

NEW VOICES FROM GREECE

Christos Armandos Gezos Eleftheria Kyritsi Thomas Tsalapatis lakovos Anyfantakis Maria Fili Ursula Foskolou Thanos Gogos Dimitra Kotoula Loukas Liakos Konstantinos Melissas Vasilia Oikonomou Kleomenis Papaioannou Marilena Papaioannou Akis Papantonis George Pavlopoulos Petros Skythiotis **Dimitris Stenos** Stergios Tsakiris **Demetrios Xideros**

Aristi Zaïmi

DISCOVER THE NEW LITERARY VOICES WHO ARE WRITING THE GREECE OF TODAY

Hellenic Foundation for Culture is pleased to introduce to the international public at Frankfurt, twenty new, talented writers, who represent the up-and-coming literary generation of Greece.

Poets and prose writers, young in years, with one or two books published works under their belts, who were nominated by literary journals and started to make their mark through the 2nd Young Writers Festival at the Thessaloniki Book Fair 2015.

The anthology includes short examples of their work – a small taste of their literary art. The writers and their work are presented in alphabetical order, except for the first three, who moved to the front as a result of having won National Literary Awards.

Let's see what they have to say.

They will have something to tell us.



Christos Armandos Gezos was born in Cheimara, in Northern Epirus, and studied at NTUA. His short stories have been published in journals and anthologies. His poetry collection Unrealized Fears won him a National Book Award in 2013. His first novel The Mud was published in 2014. (Polytropon Publishing, Melani Publications)

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EXTRACT translated by Christiane Lange

K, I will have to eat something soon, I can't keep going like this, but there is no decent bakery around here and it is a shame for me to pay two euros for a cheese pie, made from dough that has been frozen and refrozen ten times and came on a hot air balloon from Tasmania, that I will chew on in the same apathetic way that a thistle draws water through its roots, no, it is not a shame, I correct that: it is a crime and a shameless / unscrupulous / ruthless crippling of the framework that each person must protect to ensure, as far as possible, a dignified and humane existence, not just because you owe it to yourself but more importantly because you owe it to the world that washed you ashore, fed you, sang you lullabies, gave you a tongue and a jaw that you are morally obliged to deploy in the most efficient way possible to maximize their use without reducing them to rusty screwdrivers or bald brushes, since in any event you will bombard your teeth with vitriolic acids and sugar and either way you will be pouring grease into your blood

-colon, stomach, esophagus, larynx, oral cavity. Look here, take a look, yo, dude, look at this cesspool stuffed to the rafters with garbage, I was away for a year, on second thought, not even a year, but let's say a year to make it easier for us to understand each other, and not only did nothing change for the better, but my temporary stay in a city like Fermin causes me to make a tough and perhaps a bit unfair comparison, to the point that I don't understand why this city continues to be called Athens perpetuating after a certain point a dissonant nomenclature much like calling a cockroach Napoleon, not only because the only thing these marionette-strungbipedsknow of wisdom* is the neighbour's niece with her little shorts and her floaty dresses, but mainly because this illustrious name looms above them as a placating but heartless God who leaves/ allows them to stand there awestruck and useless - if they changed it. I have an idea, here, listen! choose another god, call the city Janus, why not? What do you think? With his two mugs that look both to the past and the future, ahead and behind, behind to see what he did wrong and ahead in the hope of finding out where he might end up, with his two personalities, one that weaves around and one that goes backwards and forwards, forwards and backwards until it cracks your neck, it is certainly a more fitting choice than tiresome Pallas.

^{*} Translator's note: Sophia, in Greek, is both a girl's name, here the neighbour's niece, and the word that means 'wisdom'.



Eleftheria Kyritsi
born 1979, studied
psychology at AUT and
followed that with a degree
in education. She lives and
works in Athens and has
published the collection
of poems Handwritten City
(2013), which received the
National Book Award for best
new writer. (Mandragoras
Publishing)

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HANDWRITTEN CITY

ITINERANT TROUPE

The news had been circulating from the Athens News Agency for some time

The troupe would appear amongst broken sidewalks

Dirty faces, empty shop windows

Coming from the rainy streets of the Dublin night

They had learned many versions of the play

One for each country

One for mine too

Where brothers shared their blood and sang

Some in the forest, some in their houses and some just mumbling

The troupe knew all that, it had roots

It had always been ready for such

They lifted the booms at the border

Got back in the bus and followed the arteries of the map

To where that, which was finished, definitively had to end

Wore their costumes and raised the curtain



Thomas Tsalapatis

born 1984, studied theatre at the University of Athens. His first book of poems, The Dawn Kills, Mr. Krak was published in 2011 and received the National Literary Award for best new writer the following year. He has also published a Greek translation of poems by W.B. Yeats and writes for various papers and journals. (Ekati Publishing)

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POEM translated by Thodoris Chiotis

THE BOX

I have a small box in which someone is always being slaughtered.

