

Short stories written under the Aegean sun



Somewhere
on the other side



Y U M A T Z U G A

NOTE

The characters in this short story are all inventions together with the personality of the narrator, and bear no resemblance to living persons.

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Somewhere on The Other Side

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By YUMATZUGA

PROLOGUE

TOWARDS DOWNTOWN MARKET

AFTERTHOUGHTS OF THE WINTER

BENEATH A GOLDEN CARESS

SNAIL MAIL RECEIVED!

WYOMING WINGS

CANDLES & CLEMENTINES

DONKEY SMILE

JETHRO'S RHYTHM

AT THE PRASONISI LIGHTHOUSE

ON DAPHNE'S LULLABY

ONE WINTERS DAY ON LYCABETTUS HILL

SECRET OF ST XNAMYA BAY

MY GRANDFATHER'S HAT IS IN THE GARDEN

Somewhere on The Other Side

To all
living their daydreams under the Aegean sun

Prologue

The older I have grown the merrier I've been with writing stories. In order to enhance my writing abilities with foreign language I have selected English above my mother tongue. This has proven to be an excellent choice as it has given me plenty of joy and also helped me in my daily business environment.

Greece is my beloved country for vacations and dreams. Especially the archipelago and the seas. Over ten years of holidays spent in different locations of Greece have given me inspiration for imagination that I wish to express with this series of short stories, currently identified as "*Somewhere on the other side*", originally written during the days of blogging under pseudonym 2007 - 2011.

Cheerio

Yumatzuga © 15.5.2011

Towards Downtown Market

The dry midsummer Rhodian landscape rushes by us as we ride towards north from small village called Kalavardha. The road is on the western side of the island where the constant etesian of Aegean sea blow from a direction which mostly varies between north-east and north-west. It's has been said that the landscape of Rhodes is among the most beautiful of Greece. I could not agree more.

Veteran 1967 Volkswagen Crew Cab has good enough power to carry the whole family but currently we, I and my wife, are just two of us on the road. The vehicle had detailed overhaul for all major parts just the other winter and only 15,450 km in the odometer. That figure is of course counted after the latest complete engine change. This old work horse has seen few of them while being pretty rare and trusty companion of our family.

Running on steady 70 km/h we enjoy the cooling breeze with all windows half open. This seems to be the local habit for all even you would have air conditioning

that we're currently lacking. If you only knew the eagerness of Greeks to shout to each others you would realize this habit quite inborn and well used even in pouring rain. But hard rain only happens during winter time and even then it's seldom anything but a nice reminder of a rain itself. Something you may easily forget where you have over than 300 sunshine days per year.

I love these bright Saturday mornings. Light breakfast by the pool and we're on our way. Heading to the Rhodes downtown for market near Mandraki harbor. I never expected we would move away from windy coast of Rhodes town. On the other hand after almost 5 years of more or less constant living with tourist masses finally made our decision definite. As we are not directly involved with tourism nor earn our income from it we started the long voyage along west coast. Slowly moving more towards south with every move. We realized that the Rhodes town would always exist for us to return whenever suited best and we could still have our small and quiet spot under the olive trees.

Distance is relative. There were times when I drove 1000 km a day just for a business meeting or a seminar. The time was different and so was the car, landscapes and oh, the work. Today I would not care to travel to and

from Rhodes City on a daily basis. I guess getting older will mean one will seek the most comfortable way of living too. What I have discovered this is very common among retired IT personnel. Believe me, I happen to know few.

No question, living in Rhodes is divine. Pretty obvious when you share the proximity of Greek Gods. I have had no difficulty to absorb and understand the practical concept of them. On the contrary I have learned to appreciate this attribute in my recent life. I'm unable to list the reasons or opportunities that could lure me away from here. I might go for a long "*vacation*" to other islands and have already tried that in few past years. Nice to have fresh scenery and perspectives. But to completely abandon something I dreamed over the last five and half years of my working career. No way, my dear. I do not think that could happen. Since life in the Rhodes is such divine.

I notice that suburbs of Rhodes town are passing by. Our speed is a fraction of the speed limit due to extreme crowd. Actually, from this direction these suburbs are more like small bastions of independent tourist attractions. There is a good reason for this development and that is the Rhodes International Airport, Diagoras. Huge amount of the stream of tourist visiting island will

travel the route from Diagoras towards Rhodes town. These small villages live side by side forming the south-west side of Rhodes town suburbs. With hills of Monte Smith on our starboard side we are soon cruising along the western promenade of town called Akti Kanari towards Psaropoulos Square. The season is pushing all tourist activities at full speed and that is considered attractive at least by the eyes of a local inhabitant. Or even by a semi-resident like me. The fact is that tourists equal income. Simple as that, I ponder, but soon becoming, oh, so crowded too. Where did that off-season time go?

Passing our old home at Akti Miaouli in between hotels of windy beach is always a moment of heartache and sweet memory. We'll probably never be able to get over the fact that this house was our first real home during we settled here. From the very first visit to this island I recall we decided that this was to be our home one fine day. The location, architecture and coloring of premises is just unbeatable by any scale even today. The Aegean sea is just a stone's throw away from main entrance and the location is practically in the heart of the city.

Old brakes grind lightly as I stop the VW to a parking place in front of the town hall on Eleftherias

Square. It is time to have a walk. We left the dogs at home just for being safe and free of unnecessary responsibilities of guarding them. This arrangement suited well for every party involved. I quietly congratulate myself while almost immediately spotting a few stray dogs in the shade of nearby trees. Slow turn of 360 degrees on the square will reveal the magnificent spectrum of architecture, history and sheer humane genotype. To me it's addressing loudly all in its purity often invisible to occasional visitor too lazy to strain ones head with such philosophy. I, however, fell immediately in love with Rhodes just for these reasons. It's amazing to find such extraordinary details and rich tales in a place you have considered for long to belong completely in to the category of spoiled tourist traps.

