

STEPHANOS 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 leilalim
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 πεθαίνεις 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