

**Yannis Goumas**

*translates*

**Kostas Sfendourakis**



**Yannis Goumas**

*translates*

**Kostas Sfendourakis**

Τίτλος του Πρωτοτύπου:

**“Yannis Goumas translates Kostas Sfendourakis”**

Συγγραφέας: **Γιάννης Γκούμας**

Φωτογραφία οπισθόφυλλου: Γιάννης Γκούμας

**ISBN: 978-960-93-4510-1**

Επίλεκτες Ψηφιακές Εκδόσεις: [24grammata.com](http://24grammata.com)

τηλ. +30 210 612 70 74, fax: +30 210 600 87 50

Υπεύθυνοι σειράς: [Γιώργος Πρίμπας](#), [Χαριτίνη Ξύδη](#)

Σειρά: *εν καινώ*, Αριθμός σειράς: 20

Επιμέλεια και διόρθωση κειμένου: Σωτήρης Αθηναίος

Τόπος και Χρονολογία πρώτης έκδοσης: Αθήνα, 2012

Μέγεθος Αρχείου: 1.0 Mb

Σελίδες: 74

Μορφή αρχείου: Flipping book, pdf

Γραμματοσειρά: cambria, 14

*Απαγορεύεται η αναδημοσίευση δίχως την έγγραφη άδεια του δημιουργού,  
του μεταφραστή ή του εκδότη*

Ο Γιάννης Γκούμας (1940- ) είναι ποιητής, μυθιστοριογράφος, μεταφραστής, ηθοποιός του θεάτρου, του κινηματογράφου και της τηλεόρασης, συνθέτης του Νέου Κύματος και τραγουδιστής. Γεννημένος στην Αθήνα, μεγάλωσε και σπούδασε στην Αγγλία, όπου έζησε είκοσι χρόνια. Συγγραφέας οκτώ ποιητικών συλλογών στα αγγλικά, πέντε στα ελληνικά (σε μετάφραση) και μιας τρίγλωσσης συλλογής στα αγγλικά, ελληνικά και τουρκικά. Διετέλεσε αντιπρόεδρος της οικογενειακής ναυτιλιακής εταιρείας στον Πειραιά για αρκετά χρόνια. Το 1994 εγκατέλειψε τη θέση αυτή, για να αφοσιωθεί στην καριέρα του ηθοποιού, παίζοντας μεταξύ άλλων στο Εθνικό Θέατρο και το Κρατικό Θέατρο Βορείου Ελλάδος. Τα "Πορτρέτα της ωριμότητας" περιλαμβάνουν 89 ανέκδοτα στην πλειοψηφία τους ποιήματα της τελευταίας πενταετίας και είναι η πρώτη έκδοση που ο Γιάννης Γκούμας μεταφράζει τον εαυτό του από τα αγγλικά. Αγγλόφωνος ποιητής -τα ποιήματά του έχουν κυκλοφορήσει από σημαντικούς αγγλικούς εκδοτικούς οίκους- έχει μεταφράσει ο ίδιος Έλληνες ποιητές στα αγγλικά (Εγγονόπουλο, Ασλάνογλου, Εμπειρίκο, Σαχτούρη, κ.α.), ενώ μέχρι τώρα η ποίησή του έχει κυκλοφορήσει στα ελληνικά σε μεταφράσεις άλλων.

### **Εργογραφία**

- (2012) Ανθολογία 1982-2012, Μετρονόμος
- (2007) Τα πορτρέτα της ωριμότητας, Heteron
- (2005) Τ. Σ. Έλιοτ: ένας συναισθηματικά άορατος ποιητής, Μπιλιέτο
- (2003) Ένα λεπτό πριν τα μεσάνυχτα, Μπιλιέτο
- (1997) Η σιωπή των άλλων, Κέδρος
- (1983) Past the Tollgate, Ερμής

### **Συμμετοχή σε συλλογικά έργα**

- (2008) Τα ποιήματα του 2007, Κοινωνία των (δε)κάτων

### **Μεταφράσεις**

- (2012) Ανδρεαδέλλη, Μαρία, Η αιχμαλωσία του ανέκφραστου, Μετρονόμος
- (2011) Παστάκας, Σωτήρης, Προσευχές για φίλους, Σαιξπηρικών
- (2010) Δίκα - Καπρίση, Έλενα, Άχρονος χρόνος: Η άρνηση, Οδός Πανός
- (2010) Παστάκας, Σωτήρης, Ύποπτος φυγής, Σαιξπηρικών
- (2009) Γερασιμίδου - Μάργερ, Μαρία, D. N. A., Οδός Πανός
- (2009) Συλλογικό έργο, Hellenica: Το καινούργιο εντός ή πέραν της γλώσσας: Ανθολογία νέων Ελλήνων ποιητών, Γαβριηλίδης
- (2009) Νικήτα, Δάφνη, Η περιπέτεια της Μπέττυ και άλλα ποιήματα, roema
- (2006) Γαλατά, Πανωραία, Mykonos People, Photo Gallery Mykonos
- (2005) Συλλογικό έργο, Νίκη Καναγκίνη, Futura

- (2004) Η αρχαία πατρίδα των ποιημάτων, Μεταίχμιο  
(2003) Ο χρόνος χάθηκε στα σύννεφα, Μεταίχμιο  
(2002) Μύκονος το νησί του φωτός, Σταύλοι Μυκόνου  
(2002) Γαλατά, Πανωραία, Στην έρημο του ωραίου, Σταύλοι Μυκόνου  
(2001) Δημητράκος, Βασίλης, Ποιήματα 1983-1999, Μπιλιέτο  
(1999) Χρονάς, Γιώργος, 99 Poems, Οδός Πανός  
(1997) Συλλογικό έργο, Κουνέλλης: Μ/Σ Ιόνιον Πειραιάς, Μπάστας  
(1997) Πύλος - Ναβαρίνο - Νιόκαστρο - Ανάκτορο Νέστορος, Παπαδήμας  
Δημ. Ν.