In Mandraki harbor I try to observe the situation of our dear sail-boat "*Daphne's Lullaby*". Unable to locate it though. It's probable that the crew took it sailing with some lodgers. We have agreed to charter the boat for some years already. It's not too much of an income but covers the maintenance and gives us comfort in knowing the boat is more or less inhabited all year round. This is essential as we do not have a shipyard nor idea to store the ship. We used to sail to Alimia, Makry and Tragoussa Islands near the west coast of Rhodes. Sometimes we also visited Chalki, the smallest inhabited island of Dodecanese, that has permanent population of 330. It is only about 6 km west of Rhodes. To sail back and fort

from Mandraki was just good distance for us. No denying we're a bunch of landlubbers in that sense.

Afterthoughts of The Winter

Saturday market at Mandraki harbor is great but after a while I often find myself foreseeing to go to a flea market. I don't consider myself being too wealthy and it's often nice to find useful utility articles at feasible price. I also like to encourage myself towards more green values and way of life. Obviously this does not come for all of us like inherited quality.

Today we are not able to enjoy at Saint Demetrius public cemetery area discovering profitable objects. I'm, however, not disappointed. More like opposite, since we have agreed to meet Elias Deneley and his lovely wife at Monte Smith for late picnic & early supper. That would be starting sometime around six a clock at our favorite spot where one is able to enjoy sun fading over the Turkish Mountains surrounded by the Aegean sea. It's somewhat more like a tradition for us to celebrate the season and share some of our most somber experiences of past winter. This is good way to get rid of some while being enfolded by summer warmth.

I first met Elias about ten years ago while I was

working shortly with galley Loyal at Steinsland, Norway. He had left Rock Springs, Wyoming, some 18 months before just after his first divorce. I recall we both dreamed of being able to settle somewhere on the other side where winters are less freezing and summers are long enough. Elias was traveling on his way to explore the Russia after trying to recover from his second divorce. He did not have any rush and as being a very handy carpenter he had discovered nice way to earn some allowance by hewing few interior ribs in the hull before taking of.

Today Elias has a Native American wife he originally met in France on his way coming back from the darkest Russia. He was penniless wanderer at those days and ended up in some welfare queue in the heart of beautiful Paris town. I guess it was more like love at instant from what I've heard from Elias. To me it's no wonder if a man should fall while meeting someone as pretty originating from Wyoming. She came practically from the backyard of his birthplace and there they met on the other side of the world.

After his retirement due to nasty fall of Elias in Athens two years ago the Deneley family, including small badger dog Igor, settled at Rhodes. Igor is the name of a ferryman he made friends with in Tver,

Russia. They agreed that if Elias should ever have a dog he would name it after his Russian friend. They live at the outskirts of Rhodes town on the eastern side of island. Elias has a wood workshop near Old Town Modern Art Centre. Lately he has actually become pretty famous for his decorative and practical furniture. Rhodes has one disadvantage in not having too many decent resellers of furniture. Some of the existing ones are producing quality that is considered too modest by at least my nordic taste. You could naturally make orders from mainland stores or sellers but the cost of delivery often resolves in favor for local products. I have had an excellent opportunity to purchase a few of Deneley's Workshop products.

Beneath a Golden Caress

Wenona is *"firstborn daughter"* in one Native American language. Once in a while that has turned out to *"Winona"* for people not familiar. Elias and Wenona Deneley are a perfect couple in their fifties and my wife and I have really learned to appreciate their company. That said we were eager to meet them next to nice picnic dinner.

We took the western route up to the hill of Monte Smith. It was settled that we would take care of the meal and accessories. They would serve the wine. We were to meet them in the corner of El Venizelou and Makariou near Amboise Gate as they would close early and arrive by foot. It was probable that we would end to their Villa Absalom after all as drinking wine would force Wenona to step on drivers seat of my VW once again. As far as I know she has never enjoyed any alcohol and is therefore among other an ideal companion for picnics and other occasional celebration. Above that she loves our classic VW and never refuses to drive. I once tried to question the reason for total denial of alcohol and got pretty simple answer to be content with. *"Life is more simple without any."*

The season has been one of the hottest ever and we thought that serving cold Ratatouille (a vegetable dish consisting of onions, zucchini, tomatoes, eggplant, and peppers, fried and stewed in oil) with white bread and olives would be ideal light dish. Classic Dry Martini is a traditional way for us to start this occasion. One might ask how come they don't enjoy Ouzo aperitifs, even it's one of Greek specialties? But we actually we do, since my wife prefers light Ouzo a lot more than gin based Martini.

Family Deneley is on time as expected and we pack their basket to the bed of VW. With 1500 cc engine purring seductively we start to climb our way to the western side of the hill. Saint Stephen's (Aghios Stefanos) Hill is locally known also as Hill of Monte Smith. Named because it was here that in 1802 the English Admiral, Sir Sydney Smith, used this place to spot the fleet of Napoleon sailing for Egypt. The hill is 116 meters above sea level and offers ultimate view around Rhodes town and surroundings.

On our way we pass stadium built in the second century and a small theatre. Then, little later, the acropolis with temples of Zeus and Athena. While arriving to the top we notice a buss load of tourist taking

pictures of every direction. Looks to me that they are from somewhere Asia. Possibly even Japanese? Can't tell you from the distance as we just turned to opposite direction to continue little more on the alternative road to Rhodes international airport, Diagoras. We have our favorite spot on the shore side actually no more than 400 meters from the previous intersection. That's where most people turn their way back to town not realizing the possibilities of left hand turn.

