

# Miris - by Constantine Cavafy - As Read By Elli

Post by "Cassius" of November 10, 2018 at 6:41 PM

[Miris Alexandria, A.D. 340.](#)

AUDIO

[Miris - Cavafy.mp3](#)

by C. P. Cavafy. (Note: Not familiar with Cavafy? Check out his famous ["Ithaca" as read by Sean Connery](#) with music by Vangelis)

When I heard the terrible news, that Miris was dead,

I went to his house, although I avoid

going to the houses of Christians,

especially during times of mourning or festivity.

I stood in the corridor. I didn't want

to go further inside because I noticed

that the relatives of the deceased looked at me

with obvious surprise and displeasure.

They had him in a large room

and from the corner where I stood

I could catch a glimpse of it: all precious carpets,

and vessels in silver and gold.

I stood and wept in a corner of the corridor.

And I thought how our parties and excursions

wouldn't be worthwhile now without Miris;

and I thought how I'd no longer see him

at our wonderfully indecent  $\nu\lambda\eta\tau$ -long sessions

enjoying himself, laughing, and reciting verses

with his perfect feel for Greek rhythm;  
and I thought how I'd lost forever  
his beauty, lost forever  
the young man I'd worshipped so passionately.  
Some old women close to me were talking with lowered  
voices  
about the last day he lived:  
the name of Christ constantly on his lips,  
his hand holding a cross.  
Then four Christian priests  
came into the room, and said prayers  
fervently, and orisons to Jesus,  
or to Mary (I'm not very familiar with their religion).  
We'd known of course that Miris was a Christian,  
known it from the very start,  
when he first joined our group the year before last.  
But he lived exactly as we did:  
more devoted to pleasure than all of us,  
he scattered his money lavishly on amusements.  
Not caring what anyone thought of him,  
he threw himself eagerly into night-time scuffles  
when our group happened to clash  
with some rival group in the street.  
He never spoke about his religion.  
And once we even told him  
that we'd take him with us to the Serapeion.

But -I remember now-  
he didn't seem to like this joke of ours.  
And yes, now I recall two other incidents.  
When we made libations to Poseidon,  
he drew himself back from our circle and looked elsewhere.  
And when one of us in his fervour said:  
"May all of us be favoured and protected  
by the great, the sublime Apollo"-  
Miris, unheard by the others, whispered: "Not counting me."  
The Christian priests were praying loudly  
for the young man's soul.  
I noticed with how much diligence,  
how much intense concern  
for the forms of their religion, they were preparing  
everything for the Christian funeral.  
And suddenly an odd sensation took hold of me:  
indefinably I felt  
as if Miris were going from me;  
I felt that he, a Christian, was united  
with his own people and that I was becoming  
a stranger, a total stranger. I even felt  
a doubt come over me: that I'd been deceived by my passion  
and has always been a stranger to him.  
I rushed out of their horrible house,  
rushed away before my memory of Miris  
could be captured, could be perverted by their Christianity.