It is a little larger than a shoebox. A little less elegant than a box with cigars. I do not know who, I do not know whom, but someone is being slaughtered in there. And you cannot hear a sound (except for the times when you can). I place it on the library, on the table when I want to spend my hours looking at it, away from the windows so the sun won't discolour it, underneath my bed when I want to feel naughty. Inside it someone is being slaughtered, even when we have a celebration in our house, even on Sunday, even when it's raining.

When I found the box – I am not going to say how, I am not going to say where -, I brought it home feeling satisfied. At the time, I thought I could hear the sound of the sea. However, in there massacres are taking place.

I started to be sickened by the noise, the knowledge of the events, the events inside the box. Its presence started making me sick. I had to act, to liberate myself, to calm down, to take a bath. Decisions had to be made.

So, I mailed it to a friend; a friend whom I keep only to give gifts to. I wrapped the box inside a piece of innocent colourful cardboard with an innocent colourful ribbon. Inside the mailbox there is a box and inside that box someone is being massacred. Stored inside the mailbox, it is waiting to arrive in the hands of a friend. A friendship I maintain solely for gift-giving.



lakovos Anyfantakis

born 1983 in Crete, is a doctoral student at Panteion University, writing a dissertation on how the history of the 40s has imprinted itself on Greek literature. His first novella Foxes on the Hillside was published in 2013. (Patakis Publishers)

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FOXES ON THE HILLSIDE

t was the summer of 09 and I was a lecturer at the University of Ioannina. During August, I staved in town. I had some time before decided to rework my dissertation on The Clown by Heinrich Böll, in the hope of having it published. In the afternoons I took the car and went to the nearby beaches. It was a lonely summer. During the winter I had fooled around with a sophomore, Vaso. She might have been chubby and not the most beautiful, but she was nineteen. Her skin did not have a single blemish on it. She held me clumsily when she took me in her mouth and let me come there without shame. Come July, I kicked her back to Larisa. where her parents were, and felt nostalgic for her lack of experience. The summer flowed slowly between books, my handwriting and tons of notes that I had accumulated over the last ten years. Ioannina was cold and dingy. Even in August the temperature in the city did not rise above thirty degrees. I worked until four. ate hurriedly and then I was free. Sometimes I went down to take a walk around town. I used to sit at a café near the lake with whatever book I had bought on impulse along the way. When I felt disconnected from reality. I would buy a newspaper, even if I had already learned whatever news interested me from the internet in the morning or from the radio as I was driving in the afternoon. The waitress at the cafe was touching. Beautiful, young, could be my student, but was not, had an earring in her nose, another in her brow and a third cheekily protruded from her tongue. But to her I was just another uninteresting customer about to have a midlife crisis and not someone she would think about as she changed her underwear.



Maria Fili was born in Athens in 1993. She is a student in the Art History Department at the Fine Arts Academy. Her collection of poems The Strangest Asset of Insects was published in 2014, (Melani Publications)

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AGORAS

push this body up against mine. His back is tight and certain for almost a decade now and all the other parts unsure, sparse like a hypothesis. For me he was a statue before the pain was even hewed. Bust of back and shoulders worn with a white shirt. With starfish fingers I was clung on to him. And when I was shaking my head away from him he was saying, she loathes me how greatly she loathes me, but I didn't understand why since I was always clung on to him. He just had that wet rusty smell of machines and he was soaking his bread in the milk and he was securing the meat mincer machine onto the staircase and he was taking me to the sea and he was singing to me the cloud that brought rain and he was never scolding me and I thought he was an aviator such a tall man he was standing up at the gunwale and my feet were shaking from fear that he was going to fall onto the cement and he was simple very simple when he was gathering figs in his fig orchard and he always had a hole in one of his socks and he was saying she loathes me but he only had that strange rusty smell.

So I push his body up against mine and even though he knows what the heavy purpose of the clouds is, steady he waits for me to finish.

