

## Vocabularies Of Space

In youth my first act was to light a cigarette, now not to light.

Empty, light headed am I, now, too light!

To light a cigarette in youth my first act was.

Now, debauchee

Sight.

The dew starts in a knot.

In the impass-ible            static in dreams, my sky is laboring in ink,  
   garden,

Ankle deep in might-have-seens,

Mighty

Scenes.

Outside, above the arbor, a garden cloud, defining a first act.

Inside, the parrot talks to me affectionless and vast.

Fast asleep on my willowy dreams.

Homoerotic  
                                 home-erotic,

Screams.

A compulsive peroration of regrets.

In this room of doors, without windows.

I am a widower of worry beads counting my poetics.

Ankara, Ankara, my kind hearted step mother.

On the train one must walk            walk around in slippers.  
   has to,

Of the respectful dead, you kiss the toes, you wash the feet.

The clanks of construction disappeared first,

Specifically of hammers.

The hand threw away the ash tray on the mantelpiece first.

Farewell!

Ankara, kaka,

This yellow mandala came down in the sky!

Oh, again farewell,

Adieu!

It's due!

Shovelled, dishevelled,

Dew!

Before burying me, take me around.

Kind hearted folks, you,

Burying me,

A bit before,

Carry me around!

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The forgotten-open, ajar, shutters of my house.

"It being part of my design to set everything forth, as far as may be, plainly and perspicuously (for nakedness of the mind is still, as the nakedness of the body once was, the companion of innocence and simplicity), let me first explain the order and plan of my work." (Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*)

Birds coo on my father's chest, in his drawers.

Moths fly on my sister's chest, woo her bones.

Like the prayer of two butterflies

My sister's hands were white from the wash.

Don't touch the translucence, they turn into wing crumbs.

Her hands, unknowingly, caressed the water,

I think drowned.

Lifted,

She gained shape, and weight, only out of water.

If in youth my first act were, not, to light a cigarette!

"No such,

Don't touch!"

"Like a plum tree, that grew crooked over a standing pool, she was, rich and over laden with fruit, but none but a crow, and a magpie fed on her."

Then this worm of a caterpillar.

As you know, my friends, water has no shape. Wa...!

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Windows, windows. Rectangular. Squares. Oblong.

If a house were your face, the windows were your eyes.

Let me first explain the order and plan of my work.

Think't the best voyage that e'er you made; like the irregular crab, which, though't goes backward, thinks it goes right, because it goes its own way. (John Webster)

Morning glory between the house and the fence.

Wisteria, of memories, clingers to the future.

Wisteria are weeds.

Hysteria are imaginary, apothecary deeds.

Floating to the shoal, the reeds.

The brilliant memory strums in liquid vibration.

In a discarded bundle

Thick sausage, brown, edgy, smooth,

The dead humanoid in the bundle was discarded first,

Opening my unquenchable void.

Oh, now farewell,

To the spent calmness

In the reeds.

In the pond, cool,

Brown edgy smooth

A human stool.

River, I want the river, to swim in it, like my grandmother to wash clothes on its shores, to bury ashes in its slime, to be my father, to spend my forty years pulling tug boats up its stream, river, I want the river.

Don't blow on the damp fire too hard for fear to hurt yourself.

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There's still an hour for the night, what is the thief's ladder doing here?

Blowing smoke.

Into the brown snow silence of the trees

Curl, gray with titillation,

The ash soaked birds.

I don't know where the playing marbles have gone. Somewhere in the closet, behind the shoes, shirts and boxes, though I can't find them.

Tar baby, bad child, doing everything wrong, sucking her fingers, drag her out of the closet where is the broom, seen dustier places none so messy, you messing everything up, my darky, my jewelry, my grippy.

Many doors to death's single room, many roads to death's single room motel.

Ankara, kaka!

Ata,

Ta ta, ta ta!

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"Wa."

"What?"

"The warbling turbulent stream...."

If I cry, would you hear my voice in my poems, would you touch my tears with your hands? I did not know songs were so beautiful and words so insufficient before this poem. (Orhan Veli)

I still hear him crying like a horrible, horrible roaring sea shell. Next door.

"You mean you hear his screams after he's gone?"

"Yeah, yeah,  
Sea phantoms."

"You can always tell the difference, it's more real this way."

"Which way?"

"This way."

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### **The Lovers See      The Thief At The Window Spy**

Opticus interruptus, biggus dickus limping, humping at the interrupting, the clock at the ticking, the tear in the carpet is bleeding, the giggles are at the ending, the ladder is at descending, the ghost is in the garden, the gate is behind closing.

