

Christos Kalli

## Elegy for My Grandmother's Hip

My Grandmother's hip has broken  
by the wind, again.

Like rainwater on the ground,  
she has pooled the pavement of the Cypriot stonehouse  
she stoned herself. Next to her black hair, white tulips everywhere,  
pushed out of the earth.

Beneath her loud, Cypriot screams,  
she mutters quietly the grief of her life.  
The wind-broken hip reminds 1974, when they didn't want the fire  
in their village, unless it burned through the hunger  
or the cold.

When she left north, the village  
a fire.

Hunger and cold  
buried in their knitted backpacks.  
With each curse, another word spits out, in demotic Cypriot.  
Now about demons, green lines, children,  
mothers, mothers' mothers, gunfire, Turks.

Words that bricked a house on her lips.  
Soil. Horizon. Root.

Grandma, what about the fire you shouldered from your village?  
What about  
a breath?  
Pick up the red tulips beside you—  
pluck them into the earth, again.  
Take my hand.  
Thumb my lips.  
Teach me how to move them

with passion and pain, to mutter words like  
you spoke: Soil. Horizon. Root.  
Teach me how to build a nest.  
Teach me how to be—  
the wind, the rain, the fire, the ground, like you.