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The cross is a symbol that only the moribund carry, they stuff themselves full to their stomachs which are being dragged across the ground and they await

these mortals to birth from their insides the eternal child. I also remember

of women crying in search of some belief inside desolate towers, I remember

the woodpeckers around them with monotonous pecking in the margins, to have already synchronized their beaks

with the days of rain they await of. And all they do is await

these mortals and they transform into what they await of and they smell of what they await of and they sound as what they await of. And I say

didn't I make it fine until here grandpa?



Ursula Foskolou was born in Athens in 1986. Her translations, reviews and short stories have been published in numerous literary journals, and her first collection of short stories is forthcoming. (Kichli Publishing)

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WHITOUT A FACE

ast night a faceless man entered the bar. He took a seat and showed me a bottle of aged bourbon with his hand. I placed it in front of him with an empty glass on the side and stood there, waiting for something to happen. He had no eyes, nor a nose, nor a mouth to drink from. Yet he stayed there all night. Leaning on my elbows. I stared at him. I opened the bottle and —as he wasn't drinking— I poured myself a glass. I then started blabbing about the lonely. infinite nights in the city. I even talked about you. The faceless man rested his hands on the counter and tapped the passing seconds with his fingers. Suddenly, he stopped. He turned his head and with a sound much like a wave crashing against rocks, he fell on the floor. Several droplets reached my lips and I licked them: they were salty, just like tears.

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A BAR

here's a bar, where I sometimes go to drink: with high stools, wooden counters, a rooster for a mascot. She comes, leaning on top of me with a cloth, sweeping peanut shells and cigarette butts. Her mouth smells of freshly cut lemons. Every night, before I close my eyes, I wonder how she might kiss. Yesterday I dreamt of her lips, half-parted. She was looking towards me, yet she couldn't see me and when I told her that I loved her she answered with a rooster voice: Acta est fabula. Plaudite! I then got up from the floor, I payed the bill and left.



Thanos Gogos

hails from Larisa, where he was born in 1985. He is an editor on the literary journal Thraka. Frontier Playground, his first collection of poems, was issued in 2013, followed by Glasgow in 2014. (Farfoulas Publishing, Thraka Publishing)

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VERBATIM YET UNMEMORABLE

God is the imprint of the vagina

The velvety blue word

While He counterfeits steel out of the nights

God is the masked avenger

Rid of love and your logic «rid of the woodpecker»

He is heresy

My perpetual aluminium teeth

Genderless

When they dissect the naked hours and you desperately try to grasp it

God exists self-sown

Ready for total re-examination of the product.



Dimitra Kotoula

was born and raised in Xanthi. She studied history and archaeology in Ioannina and currently works as an archaeologist in Athens. Her collection of poems *Three Notes of a Song* came out in 2004. Her poems, short stories and translations have been published in various Greek and foreign journals. Her poems have been translated into the main European languages. (Nefeli Publishing)

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MANIFESTO

There are incidents between you and me still to be revealed —incidents that only the elegy which erodes this poem can know that define us announcing our faintest breath as a political reality moving these roses between you and me a little closer to History while the petals' yellow fluff lightly dusts the words of this poem :the next day: (the symbols you keep in your backpack are not enough) :just the wind's flute blowing hot air:

(no longer do you have the luxury to passionately engage the nation)

The thought curls into herself bares her thorns.

I wanted love.

To ponder an immaculate conception here between you and me a little closer to the wail of history.

Afterwards we forget. naïvely deny: as I look down at my palms they fill with dirty rotten light.



Loukas Liakos

Is a factory worker, husband and father of three from Leivadia. His collection of poems *Fate in Another World* came out in 2013. (Endymion Publishing)

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THIRD DEGREE

domination.

I'm flashing, red dot in a dark sky the oceans under have no healing we have survived together for so long without a possibility of choice with moments of curiosity without protests. It's time. to break the chains which bind us this clutter irritates us it sounds, the trumpet of voices You are, the player that I love I come avid unappeasable frost primordial cataract



Konstantinos Melissas

His first book is *Innocent Plagiarism*, in which he attempts to illustrate the self-destructive phenomenon of plagiarism that haunts Greek poetry. (Shakespeare Books)

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Here at the final frontier
of the skyline
a huge park
and the clouds across
old houses of Neapoli,
middle-aged flats of Thessaloniki
and brand-new skyscrapers of New York.

