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Preparing to leave the city she loves, she cannot hide her dejection. A routine corporate relocation this time feels like a dislocation. The transience of nomadic lives, their ambivalence – the delight of flight and the distress of displacement. Her face glued to the windowpane, it reflects the imminent farewell.

The prospect of loss tilts the scale of ambivalence. How can I not think of the Alexandrian? “[A]nd bid farewell to her, to Alexandria, whom you are losing.” Once again Cavafy’s poetry urges me to share it with her. I find the poem online, and read to her “The God Abandons Antony” (stressing “graced with courage,” and “listen with deep emotion,” a bit too emphatically).

Cavafy has spoken to her many times, sometimes a source of solace. She asks a second reading, and I oblige. We discuss the meaning, the historical context, and marvel at the poem’s many valences. An allegory of life’s uncertainties, we agree. Do not despair, I plead. Let us savor our “final delectation” instead. We attend to the city’s sounds. We delve into our memories of the place, bringing the past into the here and now as we set off for elsewhere. Remembrance creates the basis for yet another memorial of our experience of the city.

The poem shapes the day. She looks for information on Marc Anthony and Plutarch. Tell me more about Hellenistic times, she says. We impulsively dart to the local bookstore and buy the *Collected Poems*. A second copy, but why not, what better way to inaugurate the year of Cavafy? Now there will be two Cavafy volumes in her poetry shelves, next to her own Ruben Dario.

And so, Constantine Petrou Cavafy enters our day, shapes its flow, crystallizing its particulars, expands its contours. In the urgency of a moment it bridges language and culture. A crisis and the evocation of a poem in response, we find ourselves entangled in a web of translations, archives, publications, philological work, and the institutions that sustain them. The private and the public intersect. A poem, a conduit connecting words with worlds, leaves an imprint in the everyday, blending art and life.

That December day Cavafy illuminates continuities in difference. My old affinity with the Greek poem yields an English reading. This ruptured line tells a personal story of immigration, a trajectory in the U.S. academy, encounters with the scholarship around Cavafy. In the past I was drawn to the poet’s evocation of loss, his didactics; as a graduate student I navigated his poetics («Περί Αναγνώσεως», “The Poet and the Nonpoet”). Talking over these citations, the divide between specialized and non-academic knowledge, professional and personal life, blurs. An alchemy of past and present, here and elsewhere, self and other. A diaspora Greek, Cavafy shows us of the diaspora how to reach across cultures. A community in the city does not stipulate unity.

She packs her poetry books neatly, as might befit treasured heirlooms. Her glance suggests, this poem has given her dejection a new dimension. Another page will be turned in a different place. Poems find their way into life in a roundabout way. “[M]other-of-pearl and coral, amber and ebony,” a spark of anticipation for the Ithakan journey ahead.