

## Thessaloniki

Nicholas Samaras

These are the streets you walked a quarter-century ago.  
This is the royal avenue whose name has been changed.  
This is the new name of the street you can recognize, you think.  
This is the place of your favorite pizza restaurant that used to be here.  
This is the colonnade and new restaurant that didn't used to be here.  
This is the ancient arch you sat beside, the archeological ruins sloping  
down to the Aegean bay.  
These, the memories that follow you like ghost-reflections in shop windows.  
And what does it mean?  
How much does geography hold you—tie you—to this place, that time?  
What are you looking for?  
Your first apartment where you lived and were lonely for your father?  
The daily restaurant where you ate with friends and were happy?  
The songs of that year to groove your youth back to you?  
The beautiful girl you danced with?  
The return of your life to say, yes, I matured here?  
Memories to show you who you were and are?  
Someone to remember you?  
The desire to bring your children here and tell them,  
*Look at this bench, see this street, see your young father, lonely and loved.*  
*I came to you from here—this city, these stones, this path . . . .*

## Zoe Se Mas

Perry Nicholas

With all due respect  
to the dead, *life* to us.

*Zoe se mas,*  
as we nurse our wounds,  
stuff ourselves silly,  
curse out football,  
soup up sports cars,  
apologize to neighbors,  
stalk our grass—  
dismantle our walls.

*Zoe se mas,* my love,  
as we blink away sleep,  
whisper our dreams,  
map out the day,  
settle late-night sadness,  
share small regrets.

When we miss our children,  
scold them to the moon—

*you kiss your mother  
with that mouth?—*

spin our untruths,  
cry in a thousand types of beer,  
ride our rickety trains—  
seek salvation in poetry.

So, *zoe se logo mas—*  
life to all of us—

*zoe se mas.*

## Astoria

Nicos Alexiou

Astoria is  
a cut apple.

A half-sliced dream  
that simmers  
in a blackened stewpot  
ever in the voracious  
yellow sky  
with the mute smokestacks  
and the rusted ships.

And the other half  
always travels  
with bent tongues  
to sunken isles  
and broken columns.

---

**American Journal of Contemporary Hellenic Issues** | Copyright © 2021 American Hellenic Institute Foundation, Inc.

All rights reserved. All articles appearing in the *American Journal of Contemporary Hellenic Issues* are the copyright of the Journal. The online edition is free to individuals and institutions. Copies of the individual articles are strictly prohibited. Reproduction, storage or transmission of this work in any form or by any means beyond that permitted by Sections 107 and 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law is unlawful without prior permission in writing of the publisher, or in accordance with the terms of licenses issued by the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) and other organizations authorized by the publisher to administer reprographic reproduction rights. Distribution of the published articles for research or educational purposes is possible, but requires the formal authorization of the Journal editor and the authors. Commercial use of the AHIF Policy Journal or the articles contained herein is expressly prohibited without the written consent of the Managing Editor at [AHIFPolicyJournal@aheworld.org](mailto:AHIFPolicyJournal@aheworld.org). AHIF 1220 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036.