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## Saying "yes"

I first met Constantine Cavafy in 1961. Rae Dalvin made the introduction. I was then twenty-three years old and living in the most industrialized city in the United States. The poems spoke to me on such a personal level that I began to paste photographs, newspaper clippings, ticket stubs, and other images on the pages of the collection, something I had never done before and have never done since. I did not mean to personalize the poetry but simply to say: "yes." His themes and how he was expressing himself could have come from my own time and space. That Cavafy was a Greek and the specific subjects were often Greek were just bonuses. The sexual poems were sensual in a manner that went beyond gender. More than a decade later, talking with an African-American poet from Detroit, I said I thought there was a Greek poet he should know about. He shushed me, reached up to his bookshelf, and pulled down his Cavafy. I think that present and future readers of varied cultures who read the quiet master from Alexandria will react in a similar manner. They too will say: "yes."

--Dan Georgakas