The meltemi has ceased for the day. I'm sipping my first Martini with delicious appetizer of olives in garlic and olive oil with thyme, basil and oregano. Having a pair of good binoculars I try to identify any of the sailboats sailing out there. Most of them soon need their motors since the night will be clear and calm. Unable to spot Daphne's Lullaby, though. We talk about the high price of plywood and how the mayor of Rhodes, Mr. Georgos Yiannopoulos expects the tourism to grow this year. I speak about my dream of visiting Elsa Haldorsen in Bugøynes, Norway during next winter. Doing something different than just the Christmas card. Maybe I could climb up to Ranvika, meet the Maiden of Bugøynes and go check the salmon nets with Elif, the fisherman.

Wenona shares her stunning recipe for honey with

walnuts and my wife encourages herself to reveal how to prepare raw salted salmon with fresh dill. It's almost similar to Sushi. This, with butter and rye bread is a family delicacy for us. We laugh loud for some stupid jokes, I present my latest gadget, the "*Screaming Monkey Slingshot*" and we all (not Wenona) have a few glasses of Roditis Sur Lie from vineyards that are situated at an altitude of 450 meters. It's a blessed life you can share with your loved ones beneath a golden caress of Rhodes Island.

Snail mail received!

It must have been quite some time I last received a postcard. Lacking snail mail is probably not so much due to the oddities of Greek postal service but rather due to the fact that everything is electronically taken care of nowadays. Imagine my surprise as I received a postcard from my old traveling companion. It was from Bob. The deeply loved and adored one!

Robert “*Bob*” Kildare (PhD) is one of my few friends in field of computing. We met in Dallas sometime in mid '80's during one big IT related exhibition. He worked as Development Engineer in Apollo Computer, Inc. and was in charge, among others, the Advanced Lisp programming project (to become part of Aegis) of his company. Funny how it feels like ages ago today...

Bob is a terrific person. Build as strong as an ox but gentle in heart. His humor is among the sickest I've ever met. Clever and undoubtedly very educated but still down to earth in mind. I remember we made friends instantly as we first time sat next to each other in the big

seminar hall. The fair and seminars took about five days and we got pretty acquainted during those days. In addition to realizing we were both being Greek loving souls we both loved surfing. At those days I was in shape and never refused good waves. Even though, as we all understand, I did not have, due to my situation, anything but occasional chances to hit the waves. We kept steady contact over the years, most over “*electronic mail*”.

Thanks to Bob, we had a wonderful vacation in Laguna Beach, California with my ex-girlfriend (present wife)! It was a bit weird as it started. We were making up holiday plans for summer 1989 and neither Paris nor Tunis seemed to be the right destination. One night I received a phone call. At first I thought it was one of the mysteries of British Telecom calling us at that time, but then I realized it was Bob on the other end. He suggested us to have a vacation in US with his family. Apollo was acquired by Hewlett-Packard and his new location was HP Labs’ worldwide headquarters in Palo Alto that perched on a hillside just a few miles from the famous HP garage. He welcomed us to enjoy the sun and surfs. What a dream come true! After receiving the rush visas we left next week on Pan American flight to NY and Palo Alto. What an amazing two week vacation did we have.

The North American way of living is a lot different from ours. Especially in California that is. At first I must point out *“Despite the ever sunny days and amazing smog the waves are just magnificent!”*. People are like right out from a distant planet. Even if I consider myself decent fluent to listen English speaking people and take part in conversation, I sometimes felt like an alien. And that’s what we exactly happened to be. Happy aliens!

The postcard was from Hawaii. Big waves and brown skinny ladies. Cool boards and the famous Waikiki sunset. The handwriting was definitely Bob’s. All it was two simple sentence: *“It’s all great here with my new surf business and all, but I have to admit that I miss you guys too much. Call me! xxx-xxx-xxxx-xxxxx”*

Wyoming Wings

One of the strongest feelings of being free is probably achieved in between seat and steering wheel, at least for most of us. I recognize to be among the majority while softly restoring the cruise control back to 55 mph. The interstate #80 from Wendover (Bonneville Salt Flats) continues towards east and reaches the state border little before city of Evanston, Wyoming. We are, however, on our way to north along I-15.

In Flagstaff I saw a sign for Winslow. If one was in his teens during 1970 then how can anyone expect one to refuse such a change to whistle "*Take It Easy*" in the corner of Winslow, Arizona? I promised myself to do it on our way back.

Over 395 miles after Phoenix, AZ we arrived to Las Vegas, Nevada. Good planning and valid map are right tools for successful navigation. Thank God for Google Maps! Circus Circus KOA is easy to find on 500 Circus Circus Dr, Las Vegas. Las Vegas was pretty much what expected. Limitlessly Hotels and Casinos, lots of entertainment. We were still exhausted from the jet lag

and only shortly visited previously booked Vegas Night Strip Helicopter Flight. The scenery really was magnificent and in short time we got good information package of Las Vegas in whole. While returning to camper I took short naps in taxi and unfortunately missed some of the glow of neon lights. During the night I dreamt of visiting Carson City, the state capitol of Nevada and argued with the camper rental company about if Carson City was in our route or not. Whadda odd dream I had.

About 366 miles from Las Vegas there was the next KOA. Wendover KOA situates at 651 North Camper Drive Wendover, NV 89883. The ride across Nevada with Route 93 was smooth one.