Πηγή: [http://www.biblionet.gr/author/75018/Yannis Goumas](http://www.biblionet.gr/author/75018/Yannis_Goumas)

Ο Κώστας Σφενδουράκης γεννήθηκε στην Αθήνα το 1968 όπου ζει και εργάζεται μέχρι σήμερα.

mail: [sfencos@yahoo.gr](mailto:sfencos@yahoo.gr)

Εργογραφία:

- (2012) Νίκη των τετριμμένων, Vakxikon.gr  
(2012) Νίκη των τετριμμένων, [ebook] Vakxikon.gr  
(2010) Φωτιά στον πάγο, Ενδυμίων  
(2009) Διάνθισμα, Βεργίνα







**from “Fire in Ice”**

## **“Fire in Ice”, Mr. Mihos**

As though I had put fire in ice  
do I wage my life in poetry  
bitter cold gives way to warmth  
“life in the grave” to “Christ is risen”.

With fire in ice do I burn  
and outwardly it drips as though I’m crying  
when now and then I call to mind  
poets lost aforetime.

“Fire in ice,” a phrase you wrote  
about me, Mr. Míhos,  
on your critical wall, but I’ve come full circle  
so I borrowed it and used it for a title.

“Fire in ice” in yet another book  
with rhyme and metre  
and I leave it up to the modernists to say  
“fire in ice” ... they both scorch.

## Gabriel

Gabriel lived in a house  
in an Italian quarter,  
but once he became known  
he ran off to Crete.

Gabriel didn't want  
people to know him,  
up on the mountains of Crete  
he wished to live.

Gabriel had burnt  
what documents concerned him  
in a wind-swept fire  
lit when he was born.

Gabriel lives in peace  
and in Haniá he has hung  
a bed of ropes  
tied to the moon.

Gabriel knew nothing about  
cells or leaders or races...  
the centre of his world  
is now on a tree.

## Diogenes

I dreamed of being a latter-day Diogenes  
idle and happy, free of responsibilities -  
I imagined myself - unmarried  
austere and living in my earthenware jar.

Sparing but short of nothing  
satisfying my hunger with bread and lime blossom tea  
and whoever stood laughing in front of me saying: "Look at this hippie!"  
I asked him to stand out of my sunshine.

"I dreamed it, number one, imagine  
I begrudge the way you are living  
with two jobs you cadge a living,

now shove this together with your other dreams  
- since one of your jobs is that of a grave digger -  
in a word, dig and go on digging, you jerk."

## Zombies

In concrete coffins human corpses  
with nonchalant movements drag submissions  
cold hearts sucking tears like sponges  
and wringing them out the latest screams are also quelled.

Modern towns, modern cemeteries of the living  
in a world society always apt  
to keep us godless in a lions' den  
and answering to "who's going to save us here?" "Nobody!"

## Dead Class

In the gathering of countless dead  
in a desperate husky, bass voice  
I shouted: "Here I am fecklessly present  
to share this decadence with you."

And the voice came out along with the pure  
sob which was the cradle of my hope  
to throw it now naked into eternal sleep  
in the void of my soul's chaos.

Thus I ended up one with the dead but alive,  
tied down to an insensate desk  
asking myself which file, where and when

and looking at life's rivers  
as memories now recreated by the mind  
in this pale spiritual cemetery.

## I Loved

I loved the stranger who bore a cross  
and every day he slogged away alone,  
I also loved the shadow of a beggar  
who went idly about  
followed by his shadow.

I loved Eros whose soft arrow  
aims at two hearts and runs through them at one go,  
of war I loved its hopeful ending  
I also loved the solitude's sacred silence.

I loved the guileless heart of every child,  
and their innocent eyes that look in wonder,  
I loved this poet's poems  
given the keys of my soul for them to enter.

I loved the soul's magic wings  
outspreading and covering worlds and skies,  
I loved every mind that fights like a rebel  
and won't remain a sterile, common mind.

I also loved life, the sun, the moon,  
the beauty of earth and sky, the heartbeats  
and if I came to hate death, before it took me away,  
with ardent love I drank of the immortal water.

## Reflection

Behind my grey window  
I see loneliness all over  
it is reflected in  
the street's wet mirror.

It is the shadow of every passer-by  
as if missing a piece  
what is a body looks lifeless  
or like a mouth lacking breath

or like a candle melting  
in the flame without ending  
and the melted spirit  
all around solitary and sterile.

