λουλούδια.  
— Οὐίσκι ; Τζίν ;
- Σήμερα οἱ ἀργυροί της γάμοι.  
— Τὸ νοῦ σας μὴν  
πηδῇξει στὸ φουστάνι σας ὁ σκύλος·  
θὰ τὸ λασπώσει· τὸν παραμελοῦν· γίνεται οἰκεῖος.
- Τζὶν παρακαλῶ. Μένει τώρα στὸ Κέντ. Πάντα  
θὰ τὴ θυμοῦμαι στὴν ἐκκλησιά. Σὰ βγήκαμε ἔβρεχε· μιὰ  
μπάντα  
ἔπαιζε στ' ἄλλο πεζοδρόμιο· θαρῶ Στρατὸς τῆς Σωτη-  
ρίας.
- Μέρες τοῦ Μάη, ὁ χρόνος τῆς Μεγάλης Ἀπεργίας.
- Δὲν εἴχαμε οὔτε ἐφημερίδες.  
— Δέστε τὸ βουνό·  
ὅταν βυθίσει τέλος πάντων ὁ ἥλιος θὰ εἶναι μονόχρωμο  
καὶ εἰρηνικό.  
Αὐτό εἶναι ὁ Ἅγιος Ἰλαρίων. Τὸ προτιμῶ μὲ τὸ φεγ-  
γάρι.

## IN THE KYRENIA DISTRICT

*But I'm dying and done for  
What on earth was all the fun for?  
For God's sake keep that sunlight out of sight.*

JOHN BETJEMAN

*Homer's world, not ours.*

W. H. AUDEN

*Sketch for an "idyll"*

. . . . .

—I wired her flowers.

—Whisky? Gin?

—Today's her silver wedding.

—Mind the dog

doesn't jump up against your skirt:

he'll muddy it. They neglect him, he's getting too familiar.

—Gin, please. She lives in Kent now. I'll

always remember her in the church. When we came out,  
it was raining; a band

was playing on the pavement opposite, the Salvation  
Army, I think.

—Sometime in May, the year of the General Strike.

—We didn't even have newspapers.

—Look at the mountain:

when the sun finally sets it'll be one color all over, and  
peaceful.

That's St. Hilarion. I prefer it by moonlight.

— Γράφει πώς ἔχει κι' ἓνα φάντασμα πού τριγυρνᾷ μ' ἓνα σβηστό φανάρι.

— Ὁ "Αγιος Ἰλαρίων;

— Ὁχι, τὸ σπíti της στὸ Κέντ.

— Ἐδῶ τὸ φάντασμα θὰ πήγαινε καλύτερα. Κάποτε — δὲν μπορῶ νὰ τὸ ἐξηγήσω — ἡ μνήμη σ' αὐτὸ τὸ φῶς γίνεται πιὸ σκληρή, μιὰ ζύμη πού τὴ στεγνώνει ὁ ἥλιος...

— Ζύμη ἀπὸ τί;

Ἐχω κι' ἐγὼ πονοκεφάλους.

— Γνωρίσατε τὸν ποιητὴ,

ἢ κάτι τέτοιο, πού ἔμενε τὸν περασμένο μῆνα ἐδῶ;

Τὸ αἶσθημα τ' ὀνομάζει παλίμψηστη λιβιδῶ.

πάρα πολὺ ἀσυνήθιστος· τί θέλει

νὰ πεῖ, δὲν τὸ ξέρει κανεῖς· κυνικὸς καὶ φιλέλλην.

— Σώστροφος σνόμπ.

— Κάποτε ἀστεῖος· τώρα εἶναι στὰ λουτρά.

— Στὴν Ἰταλία καθὼς ἄκουσα.

— Ναί, κάποιο «σπά».

Λέει πὼς ὠφελοῦν τὴν ἀφροδίσια ρώμη.

Τοῦ ἔδωσα σύσταση γιὰ τὸν Ὀράτιο στὴ Ρώμη.

— Πολὺ ἀθυρόστομος, πὼς τοῦ ἐπιτρέπετε;

— Ἀλήθεια, πὼς;

Ἴσως στὴν ἡλικία μας νὰ γίνεται κανεῖς συγκαταβατικὸς

ἴσως ἀνάγκη νὰ ξεφύγω τὸν τρεχάμενο ἑαυτό μου

ἴσως αὐτὸ τὸ νησι πού μὲ πλήττει σὰν ἀερόλιθος ἄλλου κόσμου.

— Γινόσαστε μελαγχολικὴ, Μαργαρίτα. Μὰ εἶναι τόσο ὠραῖα·

—She writes that it has a ghost who goes about with an  
extinguished lamp.

—St. Hilarion?

—No, her house in Kent.

—The ghost would be more appropriate here. Sometimes—

I can't explain it—memory  
grows harsher in this light, dough  
dried by the sun . . .

—What kind of dough?

I get headaches too.

—Did you meet the poet,  
or whatever he was, staying here last month?

He called feeling palimpsestic libido;  
most unusual; no one knows  
what he means. A cynic and philhellene.

—An introverted snob.

—Amusing sometimes. Now he's  
taking the baths.

—In Italy I heard.