Forty years ago Mr. Munro made a one-way run of 190.07 mph, the fastest ever officially recorded speed on an Indian motorbike in Bonneville Salt Flats International Speedway. We are on our way from Phoenix to Yellowstone and Devils Tower through Las Vegas and then naturally via Bonneville Speedway. Just to show our respect for great biker and legend as well as for all things and efforts sacrificed for the God of speed. After a good night sleep we had our morning worship right at the speedway. *“God Bless, all courageous individuals seeking for infinity!”*

Next stop was Salt Lake City after 44.7 miles on I-80. Instead of ever seeing Carson City we toured Capitol Hill in Salt Lake City to gain some knowledge about Utah. The road along east side of Great Salt Lake leads northwards 213 miles to the next stop at Idaho Falls. We decided to hike the Idaho Falls Greenbelt. From Idaho Falls we first planned to continue towards 3305 Targhee Pass Highway West Yellowstone, MT 59758 and have a rest day at Yellowstone Park / West Entrance KOA. It was a bit surprising that this location opens as late as 22 of May at latest. There might be a schedule problem since it's only late April. As we cannot confirm the status of the place we decide to change for Jackson South / Hoback Junction KOA, 9705 South Highway 89 Jackson, WY 83001 that is a less that 90 miles from Idaho Falls. In between Jackson and next planned night stop, Greybull KOA 333 North 2nd Street Greybull, WY 82426, the are 229 miles and two national parks. Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park.

Yellowstone National Park is an amazing place hard to explain. It's not the Old Faithful Geyser or huge 8,987 km² area but the flora and fauna it holds. Scenery is breathtaking and even the traffic is considerable you still manage to make the trip feel you're alone in the wilderness.

The journey continues through small towns like Powell and Lowell towards Devils Tower National Monument, the America's First National Monument. We parked in Devils Tower KOA (60 Highway 110 Devils Tower, WY 82714) for the night. This is located on the filming site of "*Close Encounters of the Third Kind*", the blockbuster movie from my teens. It was near spiritual moment to stand silent viewing towards the enormous facade of this monolithic volcanic plug.

There is no big interstate road from Devils Tower to Cheyenne and we did not wish to go back west for I-25. We followed the small roads nearby border of Wyoming, North-Dakota and Nebraska. We drove the whole day through towns like Sundance, Newcastle, Lusk and Torrington. Total of 300 mi for Cheyenne, WY. We had a reservation for night at Cheyenne KOA (8800 Archer Frontage Rd.). Next day we went to see Union Pacific Big Boy Number 4004 and after the lunch we headed for Colorado Springs and Colorado Springs KOA (8100 Bandle Drive Fountain, CO 80817). It took about 180 miles to get there. Colorado springs is somewhat six times larger in population than Cheyenne. Big city with a lot off issues coming along with rapid growth. I kind of did not like it there, even accommodation at KOA with Speight family was great. I believe the best things during our trip were the encounters with wilderness and free

open scenery under wide blue skies of US. One is able to see enough crowded cities without traveling to the far sides of earth all right.

Albuquerque North / Bernalillo KOA, (555 South Hill Road Bernalillo , NM 87004) is some miles before town of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Like they say, Great People, Great Camping. We met newly married Betty and Johan with their Afghan hound named Toosha, Sally and Larry with kids from Seattle, Eliza and Henry having their year of tripping around US. And a lot of other nice and hospitable people. Good times, however, never last too long and we had to continue in order to reach back Phoenix and flight back home.

From Albuquerque to Phoenix you follow I-40 and after about four hours and 280 miles you reach Winslow, AZ. I wanted to kiss the body of the red flat bed Ford and stand beside the famous statue. It was easy to persuade my dad to visit such a famous site. It felt pretty incredible to hum along Eagles after waiting over 30 years and right on the spot!

“Well, I’m standin’ on a corner in Winslow, Arizona

It’s such a fine sight to see

It's a girl, my Lord

In a flatbed Ford

Slowin' down to take a look at me''

- Take IT Easy (by Jackson Browne and Glenn Frey)

Humble tears rolled my eyes when I realized the time and friends passed by. I wish you could all be here! It felt good to have the first album of Eagles from 1972 in the CD player of our motor-home. It must have been played several times again and again since the ride to our last stage was about 200 miles and more than 3 hours. We had traveled over 3000 miles in total along with our journey from Phoenix to Yellowstone and back. It had been a once in a lifetime trip and worth every single effort I can imagine. God Bless.

Candles & Clementines

Saturday daylight is fading into ever deepening blue. For a short moment it is blue all over. They predicted that a storm is closing this weekend. Well, let it be. Let the devils and Lucifer fall. I will light some candles and curl up in our sofa with bowl of clementines watching Disney channel classic cartoons from satellite all night long.

While settling for the sofa my phone rings with “*Unknown Stuntman*” theme and there’s Elias on the other end. It’s not usual he calls me in the middle of Saturday evening. He had been unlucky to leave keys inside his home, Villa Absalom that is, and was requesting for a spare. Yep, we keep spare keys for several of our friends. They all have spares for our home as well. I believe this as an old Rhodian custom. Funny as we seldom lock our doors anyway. Well, of course we do have a few dogs to keep the strangers away.

However, he said he’d be at our place within an hour. That would mean he is coming on his bike. Elias has had his BMW R 1200 C for about ten years now. As he came

to Europe after his divorce one of the first things was to get a bike. He wanted to have a sturdy BMW and got lucky with the R series. He drove it through Scandinavia and even far to Russia before coming back to France to meet his future wife. I believe he bought a ride for life and will probably stay happy that way.