I see this grey world  
behind my window and weep  
it hides its loneliness  
but the wet street shows it.



## Sonnet of Reminiscence

Beautiful childhood years  
gone along with the dreams  
they migrated like swallows  
but their life was mine.

Beautiful magical nights,  
their shadow on top of the shadow  
that misery spreads over me;  
I can no longer find their beauty.

Ugly forgotten hour  
you are still close to me  
on my aged body

without surprises without gifts;  
we'll play the drama together  
till we fade away together...

## Unsuspecting

You unsuspecting ones, return to your cages,  
your guilty tolerance awaits you.  
Pay the cost of your every breath  
and move, be you timorous, with caution.

You unsuspecting ones, sign but with blood  
a pact with the rapist of passions  
and if you can't distinguish where the lie lies  
it is in masqueraded truth.

You unsuspecting ones, look at the ad  
of your products, on it is clearly written:  
“Here are sold from a baby's first cry  
to what follows, be it of sorrow or joy.”

You unsuspecting ones, listen to your heart  
a monotonous rhythm is fading  
a rhythm for your ears alone  
that you unsuspectingly named life.

## Lobotomy

“Come on now, all of us gathered here together  
let us reveal plans that open up new horizons  
and see what we discarded, see what remains  
where our ways start and if they lead anywhere.”

And having said this they looked behind me alarmed  
and under the light I saw shadows approaching,  
thinking that certain people had it in for of us,  
I turned round, and what did I see? Persons that looked like us.

Looked so much like us! The only difference was in their expression  
as if inside them they were boiling over with anger.  
“They had already settled things among themselves,” I ventured.

They usurped visions, theories, from our brains  
and made lobotomies of us in each of theirs.  
Who are we? Which our ways? Only queries remain...

## They Told Me

They told me to build my submission,  
but I - feigning indifference - was looking elsewhere  
at a shabby Municipal bench  
where an old woman sat absent;

as if life was beautiful once  
and a part of it belonged to her,  
but now isolation was inevitable  
for life is the property of others.

They told me to build and bury there  
my life in squalid, dank basements  
and on hearing this I lit a cigarette  
to smother their specious words in smoke.

They told me everyone wanted to build,  
even that old woman sitting on the bench  
(ah, granny, you thought you were human  
before you landed among human wrecks).

But I never wanted to build,  
only to demolish, that's what I liked,  
in their empty soul I'll spit  
my fag-end.

## The Friend and the Enemy

In my flaming head I have a friend and an enemy  
and when one talks to me the other refutes him  
like two bar habitués under the influence  
who start wrangling and fighting, causing a rumpus.

One says I'll find myself naked in front of everyone  
and each one will point with horror at my wounds  
and the other says I'll be following in the devils' footsteps  
discreetly and no one will see me leaving any traces.

One says I need to find the ladder to heaven  
and climb up without fear and without looking down  
and the other that I should head with far-sightedness  
in this world, confident that I'll win it over.

Thus do they go on sparring and bickering over me  
and every time in my head the fire flames up  
mercilessly and on leaving they leave behind cinders  
in which my mind searches helpless and forlorn.

And yet one is an enemy and the other a friend  
I feel it when the sense of both follows me  
and one pushes me to the edge of a cliff  
and the other seizes me when I confront chaos.

And it's the only time when I realize  
that one is my friend and the other my enemy  
it's those tragic moments I go through life  
and a couple of steps ahead lies death.

But I don't see them and what they tell me to single out mentally  
I cannot, because neither enemies nor friends say such things;  
but I do know the moment will come when I'll decide on them  
before the night of life falls upon the afternoon's tranquillity.

## Silent Society

Submit without violence  
remain unwisely loyal  
what's the use of hearing  
your screams in slaughterhouses?

Just one word freedom,  
should it become the last breath  
we'll breathe life  
into every freewill outcast.

We are horsemen and you are horses  
our will is our command  
it is we who hold the reins...

we, the shifty types  
the powers that be  
in your silent society!

## **Incurable Flight**

My youthful days will not return,  
life absenting itself!  
The figures in the cartoons didn't animate  
as I so wished...

Now I look with eyes of silence,  
of nostalgia  
and I touch the picture with a touch of shame  
like a sensualist!

I am a sick man with an incurable flight  
without a future  
or one who lived on the earth of the gods  
and angels.

## Humanity

Throughout the centuries an entire humanity  
has been nursed with “at your command” and “slope arms”  
all countries on earth have become barracks  
and the people subject to “law and order”.

A humanity tied and gagged,  
now on the threshold of hell,  
the snake’s egg covers the universe,  
on the shell cracks have drawn a map of the world.

A humanity overcome by pains  
and in despair takes the wrong pill  
which deadens its memory and feelings  
and does away with whatever produces love.



## Ballad of Light

Well, we've set out on our journeys  
we climb mountains and cross oceans  
finally to get way from the same old things  
what the mind could no longer stand;  
we thought we had good grounds for doing so...  
this country dwells in the dark  
and in it sinks the innocent  
but then somewhere the light awaits us.

We got involved in others' games  
we were naïve enough to make ties  
and came near to being eaten by the snakes  
of those who loaded us with anger  
and thanks to our habitual shilly-shallying  
we grew heavy and remained tied  
to the altars of their obscure gods;  
but then somewhere the light awaits us.

