



Meditation in the City Garden

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ABSTRACT

Poem by Nafia Akdeniz.

KEYWORDS

Home, Displacement, Asylum



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MEDITATION IN THE CITY GARDEN

a sole sound of a bird –
breaks through my wuthering mind
as sole as the last call of the last bird Kauai¹
emplacing the mist of thoughts in the garden of Varosi

I sit here to meditate under the fig tree²
stretching my feet to the street of Democracy
stretching, as if to a dry bed of a once roaring river
opening a mouth to tell a story, then flowing into the sea

what a river is to a forest is what a street is to a city
what is this hostage place in ruins to me, to you
to its people displaced abruptly from the flow?
what can this new asphalt³ open in a closed city?

it is the power of nature that opens the cracks
where the asphalted memories come to light
it is Varoshians that keep the attachment strong
where the homeplace in the heart never collapses

a sole motif of a bird –
was decorated here with oranges for the festive days
flying from the archaic⁴ times to this garden and perched
lost at the unexpected loss of those festivities

as delicate as the Edelweiss⁵, the hope to regain remains
in the ruins of the café that the white flower names
it was the setting for the first experiences of the youth
their first smoke, their first flirt, even their very first kiss

I meditate on the idea of connecting the lion of Famagusta⁶
to the botanic name of this flower *Leontopodium*⁷
a sudden zephyr in the garden disconnects the flags
from the covered name of the Greek Gymnasium

it keeps blowing in the ruins of the Café Boccaccio
turning the pages of a hundred stories in the *Decameron*⁸
a book of reflections on the values of the Renaissance
reflected in the agenda of the café's *small parliament*⁹

a sole sound of the piano –
from the Greek Lyceum of Art¹⁰, preluded the band
marching in the street parade of Democracy, then
the trees in the garden compose the music live today

the athletes in the Stadium¹¹ used to train to pass
the torch, of the then everlasting continuity flame
between ancient and modern, between past and present
is the future of this city an extinguished flame?

a sole sound of a bird –
as sole as the last call of the last Varoshians
a call for justice in the name of humanity
in the name of revival and life's continuity

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¹ An extinct Kauai 'ō'ō bird native to the Hawaiian Islands. This male bird was the last member of its species. Its last call to mate for life's continuity was left unanswered and with its death, its species went extinct.

² Sacred fig tree – *figus religiosa*, indigenous to the Indian subcontinent. It has a rich history and spiritual significance as a species of fig. It was planted in the municipal park of Varosi before the war in 1974. Very rare in Cyprus.

³ The new asphalt on Democracy Street was constructed in 2021 by the Turkish administration before the opening of the street to public visits.

⁴ Cypro-Achaic (750-457 BC) period, bird iconography.

⁵ Edelweiss is a delicate mountain flower associated with the Alps. It is one of the iconic images of Switzerland.

⁶ A Venetian stone sculpture of a lion at the Sea Gate / Porta Del Mare in Famagusta.

⁷ *Leontopodium* comes from Greek and refers to a lion paw.

⁸ An Italian writer and a Renaissance humanist Boccaccio's best-known work. The title Decameron means 10-days in Greek. It's a collection of 100 stories told by 10 people for 10 days.

⁹ The intellectual elite gathering in the café to discuss cultural, social and political issues was named as the *small parliament* by the Varoshians.

¹⁰ Lyceum of Greek Women of Famagusta.

¹¹ The Evagoras Stadium behind the Greek Gymnasium.