Expatriate

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Recommended Citation
Available at: https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2696

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American life, you said, is not possible. Winter in Syracuse, Trotsky pinned to your kitchen wall, windows facing a street, boxes of imported cigarettes. In The Realm Of The Senses, you said, and piles of shit burning and the risk of having your throat slit. Twenty-year-old poet. To be in love with some woman who cannot speak English, to have her soften your back with oil and beat on your mattress with grief and pleasure as you take her from behind, moving beneath you like the beginning of the world. The black smell of death as blood and glass is hosed from the street and the beggar holds his diminishing hand to your face. It would be good if you could wind up in prison and so write your prison poems. Good if you could marry the veiled face and jewelled belly of a girl who could cook Turkish meat, baste your body with a wet and worshipful tongue. Istanbul, you said, or Serbia, mauve light and mystery and passing for other than American, a Kalishnikov over your shoulder, spraying your politics into the flesh of an enemy become real. You have been in Turkey a year now. What have you found? Your letters describe the boring ritual of tea, the pittance you are paid to teach English, the bribery required for so much as a postage stamp. Twenty-year-old poet, Hikmet did not choose to be Hikmet.