They promised us riches and ornaments  
immortal spiritual juices  
but instead they gave us the flesh's trash  
they dragged us to steep precipices  
with rejection, derision, persecution  
and we kept hope hidden,  
buried in sobs of despair  
but then somewhere the light awaits us.

In other places in other skies  
in other hearts throughout the universe  
maybe deep down, in distant years  
but then somewhere the light awaits us.

## Ballad of Despair

We filled time for us to suffer  
in this hasty life  
and where can we actually find support?  
We are all here today, gone tomorrow,  
living helpless, earthen...  
and that bearded old geezer  
only in sketches does he dwell...  
who is to hear the requiem of our soul?

Composed we regard hearts  
through slits emptying like bags,  
strange, though we know we'll see them  
losing love's quality...  
Strange that even in prison  
with the rough prison guards  
we should simply ask ourselves  
who is to hear the requiem of our soul.

There are moments when we praise  
the eternal mystic's notion  
that we'll find salvation in him;  
a picture whiter than snow  
and though music issues from it  
to bathe us with notes of happiness  
at heart we'll ask: "Is this enough?  
Who is to hear the requiem of our soul?"

We are not guilty but blameworthy  
a head-on collision with our self  
a question lasting in time:  
who is to hear the requiem of our soul?

## From “Victorious Trivia”

## Victorious trivia

I blew hard to get rid  
of the clouds bringing rain.  
I blew for the rainbow to appear  
and moderate the greyness... the roughness.

But eventually I ran out of air  
and the clouds remained there;  
they formed that celestial monster  
occupying my nightmare...

and asphyxiated though I was  
I named the nightmare sky  
giving it supreme value...

living under new circumstances  
I came calmly down the mountain...  
trivia had carried the day!

## Coincidence?

*to Dimítris Soldátos*

Yesterday I was at the trade union's protest march:  
I sat on a bench across the way,  
it was cold - I was like an ice cube -  
but the fight is worth such a trial.

The march had rhythm, and as I watched  
the demonstrators, I kept beat  
with my left hand,  
for with the other I was eating roasted gourd-seeds.

I took an ardent part in the demonstration from where I was  
- what a just and claimable fight! -  
but then my left elbow got stiff  
and my jawbone trembled in the freezing cold.

Coincidence? No! Duty called for me  
to continue my fight at home!

## **Only with Life's Testimony**

Only with life's testimony  
do I proceed towards oblivion  
an endless, lousy punishment  
the powers that be, buildings, crowds.

Looking back on History  
to my eyes they seem like myths  
those who railed at "high-ups" ...  
obscure, their contribution, I'm not convinced.

I belong in an age of non-existence  
only what I don't want to be exists;  
but there is also this agitator  
who wakes me up when I'm asleep

to take what belongs to me  
what I have accepted from horror...

## Bleeding

“I’m Greek,” they heard him saying  
this untruth as a last resort,  
while looking at the steady flow  
of blood from his mouth.

“I’m Greek... I too am a body belonging  
to this country, I’m worth a hope,  
you’ll see...” But for them the man’s  
traces had been covered by a black peel.

“I’m Greek,” and in him his thought  
cursed: “Damn this nature!”  
It gave him away and who’d believe him?  
They waited to see if he’d peg out.

“I’m Greek... cover me in blood  
spread red all over my skin  
to change it.” His feelings of remorse  
had driven him mad on seeing the end.

“I’m Greek,” the others heard the negro  
saying, disgusted at the sight,  
and he in his black-skinned sorry state  
“I’m Greek” ... he called for love.

## **The World is gradually going Mad, Darling**

*to Yórgos Míhos*

Look at that tramp. The nice rig he's got on  
makes him a least meritorious beggar  
he drags himself along and looks up...  
the world is gradually going mad, dearest.

See that other one there how his eyes twinkle  
rifle on his shoulder  
before him he sees only enemies, a delusion!  
the world is gradually going mad, my love.

And there is she, dressed as a bride as usual  
ready for the wedding ceremony  
she'll marry either a king or a caliph...  
the world is gradually going mad, sweetheart.

But now let's leave the picture of the world  
mankind is gradually becoming a loony-bin  
let me be your world and you mine  
don't let the other world's madness spoil us.



## End Titles (a.m.)

“Three homeless people froze to death”  
a minor newspaper report  
“The carnival in Rio was a great success!”  
headline news.

Two worlds, one that is and not two -  
fighting without weapons and shields  
the one with an unliveable life  
and the other having lost all hope.

A picture of the world two scenes  
visible and hidden ugliness  
in the cold but in other winters  
is the fate that awaits them.

Three homeless people froze to death  
the carnival in Rio has ended...

## End Titles (p.m.)

“Three homeless people froze to death”  
a minor newspaper report  
and here I am at the carnival in Rio  
dressed as a king, in the lap of luxury.

Two worlds, one that is and not two -  
fighting without weapons and shields  
one with an unliveable life  
and the other thinking it has hope.

A picture of the world, two scenes  
one is visible the other hidden  
in the cold but in other winters  
are two worlds tightly bound.

Three homeless people froze to death  
the carnival in Rio has ended...

