

Lemon Tree Cottages
High Street
Sproughton
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21.V.99

Dear Panico & Elli,

Many thanks for sending your review, which I read with interest. I can only say that I have handled your book with interest, but as yet, for the most part, its secrets remain unrevealed. (I have the slightest sense of the Kouklia story.) I am in no doubt, however, that one day I shall read it with enjoyment. *("Ubiquitous" was not, I think, a nice way of referring to Elli!)*

It was also very kind of Elli to thank me. I was intrigued by the epithet 'lady' with which she tagged me. I think it would have been more apt to say 'I was amazed that a person who has little or no command of the Greek language should have had the arrogance to attempt such a task!' Of course, I couldn't have done it at all without the French. There are bits which I know need changing, and I look forward to going over them with Elli in early June, - that is, if she has enough energy left after the joys of renewed family life!

The following is my attempt at Aphrodite's Threnody.

This land which lies half bent and uncertain
In the Mediterranean
Like the Virgin with a twisted smile
Bore, and bears my grief,
The bleating of sheep,
And the cicada's lullaby

A soft place for my feet
Life breath for my lips
A sunshade for my hair
My delight
And also my sorrow.

I pass my fingers through your hair
They are like the flying fish who part the waters
Gentle and sure of something which is theirs

(I love this bit!)

On your upper lip three beads of sweat still shine
And I am sure that at your finger ends
Beats a small forgotten vein
Doing duty out of habit

And I, I am here, suffering forever like the earth.
Where is death?
The gift of the Gods, omnipotent and beyond price.

We walked under a fine rain on the sands
And beside us a story unfolded
We walked with bare feet
Within the dream and the silence
We suspended the ending in a place
Between the land and the sea

I now the endlessly thirsting sea
And you the endlessly quenching earth

Back there men will build temples
And will destroy them
They will bear children
And will kill them
But I, with your head resting on my knee,
I shall give birth to song.

Like a spinning pithea I search
One by one all the suns of the ocean
I sit and number the signs of our contact
The pebbles, the sand,
The pores of my skin

I stretched out on the soft earth
And said to you
'I desire a son to sweeten my breast'
I stretched out under the walnut tree
And said to you
'I desire a cloak to hide your shadow'

I now the endlessly thirsting sea
And you the endlessly quenching earth

Men build fresh temples
The gantries swing up and down (crane can be a bird) - could use fly with gantry : needs thinking about!
Like a thumping heart
I did not ever understand mortals
But I studied their shadows embracing at dusk
I studied the delicacy of their touch
And their straightened vision
I studied their tiny projects and their tiny days
Like a student studies an insect
Or a caterpillar

And suddenly I tire of sitting
Suddenly I want two wings
So that I may sit close to you May
Above a white shore without boundaries
And without end

I lit a fire and put figs and chestnuts in a basket
And sat down to watch ~~on~~ the road
The road was as straight and long
As the longing for the years of childhood

It is of no help that we fashioned the many
Woven threads of our condemned fabric
No help that we attended to the countless
Details of our fashioning
The important thing is that
I lit the fire this evening
So that I may warm an invisible presence.

But come, I shall bring you hot coffee and a cigarette
And anything else that cheats the silence
A book perhaps or a?
Only do not be too hasty to abet
The ticking of the clock
Over your dead memory

For at dusk an apocalypse will be born

Moon, I speak to you whom they desecrate
Publicly and without shame
For once leave your predestined and humble
Course as a satellite!
At this moment it is you whom they desecrate!

Is the only fate which awaits them
No silver nor light ?

Become human
And take up the flail again !
So at dusk an apocalypse will be born.

I put my sandals on and went down
The pathway through the ruins
Ivy clung round empty windows
At the fountain two spiralled snails
Were making love quietly and methodically
A little further on a few men with many standards
And at last the dogs.
The rutted road, soft padded
Framing crosses and question marks.
At dawn, 'before the cock crowed'
I sat down on a stone and wept bitterly
Like any mortal.

} (I don't really think this is right!)

This was much easier since the english was more accessible. I don't really know of any publishers,
but I have put out enquiries.

Simon is on the high seas, (not too high I hope) on a sailing ship in the Azores, fulfilling an
ambition to climb aloft and furl sails etc., Not my idea of an ambition, but then I tend to be reactive !
We haven't heard from James Reston, although Simon e mailed him and sent a catalogue of his plays.

Perhaps this has stunned him into silence!

Much love to you both —

Ronkins.

This may well be
misconceived!