

## **EDITORIAL:**

### **A Bouquet of Poems**

*by*

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When I began teaching my poetry workshop for the School of English at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in October, 2021, while serving as a Fulbright Scholar there, I acknowledged to my students how difficult it would be to write poetry in English, a second language for all of them. To help with this daunting task, I offered a series of writing prompts that encouraged them to practice literary techniques, while also challenging their sense of what poetry might look and sound like. To that end, we read poems that could serve as models, or at least possibilities for the various shapes those assignments could take. We explored a broad swath of recent and contemporary American poetry, but I also took the risk of asking my Aristotle University students to read Greek poetry in English translation, allowing them to enjoy the shock of encountering work from their own tradition—even poems they thought they already knew—at this new angle of estrangement. The prompts they worked from often involved specific poetic modes and forms: the praise poem, the self-portrait, and the epistolary poem, to name a few examples, but also the “Days of...” poem invented by C.P. Cavafy. On top of all the joyful tasks of reading, writing, and discussing the work they produced, we were trying to hold our classes in person during a global pandemic. After almost two years of isolation, distance, and fear, we gratefully donned our masks, flung wide the windows of our classroom in the Old Philosophy building, and worked to stay healthy so we might be together each Tuesday night. The poems published in this issue of ECHOES emerged from this confluence of anxieties and fertile discoveries.