## **In Another Age**

The sky dawns kindness  
and all the people smile  
at the sun, there it is! So innocently does it shine  
and the whole town is all embraces.

The old days are back again;  
grandma's fairy tales to her grandchildren  
the swallows' nests on the balconies  
and the swallows yearning to return.

The jasmine smells so sweet:  
the place's welcome to the wayfarer,  
and the people upright, they seem  
honoured to be a part of each other.

And on starless nights  
each house mirrors a star  
breaths make candles flicker  
and beautiful songs in an all-night do...

But what am I saying? I have a high fever  
and I'm asleep and still dreaming;  
to wake up might be a sensible thing to do  
and meet the age of terror.

## A Prodigal's Fate

The eyes two baby bodies  
blinking  
are his own bats  
around him he sees but ruins.

Dreams not dreams  
words on blank pages  
two blades in the body  
loneliness and insomnia.

Misery becomes a sea  
and his hollow flesh  
is a boat repaired umpteen times.

He makes oars of his two arms  
and returns to his family home...  
such is a prodigal's fate.

## The Trolleybus Driver

On the trolleybus a few oldsters,  
youngsters, foreigners, a recruit perhaps  
the driver cool, mumbling through  
his teeth... Baudelaire's albatross.

The terminal - he reckons - is a grave  
and every stop is like a pale sign  
indicating the mistake to all who come aboard...  
the mistake that takes them straight to Hades.

And when it's time for him to knock off  
young and old look at him sadly  
as though he had left them to their fate.

What god has created  
this trolleybus driver? - they wonder -  
scared of his twin nature...

## **The Angel of Spring**

Tonight the angel of spring  
showered beguiling words upon us  
the hour of devoutness has come - he said -  
lamentation must now cease.

He said that death had been abolished  
that life would blossom again  
“the drama has come full circle”  
were the concluding words.

He came and presented lies  
as though glad tidings  
and we dead and gone, dried of blood  
nonetheless laughed our heads off.

## Ruins' Guide

Here it is in front of the earth the minefield  
here it is right in front of the huge chasm  
here too spread on the breaths a design  
covering the sky like a spectrum.

There's the soldiers playing the TV  
firing at ideas and scenes  
truth and vision for weapons  
laws and rules as allies.

A little further down we see the helot  
going where coincidence is taking him  
he'd rather not declare his dreams  
lest the Inland Revenue levies them.

Here too is the hammering of nails...  
everything is mutually attracted by chance and on purpose.

## **In the Mirror**

*to Philip Koutsoyánnis*

The sovereign strokes his hair  
and meditates with a fearless look:

“I have been given the gift of might  
by the people I lead by the nose  
and who measure up me completely  
though everything around is lost, destroyed  
I took their 'demand' for booty...”  
and turning to the window he says:

“Leave lovingly in the Sovereign’s arms  
the souls and the possessions.



## Poem of the Western World

The sun is setting and with a snap  
the earth's eyelids close  
with a whip and a carrot  
the West will take what it wants.

It's the truth, the sun is setting  
and sends successive darkness  
Egypt, Tunisia, Libya...  
leaving behind it dead marks.

Light will come from the saviours  
not from the sun nor the stars...  
it was they who made beads of fates

to play with them like worry beads  
in their skilful cold hands  
as long as the dirges are heard.

## Portrait with Labyrinth

*in memory of Jorge Luis Borges*

“March through the labyrinth  
with thousands of others who resemble you  
no one wants Ariadne’s clue  
everyone will remain in it as long as he lives...

And it abounds in fake exits  
leading you to dark spaces  
the work of some joker whose witty  
humane mind created it.”

I was speaking these words to my self  
and he listened to them thoughtful  
but then came an insect’s irksome sound...

For a while he loses sight of me  
for a while panic vanishes  
before returning posthaste...

## **There Exists**

I wander hunched, in tatters, through the sewers  
reciting poems not to be found in books  
I see rats laughing - a ludicrous sight -  
head despondent and heavy on my shoulders.

Thus incoherently I wade without rhyme or reason  
I look like a ship full of rust and empty of people  
my studies ghosts, not having attended school  
my sea dry, lined with roads.

I fly in a sky with clipped wings  
my sky a prison, a grey optical illusion  
and because I feel the two wounds on my back

it's proof of my existence obtained at birth.  
There will always be a death-like life for me,  
in a sewer, a sky, a sea, in something...

## Like a bad Dream

I a lame and funny jumper  
and you looking at me and laughing  
you a dream and a nightmare  
and I my self's bother.

You my soul, my life and death  
how I've longed for you to come out  
you drew me away from the world's corner  
and dragged me into the depths of the world.

In your eyes I discovered passion  
on your lips did lies enchant me  
I became a secret, I became an error  
I became the fire's smoke

and you looking at me and sneering...  
O my soul, how much you resemble my soul!

## **Magic train**

I open the window to let the sun in  
and give colours to everything, life to the flower pot,  
give light to what is dark while I remain the same  
with pitiless sins in the depths of my soul.

I shut the window and bring the darkness  
to immerse thought in my depthless passions  
on a trip by the mind's magic train  
which only me and no one else shall ever know.