Builded by ants
pitch-black maggots
sprawling through the heat
engaged in building the sky using cobbles
and me, with a "Camel 240" in my back
looking at them and cooling them with water.

Here, at the last stop of Sheikh Sou which some slavishly named "Panorama".

There are no workshops for the city's gentrification or the designation of the old mayor, but nature's labs

are constructing the non-existent yesterday the fleeting today and the never appearing future.

Here, on the verge of the small world of Thessaloniki, at Panorama after Exohi, 15 miles from the fire station, at 6:30 p.m.

in the serenity of nature but mostly the soul the light pulverizes the clouds and turns the houses of Neapolis the flats of Thessaloniki and the skyscrapers of New York into universal building debris.

Here all alone
away from the crisis
the tests of New York
fights like
"I didn't help,
You didn't help,
You didn't love me as much as I did".
But I am not alone
in this universal park.
You are here as well
and, yes, Avgi is too.



Vasilia Oikonomou was born in Pireaus in 1983. She studied history in Ioannina and has been published in various literary journals. Her first poetry collection is *Balance of Abstraction*. (Govostis Publishing)

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BALANCE OF ABSTRACTION

BIRTHDAY

I have an unborn daughter

Fortunately nothing like me

She is obscene

She is tough

She is just as she should be

She doesn't need me

She doesn't love me

She knows me from before

I carry her on my chest

I show her off

I hide her

I sing to her in the evenings, as I drink

I kiss her on the mouth

As if I love her

As if she is mine

As if it is real

She turns away and spits

She owes it to me

That I did not give her feet with which to flee

She owes it to me

That I did not give her a voice with which to curse

That is how

I have an unborn daughter

Who will never die



Kleomenis Papaioannou
was born in 1990.
He studied international
relations and history at
Panteion University.
Letter on a Foolish Heart
is his first collection of poetry.
(Vakxikon Publishers)

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DECONSTRUCTING THE UNIVERSE

NO LIMITS

The limits were just

lines I ignored,

rules I crossed out,

borders I went by

and everything I

broke

tore apart

broke down

repelled

condemned

subverted

took back

cut

got rid of

erased

destroyed

annulled

and burnt to get to you.

I'm not keeping it a secret from you,

I broke down the universe to get to you.



Marilena Papaioannou

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born Athens 1982, studied dance as a child but eventually went on to university studies in genetics and molecular biology. Her first novel *Delta Nikitas* was published in 2013 and she has a second novel forthcoming. (Hestia Publishers & Booksellers)

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hey had sent Vassilis here to organize the locals. Of course, back then, while the Germans were breathing down our necks. almost no one knew this: we found out about it later on, when the other war had started. In the beginning, we all thought that he was a solitary carpenter, who rarely came out at daylight; that's what I thought too. I found out the truth some time later. A few months after he met Nikitas. Vassilis took him with him in the backwater: do you want to print for us. he asked him, and my son answered, yes. I do. To be honest, he didn't quite feel an urge to do so, no, but since he didn't want to carry a riffle, nor could his skinny legs and weak lungs bear the running, he reckoned he should go for it, so that he wouldn't have to listen to Dido's wining. I must admit. though, that I thank God Vassilis realized that my son was not meant for holding a gun and thus set him up in the attic to do all their printing. In fact, once, just for a fleeting moment, I saw Vassilis with my own eyes; he was at a distance. I saw him and I was bedazzled. He was a huge man, quite a beast. He must have been around thirty at the time. He was also from Smyrna, motherless, she'd died during labor. He ended up in Mytilini after the Catastrophe. The locals used to say that his father tied him on a scantling and swam all the way until Chios, having the boy on the side. For two days and two nights. they were tossed around the sea storm and by the time they reached land, Vassilis was already bloated. I'm not quite sure he's going to make it through the night; those were the doctor's words to Vassilis' father, sohe sent them with a small boat here.Back then, we had a great pediatrician, Kyritsis; he saved the boy and ever since, Vassilis grew up in Agia Kyriaki, having the neighborhood's women as his mothers. All of them!



Akis Papantonis

...30

(b. 1978, Athens, Greece) studied biology at the University of Athens, worked as a researcher at Oxford University and is currently a professor at the University of Cologne. He has published prose in Greek and Anglophone journals and has contributed short stories to anthologies. For Karyotype (Kichli Publishing) his first book, he received the 2015 First Book Award (Anagnostis).

