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Poems

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Three poems of Angelos Sikelianos, translated by A. E. Stallings

by [A E Stallings](#)

Coming between Cavafy's spontaneous modernity and the studied modernism of Seferis, and admired by both the senior and junior poet, Angelos Sikelianos (1884–1951) is an anomaly. He wrote exclusively in received and nonce forms using a rich vernacular and vatic voice. His is not the stance of irony or modern detachment and exile, but of a mystic oneness with Greece's landscape and mythology. He is often compared with Yeats. In conversation with Seferis, the translator Edmund Keeley suggested that, though Sikelianos was a great poet, Yeats was greater. Seferis replied, "What does that mean? For me, Sikelianos is the greater poet and Yeats is second in comparison. Because I am Greek and Sikelianos is the great poet in my tradition."

Sikelianos is famously difficult to translate—without the structure of his forms and the verve of his demotic, the ...

A E Stallings's latest collection of poetry is *Hapax* (TriQuarterly).

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