—Yes, some "spa."

He says it encourages sexual vigor.

I gave him an introduction to Horace in Rome.

—How could you, he's so shocking.

—How, indeed?

Maybe at our age one makes allowances  
maybe out of need to escape from my ordinary self  
maybe it's this island that bores me like a meteor from  
another world.

—You're becoming sad, Margaret. But it's so beautiful:

ὁ ἥλιος, ἡ θάλασσα· ἓνα παντοτινὸ καλοκαίρι...

—“Α! τούτη ἡ θεά

πού ὅλο ρωτᾷ κι’ ὅλο ρωτᾷ. Προσέχετε κάποτε τὸν κα-  
θρέφτη

πῶς κάνει ἐντάφιο τὸ πρόσωπό μας; Καὶ τὸν ἥλιο τὸν  
κλέφτη

πῶς παίρνει τὰ φτιασίδια μας κάθε πρωί; Θὰ προτι-  
μούσα

τὴ ζεστασιά τοῦ ἡλίου χωρὶς τὸν ἥλιο· θ’ ἀποζητούσα  
μιὰ θάλασσα πού δὲν ἀπογυμνώνει· ἓνα μαβὶ χωρὶς  
φωνή,

χωρὶς αὐτὴ τὴν ἀνάγωγη ἀνάκριση τὴν καθημερινή.

Θὰ μὲ ξεκούραζε τὸ σιωπηλὸ χᾶδι τῆς ὁμίχλης στὰ κρό-  
σια τοῦ ὀνείρου·

αὐτὸς ὁ κόσμος δὲν εἶναι ὁ δικός μας, εἶναι τοῦ  
‘Ομήρου,

ἡ καλύτερη φράση πού ἄκουσα γι’ αὐτὸ τὸν τόπο.

“Ἡσυχὰ Ρέξ!

— Εὐχαριστῶ, μὴν κάνετε τὸν κόπο,

ξέρω τὸ δρόμο. Θὰ ἤθελα νὰ προλάβω ν’ ἀγοράσω πανί,  
σαράντα πῆχες δίμιτο, γιὰ τὸν περιβολάρη μας τὸν Πα-  
ναγῇ·

ἀπίστευτο! τόσο λέει τοῦ χρειάζεται γιὰ μιὰ βράκα...  
Καθὼς μιλούσατε θυμόμουν ἓνα Σάββατο, τὸν Μπίλλ,  
στὴ βάρκα

στὸν Τάμεση... Κοίταζα τὸ φουλᾶρι του ὅλο τὸ δεῖλι.

Σφύριζε καθὼς ἔλαμνε, «Πές της το μὲ τὸ γιουκαλίλι».

Τί νὰ ’γινε ἄραγε;...

— Σκοτώθηκε στὴν Κρήτη.

the sun, the sea, an everlasting summer.

—Ah, this view  
that questions and questions. Have you ever noticed how the  
mirror sometimes  
makes our faces death-like. Or how that thief the sun  
takes our make-up off each morning? I'd prefer  
the sun's warmth without the sun; I'd look for  
a sea that doesn't strip one bare: a voiceless blue  
without that ill-bred daily interrogation.

The silent caress of the mist in the tassels of dream would  
refresh me:

this world isn't ours, it's Homer's—  
that's the best description I've heard of this place.  
Quiet, Rex!

—No, please don't bother,  
I know the way. I'd like to have time to buy some cloth:  
thirty yards of woven stuff, for our gardener Panagi;  
incredible, he says he needs that much for those old baggy  
trousers he wears . . .

As you were speaking I remembered Bill, one Saturday,  
on the Thames . . . I gazed at his scarf all evening long.  
As he rowed he was whistling, "say it with a ukulele."  
What's become of him, I wonder?

—He was killed in Crete.

—“Ομορφος, πολὺ ὁμορφος... Θὰ σᾶς περιμένω τὴν Τρίτη...

“Ἡσυχὰ πού κυλοῦσε ὁ Τάμεσης μέσα στοὺς ἴσκιους...

Καλὸν ὕπνο.

— Κρίμα πού δὲν μπορέσατε νὰ μείνετε γιὰ τὸ δεῖπνο.

—He was handsome, so handsome . . . I'll expect you on  
Tuesday . . .

How softly the Thames flowed among the shadows . . .

Sleep well.

—It's a pity you can't stay for dinner.

## ΠΡΑΜΑΤΕΥΤΗΣ ΑΠΟ ΤΗ ΣΙΔΩΝΑ

*Ἡ τάχα Κοῦρον  
Κυπρίδος εὐκόλοιο καὶ Ἐρμάωνος ἐνίψεις.  
ΧΡΙΣΤΟΔΩΡΟΥ ΕΚΦΡΑΣΙΣ*

Ὁ νέος πρᾶματευτῆς ἦρθε ἀπὸ τῆ Σιδῶνα  
χωρὶς νὰ φοβηθεῖ τὸ θυμωμένο Ποσειδῶνα.