The western sky is still glowing a bit with stars starting to show up everywhere. The night is calm and cloudless. No signs of any storm yet. While waiting Elias to show up I decide to prepare some hors d'oeuvre. Nothing extra but just a little snack to bite with a few Mythos. Crackers, good Italian tapenade, gorgonzola cheese and some smoked oysters. In case Elias is more in need of a good food and company than just spare keys I selected good calvados appetizer BOULARD Grand Solage. Afterwards we can arrange a raid in our kitchen as my wife is having a business trip in Athens for the weekend. We'll probably end up sipping tasteful whiskies under the dark blue Rhodian skies. This would eventually mean that he need to have a rest in our guest house. It's not a hotel but neither similar to the Hanoi Hilton. Something in between practical and cosy I would say.

I seat myself in one of the deck chairs on our front terrace with cold vodka martini. There is a star, right

from the top leaves of the oleander tree. Makes me think of Project Excelsior and Joseph Kittinger, the pioneer of high-altitude parachute jumps.

I hear a bike roaring uphill...

Donkey Smile

Lips are getting chapped and the last lip pomade is about to come to an end. It was milk & honey from Labello. It's only plus ten outside and I wear another pair of my woolen stockings. It is Saturday and I have promised Mike to be in town at three to check the new HP Blade and EVA storage he has been building up at work. Actually I cannot reveal his employer nor customers but just say that his place of business is in Rhodes Greece.

Mikhail or Mike as we all call him was born in Cyprus from Belarusian immigrant parents escaping destitution after second world war. Their miraculous journey through eastern Europe from Mahilyow all the way to Limassol would make a book easily. Mike graduated from Cyprus University of Technology only few years ago and as being a bright student he was lucky to get a job in Limassol right away. Currently he is in charge of making major IT renovation in Rhodes for his customer.

This winter is slowly turning into early spring.

Daytime temperatures are yet hardly above ten but there is certain amount of anticipation in the air all right. I hurt my knee a bit last week as I was fiddling around with the latest purchase. It's a Vespa LX 1500 last year model and was somewhat cheaper than 2009. The four stroke engine consumes less than four liters gasoline within one hundred km. It is a kind of green alternative to my other vehicles. And what a fun to ride!

In spite of the chapped lips and hurting knee I insist taking the trip with Vespa rather than beetle. The beetle should have an oil change and fixed exhaust anyway before the summer. I guess I'll let it rest just few more months.

It's already two o'clock. I must hurry since I'm certainly not one of those guys that say they'll come exactly but then always appear half an hour late. I wear my Arai helmet, naturally. After last drops of the lip pomade I put on my donkey smile with extra grin and have joyful ride!

Jethro's Rhythm

The country road is running under my Vespa. I'm headed south-west towards Prasoníssi Island. It's about 50 km ride to the other end of Rhodes where the Aegean Sea meets the Mediterranean Sea. During high season the place is filled with wind- and kite-surfers. This time of year there is no problem to enjoy the lonesome roads and early spring though it might occasionally give a bit of rain.

The Vespa has reached almost 1000 km in the odometer in less than 3 months now. Yep; in spite of the capricious knee and dust dry lips. Well, I know that it takes some "*raw strength and courage*" to enjoy motor-bike full year around at this latitude. Even despite over 300 sunny days. I think that I'm eventually going to sell the beetle if I can't fix it properly. On the other hand I'd be stuck with the scooter then. The beetle would need at least some paint-job and maybe major overhaul for all major moving parts in the engine. Let's wait and see. I'm still kind of waiting for the inspiration to kick in.

I park the scooter, pick up my light gear and try to

locate Jet. He probably has not arrived yet. Jethro “*Jet*” Woolmeyer is one hell of a water-sport enthusiast that I’m about to meet. The plan is that we’ll go to the Prasoníssi Island and over to the southern-most tip to explore the lighthouse. I hope he has something bigger to arrive that the Yamaha PWC last time. It is fast all right but much too cold for this time of the year without wetsuit.

I slowly start walking towards the shoreline. During most summers when water levels are low, the island is actually a peninsula attached to Rhodes. You can walk to Prasoníssi “*island*”. Today, however, it’s not possible and would be dangerous to try due to the extreme streams in the passage.

It’s dazzlingly beautiful and glittering view that I have admiration to.

- *Sir? – Hello Sir.*

- *Umh?*

Lightsome voice few meters in behind me almost felt unreal. I saw a nice looking, tanned girl with her strait black hair, blue t-shirt and half length jeans.

- *Mr. Jet sent me to pick you up, Sir.*

- All right then. Shall we go? And, please, don't call me Sir. Thanks.

- Please follow me, Sir. Umh...

“Pretty impressive, Mr. Jet” I thought quietly while I was walking in the footsteps of this long haired fairy. We soon ended up to the dock and I was pondering about the size of our vessel since the dock seemed like empty. At the end of the dock my guide suddenly just vanished somewhere down below. At few steps ahead I realized I was in trouble. This personal water craft looked even more wicked than any previous I had seen. She was staring the beast and removing mooring ropes.

Talking about extreme rides I need to confess I almost felt myself too old this time. Young girl riding a 250 HP water jet in her t-shirt and short jeans made me insecure of my future and, simultaneously, too confident of my doom.

- OK, Sir. Hang loose with good grip, Sir.

- It's about 45 seconds ride ahead!

One, two, threeeeeee! – One, on-e, twooooo, threeee!

Jumping from wave to another (luckily the strait was practically calm) over hundred kilometers per hour. After one minute of fear of death we went ashore on the other side of this narrow sound. I found Jethro smiling on his dock with video camera on his hand. You son of a devil, you had planned it for me from the very start! Wait till I get you!

