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ta'en

C. P. Cavafy

Stavros Deligiorgis

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ta'en · *C. P. Cavafy*

March 1921

reading Greek  
folk lately  
our stuff  
the kind close to the heart  
of wars and feats of freedom  
outlaws  
the sweet stuff

reading then the mournful ones  
on Constantinople's fall the fall  
of Saloniki  
of the Voice heard  
as the king  
on the left chanted to Patriarch  
on the right  
saying hold  
those papers close the gospels  
Constantinople's fallen and so is Saloniki

what touched me deepest was  
the song from Trebizond in its strange tongue  
the sorrow of those distant Greeks  
believing we'd still make it  
somehow

a bird of fate though  
in fro' the 'Polis  
a roundwrit paper on its wing  
lighting neither in yard nor vine but rather at  
the cypress root  
the leading priest not  
able—or just unwilling—to take up  
and read  
the wedos son instead

Janikas picks  
and reads  
and starts the moan

alas is us  
and wellaway  
beating his heart  
alas is us

Byzance is ta'en

*translated from the Greek by Stavros Deligiorgis*