### **In The Moment Of Conception**

A baboon entered my home  
opened the gate  
walked on my lawn.  
I thought he was the milkman,  
left the door open  
and left the money for the week.

My asshole is flaring, sweet begonias are staring, unheard tunes are in the airing, hysteric,  
wistarc weeds are unsparing, my heart is bearing, as the fangs of my inner ghosts baring,  
all these beyond airing, oh, all these beyond airing.

Whither thou, ghost, I cum with thee! (stanza break)

A bowl of rain pours out of the rainbow, scalded tears out of my eyes.

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## Water

He spun thrice  
in water;  
then was  
all.

The quiet  
water  
in her quiet  
eyes.

Leaping  
moments  
late. Sea  
weeds  
do have  
a  
number  
but  
who knows it?

Tunes.  
Torn.  
"Mother  
take me out of  
water

for this  
once.  
Hear me?"  
Unlisted.

"Must you know  
I  
call you."  
"Can't tell the tongue  
of water  
child. Come again."  
The warbling turbulent

stream  
"What?"  
"Can't tell more  
mother.  
Come."  
"I can't"

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Distance is created either by space or the slowness of movement as one can move thirty-one years back in time by visiting my Turkey.

Kadikoy, a ten-minute ferry boat ride from Istanbul, a continental shift, Europe to Asia,

A crowd.

Fishermen on the wharf, keeping the fish fresh by sprinkling them with sea water, next to peeled cucumbers.

But these can't be the same fish stale alive in my memory!

Now, thirty-one years later, in the falling dark, the ferry now, not a pleasure craft, but a commuter boat, (stanza break)

Carrying tired grim people sailing from work,

And I, the prodigal son returning,

Not to the embrace of his brethren, but to those for whom he is a stranger,

Alien in the alien corn,

A tourist...

When the space traveler returns, having travelled at the speed of, spun, puns, he'll find himself/herself much younger and unable to filter through the membrane of weird, float

old/new words,

Meanwhile, down on the slop ranch, pig ranch, cow range, slow-as-snail plough ranch, words have stripped off, shuffled off, brushed off, stripped off, kicked off, put in the closet their angelic natures, wings of paradisiac aphrodisiacs, but are slow witted (even airs retarded) gamins, sad ruthless Monte artists, addicts, soiled fifth columnists...

I can feel the cool breeze of Kadikoy's secluded square, unbent

Nowhere.

Change, in a chain: time bends space bends light, bent in water...

Words chain. Change.

Nostalgic hope, you dope, rope.

### **After 31 Years A Bookstore Under A Huge Tent In Kadikoy**

Intermingled bulbs, shaking in the breeze, hanging from a rope all across the tent.

That rope has been an irritating resistance, a ghastly, ghostly double exposure, streak of light.

Faces, political posters, intermingled with bulbs, shaking, stretching on a rope inside the tent.

Wind and choral music blaring, the flaps pulling back on all sides, the sea breeze...

I begin browsing along the sides of the tent,  
stop in front of racks of political postcards,  
with drawings of a grieving mother and hungry child  
or a photograph of a  
black man or a marching group with flags.

Suddenly, somebody steps to my left very near behind me. He is the secret police checking out a new face.

I pick a few postcards, leave them with the owner at the counter, ask him if the music playing is the radio or a tape, he says a tape, I ask if he has it for sale, he checks, but says no, but

he has others by the same composer, ask him to give me all and ask him if he recommends others and to put them aside, then I go on to browse further.

*The Secret Sex Life in Galata,  
Caning In The Ottoman Schools,  
The Charms Of The Chador,  
Ottoman Bathhouses for Lady Dowagers,  
The Art of Secret Communication With Signals,  
Womanizing In The Winter Snow,  
The Methods Of Avoiding Police Raids,  
The Varieties Of Supporting A Mistress  
The Rules And The Lingo Of Street Compliments In The Ottoman Period.*

I bought also Eleni Fourtouni's, *Women Hanged in the Greek Civil War*,<sub>2</sub>

with the cover photograph of two women hanging from branches of an oak tree, necks broken, arms and legs dangling, with a third figure, in the back, merging with the black oak tree, only the lighter rope visible.

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In this veil of tears

Air heavy.

Salty

In the eyes.

Sweat falling from the forehead

When working the fields.

As I carry her,

The arms, unknowingly, caressing the water,

Just if she were not dead, but heavily drunk with water,

Last hope, like last of city lights, last window, the last kind face

Blowing out.

Finis

Murat Nemet-Nejat, 1995