

PRAYER

The sea took into her depths a sailor's life —
Unaware, his mother goes and lights

A taper before the image of Our Lady
That the weather might be fair, and his return speedy —

While at the wind she always strains her ears.
But as she prays the ikons hears,

Solemn and full of mourning,
Knowing that the son she awaits won't be returning.

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CONSTANTINE P. CAVAFY (1863-1933) lived in Alexandria and worked as a journalist and civil servant. He published 154 poems; dozens more remained incomplete or in sketch form. His most important poetry was written after his fortieth birthday.

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