Κοράκου χρῶμα τὰ τσουλούφια του, ὁ χιτώνας του πορφύρα  
καὶ τὸν κρατάει στὸν ὦμο του μιὰ χρυσὴ πόρπη· μύρα

ἀνασαίνει καὶ ψιμύθια κάθε πτυχὴ τοῦ σώματός του.  
Μπῆκε στὴν Κύπρο ἀπ' τὴ θαλασσινὴ πόρτα τῆς Ἀμμο-  
χώστου

καὶ τώρα χαίρεται μὲς στὰ στενὰ τῆς Λευκωσίας τὴ λια-  
κάδα.

Μιὰ τουρκοπούλα στὴν αὐλή, καὶ σείστηκε ἡ περιπλοκάδα

ποῦ κορφολόγαε μὲ τὰ σιντεφένια δάχτυλά της.  
Ἐκεῖνος διάβηκε τοῦ ἥλιου τὸν ποταμὸ σὰν ἕνας θεῖος πε-  
ράτης,

σὰν ὄνειρο ψιθυριστὰ τραγουδώντας: «Ρόδα στὸ μαντήλι».  
Λὲς γύρευαν τοῦ Δία τὰ πέδιλα τὰ βυσσινιά του χεῖλη.

## PEDDLER FROM SIDON

*At once you knew him for the son of a full-breasted  
Aphrodite and of Hermes.*

*CHRISTODOROS' DESCRIPTION\**

The young peddler came from Sidon  
without being afraid of angry Poseidon.  
His curls crow-colored, his chiton purple,  
fastened at the shoulder by a golden clasp,  
his body reeking of myrrh and make-up.  
He entered Cyprus through Famagusta,  
now enjoys the sunlight  
of back lanes in Nicosia.  
In the courtyard a young Turkish girl:  
the creeper that she trims with ivory fingers  
sways shyly to her touch.  
The peddler crosses the sun's river  
like a walking god, the song he sings  
dream-soft: "Roses in a kerchief . . . ,"  
as if his crimson lips  
longed to kiss Zeus' sandals.

Ἔτσι προχώρεσε καὶ κάθησε πλάι σ' ἓνα γοτθικὸ παρα-  
στάτη  
ὅπου τοῦ Μάρκου ὁ λιοντάρι κάρφωνε μ' ἀλαφιασμένο  
μάτι

ἓναν κοιμάμενο βοσκὸ ποὺ μύριζε τραγὶ κι' ἰδρώτα.  
Ἀκούμπησε, ἔβγαλε ἀπὸ τὸν κόρφο του καὶ κοίταξε μιὰ  
τερακότα·

ἓνα γυμνὸ ποὺ γλιστροῦσε ἀβέβαιο στὴ σαλμακίδα κοίτη  
ἀνάμεσα στὸν κοῖλο Ἑρμὴ καὶ τὴν κυρτὴ Ἀφροδίτη.

He walks on so, then stops  
to sit beside a Gothic gate-post  
that offers the wild-eyed lion of Mark  
glaring down on a sleeping shepherd  
who smells too much of goat and sweat.  
The peddler leans back; his hand  
feels inside his shirt, removes  
a terracotta statuette.  
He studies it: a naked youth that glides,  
uncertain, on the effeminate couch  
between concave Hermes and convex Aphrodite.



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In this note we do not attempt to cite all possible sources that would be relevant to a thorough study of Seferis's poetry. We offer here only a list that includes the first Greek editions of the various volumes that constitute Seferis's collected poems, the definitive collected edition of his work in Greek, his principal prose works, the latest editions of his principal translations, selected translations of his work into English, selected critical books on Seferis, and selected critical articles on Seferis in English. We are grateful to George Savidis and Nasos Vayenas for assisting us in bringing this note up to date.

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## NOTES

The following notes are intended to be factual rather than interpretive. Some derive from Seferis's own notes to the sixth edition of his *Ποιήματα* (Athens, 1965). A few are based upon George Savidis's notes to subsequent editions of Seferis published by Ikaros, Athens. The additional notes are included to assist the English-speaking reader generally, as well as the specialist in modern Greek literature.

### Page

- 1 The colloquial meaning of the title is "novel," but it has other connotations also, as the poet indicates in the following note:

MYTHISTOREMA—it is its two components that made me choose the title of this work: MYTHOS, because I have used, clearly enough, a certain mythology; ISTORIA [both "history" and "story"], because I have tried to express, with some coherence, circumstances that are as independent from myself as the characters in a novel.

- 1 *Poésies*, "Fêtes de la Faim," 11. 3-4.
- 5 The "poet" referred to is Dionysios Solomos, and the phrase cited is from his prose work, *The Woman of Zakynthos*, Chap. I.
- 7 Aeschylus, *The Libation Bearers*, 491. Orestes is speaking at Agamemnon's tomb, reminding his father of the bath where he was slain by Clytemnestra.
- 9 The quotation is from Plato, *Alcibiades*, 133 B. In a note on the poem, Seferis says that these words, spoken by Socrates to Alcibiades, once gave him a sensation akin to that evoked by the following lines from Baudelaire's "La mort des amants":

Nos deux coeurs seront deux vastes flambeaux,  
Qui réfléchiront leurs doubles lumières  
Dans nos deux esprits, ces miroirs jumeaux.

