

ETUDES HELLENIQUES

HELLENIC STUDIES

LA TURQUIE EN MUTATION TURKEY IS CHANGING

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Poètes Chypriotes / Cypriot Poets

Theodosios Nikolaou

The poet's job

When at long last the angels close their eyes
And the flames of their swords fade away
The poet, who all this time, lies awake
Puts on the thief's uniform
Strides over the doorstep
And takes up his hard
And unholy job.
But he returns
Having enriched his sight
With the shapes and the colours of the things.
Blissful within the abyss of his ignorance
He smiles
Like a good hostess
Who polishes a copper vessel.

Of Nova Justiniana and all Cyprus

Great is the glory of the Archbishop of Cyprus.
He wears a purple cope like an emperor
Bears a sceptre like an emperor
Signs in red ink
like an emperor.

His title is not simply the Archbishop of all Cyprus
But of Nova Justiniana and of all Cyprus.
First of Nova Justiniana
Which is often omitted
For brevity's sake
Or because of ignorance.

Nova Justiniana... Nova Justiniana...
Where is Olden and where is Nova Justiniana?
There is neither Nova nor Olden Justiniana.
Where it used to be, other cities flourish now
With foreign names and foreign people,
Or its memory is only disturbed by iron
As it opens new ditches.
A memory that still burns without burning out
A yearning that doesn't cool down.

Nova Justiniana...
A stake that ceaselessly impales
The wings of imperial glory
Such a heavy anchor to be weighed.

(Translated by Andy Panayiotou)

Michalis Pashiardis

Poets

Poets keep memory
When others forget

Poets speak
When others keep silent

Poets mind the roots
When others cut boughs and wave

Poets ponder
When others refuse to think

Poets above all and always,
Always and above all keep vigil

(Translated by Irena Joannides)

A Soldier-Boy

There was a soldier - boy in the army
who lived in a different way;
the others didn't stomach him; the captain cursed him
and he laughed.

There was a soldier - boy in the army
who lived in a different way;
he had a hidden mourning in his glance, revealing itself
only when he laughed.

There was a soldier - boy in the army
who lived in a different way;
one day they left him dead in a trench;
might he still be laughing?

(Translated by Amy Mims)

Lefkios Zaphiriou

Poetry

Poetry is a garden
full of birds,
it sings of Eros
of Michalis, of Anna.
Poetry is a house
that holds the whole world.

But when freedom is lost
poetry becomes
rifle and sword.

(Translated by Irena Joannides)

My Mother in Spring

As the white buoys of spring
sprout forth
on the hills one by one
so your august face
appears
bathed in bright light,
a bust with two
butterfly tears in its eyes
from the tear-gas
of time.

(Translated by Amy Mims)

Plea

Do not ask me for explanations
of things for which I am not to blame
and for words which were never said
by me.
I speak with naked words
of things not at all imaginary
and so human:
bread, the labourer
and our crippled freedom.

(Translated by John Vicker)

Stephanos Constantinides

Fragmentaires

La poésie
dernière ligne
de défense
contre l'assaut
des barbares

.....

Le silence
dernier bouclier
contre l'assaut
des barbares.

.....

Si l'on pouvait
déchiffrer
une page blanche
on saisirait alors
de la poésie
le sens même
le plus
profond.

.....

Douillettement
Il attend
la beauté et la volupté
du monde
l'investissement
des vents
pendant les grincements
de mortaises
de la nuit.