

1978

# Fever

Yannis Ritsos

Edmund Keeley

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Poems of Yannis Ritsos · *Translated from the Greek by  
Edmund Keeley*

## Inertia

He sat alone in the darkness of the room smoking.  
Nothing was visible. Only the glow of his cigarette  
moved slowly now and then, carefully,  
as though he were feeding a sick girl  
with a silver spoon, or as though he were treating  
some star's wound with a small lancet.

## Fever

Small squares in perpetual motion, one penetrating the other,  
one emerging from the other: building, unbuilding,  
a city of windows on windows; right and left the two corners  
rising asymmetrically and just beyond,  
noiseless, the great collapse in the midst of noiseless motion, while  
the three lean dogs grew more distant in the successive squares  
smelling foreign dead and their great staves to the far end,  
there where the woman, naked, raises the skinned hare in front of a  
mirror.