ADRIANNE KALFOPOULOU

My Daughter’s Eyes

My daughter’s eyes have all of Greece,
all of Turkey in their limpid darkness
lightening out of burnt shades of brown.
Wet and jeweled like Asian candy
they scatter a color so rich I see Bursa,
the Anatoli, deep Aegean velvets that lap
the jagged shorelines of so much discord, so much
fevered history. Her eyes resurrect ancient possibilities
alive the moment she will insist on truce,
the measured beauty of Platonic balance.
“Why can’t you smile at dad?” she asks, “why
can’t you and he be friends?” She is trying
to cross an unknown Bosphorus
to reach Agia Sophia’s gorgeous spires.
But the saints are buried under plaster, their eyes
gouged out – her everlasting why
swims the turgid moment. I am her other-
cultured American mother, her short-tempered efficiency,
her father is his father’s orphaned, barefoot escape,
a Smyrnan memory, the songs she sings
whose words stay foreign and full of intent —
her longing could almost bridge the amber depths,
her eyes ask for the world whole, and I
can only translate so much.