- 11 See Homer, *Od.* xi. 75ff., where the shade of Elpenor, youngest of Odysseus' companions, asks that his oar be planted on his seashore grave to perpetuate his memory. See also the note to page 281 on Elpenor.
- 15 The initials are those of Maurice Ravel (1875-1937), the French composer.

- 25 In Homeric mythology the meadow of asphodels is the dwelling-place of the dead. See *Od.* xi and xxiv. 12ff.
- 27 During the wedding ceremony in the Orthodox Church, the bridal pair exchange both crowns and rings.
- 27 The Symplegades, through which Jason and the Argonauts had to pass, were dangerous clashing rocks at the juncture of the Bosphorus and the Black Sea (Pontus Euxinus).
- 31 See note to page 11.
- 33 Hydra, a rock island off the northeastern coast of the Peloponnese, contributed substantially to the naval forces that helped to win independence for Greece in the early nineteenth century. This contribution is celebrated annually with colorful festivities.
- 37 Pliny, *Letters*, I, 3.
- 41 Sophocles, *Electra*, 694. From the passage which describes Orestes' participation in the chariot-races at Delphi.
- 45 Younger son of Hector and Andromache. At the fall of Troy he was either flung from the walls by Neoptolemus or killed by Odysseus. See also the *Iliad*. vi. 402-403.
- 51 Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 1. 958. The line is from the speech by Clytemnestra justifying Agamemnon's treading on the purple carpet leading into the palace.
- 59 See *Od.* x. 526ff. where Odysseus is instructed by Circe to sacrifice, on visiting the dead, a young lamb and a black ewe, turning their heads towards Erebus.
- 71 In a note to the first edition of *Book of Exercises*, the poet writes: "This book is made up either of various poems which have no place in any of the other selections that I've already published or might publish later, or of occasional pieces dedicated to friends, or of exercises, some more complete in form than others. Under the circumstances, the book has, I imagine, no other coherence than that provided by ten years of continuous effort towards poetic expression, and perhaps it is nothing more than a contribution to criticism."
- 75 Kifisia is a cool, well-watered residential district lying some eight miles north of central Athens.
- 75 Aidipsos, on the northwest coast of Euboea, has been a famous spa since Roman times.
- 79 George Theotokas (1905-1966) wrote a number of novels and plays, including *Argo*, a novel translated into English and published in London by Methuen and Co. Ltd. in 1951. Theotokas "discovered" Syngrou Avenue in his early work, *Ἐλεύθερο Πνεῦμα* (*Free Spirit*), published in 1929. The avenue, running from the Temple of Olympian Zeus to Faleron and the sea, was at that time the broadest in Athens, "one of the symbols

of the new era which it was our destiny to express," according to Theotokas (in *Ἐποχές*, Athens, February 1964, p. 14). In his *Ἐλεύθερο Πνεῦμα*, he writes: "Day and night, towards the Faleron shore, Syngrou Avenue carries the newly born and still unexpressed rhythms of a powerful lyricism that call for powerful poets." Cf. the second stanza of "A Word for Summer," p. 167.

83 Cf. Joachim Du Bellay, *Les Regrets*.

85 The *Erotokritos* is a Cretan epic of the seventeenth century written by Vitzentzos Kornaros, a work of 10,052 verses in the chivalrous genre, telling of the love of Aretousa, the daughter of a King, and the valiant Erotokritos. Seferis has written a critical study of this work, reprinted in *Δοκίμης* (see Bibliographical Note).

89 Book III, 1. 10 of his "Meditations."

101 See note to page 27.

103 D. I. Antoniou, a contemporary Greek poet (see Keeley and Sherrard, *Six Poets of Modern Greece* [London, 1960]), has served for a number of years as an officer in the Greek merchant marine. The title of the poem is a nautical term identifying the direction of the prevailing wind: between Sirocco and Levante, or ESE.

107 Pelion is a mountain range in Thessalian Magnesia. The centaur, Chiron, is said to have dwelt on its wooded slopes.

107 Santorini: see the epigraph to *Gymnopaïdia*, p. 61.

107 Spetses, Poros, and Mykonos are popular Aegean islands.

109 Omonia ("harmony") and Syntagma ("constitution") are the two largest squares in central Athens. The dialogue here makes use of "katharevousa," the purist language.

109 Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 659.

117 Literally "Stratis the Mariner," a persona that appears frequently in Seferis's poetry (see Bibliographical Note).

125 Aeschylus, *Eumenides*, 143. The cries are uttered by the Furies after they have been aroused from their sleep in the temple of Apollo at Delphi by Clytemnestra's ghost and urged to continue their task of hunting down Orestes.

