

FOUR POEMS



Constantine P. Cavafy

MORNING SEA

Let me stop here. Let me, too, look at nature, briefly.
The morning sea and cloudless sky
both deep shining blue, yellow shore: all
beautiful, immensely light.

Let me stop here. And let me, self-beguiling, seem to see them
(I saw them truly in the minute I first stopped):
and not here too my fantasies,
my memories, the idols of sensual joy.

CANDLES

Future days stand before us
like a row of small lit candles—
golden, warm, and vivid candles.

Days that have passed remain behind,
a pitiful line of spent candles;
the nearest are still smoking,
cold candles, melted, and bent.

I do not want to see them: and then sadly
remember the shape and light they started with.
I look directly to my lit candles.

I do not want to turn, lest I shudder when I see
how quickly that dark line lengthens,
how quickly the dead candles crowd together.

IN THE DULL AND GLOOMY VILLAGE

In the dull and gloomy village where he works—
clerk in a shop, very young—
and where he waits for two, for three more months to pass,
and let him go off to the city to throw himself
into that scene, into those pleasures right away;
in the dull and gloomy village where he counts the hours—
he's gone to bed tonight in passion's grip,
all his youth lit bright by flesh's longing,
a beautiful new strength for all the beauty of his youth.
And in his sleep pleasure has come to him;
in sleep he sees and holds the form, the flesh he wanted.

THE WINDOWS

In these dark rooms, where I go
through weary days, I wander back and forth,
looking for the windows. —When it opens,
a window will be consolation.—
But the windows aren't to be found, or I'm unable
to find them. And perhaps I'm better off not finding them.
Perhaps the light will be some novel tyranny.
Who knows what new things it will show.

Translated by Theoharis C. Theoharis