At The Prasonisi Lighthouse

The distance from Rhodes Island over to other side of Prasonisi sound is less than 800 meters when sea level is high enough to flood the isthmus in between. Traveling over 30 meters a second over the shallow strait made my heart bounce good. After some friendly bear wrestling with Jethro he finally served us Amstel beers and presented his latest girlfriend Joanne, the tanned girl in blue. She really looked gorgeous to me. Long over shoulder length dark brown hair, slender well tanned body and inviting appearance. I had just recently learned hers talent of steering her impressively powerful watercraft. What a captain!

As planned we were heading for the lighthouse on the southern part of the tiny island that Greek have baptized as a green island. Prasonisi is measured round about 6 kilometers only. The walk from “*harbor*” to lighthouse is less than 2000 meters on moderately good path. Highest cliffs face towards west and eastern shore is more like lowland area. There is practically no trees at all. Only some tiny bushes.

We go on foot at decent pace. I have to be a bit careful with the knee even it's improved a lot. Jet and Joanne are both healthy and young in their thirties. I have some issues in trying to keep the tempo during most steepest climb. I start to get out of breath and after a while I need to stop for good gulp of water. The scenery is very much Greek looking. Rhodes Island is still very near and partly visible view towards open sea looks fascinating. The steady breeze from west refreshens us.

About 50 km towards south-west lies Karpathos among Dodecanese Islands. On clear weather this can be seen from the furthestmost cliffs of Prasonisi. Near there is the white lighthouse we have arrived to study. It's very modern looking construction with buildings main entrance towards south. The actual light tower is about 12 meters tall with service and supply facilities that are in two separate rooms next to each other. It's fully automated lighthouse of course. We are unable to enter the premises but this splendid scenery compensates it all.

It's nice to be here in peace. During August-September there are crowds of people visiting the place just for pure curiosity. It's more like several month wild beach party than normal resort for tourists. Few more photographs and views through field-glasses makes it all.

The silhouette of two stage construction of the light tower has corroded in my mind. I will remember the delicate handrails and sharp needle on top of it all. Great sight!

We return to Rhodes with Jet's 2002 Bombardier 210 Fish Hawk by going by foot back to where we left and then going clockwise round the Prasonisi Island. This gives completely new view to the island and pretty lighthouse. Joanna rides her toy full speed towards Karpathos and after some time she passes us in the distance while still able to have a Johnny Weissmuller Cocktail before we even come ashore. Afterwards we threesome enjoy tasty lunch and nice afternoon sun doze under the bar terrace canopy. I believe I saw myself paddling around Prasonisi in my sweet dream.

On Daphne's Lullaby

The dance of reflected sun rays up in the bedroom cabin roof has mesmerized my attention. My eyes try to catch all the nuances of light over the roof structure. I believe I saw a dream about strategies involved with naval warfare and Arthur Herbert, the originator of the term “*fleet in being*”. Must have been something I have lately read.

All known wars seem pretty distant though one of the closest is practically just round the bend. The conflict between the Republic of Turkey and the militant ethnic separatist Kurdish guerrilla group has been going on since 1978. This is less than 1000 deaths per year war and is therefore considered as secondary like many other smaller-scale armed conflicts.

It is Christmas Day morning. An annual Christian holiday for commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ. The Pope is about to give his Urbi et orbi greeting. Just a few days back hundreds of pagans celebrated the winter solstice at Stonehenge. It feels great to wake up here without any stress or need for opinion about these

contradictory worlds. My tiny world is around me. At least, today. I'm glad we did not rent the boat out for this year. After several years of chartering her for lodgers she definitely is in need of renovation. This is my short holiday at the boat. New Cummins 4B 3.3-M marine diesel with 65 HP @ 2600 RPM is waiting at shipyard and the service schedule is agreed. It's amazing how many targets we have spotted so far. Can't imagine what it will turn out to be after she is in the dockyard.

In the background Toby Keith is singing the Cryin' For Me / Wayman's Song. Being a sucker for country music I usually have 3G web radio open 24/7.

“So play your upside-down, left handed

Backwards base guitar

And I'll see you on the other side

Superstar”

Old and worn teak deck feels dry and warm in the morning sun. It should have some planks changed though. Nights are getting near +15 degrees of Celsius but sunny days still yield over +20. No problem with the current heating. It's based on rock solid Dickinson marine diesel heater & stove we installed some years ago

for our paying guests.

The surge is growing stronger along the awaking sea breeze. The boat is safe here beyond the natural breakwater as the bow is properly at the buoy and stern is attached to quay by two ropes. With pair of Steiner 8×30 marine binoculars I'm able to see the Papagou corner cafe at Nea Agora opening their doors. One of the favorite places outside tourist season. It's little less than 400 meters away on the other side of the Mandraki harbor bay. Maybe I should take a walk for good cup of tea and some cherry biscuits.

The sun has climbed higher and generates good warmth even on December. Most of the boats are just waiting for the next season being about four months ahead. It's incredible feeling to walk here a stone's throw away from the place of ancient Colossus of Rhodes. Passing the three windmills I spot a cargo vessel on the horizon of the port side going towards west. It's Kostas Dimakis from Greece most likely going back to mainland thru Corinth Canal. That's a mystery place I wish to visit one fine day.

One Winters Day on Lycabettus Hill

It's an another late winter morning. I wake up in the two room apartment rented for a few months stay. I'm here just for discovering Athens and Greek people. Also escaping the northern winter with a best of my luck. The flat is 65 square meter 2 bedroom fully furnished in the corner of Marasli and Ypsilantou streets. Practically in the center of Athens. This luxury is costing over 25,000 drachmas a month and I have figured that within next two to three months I need to leave. I do not hold a valid work permission and the current random income is too little though I have several activities going on.

