

composer's note

Several years ago, my old friend and mentor Theofanis Stavrou asked Cypriot poet Roula Ioannidis-Stavrou to write a poem about Dhiorios, his childhood village, located near the northern coast of Cyprus. Dhiorios, historically an ethnically mixed village, was captured by Turkish troops during the invasion in the summer of 1973, forcing the Greek inhabitants to leave. The poem expresses a longing to return not only to the physical environs of Dhiorios, but to the treasured memories of friends and family so far away in time and memory from the present-day life in exile, wherever in the world it may be. The poem was commissioned with the specific purpose of being set to music that could be sung by Professor Stavrou's daughter Niki. This setting is one version; another is being written by Niki herself.

DHIORIOS

My thoughts drift with the breeze
above the mountains of Cyprus,
and from its skies I behold
the endless beauty of Dhiorios.

The fields spread out in front of me,
with the tulips in their embrace,
and the bright red poppies –
they flood my heart.

On the pavements are pots
of sweet-scented flowers,
and the doors of the courtyards
are adorned with fragrant jasmine.

(refrain)

Dhiorios, Dhiorios,
my village, how I miss you.
How I desire, how I desire

to find myself near you.
With the strength of my soul
I will set out again
to come to worship
in our Aya Marina.

I seem to hear in its little alleys
familiar voices of friends,
songs, laughter, joyous commotion
in their open arms.

Nearby are the neighborhoods,
clean, with beautiful houses,
and further, just below, places
where we played as children.

Now I see you enslaved,
suppressed under the Turk's boot.
How I desire, how I desire
to see you free again!

(refrain)

Dhiorios, Dhiorios,
my village, how I miss you!
[How I desire, how I desire
to see you free again!]

*Roula Ioannidou-Stavrou, October 2019,
Lefkosia, Cyprus
Translation: Theofanis G. Stavrou
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