

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.

Post by “Cassius” of January 8, 2021 at 10:57 PM

Elli's return to posting reminded me of this music video, and I couldn't think at first of a good place to post it -- well how about right here next to Elli's reading of Miris!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2UDVAC31Zs>

Post by “Don” of January 8, 2021 at 11:23 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

AUDIO Miris - C. P. Cavafy - Read By Elli Pensa

That was great! Thanks [Cassius](#) for sharing [Elli](#) 's wonderful, heartfelt recitation! I've heard of Cavafy by name but was unfamiliar with his work. Time to investigate!

Post by “Cassius” of January 8, 2021 at 11:25 PM

Glad you liked it Don - I am sure [Elli](#) will be glad to hear that! I have now fixed the first post so it should now appear with an embedded mp3 player to make it easier to listen.

Post by “Don” of January 8, 2021 at 11:47 PM

This stanza of Ithaka rang very Epicurean to me:

Quote

Always keep Ithaca in your mind.

To arrive there is your ultimate goal.

But do not hurry the voyage at all.

It is better to let it last for many years;

and to anchor at the island when you are old,

rich with all you have gained on the way,

not expecting that Ithaca will offer you riches.

Display More

It made me think of Epicurus's instruction to remember the pleasures of your past so you don't grow old. And also the connection between ataraxia and smooth sailing.

Paian Anax! Thanks so much for spurring me to look into his work!