## Oil

*to Christina Métsika*

Poems lighten at night  
when I'm sound asleep  
when the clock hands stop  
and the air brings them to my bed...

and they pass through the pores into my dream  
they see it, touch it, gad about  
and stand at the end of every street  
to smoke of the dream's tobacco.

But come daybreak  
they return en masse to their foolscap  
silent, motionless, in order  
without talking or nodding to me...

I am left with a feeling, a caress  
a smear of oil on my forehead.

## **The Storm and the Fairy**

*to Irene Deneketzí*

I'm not going to miss this storm  
I'll go out and start dancing  
the playing on a piano will be heard...  
I'll enjoy it.

A fairy will have kissed me  
in this fairy-tale décor  
the storm will have erased  
the deer's tracks.

I'm going to live this storm  
till it abates, till it leaves  
at dawn, only to return  
to another land...

## **Revelation**

*to Anna Góundra*

So it's time to introduce myself  
my good servants  
my words are convincing  
I'm convincing to the marrow.

I am the lord and master  
of you and your family  
the liege of conscience  
I am your voice.



In my system bleeds  
whoever wants to live  
the entire earth belongs to me  
to me the whole of nature.

I am your intoxication's wine,  
I am I, I am You.

It's not by chance that you've come this far  
I am the big idea  
it's me showing you the way  
the godly, vulgar way

I am the end and the beginning  
of the end of any hope  
I am your new era  
the meaning of homeland

and you meek lovers  
beggars of my desires  
I manipulate your strings  
my little marionettes.

I am your aching heart  
I am I, I am You!

I have you loose and enlisted,  
your "demand" belongs to me  
the "how" is not apparent  
in my assured victory.

Each new generation of yours  
bears my own marks  
mine too is virginity  
with your consent.

My traces are fresh  
on each of you for good  
which of you doesn't love me?  
With me you've become as one!

Which of you doesn't hate me?  
I am I, I am You!

## Lullaby

What torment aged you and yet  
what happy feeling made much of you  
that you donned love's body  
with that of decay.

Who switched this weeping to laughter  
who left a kiss on your lips  
and from the mouth issues a gospel,  
a white bird.

The pictures dripping their truth,  
who gave you two sharp eyes  
for all faces in the world to look  
sad.

He beautified your drab soul,  
and took it to his own sky...  
now lie down and have a quiet sleep,  
I'll be cradling you!

## **Puerperium**

A horse made of cloud  
black sea, dark glass...  
the sky a bleeding wild beast  
one of its sides like a red carpet

is heard groaning again  
its eyes are flashing with anger  
outbursts of temper, dense, turbid and grey  
disgorge yells of ages and silences.

The picture of the universe's upshot  
a picture that no one shall see  
my soul begets and resembles a puerpera  
holding her dead child in her arms...

## Change of Clothes

Loneliness is a boundless beauty  
a sea of alternating colours...  
Empty the wardrobe, no change of clothes;  
only a sense of non-existent things.

In the bedroom the expectant moments  
change shape and become wrinkles  
in a mirror where no one has appeared  
only cracks that look like blades.

A dog huddled up in the corner  
the fag-ends are out of the ashtray  
a birthday changing a generation.

The beauty of loneliness, expectation  
a woman's photograph in Ithaki  
coming alive by degrees... Patience!

## Acheron

Take my heart, squeeze it, add lemon, drink it.  
Words are difficult...  
We were children when she lit fires we put out  
with water pistols...

Now that we've grown up, the smoke chokes me,  
my loose thinking...  
And dreams become sacrificial lambs,  
riding on white horses...

Add lemon, drink her, don't drink her bitter,  
drink her at one gulp, without compunction...  
Such hearts are seen by the cold, lustreless eyes  
of the dead...

She was pure and guileless, soulful,  
when I ventured out into the world...  
She became a guilt-dripping rag,  
a drunken tramp...

Drink her having loved her, drink her when I'm gone,  
Blend her with lovemaking...  
For me another heart is moulded in the deep,  
in the bowels of Acheron...

## Response

So to whom does poetry belong  
in whose house - he says -  
no bloody poetaster is let in  
because he can't pay the rent?

Who manhandles her who molests her  
she who nurtures us like a mother?  
Who sells her like a cheap whore  
saying "the end justifies the means?"

No one can snatch poetry...  
She is born from the depths unto glory.  
She is a virgin dressed in silk.

She is not subject to anyone's vagary  
to the pigheadedness of any stuck-up geezer...  
The rest is hypocrisy and deceit.

## Transmutation

It's me, it's me, not someone else  
whose look filled with moonlight,  
with a soul sporting an angel's beauty  
with every breath undoing a knot.

It's not me, not me who I said I was  
I'm only a despairing shadow  
nowadays my look fills with shame.  
I am my conscientious objector.

Don't look at me, don't look, my dear  
I am your future, the future's horror  
holding your image for a crutch.

I'll look at you with these tearful eyes,  
for a life never to return...  
Fire you are, I'll desire you till I burn out!

## Insecurity

I'm afraid lest I should wake up one morning  
with not a single verse on my lips  
and without hearing this sound  
rustling like a leaf of my heart.

I'm afraid lest a moment should come  
and I'll feel my eyes gone dry...  
useless, parched knowledge of pain  
sighs will be devoid of tears.

