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## Poetry

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Donna J. G. Lee<sup>i</sup>

### **Afternoon in *Paleó Fáliron***

I determine the number of  
blocks, decide to walk  
to the *kafenion* on the coast.  
I know there I will have the option  
of crossing the highway, putting  
my face to the sea. If the gods  
agree, I will feel a breeze  
poised with salt and an eager-  
ness to continue. But more than  
likely, I will choose a table  
on the corner of town, where  
the policeman watches as if he  
expects something to happen.  
The offhandedness  
of single women keeps him  
alert—and newly married  
women, like me, who  
don't know the rules.

Poseidon cracks a wave  
against the jetty so hard  
I can hear it shatter like glass,  
my tiny cup of Greek coffee calm  
in the concrete village. Chairs  
screech; the officer approaches  
once again to ask why  
I am here, where I live,  
what time my husband usually  
comes home.

### **Up the Mountain**

On a steep cobblestone street, a woman  
who wears winter on her face  
sweeps her doorstep once again, returning  
the dirt outside. She cannot straighten  
from years that have found their home  
in the sinews of muscle  
and bending bone.  
She remains where the shadows fall,  
in the black part of her house, which cuts  
into a street in a rush with tourists.  
Her sons and daughters  
in Athens. Their pictures dusted

over doilies in each silent room.  
Vacation, the domain  
of those who can leave.

Sunset's shadows settle  
in the castle ruins, send the  
old fishermen out with nets as tourists  
sip frappés on pendulous balconies.  
Woman of the mountain, how many  
mornings have you kneaded  
bread? Beneath your  
callused fingertips,  
years of crocheting unravel.  
The sea wild  
with white caps.

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