

Poems by Karine Leno Ancellin ('78)



"From Above" By Fabrice Poussin

A Burning Man

By [Karine Ancellin](#)

(Dedicated to Panos Kokkinidis and family)

Amongst Athens' top pastry chefs
Panos Kokkinidis
was spending a warm summer day near Mati,
a picturesque beach town, suave and lovely
on the Aegean shore of Greece.

He had mastered the art of fire
crafting innovational delicacies,
well-known with the Athenian literati.

So when the grey flames came blazing towards him,
his wife, his children, and his mother,
he took his phone out and began filming,
not knowing what was to come.

He posted the agonizing video,
struck by this monumental inferno,
a slithering, colossal ember moving
like an incandescent dragon approaching
denser and closer,
scorching the children and elderly first,
threatened and afraid,
all scampered, fast
the somber smoke asphyxiating
as the diabolical flares
crawled black into their flesh.

A White Mask in a Dark Corridor

By Karine Ancellin

A French lover in New York
impeccably dressed
part of the fashion crowd.
With the New York glitterati,
they meet at The Pierre
happy hour whisky.

Holidays sailing in Greece
handsome tan, well read,
treading the trends of the times
with a pronounced French accent
a fancy foreign friend to most,

you tried my blue mother,
you had a daughter, me
you lured my aristocratic step-mother,
you had a son, my half brother,
you married your house cleaning-secretary,
you were too old.

Racist bathtub of bleached porcelain
narcissistic wall to wall mirrors:
muffling the thumps,
encapsulating masked malice
reverberating lacks, silences and love
unimagined

All
dead.

Panos perished,
a burning man,
the flames had devoured their master.

A plastic dumpster melted in its own carcass
the fire had a Daliesque rage.
Scattered burnt doors fume,
carbonized peeled cables
much like macabre carnations,
sardonic skeletons of electric metal boxes
dangled on worn-out weeping walls
their imperial power annihilated,
a waste of human sacrifice.

The tranquil blue now nags at the blanket of silver ash-dust,
why is its turquoise so arrogant, so indifferent?
Is there no suffering in this crystal sea?

The fire had devastated the lands
leaving nothing to soothe the empty hands.
Death was irrevocable,
nothing to hang on to for rebirth,
not a thing not turned to ashes.

How will any phoenix rise from these stale and sterile cinders?
No remnants of the sounds of laughter
—where will the birds land?

(<https://callmebrackets.net/a-burning-man/>)

morphing plastic surgery scars,
immigrant temperamental camouflage.

Alive, I kept you the parent ideal
dead, excruciatingly, I emptied your failure.

(<https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/0a3c70c2c85c12c42f4a3b97343b3df138f6b2.pdf>)