

ALBANIA

Martin Camaj

A Bird Languishes

The Canon of Birds says:

Every bird shall stretch its wings and perish on the grass,
Punishment for having plied the forbidden border
Between heaven and earth.

A bird languishes upon the lawn, at death's door,
The leaves in the trees are
Unreachable birds and companions
Frolicking in the sunlight.

In the distance are two millstones pounding
At one another, as is their wont,
Silently.

PQΣIA

Regina Derieva

I Don't Feel At Home Where I Am

I don't feel at home where I am,
or where I spend time; only where,
beyond counting, there's freedom and calm,
that is, waves, that is, space where, when there,
you consist of pure freedom, which, seen,
turns that Gorgon, the crowd, to stone,
to pebbles and sand . . . where life's mean-
ing lies buried, that never let one
come within cannon shot yet.
From cloud-covered wells untold
pour color and light, a fete
of cupids and Ledas in gold.
That is, silk and honey and sheen.
That is, boon and quiver and call.
That is, all that lives to be free,
needing no words at all.

Constantine P. Cavafy

The City

You said: "I'll go to another country, go to another shore,
find another city better than this one.

Whatever I try to do is fated to turn out wrong
and my heart lies buried like something dead.

How long can I let my mind moulder in this place?

Wherever I turn, wherever I look,

I see the black ruins of my life, here,

where I've spent so many years, wasted them, destroyed them totally."

You won't find a new country, won't find another shore.

This city will always pursue you.

You'll walk the same streets, grow old

in the same neighborhoods, turn gray in these same houses.

You'll always end up in this city. Don't hope for things elsewhere:

there's no ship for you, there's no road.

Now that you've wasted your life here, in this small corner,
you've destroyed it everywhere in the world.