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# The Miracle

Yannis Ritsos

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## Six Poems · *Yannis Ritsos*

### THE MIRACLE

It's a miracle, he says, more than a miracle:  
there where everything is used up (I first of all) what do I find  
among the pebbles at the sea's edge but the sacred skull  
of one of Achilles' horses—maybe that of Xanthus. In the camomile  
I find the Patriarch's staff.  
I take it up devoutly, I climb the marble stairs,  
I don't tap it on the steps, the crowd gathers,  
I stand before the pulpit, I hear my hair become motionless,  
loose on my shoulders. The crowd becomes impatient, people jostle  
each other;  
I open my mouth to speak, and suddenly I realize  
that I'm mute and that they hear me.

### LIKE CHANGES

They moved to a new place every now and then. They'd take  
a few suitcases with them, the essentials: handkerchiefs, socks,  
very few souvenirs—the usual terms and names  
for tools, plants, and birds. Maybe this gave them  
a sense of familiarity with, of long-range mastery over,  
that which they called “sometime” or “distant” or “never”  
when drops of rain slid down their spines under their collars  
and stopped at the small of the back, there where the shirt was held  
tight  
by a leather belt. Because in that territory  
it rains ceaselessly; invisible, hypertrophic plants grow  
inside closed wells, where once they thoughtlessly threw in  
graters, basins, cases, broken mirrors  
and those small hydrocephalic unborn bodies.