127 On the eve of the feast day of St. John (June 24), it was customary in Seferis's childhood village of Skala near the town of Vourla in Asia Minor—as in other Greek communities generally—for the children to light small fires in the streets after sunset and jump over them for good luck (see Nikos E. Milioris, *Τὰ Βούρλα τῆς Μικρᾶς Ἀσίας*, Athens, 1965, II, 236). Among the various divinatory rituals practiced by unmarried girls on this feast day are the two mentioned in the poem:  
1) The girl drops molten lead into a container filled with

- "silent" water (i.e., water brought secretly from a spring by a young girl or boy who is forbidden to speak to anyone on the way), and the shape that the lead takes on cooling indicates the trade or profession that the girl's future husband will follow; 2) The girl undresses at midnight and stands naked before a mirror, invoking St. John and asking him to reveal the man she will marry; the first name that she hears on waking the next morning is that of her future husband (see G. A. Megas, *Ἑλληνικαὶ Ἑορταὶ καὶ Ἑθίμα τῆς Δαϊκῆς Δατρείας*, Athens, 1963, pp. 217-18).
- 129 In 356 B.C. Herostratus burned down the famous Temple of Artemis at Ephesus in order to make his name immortal.
- 131 Nijinsky: the famous Russian dancer.
- 153 Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 1,314; from Cassandra's speech just before she enters the palace to be murdered.
- 153 Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 958. See note to page 51.
- 155 See the epigraph to *The Cistern*, p. 491, and the note to it, p. 547.
- 173 See note to page 79.
- 203 "Bread and Wine," 7, ll. 11-14.
- 209 Ghegs and Tosks are the names of two Albanian tribes.
- 211 Vercingetorix was the son of a former king of the Gallic tribe, the Averni. He led the Gallic revolt against Caesar in 52 B.C., was defeated and put to death after Caesar's triumph.
- 211 Stéphane Mallarmé, "*Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe*," l. 1.
- 213 The opening line of Marcel Proust's *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* (*Du côté de chez Swann*).
- 213 Hylas was a page and companion of Heracles and the Argonauts.
- 227 In Greek: Ἡ Χώρα τοῦ Ἀχωρήτου. This is one of the epithets applied to the Virgin as the Mother of the infinite, and therefore uncontainable, Deity. From it derives the name of the Church of the Saviour of the Chora (Kariye Camii) at Constantinople.
- 239 The allusion is to the *Iliad*. vi. 457: "Then in Argos . . . you shall bear water from Messeis or Hypereia" (the line is from Hector's speech to Andromache) and also to Thucydides, vii, 87: "At first the Syracusans treated them terribly in the stone quarries. . . ." The relevant passage refers to the Athenians and their allies who were taken prisoner by the Syracusans after the destruction of the Athenian expedition to Sicily in 413 B.C.
- 255 *Louis Lambert*.
- 261 From *Mythistorema*, 7.
- 265 *Iliad*. ii. 560; from the catalogue of ships.
- 265 The citadel is the ruined acropolis of Asine, close to the

modern village of Tolos on the coast of the Argolid. The landscape has changed considerably since the poem was written.

275 One of two large gates of early Alexandria, Egypt, known as the Rosetta Gate in Arabic times. The other was called the Gate of the Moon.

285 Agapanthi (literally "love flowers") are African lilies. For "Stratis Thalassinós," see note to page 117.

285 See *Od.* xxiv. 12ff.

285 See *Od.* x.

287 Elpenor, to whom reference has been made in *Mythistorema* (Nos. 4 and 12), is a central figure in Seferis's poetry. In Homer's *Odyssey* he is described as a somewhat foolish and feeble-hearted companion who finally kills himself in a fall from Circe's palace while heavy with sleep and wine. Seferis has written of this figure as follows: "Perhaps you will ask why I write about them [the Elpenor-type] with sympathy. Because the men who belong to this category, among the heroes (in the Homeric sense, not, for God's sake, in the Carlylian) are the most sympathetic. Even the Homeric Odysseus, when he sees Elpenor, first among the dead, pities him and sheds tears. I do not say lovable or admirable, I say sympathetic, sentimental, mediocre, wasted. . . . He [Elpenor] symbolizes those to whom we refer in daily conversation with the expression: 'the poor devil.' However, let us not forget that these guileless men, exactly because they are 'easy,' are often the best carriers of an evil which has its source elsewhere" (see *Foreword*, fn. 5, same source, p. 502).

287 This line is from Solomos's "The Destruction of Psara" (1825). The island of Psara was razed and its people massacred during the Greek War of Independence (1821-1829). The complete poem, among the more famous in modern Greece, may be rendered as follows:

On the blackened ridge of Psara  
Glory walking alone  
Recalls the gallant young men:  
On her head she wears a crown  
Made of what little grass  
Remained on that desolate earth.

295 For "Stratis Thalassinós" see note to page 117.

309 The phrase is from the Introduction to the *Memoirs* of General Makriyannis, one of the principal leaders of the Greek War of Independence. His *Memoirs* is, perhaps, the most important prose work in Greek literature of the nineteenth

