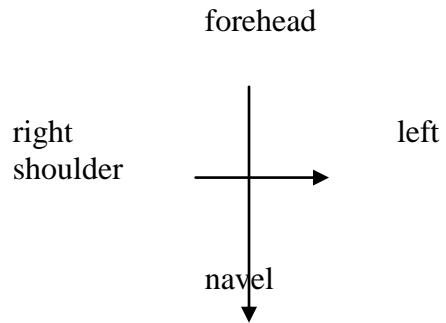


Helen Koukoutsis

At a Funeral

He came
with a suitcase,
3 cents
in his pocket,
a fountain of hope
and an organically
-fed liver –
so he kept
telling us;
but 40 or so
years later,
he surrendered
his chemical
body to foreign
soil. He craved
nothing of
the old land
or the family
he left
behind,
he wondered
no more
when
or how
he would
die
or even if
his pseudo-
Orthodoxy
would save
him. Today
begins his
wait.
Name
carved into
priceless
marble –
not yet
weathered
by a caustic
sun –
he waits
.

Just this once
I try to
specialise
his absence
with an austere
performance
of the cross



and just like
a compass
on the moon
my presence
among the
frankincense
and myrrh
seems pointless.

Earlwood's Drug Dealer

I love
those nanoseconds,
that feigned
tiger-stance
when he sinks
 white
 2 x 2 inch
packages
into dull
unassuming
handshakes
and disappears
like shit
down
 a cement hole,
“unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung”¹ –
mindless of
the vile stench
from which
he came
or the dust
to which
he returns
his comatose
users.

¹ “Breathes There the Man” by Sir Walter Scott

Greece
Summer of '07

This country
they call
Greece,
these people –
 the culture –
 the angry expression
 on civil servants
 who ignore you
 on your approach –
 the hubris
 of Trojan farmers –
 the arrogant young –

the smell of smoke
in airports, banks, cafeterias
and Peloponnesian forests:

I could (not) have lived
without seeing them all
this summer.