Early morning is clear and I conclude temperature will be something around 16 to 17 degrees Celsius during the day. A bit different from the weather would be up in the North. I've had letters saying it has been less than -15 for a month now. Blessed is the Mediterranean environment.

Today I will meet Robert "*Bob*" Kildare once again.

He is one of my few friends in field of computing. We met some time ago in Dallas as he still worked as Development Engineer in Apollo Computer, Inc. Bob had recently been teaching Advanced Lisp programming in University of Athens Informatics and Telecommunications department on a temporary basis. He has piles of friends in Athens and we found each others once again a few weeks back at the sales afternoon cocktail party of HP Athens office at Mesogeion Street.

At the party Robert was just like if I had seen him yesterday. A bit of a reddish hair with clean short cut and generously waxed mustache. He had light freckles on his face due to the excessive sunlight. He is not a tall man but pretty impressive with wide shoulders and shovel size hands. Seeing him without shirt really shows out long years of exercise though he is no bodybuilder by any means.

We were to meet by the Lycabettus Hill. Pretty convenient for me since it's only about 500 meters as the crow flies from my apartment to the Lycabettus Hill cable car. Instead of going to the summit by train leaving at Ploutarch Street in Kolonaki we agreed to go by foot. What could be more relaxing thing in hectic heart of Athens than hiking slowly to the top for most exquisite

view?

We meet at nine forty-five at the entrance of cable car substation. Bob is waiting for me already. Casual and easy-going as always he is. The sun is sharing warm rays from southeast. It's Tuesday and there is no sign of tourist crowds yet. A snake-like path near from left side of the entrance will lead us. I have never counted the total amount of stairs leading to the summit but they are many. Agave trees are lined along the path. In between they will step by step reveal more of the magnificent view over great Athens City.

While heading upwards the hill we discuss about the economy and prospects of modern computing. IBM has just launched new personal computer PC/AT model 5170 running at 8 MHz. Apple Computer had also started the production of Macintosh few years ago. Bob is telling interesting rumors about the development since he had shortly dated one of the original Macintosh design team member. We walk and talk, occasionally stopping for gulp of water and scenery.

I silently send thanks to Pallas Athena for dropping this mountain in such exquisite place. As we near ourselves to the top the trees have practically vanished

and no longer hide our view. There is an ardent desire in us to rush into the summit and see everything possible.

At the top the scenery over Athens is hard to describe. It is like out of this world. The city goes on forever. You notice that Athens is mostly built flat. No high buildings. The only higher objects are Strefi, Filopapou, Acropolis, Ardittos and Turkovunia, as the city is developed around them.

There is the chalk white nineteenth century Byzantine chapel of Agios Georgios. Flag of Greece flutters in the wind. No wonder how Greek got the colors to their national flag. They are symbolizing the colors of the famed Greek sky and clouds. There is a hymn of adoration from revelation 15:3 written on a flagstone. While reading it we hear weak but clear vocal singing.

“I’ve seen bigger lies

You’ve seen harder crimes

We have seen

a few too many disappointments

while going towards the end of line”

There is a woman in her thirties at the shadowy corner of stone fence playing guitar and she sings a catching tune.

*“I believe I’ve seen even harder lies
You’ve must have seen the worst of times
We both have seen
a way too many disappointments
while going towards the end of line”*

I believe I have heard that song somewhere but can’t recall it.

- They say that there is no dead end in Greece. But I feel that sometimes this is not quite true.

- Umh. Say what?

- What do you think of a place like this where the next stop possible is heaven?

- Well, I’d say it must be the dead end for all human creatures living, at the very least.

- Yep yeppers, dear old friend.

Secret of St Xnamya Bay

Internet. Forget it. Stay away from it. *“Who do you want to talk to? All those morons who are living across the world somewhere?”* he said. *“You don’t even want to talk to them at home.”* (Ray Bradbury, February 2, 1997).

That read I may congratulate myself for being away from the reach of Wi-Fi for a full month or so. Actually I have more like missed proper devices for getting connected even there may have been plenty of open networks to choose from. Anyway that is pretty good when you consider that I’m used to get connected on a daily basis under normal circumstances. But let me tell you bit about the history as this time it was really different. Connecting while traveling is not a problem usually but there was a bit of a disaster on my way to Athens. It all started as I left from home with a ticket to the 3350 DWT ferry Diagoras (Blue Star Ferries) that leaves Rhodes towards Kos, then Kalymnos and finally Piraeus.

Kos is magnificent. It has been said that a French

diplomat, writer and explorer, François Pouqueville once wrote quite remarkable praise about the island of Kos, saying “*There is no pleasanter land under the heavens than Cos, and viewing its lovely and odoriferous gardens you would say that it is a terrestrial paradise*”. There are clear references to this quote in at least two common books, *The Island of Roses* and *Her Eleven Sisters* by Michael D. Volonakis and *The Greek Islands* by Lawrence Durrell. I have not, however, been able to identify the original book among the production of Pouqueville. Probably due to lacking ability to read French language properly.

Kalymnos is shaved looking relatively small island but has at least one big thing being commonly famous and known. That is The Sponge of Kalymnos also known as the Kalymnian “*Gold*”. Having a career by diving sponges is still alive, if not in the enormous extent as it once used to be. The Mediterranean Sea has been struggling with sponge killing disease. As times change several Kalymnians are now in good speed looking forward to have other sources of income. Tourism being the top favorite.