- century. See *The Memoirs of General Makriyannis 1797-1864*, edited and translated by H. A. Lidderdale (London, 1966).
- 311 Virgil, *Aeneid*. ii. 55.
- 311 Makriyannis, *Memoirs*, II, 258.
- 313 African lilies. See "Stratis Thalassinos among the Agapanthi," page 285.
- 315 Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 179-80.
- 317 *Thrush* was the name of a naval transport sunk off the island of Poros during the Second World War; see Section III of the poem, page 333.
- 317 Plutarch, *Consolatio ad Apollonium*, 115 D.
- 319 This house, at the sea's edge on the island of Poros, for a while a hotel, was called Γαλήνη (Serenity). In his "A Letter on 'Thrush'" (see *Foreword*, fn. 5, p. 501), Seferis says: ". . . that Victorian house in Pompeian red gave me, for the first time in many years [i.e., the autumn of 1946], the feeling of a solid building rather than of a temporary tent."
- 321 Elpenor (see note to page 287) appears at this point, followed by Circe; they become the protagonists of Section II of the poem.
- 331 The term "Soulmonger" was suggested to the poet by the *Agamemnon*, 438: "Ares, the bodymonger."
- 333 See *Od.* xi. The voices referred to in this passage are those of the dead in Hades. "The old man" of line 18 is not Teiresias, however, but Socrates, as is indicated by lines 21 ff., which are based on the *Apology* (cf. xxvii, and Socrates' concluding statement).
- 333 Cf. *Od.* xi.
- 337 The "old suppliant" mentioned here is Oedipus; the "invisible fields" are those referred to in *Oedipus at Colonus*, 1,681.
- 337 The allusion is to the star Antares of the constellation *Scorpio: cor Scorpionis*.
- 339 See Hesiod, *Theogony*, 270ff. The Nereids, daughters of Nereus and Doris, were nymphs living at the bottom of the sea, reputedly propitious to sailors—especially to the Argonauts. The Graeae, children of Phorcys and Ceto, were also reputed to be sea-nymphs: divinities of the white foam seen on waves, gray-haired from birth. The "rising goddess" of the following verse is, of course, Aphrodite.
- 339 The line recalls the refrain of the *Pervigilium Veneris*: "cras amet qui numquam amavit, quiqui amavit cras amet."
- 339 See the *Erotokritos*, Book I, 1,365.
- 341 With the exception of "Memory I" and "Memory II," the poems in this volume were written in Cyprus during the

- poet's visit there in the fall of 1953. See the poet's note to the first edition.
- 341 The quotation is from Euripides' *Helen*, where Teucer speaks of "sea-girt Cyprus, where it was decreed by Apollo that I should live, giving the city the name of Salamis in memory of my island home" (ll. 148-50). The quotation appears again in the epigraph to "Helen," p. 355.
- 343 Agianapa (sometimes spelled Agia Napa) is a village near the sea to the south of Famagusta, Cyprus.
- 347 In a note, the poet says: "Gourds which are used as jugs. The decoration of these gourds is among the more interesting folk arts of Cyprus: ornamental designs, figures of heroes, either actual or satirical. Only old men were able to give me information about this dying art." In this instance, the ornamental figures are representations of the damned as they appear in church frescoes of the Second Coming.
- 347 "Alakatin" is the colloquial term for the well-wheel mentioned here.
- 351 See Herodotus, I, 199: "When a woman has once taken her place there, she does not go home before some stranger has thrown money into her lap and has had intercourse with her outside the temple; but as he throws the money, he must say: 'I summon you in the name of the goddess Mylitta' (that is, the Assyrian name for Aphrodite) . . . There is a custom like this in some parts of Cyprus."
- 355 Euripides' play assumes that not Helen herself but a phantom of Helen went with Paris to Troy. Helen herself was carried by Hermes to the Egyptian court of Proteus, where she was eventually reunited with her husband Menelaus long after the end of the Trojan war.
- 355 Platres is a summer resort on the slopes of Mt. Troödos in Cyprus.
- 359 The phrase is taken from a fresco in a countryside church at Asinou in Cyprus.
- 363 Revelations, 21, 1.
- 367 *Paradiso*, XIX, 146-47. The allusion in Dante is to Henri II de Lusignan, king of Cyprus and Jerusalem from 1285 to 1324, regarded by Dante as one of the more lawless and perverse monarchs of Christendom. The poem has to do with Pierre I de Lusignan, king of Cyprus and Jerusalem from 1359-1369. See the note that follows.
- 367 The relevant historical background to this poem can be found in R. M. Dawkins' translation and edition of Leontios

