



Constantine Cavafy  
(1863 – 1933)

*REMEMBER, BODY*

Body, remember not just how much you were loved,  
not just the beds where you have lain,  
but also those longings that so openly  
glistened for you in the eyes,  
and trembled in the voice – and some  
chance obstacle arose and thwarted them.  
Now that it's all finally in the past  
it almost seems as if you gave yourself to  
those longings, too – remember how  
they glistened, in the eyes that looked at you;  
how they trembled in the voice, for you;  
Remember, body.

(Translated by Daniel Mendelsohn)

*I HAVE GAZED SO MUCH*

At beauty I have gazed so much  
That my vision is filled with it.

The body's lines. Red lips.  
Limbs made for pleasure.  
Hair like something taken from Greek statues:  
Always lovely, even when it's uncombed,  
And falls, a bit, upon the gleaming brow.  
Faces of love, exactly as  
My poetry wanted it . . . in the nights of my  
youth,  
Secretly encountered in my nights . . .

(Translated by Daniel Mendelsohn)

*COME BACK*

Come back often and take hold of me,  
Beloved feeling come back  
and take hold of me—  
when the memory of the body reawakens,  
and old longing once more passes through the  
blood;  
when the lips and skin remember,  
and the hands feel like they're touching once  
again.

Come back often and take hold of me at night,  
When the lips and skin remember . . .

(Translated by Daniel Mendelsohn)

*HIDDEN THINGS*

From all I did and all I said,  
let them not seek to find who I was.  
It stood an obstacle in my way this, altering  
my actions and my way of life.  
This stood an obstacle in my way, stopping me  
all the times I wanted to speak out.  
My most unnoticed actions,  
discreet writings, those most disguised—  
from these alone they'll understand me.  
But maybe it's not worth so much care,  
all this effort just to know what and who I am.  
A long time from now—in a more perfect world—  
some other made like me will appear  
and, to be sure, he will act freely.

(Translated by John Chioles)

*VERBORGENHEDEN*

Laat niemand uit wat ik deed en zei proberen af  
te leiden wie ik was.  
Er was een belemmering, die vervormde de  
daden en de wijze van mijn leven.  
Er was een belemmering, die weerhield mij vele  
keren als ik wou gaan spreken.  
Mijn meest onopgemerkte daden, en mijn  
meest verhulde geschriften—daaruit alleen zal  
men mij begrijpen.  
Maar misschien is het niet zoveel moeite,  
zoveel inspanning waard om mij te kenen.  
Later—in een volmaakter samenleving - zal  
stellig iemand anders, zoals ik geschapen,  
verschijnen en handelen in vrijheid.

(Vertaald door Hans Warren & Mario Molengraaf)