

Ο ΠΙΠΙΟΤΗΣ ΚΑΙ Ο ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ (1513)

Καθώς σὲ βλέπω ἀκίνητο  
Μὲ τοῦ Ἀκρίτα τ' ἄλογο καὶ τὸ κοντάρι τοῦ Ἀη-Γιωργιῶ  
    νὰ ταξισεύεις στὰ χρόνια  
Μπορῶ νὰ βάλω κοντά σου  
Σ' αὐτὲς τὶς σκοτεινὲς μορφὲς ποὺ θὰ σὲ παραστέκουν αἰώνια  
Ἔσπου μιὰ μέρα νὰ σβυστεῖς κι ἐσὺ παντοτεινὰ μαζὶ τους  
Ἔσπου νὰ γίνεις πάλι μιὰ φωτιά μὲς ἀτὴ μεφάλη Τύχη ποὺ σὲ γέννησε  
Μπορῶ νὰ βάλω κοντά σου  
Μιὰ νεραντζιά στοῦ φεγγαριοῦ τοὺς χιονισμένους κάμπους  
Καὶ τὸ μαγνάδι μιᾶς βραδιάς νὰ ξεδιπλώσω μπροστά σου  
Μὲ τὸν Ἀντάρη κόκκινο νὰ τραγουδάει τὰ νιάτα  
Μὲ τὸ Ποτάμι τ' Οὐρανοῦ νὰ χύνεται στὸν Ἄγουστο  
Καὶ μὲ τ' Ἀστέρι τοῦ Βοριᾶ νὰ κλαίει ταὶ νὰ παγώνει –  
Μπορῶ νὰ βάλω λιβάδια  
Νερά ποὺ κάποτε πισαν τὰ κρίνα τῆς Γερμανίας  
Κι αὐτὰ τὰ σίδερα ποὺ φορεῖς μπορῶ νὰ σοῦ τὰ στολίσω  
Μ' ἓνα κλωνὶ βασιλικὸ κι ἓνα ματσάκι δυόσμο  
Μὲ τοῦ Πλαπούτα τ' ἄρματα καὶ τοῦ Νικηταρᾶ τὶς πάλες.  
Μὰ ἐγὼ ποὺ εἶδα τοὺς ἀπογίνους σου σὰν πουλιὰ  
Νὰ σκίζουν μιὰν ἀνοικάτικη αὐγὴ τὸν οὐρανὸ τῆς πατρίδας μου  
Κι εἶδα τὰ κυπαρίσση τοῦ Μοριᾶ νὰ σωπαίνουν  
Ἐκεῖ στὸν κάμπο τοῦ Ἀναπλιοῦ  
Μπροστά στὴν πρόθυμη ἀγκαλιὰ τοῦ πληγωμένου πελάγου  
Ἔσπου οἱ αἰῶνες πάλευαν μὲ τοὺς σταυροὺς τῆς παλλυκαριᾶς  
Θὰ βάλω τώρα κοντά σου  
Τὰ πικραμένα μάτια ἑνὸς παιδιοῦ  
Καὶ τὰ κλεισμένα βλφαρα  
Μέσα στὴ λάσπη καὶ τὸ αἶμα τῆς Ὀλλανδίας.

THE KNIGHT AND DEATH (1513)

Just so, I see you motionless  
travelling down the ages with the horse of Akritas<sup>i</sup>  
    and the sword of Ai-Georgi  
I would place beside you  
with the dark shapes that stand eternally beside you  
until the place where you are extinguished eternally with them  
until you become a fire in the great Chance where you were born  
I would place beside you  
an orange from the snow-covered fields of the moon  
I would unfold for you the veil of an evening  
with red Antares<sup>ii</sup> singing the young men  
with the River of Sky overflowing into August  
to weep with the North Star and freeze  
I would place beside you meadows  
waters that never watered the lilies of Germany  
and I would ornament this iron you wear  
with a sprig of basil and a handful of mint  
with the arms of Plapoutas<sup>iii</sup> and the sword of Nikitaras<sup>iv</sup>  
And then I who saw your descendants like birds  
split open on a spring day the sky of my country<sup>v</sup>  
saw the cypress trees of the Morea stop breathing  
there on the fields of Nauplion  
before the waiting embrace of the wounded sea  
where the eons wrestled with the crosses of gallantry  
I would place beside you  
the bitter eyes of a youth  
and the closed eyelids  
in the mud and blood of Holland.