# NOTES TO PAGES 371-393

- Makhairas' *Recital concerning the Sweet Land of Cyprus entitled 'Chronicle'* (Oxford, 1932), I, 215-69 (pars. 234-81).
- 371 A "Turkopolier" was the commander of the "Turkopoles" (literally "descendants of the Turks"), indigenous troops of Turkish or Arabic origin employed by the crusaders as light cavalry. The "Turkopolier" was always a Frank.
- 373 The translation is by R. M. Dawkins, *op.cit.*, I, 445. This work is in large part the source for the various historical allusions that appear in the poem.
- 375 See Dawkins, *op.cit.*, I, 595ff. (pars. 599-611). The specific reference is as follows: "And after he was crowned, King James sent to the castle [of Buffaneto near the village of Koutso-vendi] and they cut off their heads [i.e., of Perot and Wilmot Montolif]; they put them into a chest and set them on a mule, and brought them to Cava: and the mule died, and there they buried them."
- 377 The Bacchae were women inspired to ecstatic frenzy by Dionysus. It was concerning them that Euripides wrote his play of that title.
- 379 See Heracleitos, Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, B 15.
- 383 Aeschylus, *The Persians*, 894-96. The lines are spoken by the chorus as they recall the extent and power of the Persian Empire under Darius, and lament the disaster inflicted by the Persian defeat at the battle of Salamis.
- 383 From Psalm xxviii (Septuagint).
- 385 Aeschylus, *The Persians*, 447. From a speech in which the Messenger describes the destruction of the Persian fleet at Salamis.
- 387 In a note the poet refers to the wartime prayer of Commander Lord Hugh Beresford, R. N., who fell in the battle of Crete: "O God our loving Father . . . Help us to keep in mind the real causes of war: dishonesty, greed, selfishness, and lack of love, and to drive them out of this ship, so that she may be a pattern of the new world for which we are fighting. . . ."
- 389 Euripides is said to have been killed by hunting dogs while staying at the court of Archelaus, king of Macedonia.
- 391 Engomi is a village to the northwest of Famagusta, Cyprus.
- 393 Compare lines 21-37 of this poem with the following passage, relating to the Virgin's birth of Christ, in "The Book of James, or Protevangelium," xviii, 2, of *The Apocryphal New Testament*, trans. Montague Rhodes James:

Now I Joseph was walking, and I walked not. And I looked up to the air and saw the air in amazement. And I looked up unto the pole of the heaven and saw it standing still, and the fowls of the heaven without motion. And I looked

upon the earth and saw a dish set, and workmen lying *by it* and their hands were in the dish: and they that were chewing chewed not, and they that were lifting *the food* lifted it not, and they that put it to their mouth put it not thereto, but the faces of all of them were looking upward. And behold there were sheep being driven, and they went not forward but stood still; and the shepherd lifted his hand to smite them with his staff, and his hand remained up. And I looked upon the stream of the river and saw the mouths of the kids upon *the water* and they drank not. And of a sudden all things moved onward in their course. The "ploughman" appeared as a shepherd in the first edition of the poem.

- 399 The allusion is to the Graeae (see note to p. 339).  
 403 Cf. Heracleitos, "All things are ruled by the thunderbolt."  
 407 Hecate was moon goddess of dark forces and magic. She was often represented in sculpture as a woman with three bodies or three heads.  
 409 The allusion is to Proteus, called "The Old Man of the Sea" by Homer, always changing shape in order to avoid uttering his unerring prophecies (he appears elsewhere in Seferis, e.g., p. 101, p. 275, p. 311, and p. 357).  
 415 See Dante, *Purgatorio*, XXVI, 41-42.  
 419 Cf. Marcus Aurelius, "Meditations," Book VII, 1. 59.  
 427 The ritual alluded to here is among those performed on the eve of the feast day of St. John (June 24). See note to p. 127.  
 433 Rex Warner, among Seferis's translators, was a distinguished translator of classical Greek texts and a novelist (among his novels is *The Wild Goose Chase*, alluded to in line 2).  
 433 6-8. The allusion here is to the concluding section of Seferis's "*Thrush*."  
 435 In a note to the first edition of the poem, the poet tells us that "the lines following the reference to 'Philetaerus Socius' recall impressions from various exhibits in New York during 1965, e.g., the Museum of Natural History, *Guernica*, etc. The sculptor mentioned is of course Alberto Giacometti; see his letter to Pierre Matisse, 1947: (a) '... j'avais acquis la conviction que le ciel n'est bleu que par convention mais rouge en réalité ...' and (b) 'Une grande figure etait pour moi fausse et une petite tout de même intolérable et puis elles devenaient si minuscules que souvent avec un dernier coup de canif elles disparaissaient dans la poussière (see *Alberto Giacometti*, ed. Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1965)."  
 435 See *Jonah*, 4.  
 439 See, among other travellers between 1483 and 1750, Estienne de Lusignan, *Description de toute l'isle de Cypre* (Paris, 1580

and photo-copy ed. Les éditions L'Oiseau, Famagusta, 1968): "Pour n'oublier comment ce bestial veneneux fut extirpé du susdit Promontoire il faut noter ce qui s'ensuit: . . . 'le premier Duc de Cypre, fist bastir un Monastère de Moynes de l'ordre de saint Basile en l'honneur de saint Nicolas, et donna tout ce Promontoire à ce Monastère, à telle condition qu'ils seroient tenus d'y nourrir tous les jours cent chats pour le moins, auxquels ils bailleroient quelque viande de tous les jours au matin et au soir, au son d'une petite cloche, afin qu'ils ne mangéssent pas tousjours du venin, et le reste du jour et de la nuit allassent à la chasse de ces serpens. Mesme de notre temps ce Monastère nourrissoit encore plus de quarante chats. Et de là vient, qu'on l'appelle encores aujourdhuy le Promontoire des Chats."

