

When Izmir is the Sound of Silver



Joseph Salvatore Aversano

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The cover image was taken from the publication *Smyrna. Mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die geographischen, wirthschaftlichen und intellectuellen Verhältnisse von Vorder-Kleinasien* (1873).

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Part I: When İzmir is the Sound of Silver

the sea they say
all the ones they have
in mind

pointed at
through the wall-like
blocks of flats;

and the freight ships on it
can go entirely missing

if the wide mirror at the barber's
is tilted towards a
shining thing washed

with the rain on
the antique peddler's
rack

in steam still
coming off of the samovar

spoons in
empty glasses the clink

each step makes up the street
under the spoons

in empty glasses
the weight

of calling it
a weight

gull
& I
abreast

head-on
wind

for a while on the ferry
forgetting either landing
either side of
and or or

for Asu

the cooing
she says

brings to mind the
summer place

the cooing of the
common city pigeon

in every direction
home

now this swaying
of the upper
storeys of the
cypresses

the coming
or going of a winged
or as if winged
divinity

as no other
bird nor moment
will approach
awhile

in bird syllabary

that sudden hush

lightning the Gulf of Izmir moves like an eel

our lives by this delta's many moons

two small girls in winter parkas
out on their scooters in the drip

drip of the palm leaves being
dripped onto the girls splash ahead

into this beautiful dripping planet
where it rains

how the seller of iced almonds
without a call nor cry

floats his yellow striped umbrella over
his pushcart

a light

(Smyrna, 11/2017 – 03/2018)

Part II: Or a Mirror of the Sea

Illuminations I -- IV

Aristarchus, by standing in Alexandria
Revolved around the Sun;

Whereas another in Alexandria, Ptolemy
Stood at the Universe's Center;

And both were right.

The Pharos Lighthouse
paned with mirrors
of the sea

No Vacancy

night which is the land the sea

No, not just the dark. With the next slow sweep from the lighthouse, are the shoals, the bed here, and that wall. And with the next, the caught corner of a frame, of some seascape, or mirror. Yes, a mirror of the dark.

but when the moon
is because of the sun
and earth and all else
then what is even reflected
or reflecting? and what
is a sent-up satellite
ever taking pictures of?
itself made of the shining
metals of both the
here and the way out
over to the there

A Thing About Surfing at Tobay
(a witness account confirming what Dickinson was telling us
about His Silver Heel being Upon her Ankle)

Well the younger local surfers would call him Neptune, and not just because of the wiry build, graying hair, and goatee, but because no one had actually ever seen him ashore. But what had me convinced was how he would only appear when there was a good wave set, and only on darker overcast days; and he would be the first to paddle over to where a good set would break, where just before there wasn't even the slightest swell, nor any sign of one, but just the broad gray shadow of the clouds. And he would never speak, but would maybe grant one or two of the old-timers a wink, or even a nod. And no one would ever see him go, as there were no goodbyes, but only a lull in the waves, a lull in our sense of how long we'd been out there.

of this world the barrier island secured by a tarmac strip

a terra firma of seabirds' cries

The O About P

It's funny this dog should always sleep on the same blue tiles. And none other. It will neither lie out in the street, nor lie hidden in weeds. It has to be these particular tiles. And you'd think it wouldn't matter; and you'd think that for a dog any spot would just do. But the blue of the tile communes with something of blue in the dog. And why can't it? Haven't both the dog and tile come into this selfsame world?

night moth
a misnomer
for light

after Empedocles

coming down off
the steppe

the poplars now
cypresses

the grasses now
sea

the sea!
with all of the other
seas seen

the olive's
silver light
in leaf

My Life on the Marmara Sea

The sea comes back to mind as one comes back to sea; as the men aboard, shoulder-to-shoulder close, look out; and as their boat gets even smaller, its net is cast wide; and the men, being half the mermen they are, remember.

into the sea body one part salt

the shade of distant Samos the sea's

