

Lunch in the Vale of Tempe

Perhaps it was the perfect lunch,
the souvlaki at the Castello Restaurant
sauced by the legendary setting,
the mild valley between Olympus and Ossa.
From our balcony table we could look across
to the Frankish Castle of Platamóna,
and beyond to the sea squeezed from a tube
labeled Aegean blue. Somewhere near the beach
flows the spring of the Muses. We had a bottle
of Macedonian wine, fresh, never sold for export.
The Middle Ages named the valley Lykostóma,
the Wolf's Mouth, and looking at the castle, I could see why.
But now it's the Vale of Tempe again, where we ate
our perfect lunch. On my desk I lay the two pictures:
your face, a little dark, with the castle and sea very sharp
over your shoulder; the other, with your face clear
and the scenery blurred. For once I can have it all,
foreground and background: the prints were made
from the same negative, and the bright wine still flows.

BERT ALMON