

Disembarking

Disembarking the train near midnight,
the day's slow map-crawl rolls away,
thunder's long receding rumble.

A small, contained world cedes to open sky,
stretch of muscles, a surfeit of air.
Five miles from the Yugoslav/Greek border,

I enter the night on foot,
with a just met Cypriot-born New Zealander.
I have no premonition of the war to come.

A full moon is reflected and reflected
by the side of the road, mosquitoes fill the dark,
the shimmering lights of the border crossing

are a bright caterpillar on a ridge.
I recite from *The Axion Esti*
'In the beginning the light and the first hour'

and hear the words return in Greek,
hovering in the air,
poetry infusing the night with its presence,

two of us conjuring Odysseus Elytis,
his voice resonating with our footsteps,
oblivious to all borders.

David Adès