Αὐτὸς ο μαῦρος τόπος  
Θὰ πρασσινίσει κάποτε  
Τὸ σιδερένιο χέρι τοῦ Γκέτς θ' ἀναποδογυρίσει τ' ἀμάξια  
Θὰ τὰ φορτώσει θημωνιές ὀ κριθάρι καὶ σίκαλη  
Καὶ μὲς στοὺς σκοτεινοὺς δρυμοὺς μὲ τὶς νεκρὲς ἀγάπες  
ἼΕκεῖ ποὺ πέτρωσε καιρὸς ἓνα παρθένο φύλλο  
Στὰ στήθια ποὺ σιγότερμε μιὰ δακρυσμένη τριανταφυλλιά  
Θὰ λάμπει ἓνα ἄστρο σιωπηλὸ σὰν ἀνοιξιάτικη μαργαρίτα.

Μὰ ἐσὺ θὰ μένεις ἀκίνητος  
Μὲ τοῦ Ἀκρίτα τ' ἄλογο καὶ τὸ κοντάρι τοῦ Ἀη-Γιωργιοῦ θὰ ταξιδεύεις στὰ  
χρόνια  
ἼΕνας ἀνήσυχος κυνηγὸς ἀπ' τὴ γενιὰ τῶν ἡρώων  
Μ' αὐτὲς τὶς σκοτεινὲς μορφὲς ποὺ θὰ σὲ παραστέκουν αἰώνια  
ἼΩσπου μιὰ μέρα νὰ σβυστεῖς κι ἐσὺ παντοεινὰ μαζί τους  
ἼΟσπου νὰ γίνεις πάλι μιὰ φωτιά μὲς στὴ μεγάλη Τύχη ποὺ σὲ γέννησε  
ἼΟσπου καὶ πάλι στὶς σπηλιὲς τῶν ποταμῶν ν' ἀντηχίσουν  
Βαρὰ σφυριὰ τῆς ὑπομονῆς  
ἼΟχι γιὰ δαχτυλίδια καὶ σπαθιά  
ἼΑλλὰ γιὰ κλαδευτήρια κι ἀλέτρια.

This dark land  
will someday become green again  
The iron hand of Götzi<sup>vi</sup> will overturn the caissons  
and mound them with sheaves of barley and rye  
And in the dark oaks with the dead loves  
there where time turned a virgin leaf to stone  
on the breasts where a tear-stained rose trembled  
a star will shine silent as a spring daisy

But you will remain motionless  
with the horse of Akritas and the lance of Ai-Georgi you will travel  
through the years  
a restless hunter from the race of heroes  
with those dark shapes that stand eternally beside you  
until a day when you will vanish eternally with them  
until you become again a fire in the great Chance where you were born  
until in the caves of the river  
the heavy hammers of patience resound again  
not for ornaments and swords  
but for pruning hooks and plows.

- <sup>i</sup> The Anatolian hero of a thousand years of Greek poetry who wrestled with Death.
- <sup>ii</sup> The bright star in the heart of the constellation Scorpio whose name, appropriately here, means "rival of Mars." In July-August it lies low to the south.
- <sup>iii</sup> A general of the Greek revolution.
- <sup>iv</sup> Called "Turk-killer," a hero of the Greek revolution from Nauplion, mentioned below.
- <sup>v</sup> The German invasion of Greece reached Nauplion on 28 April 1941.
- <sup>vi</sup> Götz von Berlichingen (? 1480 – d. 23 July 1562), a German mercenary knight and robber baron, lost his arm in battle and replaced it with a prosthetic of iron.