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The time is at hand when you will have forgotten everything; and the time is at hand when all will have forgotten you.

—Marcus Aurelius. "The Meditations"

HERE WERE DAYS WHEN THE MIST WOULD GIVE WAY.

Those days the color of the paved sidewalks would reveal itself, and so would the dry patches of lawn in the front gardens and the mold growing on the roofs of the like-next-to-like houses. Those days the trees would be relieved of some sort of invisible weight, and it felt as if the town was taking a deep, long, breath.

It was those days that he would take long, premeditated, walks, All by himself, wrapped up in a scarf and coat, and in multiple layers of clothes. He would climb up the seven steps to the sidewalk, counting them one-byone, every single time, as if taken over by a fear of finding—at some point or other—that there would be more or less than seven of them. Once he reached the top, he would touch the sidewalk with the tip of his shoe—as if testing the water temperature of a (hypothetical) sea. And then he would set out; keeping to the sidewalk, making sure each footstep landed precisely within the four sides of its tiles, or—if snow had fallen—precisely on the last passerby's footmark. He would always walk slowly. He would always cross the street via the zebra-crossings. And he would always navigate using the same signs; the red Royal Mail post box around the corner, the deserted Fox & Hounds pub. the corner house of that hideous green color, the bearded homeless man by the town library back wall, the window of the tea shop in the Covered Market. Always the same left and right turns on the map of his everyday life, making sure he wouldn't get lost in a city he barely knew—already three years there.

One Thursday afternoon the signs had vanished. He paid no attention and climbed up the seven steps as usual. Fresh snow had fallen against the windows of his flat and now covered the whole of the red post box. The Fox & Hounds pub was turning into a Tesco's; the hideously-colored house was all wrapped up in nylon, and workers wearing space suits were rushing in and out; the bearded homeless man was nowhere to be found. He kept on walking, he did not believe in signs.



George Pavlopoulos

was born in Athens in 1980. He is the author of three novels: 300 Kelvin in the Afternoon (Alexandria, 2007), Steam (Kedros Publishers, 2011) and The Limit and the Wave (Potamos, 2014). He has also written several travelogues and short stories. He currently lives in Berlin.

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ong before the city's great urbanization. the building where Steam was situated had been used as a meeting point for cows, where work-roughened hands would milk an army of udders and, thanks to a basic distribution network that operated with carriages, a whole population-the children of which would constitute the first middle-classes of the city-had been fed with milk. When those children had drunk their fill of milk and grown up sufficiently. Pavoise had made his appearance in town. He was a faithful follower of Baron. Haussmann and a distant relative of Bloven. who had been called to design the new face of the urban landscape beginning with mapping out a great ring called The Square of Independence-a notion that never quite reached the limits of its meaning-and around which seven wide boulevards pointed like arrows. the most impressive being the Boulevard of Collective Visions, which later had been renamed Boulevard Dylain. A new urban landscape had been created in parallel to the restructuring of the human geography; vast roads had been constructed in which generations of people had worked and mixed, erected buildings and built legends, brought down institutions and died; a population flow that had cemented the achievements of the middle-classes. This was the vision of the masses that had built the city. inside of which-as expected-there had been no room left for cows, which had been escorted to the surrounding valleys without anyone ever seeing their vast procession leaving the city. They'd been abandoned in free-range grasslands for imminent slaughter, waiting in vain for their return to the city, even as ghosts, or even as part of a sentimental special in some environmental magazine.



Petros Skythiotis born 1992 in Larisa, studied education and currently lives in Florina, where he is completing his Master's degree. His first collection of poems A Treaty of Balance was published in 2014.

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AMERICAN

We were analyzing Alberto's second cup of coffee when I told him I was hungry. He repeated that food is a social construct of the godless, but I insisted that he turn on the stove. He stood up and pushed the television button. Immediately a tray full of stardust opened under the screen. He picked it up and put it in my coffee. What are you looking at, he said, there's nothing more nourishing.

This is why man walked on the moon.

FEMALE-SHAPED AMPHORAE

Alberto kept in his garden three statues of women. One was missing its arms, the other its legs, the third one had no details. How long you love, he said, is the time it takes to sculpt the idol. How much you love is in the clarity of its details. It was all that I could learn from them,

It was all that I could make. Maybe it would take just one, I said, just one out of warm clay and without a head. I already have one like that, he said, still at blood temperature.

