STEFPHANOS STEPHANIDES

Karpassia
The Grove 16 (2009)

For equus asinus, careta careta, and the other rare species who accompanied me on the journey or who I met along the way

Do you remember when the sun moved into Virgo and we were pulled against gravity
To a thin place careful not to tread the rhizomes of the calamint by the rock
Where the Holy Friend found his sacred spot and where there is too much sky as sea swallows the sun
And in the purple hue turtle midwives come from far away to bring the science of nature
To the nature of departure protected as the whorl of shell in liquid turquoise embraces a flesh of fragile green
And when night fell with a torrent of rain and the lightning struck the defi drum
while the candle flame danced the leilaim And in response
Our bodies swayed as the island’s hull was turning till day cleaned the fields fresh

For the wild and wide-eyed donkeys bashful as they sing to us their kin
Olmaz Olmaz να με πεθάνεις πολεμάσ
And with gravity we turn to ask is this the homeward way toward a fertile Mesaoria lying fallow
The air, so thick you cut it with a knife and houses waste like time itself or space ships that have lost the ground
not sure if in this place their time is long or short this plain was once
the old sea between two islands was once
my dwelling till the horizon lifted to let us through
so I still wonder how to write thick poetry? How to chant for a thin place
Expecting Nightingales

At the smallest hour
I awake and wait
In expectation
The nightingale will sing.
The roar of the sea
Absorbing whistles
Of the passing trains
Hoodwinks me into slumber.

So I do not even sense
The rooster’s crowing.
The pink light eludes me
Stealing silently through slats
To soften Kathy’s sleep
And I hear a warm smell of fresh focaccia
In Raffaella’s buzzing at the door