

Orders from the Dead

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The world is going up in flames. The world is going up in flames. The world is going up in flames. The world is going up in flames, but these flames are not new to our dead. Our dead did cry their final prayer in those flames. Our dead did sing their last lullaby in those flames. Our dead prayed to our infidelite god in those flames. Our dead whispered a last goodbye to their mother in those flames:

Της είπα, "Μάνα, μην σκιάζεσαι. Θα γυρίσουμε. Έχε γεια, μάνα!" (Tis ipa, "Màna, min skiàzese. Tha yirìsume. Èhe ya, màna!" [I told her, "Mother, do not be saddened. We'll return. Goodbye, mother!"])

The world is going up in flames. Our world clawed their children close in the world is going up in flames.

"Τα παιδιά μου καλέ! Μην είδατε τα παιδιά μου; Για όνομα του Θεού! Ωχ, μου τα πήρανε... και τι να θέλω τη ζωή; Τα παιδιά μου! Τα παιδιά μου!" Βάζει μια τρεχάλα για την θάλασσα... πέφτει και πνίγεται. ("Ta pedhià mu kalè! Min ìdhate ta pedhià mu? Ya ònoma tu Theù! Oh, mu ta pìrane... ke ti na thèlo ti zoì? Ta pedhià mu! Ta pedhià mu!" Vàzi mia trehàla ya tin thàlasa... pèfti ke pnìyete. ["My dear children! Have you not seen my children? For God's sake! Oh, they took them from me... and what should I live for? My children! My children!" She runs to the sea... she falls and drowns.]

Our dead watched their daughters butchered, raped, and beaten in the still-burning of those flames. Our dead watched an axe remove their mother's skull and crown a wooden spit in the continuous burning of those flames. Our dead watched while Chrysostomos' eyes and tongue were pulled out, teeth and fingers broken, one by one, in the laughing and the cheering of those flames.

Αρπάζανε από την τετράδα μας, του σκίσανε την κοιλιά με μια μαχαίριά, τον βάλανε και βάδισε, κρατώντας τ'άντερά του στα χέρια. (Arpàxane apò tin tetràdha mas, tu skìsane tin kilià me mia macherìà, ton vàlane ke vàdhise, kratòndas t'ànderà tu sta hèria. [They grabbed one of our quartet and tore his stomach with a knife. They made him march, holding his viscera in his hands.]

Our dead watched their sisters drenched with gasoline and scream with melting skin: "The world is going up in flames!" Our dead gave birth to Turkish victories, the gurgling and then dying trophy on a bayonet which marked the borders of the world which is going up in flames.

Για όνομα του Χριστού! Μην μας αφήσετε! Έχουμε μωρά μαζί μας, έ

χουμε γερόντους, κορίτσια... Είστε υπεύθυνοι! Νάναρχε, νάναρχε... Φωτιά! Φωτιά! (Ya ònoma tu Hristù! Min mas afìsete! Èhume morà mazi mas, èhume yeròndus, korìtsia... ìste ipèfthini! Nàvarhe, nàvarhe... Fotià, fotià! [For Christ's sake! Do not leave us! We have babies with us, we have elders, girls... You are responsible! Admiral, admiral... Fire! Fire!])

Our dead were dragged in marches through the desert sun for weeks until the sun burned out their lungs and when the flames turned inside-out their mouths and ripped apart their lips, we heard their final prayer: "Lord God, have mercy, please, upon our souls!"

Μας προδώσανε! Μας ξεπουλήσανε! Π'ανάθεμά τους! Νάναρχε, τι κάνεις; Νάναρχε, σώστε μας! Φωτιά! Φωτιά! (Mas prodhòsane! Mas xepulìsane! P'anàthemà tus! Nàvarhe, ti kànìs? Nàvarhe, sòste mas! Fotià! Fotià! [We are betrayed! We were sold out! God damn them! Admiral, what are you doing? Admiral, save us! Fire! Fire!])

They saw the world is going up in flames. Buried, not yet dead, inside the pits, engraved: "Giaoure! Infideli! Our god has chosen you to die."

Γονάτισε κάτω! Και γονατίζει. Ξεγυμνώσου! Και ξεγυμνώνεται. Ανοίχτά τα σκέλια σου! Και τα ανοίγει. Χόρεψε! Και χορεύει. Φτύσε την τιμή σου και την πατρίδα σου! Και πτύνει. Απαρνήσου την πίστη σου! Και την απαρνιέται. (Gonàtise kàto! Ke gonatìzi. Xeyimnòsu! Ke xeyimnònete. Anihtà ta skèlia su! Ke ta anìyi. Hòrepse! Ke horèvi. Ftìse tin timì su ke tin patrìdha su! Ke ftìni. Aparnìsu tin pìsti su! Ke tin aparniète. ["Kneel down!" And she kneels. "Undress!" And she undresses. "Open your legs!" And she opens them. "Dance!" And she dances. "Spit on your honor and your country!" And she spits. "Deny your faith!" And she denies.])

And now the unblessed dead have ordered us to say: "This is my grave, my holy bed. You cannot take it. You cannot erase my name."

You cannot erase our dead. You cannot erase the dead, because we have been ordered now to list their names, their numbers, to give their date of birth, their earthly city, their father's name, the sweetness of their mother's eyes.

"Goodbye, goodbye, goodbye, and forevermore we'll see you when the desert meets the sky, but do not forget my name."

And so these were the orders from the dead, said, without a word, but with a final glance: the second granted to the infidel, since an infidelite hell should not require a prayer, should not require a silent moment, and now the infidel is told to forgive and to forget, to understand.

"Advance into a paradise of dead memories, of living death, the old folks' home of catatonia, of madness and despair. Do not ask me for the number of that grave. It has been stolen. What is this love for bones and dirt?

"Yaùr! Put this ancient thing behind you. You have no claim to god. You have no claim to peace. You have no claim. You have no claim. You have no claim. Yaùr! Remember just how lucky, sperm of Satan, that you are to even be alive. Now. Across the sea. Yaùr! You have no god. A man without a god cannot be burned alive. He never was alive. Not as a man, yaùr, but as a dog."

But I have orders from the dead that warn me: "Do not forget me. My blood will fill the air you breathe forever. My death-bird is not dead. He carries all my teeth, my smile of unforgetfulness, my laugh! Βρυκόλακα! (Vrikólaka! [Vampire!]) I am the man unburied who cannot sleep in forty pieces! I am the girl, dismembered and unblessed. I am the open mouth that drags your flesh and that can never rest until my death is written in a rock that cannot be broken!"

And these are the orders from the dead.