MODERN DREAMS EXHIBITION

As the era of windows opens, so the curtain of the world closes, said Alberto, inaugurating the exhibition of the exposed.

In the back the crowd waited; they removed the masks from their faces and placed them on the paintings. Every painting was a plaque of music. As time went by, the saxophone became night and night became keys. Each key was handed out to the crowd and was fixed right between the eyes. The only one to notice was a locksmith of old chests, named Bill Feldow. He moved steadily towards the sea.

And as the sea approached, the key was turning and he was leaving. The birds above didn't pay any attention; they didn't know how to interpret dreams.



Dimitris Stenos

was born in Piraeus and lives in Perama. He studied art at the Vellios Art School. His first poetry collection *Remnants* of Fear was published in 2013. He has also been published in various print and online journals. (Odos Panos Publishing)

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BIRTH

Something is born within me It grows slowly And it cries, finding me insufferable.

GLASS

Let the glass doll break finally Let the baby be set free from within Beyond the mind to reflect Black shadows with open mouths.

ELEUSIS

His hands

Were hanging from the sky.

His heart

Crawled bloodied into Eleusis

His eyes

Shattered the dawn.

Dead emotions

Wiped away the sunset with alcohol.

EXPERIENCE

The tears became a creek
Bitter poison
I gained bitter experience
I know who cries in his sleep.
Whenever he cries
All over my eyes

A spider drips poison.



Stergios Tsakiris

was born in 1983 in Serres and studied law at AUT and also attended the Military College. He has published the poetry collections Beneath the Light of the Lamp in 2011 and Runaway Products in 2013. (Paremvasis Publishers, Poema Publishers)

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PORTRAIT OF FRIENDS

We are open harbours
where ships moor.
We are the sides of the form
Thessaloniki-Athens-Ithaca
that tightly encloses us.
Musings,cracklings and pebble-stones
overflowing the journey to the unknown self.

You remember her figure by the seaside in July sculpting the moon and the sun while you are cherishing the nonchalance of the hours.



Demetrios Xideros

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born 1980, studied architecture in Manchester. He has been published in various journals and has translated selections from Poetical Sketches by William Blake into Greek. His first book of poems was published in 2011 with the title Crossing Without Traffic Lights. (Iridanos Publishing)

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CROSSING WITHOUT LIGHTS

The Officials, did order an "ALMOST PEACEFUL" and rather well-born, Periœcus, to be enervated joyfully.

- For a Feeding more improved.

- For an Event somewhat more improved.

Thereafter,
they did erect him in the crossing
and asked him to march...
to Descent,
without Lights.

This is the Truth.

I am telling you the Truth...

[This stays between us]

Even though the Angels are on strike,

I have

kept

the nails...



Aristi Zaïmi

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was born in Kavala in 1991, but lives and works as a lawyer in Thessaloniki. She was first published in the literary journal *Enteukterio* in 2014 and also participated in the Literary Scene Festival the same year. (Enteukterio Publishing)

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VIEW SPOT

At Bella Vista hotel suspended from the skies by a golden thread, one can find a bit of everything. It's a crystal hotel floating over the bony town that hustles and bleeds. (No need to explainwe all know of blood.)

Still Bella Vista hotel
offers croissants and
jams, tiny walled dramas,
and some rare losses, if any.
Its pure mountainous air thaws
into tea and bow-tied receptionists
are smiling with valerian.
It offers ball dances
that evaporate in bubbles
while the wine lingers
without oxidation
in the innumerable balconies.

Hotel Bella Vista solely takes in foreigners on verges who are immune to vertigo unaffected by the taste of bloodas long as it is effervescent.

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NARRATIVES OF GREECE / FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR 2015 THE GREEK STAND: E 131, Hall 5.1

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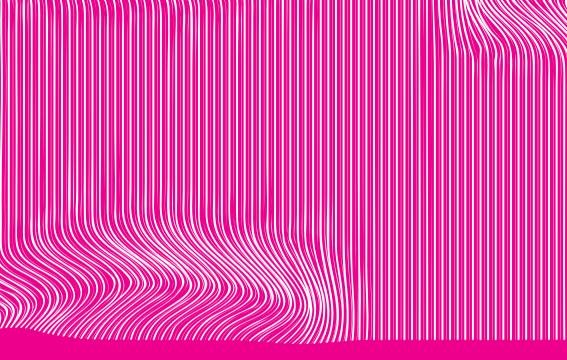
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