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ON TENDERNESS

Γιὰ τὴν τρυφερότητα

[excerpt]

spiritual itinerary in the Greek world
πνευματικὴ ὁδοιπορία στὸν ἑλληνικὸ κόσμο

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ON TENDERNESS

He woke up as soon as the day opened its eyes. He got out of bed... threads, petals, leaves, pale sheets, vanishing lights. And while his reposed body left the recesses of sleep, he felt an indescribable, virginal tenderness for everything he saw in his white home, on the distant hill that among fluctuating gauzes was swallowing the last shadows, and over the sea, that – with a gentle start – made the final dreams fade away from that azure desert. He sighed and shivered as he blessed his eyes, his entire body that – as erect as it was – confirmed the whole world around. He bore on his body the imperceptible signs of the sacredness of sleeping and dreaming, and wanted to caress it tenderly to arouse in it the beaming joy, the bright ecstasy of existing. He touched his cheeks, his chest and thighs with a tender familiarity, then he unbolted the doors and light poured inside the house fluctuating delicately, silently. Then he heard the sea calling him and went down to meet it. He stood in front of it, naked and unaware, entrusting himself to the serene inebriation that poured from his entrails. How many inestimable gifts he was adorned with! The still very dark color of its waters with their azure and exposed flesh, the purest line of the horizon, string of an angelic guitar stretched over the immensity, the sky totally opened in the moment of the divine exaltation. Silence and joy, happiness at the highest degree. As he walked on the pebbles he felt that their coolness made his heart jump, his entrails throb, all the joints of his body creak. The cracks in his heart and the gaps in his existence had never healed in such a abrupt and perfect way. He had never felt so much harmony with the entire Creation. God was talking to him with His own silence. And then, like a spear of crystal, the very first sunbeam, the only one of its kind, fell on the seashore. It fell and hit gently, with tenderness, a white smooth stone. And the stone, honored by that, shone. Struck dumb by joy, he bent on the stone, lifted it from its pallet, started to look at it, put it on his cheek – an ancient stone that a

relation of tenderness connect with fleeting, short-lived man who rules the world while he is being ruled by Time and Death. Friendship blossoms with a kiss, a man and a stone with an embrace. All he was observing around him produced in him a constant dripping of tenderness. The Creation had never seemed so perfect, so eloquent to him. The two birds that flew silently over his head, the insects that were tossing about the pebbles, they all established a privileged relation with him. He felt a solicitation to tenderness from everything and for everything, for the evocative waters of the inexhaustible sea, for the hermetic stones, for the very garrulous plants that precisely in that moment disclosed their heart, for all the virginal things that his senses produced for him to touch, caress, know. He was Adam to whom, on a morning that memory and past had not touched yet, the Creator consigned the secrets of His [own] creation so that he might observe it, rejoicing in it with tenderness and respect. Because only tenderness possesses the gift to harmonize itself so well with respect. And only respect can cause a distance to open and last between a man and another man, between Adam and the creation. But the divine command to rule completely over this Creation presupposes some actions to conquer that transcend the noble inertia of respect. For this reason respect aims at tenderness, at wise and discrete contacts, at disinterested intercourses that shorten the distance between people but without allowing an insane promiscuity, as may happen with love.

