

Collected Poems by Cavafy



Like a bothersome stranger.

AS FAR AS YOU CAN SEE

And if you can't make your life what you want,
strive for this at least
as far as you can: don't degrade it
through associating too much with people,
through too much gadding and talk.

Don't degrade it by taking it,
circulating often and exposing it,
to the daily foolishness
of social ties and engagements,
till it becomes like a bothersome stranger. (p.31)



ONE NIGHT

The room was cheap and sordid,
tucked away above the shady tavern.
The window looked onto the back street,
a dirty narrow one. From below
came the voices of workmen
playing cards and carousing.

And there, on the common, lowly bed
I experienced love's body, experienced
ecstasy's sensual and rosy lips —
rosy lips of such ecstasy, that even now
as I write, after so many years,
in my lonely house, I'm in ecstasy again.
(p.37)

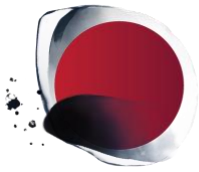
RETURN

Return often and take hold of me,
Cherished sensation, return and take hold of me —
when the body's memory awakens,
and past desires again run through the blood;
when the lips and skin remember,
and the hands feel as though they touch again.

Return often and take hold of me at night,
when the lips and skin remember...
(p.39)

REMEMBER, BODY...

Body, remember not only how much you were loved,
Not only the beds on which you lay,
But also those desires that for you
Shone openly in the eyes,
And trembled in the voice — and that
some chance impediment frustrated.
Now that all these are long in the past,



it almost seems as though you surrendered
to these desires too how they shone,
remember, in the eyes that gazed at you;
how they trembled in the voice for you, remember, body.
(p.53)

Reference:

Cavafy, C.P. (2014). *Selected Poems*. (David Connolly, Trans). Athens, Greece: AIORA Press.

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