2006

Athens, 2004

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Recommended Citation
Available at: https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.6143

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"Fuck the Olympics" spray-painted on the ruins of Greece, unseen

strikers’ voices heard over the agora walls. You on Rhodes. Me almost unable to get a ferry reservation to take me there. You say, “Don’t come.” How strange to fly halfway around the world in order to not see you! There are worse ways to drop a G. There’s an “Agon” show at the Archaeological Museum where I found it hard to take my eyes off the boy (almost a man) with parents in tow, sometimes straying a little as we followed one another from room to room filled with artifacts, his body mirrored in every kouro standing firm, erect as columns to some ruined temple I’ve ever worshipped in, one foot
slightly forward to nowhere in this
climate-controlled world, the parents
apprehending glances, myself

the xenos-cum-pedophile more open
to classical man-boy love than anyone
I've yet met in this museum—all

the Tadzios I've ever laid eyes upon

now coming to take me away to some
Olympic-sized dream freed from

strike's voices and graffiti tinged

with hate reaching islands where you
hope I won't set foot upon and mar

your paradise, but no, those voices

from the next block over return
as I tip my espresso freddo metrio

all the way back, glad to find a ticket

(vip—economy class sold out) since,
as that gypsy said to me last night,

No one owns that island, and this

is the only life you have, every boy
an island whereupon a man just might
go, not knowing what he wants, only

that there's nowhere else on earth
able to offer its particular pleasures

even if one ends up alone on a street

in Athens with no plans to attend
the Games, stray cats fighting over

a piece of octopus flung into the dust.