I'm afraid lest one fine morning  
the tone of my life is marked by perversion  
in my voice, and comes out

as an indolent, useless cry.  
I'm afraid lest that day should find me  
looking for my soul up in the air...



## Native Place

I left Crete again  
on a Wednesday morning  
leaving the house behind me  
to generate life.

Into a bottle of raki  
I put hopeful thoughts  
loose words of poems  
and a father image.

This place has nourished me  
a sweet and bitter picture  
I adore this place -

this place, convincing me  
that though short, life  
becomes a lovely fairy tale!

## Torrential

*to Pános Tsakotós*

He puts an end to the beginning  
and makes another start  
he named the arrow “spirit”  
the sword “soul”.

He colours Hades white  
the sky blue  
he becomes a dot, a mark  
in the void.

He imbibes the world’s seas  
he wears rain  
he says: “I am mine”  
and lays off sins.

Without worry, without envy  
without cause  
like elusive time  
he rushes off.

He runs so fast that he catches up with it  
and overtakes it...  
now till he dies  
he’ll never grow old again!

## Nirvana

I went out on the balcony and watched  
depression going up and down the street  
the world a centipede  
“Where is this life leading, where is it taking us?”

I asked my other self  
and he replied in a mincing manner  
(for years I was flirting with him)  
“Darling what do you care?”

I heard him and went back in  
but instead of catching on, stupid me,  
my perfidious thought led me  
further in, on Nirvana’s screen.

“Ah how perfect everything is! Some magic  
wraps there the human casts...”

## **Buzz off**

Scram, damn you, get out of my life  
you've been after me for years now  
you want to deprive me of breath,  
do up my shoelaces first...

You are incapable of doing this  
only you come from behind  
and stick a gun barrel in my mouth  
preventing me from speaking.

Get out of this shack, you cunt,  
you've made a pile pimping  
stick the dough up your ass,  
and here's some pocket money from me.

Buzz off, you cunt, I don't want you...  
you circulate in parks  
wearing sunglasses and a tilted hat  
soulless, only flesh.

Shove off, you cunt! But you remain  
in people's cells  
the world's cancerous tumour...  
you are my slow death!

## Immobility

They stand still anticipating fate  
the thought of being alive is self-deceiving  
a saline sea is the world  
and they slaves gathering salt.

Immobile, yes, the traitors of life  
placed in its whose holy struggle  
children to act as would-be blood donors  
tear gas blinding their eyes with tears.

Immobile voiceless shrimps  
their look ending far beyond  
on a horizon hazy with lies.

Hazy with meagre dusty lights  
of a life slowly erasing marks in the now  
everyone immobile, everything immobile and empty...

## **In the Bowl**

*to Dimítris Triantafyllídis*

What hopes? What big plans?  
You are mere fish, swim...  
in any case you won't be out of the bowl  
safe in a microcosm you are.

Some food and the tide turns  
on top with mouth wide open  
from hunger, from wonder  
if you are still fit to eat.

The master's eye over the bowl  
you amuse him, he keeps watch on you  
around the bowl are greedy cats  
hoping he'll throw them some scales.

Who is to refuse, who'll say "no"?  
It's a little fish not a jackass  
it knows it'll then be caught in a net  
and thrown bare in the frying pan.

Which of you feels sorry for the state it's in?  
No one has seen a fish cry...  
that whatever floats is bait  
which of you happened to know this?

## Sleep

*to Yannis Goumas*

Sleep my little angels  
I'll tell you a story, sing to you  
sleep sweetly.

Sleep shshsh don't breathe a word  
you my flesh and blood  
boys and girls.

Sleep and whilst I breast-feed you  
you'll hear my voice as a hymn  
even though I'll caterwaul.

One time I said to the shapeless night:  
"Don't let them see me, take them and throw them  
away from the dawn."

Bed down, I'll lull you to sleep,  
the blue doesn't turn grey  
when the eyes are closed...

Only in the dream's whirl  
you'll think you've grown up  
because you are going ahead.

And in there you'll create Greek nations  
all of you who are even more mothers  
you, bodies, in there.

Sleep, swarm of my fertility,  
in your dreams I'll remain a myth  
in truth solitude.

## Colonel

He wants the rules and his terms to be enforced  
for the ne'er-do-wells to get out of the way at last  
envy and rage are his fellow-travellers  
on this road opening with saliva.

“Hello, brother,” the snails greet him  
it's the people's picture that deludes  
they look like machos when walking in twos  
but like snails when they slither side by side.

He wants the rules to be enforced and for poetry  
to provide him with what he needs to exist:  
an army to pursue glory and arrogance  
and everyone under the colonel's command.

And those who hear him ordering “follow me”  
to cease interpreting it as “spit at me”.



## Rapid Metastasis

Empty mirror, a sign of existence steamed up as it now is;  
our bodies always become counterweights of absence.  
A chain-smoking god, our breath tobacco, he smoked it all  
in his ashtray the anthropomorphous butts.

Irresolute slaves, life's beggars, experiments of sorts;  
scientific authority has undergone changes  
a society, suffering from old-age amnesia  
trudges along helpless, its kindred poverty-stricken.