439 Ramazan was one of Seferis's cats.

439 The allusion is to the poet D. I. Antoniou (see note to p. 103).

445 Plato, *Republic*, 616.

447 This section includes all but three of Seferis's early rhymed poems and all but two of the eight rhymed poems that he published after *Mythistorema* (1935). These poems are tightly rhymed in the original; some make use of traditional forms and rhythms, including the "dekapentasyllavos" (see *Foreword*, p. v), while others (for example, *The Cistern*) contain intricate internal rhymes and verbal configurations. We have not aspired to any sort of close formal approximation of these poems in order to limit the distortion that such translation would involve; their inclusion in this appendix is, in any case, a tacit admission that our versions, compared to the originals, are little more than bones from which the flesh has disappeared. Indeed, we have omitted the three early poems ("Σχόλια," "Εἰς μνήμην," and "Δημοτικὸ τραγούδι") because they did not seem to us to come over into English adequately enough to justify their inclusion at all. We have omitted one late rhymed poem ("Νεόφυτος ὁ ἑγκλειστος μιλᾷ") for similar reasons, and we have kept another ("The Jasmin") in its original position since in this instance we have offered a formal equivalent.

451 Book III, 1,277-78. See note to p. 85.

453 The Hydra was a poisonous water snake with nine heads that merely grew in number when severed—unless cauterized, as Heracles proved in destroying it; also, a southern constellation represented as a snake on maps of the heavens.

463 Homer, *Od.* i. 8-9.

465 A phrase from a song popular in the 1920's.

469 From *A Narrative of A. Gordon Pym*, Chap. 10.

479 *Pythian Odes*, 3, 21-23.

# NOTES TO PAGES 483-527

- 483 The image is from the *Erotokritos* (see note to page 85), as are several others in the poem.
- 491 Domenikos Theotokopoulos, born in Crete probably in 1541, is better known as El Greco, painter, architect, and sculptor. He first studied in Venice, and later settled in Toledo, Spain, where he died in 1614. The inscription cited was written by El Greco himself on the plan of Toledo in his picture "View and Plan of Toledo" (painted *ca.* 1609 and now in the Greco Museum at Toledo).
- 499 In the ritual for Good Friday in the Orthodox Church, the entombment of Christ is re-enacted by carrying around the church, and the village or the district in which the church is situated, an image of Christ lying as though dead. This image is usually embroidered on a piece of material and the procession is known as the epitaphios procession.
- 515 In 1156 Renaud de Châtillon, a French adventurer who had married Constance, Princess of Antioch, in 1153, invaded Cyprus. After carrying off what gold, silver, and valuable vestments he could, he drove the inhabitants down to the shore, and they were set free only after they had paid a huge indemnity. Hostages taken from the leading clergy and lay people were held captive until the ransom was paid. See Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades* (Cambridge, 1952), II, 348.
- 527 Christodoros was a poet from Egyptian Thebes, living in the reign of the Byzantine emperor Anastasios I (A.D. 491-518). His *Description* (*\*Εκφρασις*) is an epic describing eighty statues in the gymnasium known as Zeuxippos in Constantinople. See the *Palatine Anthology*, Book II: the description of the statue of Hermaphroditus.



## BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

The following is based largely on G. P. Savidis, "Σχεδίασμα Χρονολογίας τοῦ Γιώργου Σεφέρη," *Ἐποχές*, Vol. VIII (Dec. 1963).

- 1900. Born to Stelios and Despo Seferiades on February 29, in Smyrna.
- 1914. Moved with his family from Smyrna to Athens, where he received his secondary education.
- 1918-24. Studied in Paris, where he earned a degree in law.
- 1924-25. First visit to London.
- 1926. Appointed to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Served in Athens until 1931.
- 1931-34. Served in the Greek Consulate in London.
- 1934-36. Resident in Athens.
- 1936-38. Consul in Koritsa, Albania.
- 1938. Appointed press officer to the Department of Press and Information.
- 1941. Married Maria Zannou. Accompanied the Greek government in exile to Crete, Egypt, and finally South Africa, where he served in the Greek Embassy at Pretoria until 1942.
- 1942-44. Press officer to the Greek government in Cairo.
- 1944. Accompanied the Greek government to Italy.
- 1945-46. Director of the Political Bureau of the Regent Archbishop Damaskinos.
- 1946-48. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens.
- 1948-50. Counsellor of Embassy in Ankara, Turkey.
- 1951-52. Counsellor of Embassy in London.
- 1953-56. Served as Ambassador to Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq. In 1953, 1954, and 1955, he visited Cyprus.
- 1956-57. Director of the Second Political Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens.
- 1957. Member of the Greek delegation to the United Nations, New York, during the discussion of the Cyprus question.
- 1957-62. Ambassador to Great Britain.
- 1960. Hon. D. Litt. (Cantab).
- 1962. Foyle Award.
- 1962. Retired from the diplomatic service, settled in Athens.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

- 1963. Nobel Prize for Literature.
- 1964. Hon. D. Litt. (Oxon).
- 1964. Hon. D. Philosophy (Salonika).
- 1965. Hon. D. Litt. (Princeton).
- 1966. Elected Honorary Foreign Member, American Academy of Arts and Sciences.
- 1966. Appointed Honorary Fellow, Modern Language Association.
- 1968. Member, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N.J.
- 1969. On March 28, issued statement condemning the Papadopoulos dictatorship.
- 1971. Died on September 21, after extended hospitalization. His funeral in Athens drew a vast crowd and was linked to the protest movement against the dictatorial regime.