

**Poems by Mikis Theodorakis** (b. 1925)  
translated by Gail Holst

**THE VOICE OF SILENCE**

The sun drunk  
the earth shattered  
like an ancient shipwreck  
and once again the emptiness  
with the taste of fullness

Time an orphan  
a voice prays silently  
the only voice  
to emerge from the silence  
because it doesn't touch the silence.

Ancient shipwreck  
like the bashful stars - wounded  
by the emptiness  
the emptiness with the soul of fullness  
drunk on the voice  
the voice of silence.

(Buenos Aires, 1973)

**SCHUBERT'S "UNFINISHED"**

Three capsized moons  
in a handful of water.  
A shattered boat  
full of larks and violets  
I passed you and you were  
yesterday's rain.  
I'll come and find you holding  
a taut string in your hand.  
My name is Phaidron.  
I have nothing more  
Outside my ravelled sleeve.

I no longer suffer the voice of the birds.

(Athens, 1946)

**From THE SUN AND TIME:**

4.

In the dry soil of my heart  
a cactus has grown.  
It's been more than twenty centuries  
since I dreamed of jasmine.  
my hair smelled of jasmine  
my voice had taken something  
of its delicate perfume  
my clothes smelled of jasmine  
my life had taken something  
of its delicate perfume.  
But the cactus is not bad;  
it simply doesn't know it and is afraid.  
Sadly I look at the cactus;  
where did all those centuries go?  
I will live as many again  
listening to the roots  
as they continue to grow  
in the dry soil of my heart.

(1967)