Birds attempted to migrate, but couldn't  
before their eyes the surrounding ideals appeared rosy!  
But they ceased chirping, the double-barrelled shotguns came out  
the seconds laughed in pain to their last.

Perforce a revolution dies in a dream.  
Now the ancient carcinomas are increasing beyond control.  
With the speed of darkness, they metastasized throughout us  
"One time we existed," we'll say, "the prints can be found."

## Unsociable

Hump-backed life on the way to death  
countless sighs dance on it;  
it was man's lot that joy mixes  
with evil and inside him laughter and sobs.

The spot of the burning bush has been lost;  
who is a Moses now, who has the force  
to rouse the masses and burst their fetters  
to open a fissure in the oceanic world?

O unsociable society, world society  
the times have rendered you sham, plastic  
the atmosphere is full of human mania.

Now that you obliterate dreams, that hopes are lost,  
your time will come forthwith, there it is, lying in wait;  
fat obscures your eyes that's why you don't see it.

## **It belongs to Us**

This world belongs to us  
though we didn't create it!  
On all latitudes and longitudes  
it was given us gratis.

This world belongs to us  
and our childhood heart;  
it found its way to victory  
and the keys to hope.

This world belongs to us  
and we belong there;  
in the other world's expanse  
we are just passersby.

## Sonnet for Andréas

*to Aléxis who lost the best dad in the world.*

Battling against the waves, Andréas,  
you wondered what would become of the boy  
a fatal thought, a fatal moment  
fate's mystery, fascinating.

Battling in life you suffocated too  
the one you loved was oxygen  
you had told me that all you dreamed of  
you dreamed solely for him.

But now you'll leave him alone  
in that lovely little house, out on the balcony  
raising his eyes

and folded in the arms of nature  
thinking that he has a father  
who sends his love from beyond.

## To Vangélis

To this friend gone elsewhere I give  
a carnation, a laugh, a dawn,  
a dead wind-swept leaf,  
a word, a sea, an earth.

I take from him the look towards time  
that he shouldn't see my aging look,  
from his youthful eyes I take this pain  
and this sorrow brought on by loneliness.

Come let's have a drink together, in my dream  
there'll be just the two of us, no one else.  
I'll make a wish on this dark road  
that you appear like a sun, smiling...

## Contents

### From “Fire in Ice”

“Fire in Ice”, Mr. Mihos  
Gabriel  
Diogenes  
Zombies  
Dead Class  
I Loved  
Reflection  
Sonnet of Reminiscence  
Unsuspecting  
Lobotomy  
They Told Me  
The Friend and the Enemy  
Silent Society  
Incurable Flight  
Humanity  
Ballad of Light  
Ballad of Despair

### From “Victorious Trivia”

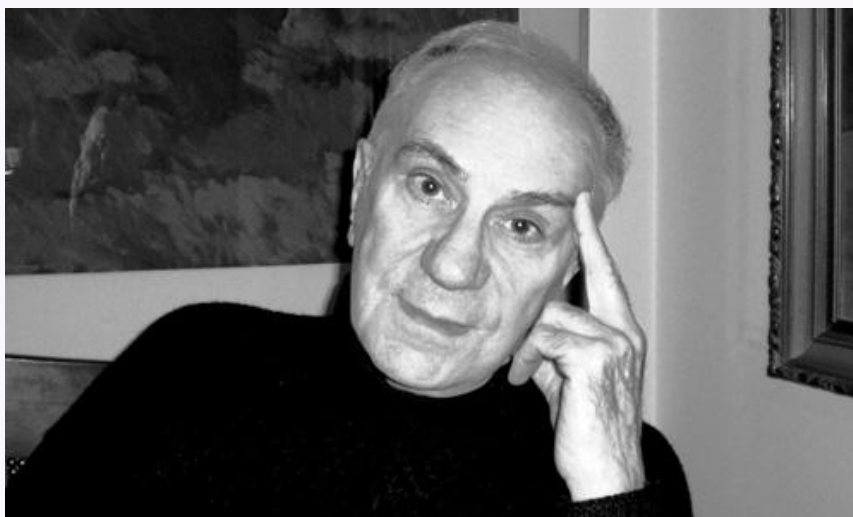
Victorious trivia  
Coincidence?  
Only with Life’s Testimony  
Bleeding  
The World is gradually going Mad, Darling  
End Titles (a.m.)  
End Titles (p.m.)  
In Another Age  
A Prodigal’s Fate  
The Trolleybus Driver  
The Angel of Spring  
Ruins’ Guide  
In the Mirror  
Poem of the Western World  
Portrait with Labyrinth  
There Exists  
Like a bad Dream  
Magic train

Oil  
The Storm and the Fairy  
Revelation  
Lullaby  
Puerperium  
Change of Clothes  
Acheron  
Response  
Transmutation  
Insecurity  
Native Place  
Torrential  
Nirvana  
Buzz off  
Immobility  
In the Bowl  
Sleep  
Colonel  
Rapid Metastasis  
Unsociable  
It belongs to Us  
Sonnet for Andréas  
To Vangélis









**ISBN: 978-960-93-4510-1**

***νέο Flipping book***

**24**

[24grammata.com](http://24grammata.com)

σειρά: εν καινώ, αρ. σειράς: 20