

THE FIRE

*Hand in hand they stood in the dust
of the city, feeling the ashen breeze
that came off the city waters, watching
the clouds that passed them
in the alien sky.*

*The air was sheer and shrill
with the clang of the docks, the loading noises
of winches and cranes, the railway trucks
that trundled onto the ferry.*

*And the two who watched
saw the women who fetched the water in the village,
The silver of the poplar leaves
the swallow's nest.*

*There they stood,
going over and over the rote
of the words that spoke of home. There
they stood, as if looking out for a boat
that would moor at a mossy jetty
where the lakewater patina
shimmered like the world
upon a retina.*

*Amid
the cries of the hawkers, like a bird,
the single note of a flute. Faint. But heard.*

Cevat Çapan, born in 1933 in Danica, studied at Cambridge, is well known for his poetry and translations of Ritsos and Raymond Carver, among others.

