

Spring for Poetry in Takoma Park

Angina Pectoris

If half my heart is here, doctor,
the other half is in China
with the army flowing
toward the Yellow River.
And, every morning, doctor,
every morning at sunrise my heart
is shot in Greece.
And every night, doctor,
when the prisoners are asleep and the infirmary is deserted,
my heart stops at a run-down old house
in Istanbul.
And then after ten years
all I have to offer my poor people
is this apple in my hand, doctor,
one red apple:
my heart.
And that, doctor, that is the reason
for this angina pectoris —
not nicotine, prison, or arteriosclerosis.
I look at the night through the bars,
And despite the weight on my chest
My heart still beats with the most distant stars.

Nazim Hikmet (1902–1963), Turkish
Trans. from Turkish by Randy Blasing and Mutlu Konuk



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