In distance between islands of Kalymnos and Pserimos lies tiny uninhabited island of Plati with the chapel of St Nicolas on the eastern shore of the island.

This all is a bit difficult to discover if you are traveling on a ferry with fixed route between Rhodes and Piraeus. It's also impossible to see one micro sized petty island, more like a shoal, right northwards from Plati in less than 200 meters away from the island itself. It's hardly worth visiting unless you appreciate to have sheltered hideout bay for stormy night stay.

MS Diagoras has a ramp height of 4.30 meters and a maximum axle weight of 14 tons. So my '67 VW Beetle would fit fine with curb weight less than 850 kg. I had decided to kill two birds with one stone by having a nice round trip to Athens and sell my (not so trusty, anymore) companion and buy something more suitable instead. I have often dreamed over owning a Land Rover. Sturdy four-wheeler that would serve until the last day of times. It's the greatest mark in expedition use ever. Especially the Defender model that has been on the market since 1983. I used to have some hauling capacity in my previous vehicle, the veteran 1967 Volkswagen Crew Cab. I kind of have missed the opportunity to carry anything but few passengers and a bag of groceries nowadays. Having a good trailer hitch would not hurt either. Or the roaring diesel and a 1-tonne payload.

I just love poached eggs in the morning, or actually at any time of a day. But not just the eggs it is often the

additional ingredients that are involved too. Like when you prepare a tasty and juicy breakfast open sandwich from bread, slice of ham, poached egg and hollandaise sauce. However, eggs Benedict, for instance are something you do not stumble over in Rhodes too often unless you are having a luxury cruise with time for a leisurely breakfast somewhere on deck 10. with view overlooking the town and harbor where it all comes together naturally. This time I was not having any luxury but quite opposite kind of cruise as by the time I had parked the Beetle in the belly of MS Diagoras I felt pretty hungry but soon discovered completely missing my backpack. Come on, guys! Had I really been such a fool to forget that precious item on the doorstep of our cabin in Kalavardha. Yep yeppers, it sure looked that way. So there I was with a ferry ticket and about 50€ cash in my pocket going to Athens while my backpack stood deserted waiting and holding my wallet, credit cards, drivers license, laptop, mobile phone and the rest I had prepared for good two-week joyous voyage.

I tried to calm down with a fact that it all could have been a lot worse. I just was not sure of what that kind of situation might have been. The sun was going down on western sky above Turkish mountainous shoreline and after first shock I was slowly recovering with extra strong Metaxa on my left and one of the best La Libertad Demi Corona cigar on my right hand. These are the two items along with box of matches and car registration

documents I always hold in the glove compartment of the Beetle. It's an old tradition learned in spite of changed vehicles. I strongly feel that some humans, like cats, are sometimes prisoners of their steady habits. Now I was about to do the final change of vehicles but as the situation looked more challenging than expected due the self-inflicted misfortune. I decided first to fully enjoy my refreshing liquor before making any hasty decisions, like stopping and turning back at Kos Island.

The harbor of Rhodes is even more beautiful from the sea where you can view it in the entirety from cruise ship. Then the complex view of harmony of eternal horizon with endlessly flowing groups of tourists becomes complete. I have seen a lot of old pictures and even video of times when there were no actual tourists in Rhodes. These days are long gone and the fact of live is that there would be very little activity around without the several hundreds of thousands of tourists. They keep the essential flow of income running and even it is a serious business I often wonder how on earth the Greeks think to keep it all up in times to come. The scenery is similar to most of the tourist attractions in Greece. In good and in bad. So many pretty facades and on the other hand, simultaneously terrible empty plots of land, as landfills, they have been spoiled with rubbish and dirt. Is it the Greek way of doing things? Or more like the Mediterranean way, I guess. But for how long this expected to allure people to visit and pay?

Rhodes has some especial business advantages over the other more remote locations, though. First of all it is an airport island with huge masses. Also very long, fascinating history, buildings, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and rest of the island that has plenty more to discover. Other than just plain tourist traps with souvenirs found from so many unfortunate Greek locations. If the polluted and dirty environment will not repel all guests then one huge big oil spill will eventually do the job. It's just a matter of time, I'm afraid. It has been so sad to see this innocent and untouched scenery starting to deteriorate slowly but with steadily escalating pace. It is scary to think the length of modern tourism around Greece viewed history wise and compared towards the known human history. Is it really so that within less than one percent of all the time since start of days, Greeks have, for steady incomes sake, been able to start up the final countdown to the irreversible collapse. Or will there be bright enough people willing to care and prevent destruction?

The passing view over Rhodes is just heavenly beautiful. Everything in the scenery is slowly merging into each other and becoming fully integrated view of joy. Especially in the evening time when hundreds of lights glitter on the surface of calm water and the beloved sickle of the moon is slowly rising over the

aquamarine colored cloudless sky. It's easy to let this view corrode permanently to the mind. Even I have done the same trip several times it never stops being same breathtaking experience all over again. But like for most of us leaving Rhodes is nothing more than an other opportunity for pleasant return. I know that as my home will always be where my heart is and that place, for now at least, is Rhodes in Greece.

I did not turn around at the harbor of Kos. Instead I managed to call my wife for her being the sole to rescue my backpack valuables and especially a pot of Glyko Karpouzi, home made watermelon preserve, that I reserved as a souvenir for Bob living in Athens. We had agreed on boys night out for old times sake whenever I was present and ready in any bar at the rushing Plaka.

I did not have any rush with that but spent a few days finalizing the sale of old four wheel companion. Probably I was not making the most profit of selling the vehicle but I needed some extra money for making dreams come true. At least that was the idea on the day of selling. With a purse holding more than usual I had hard time keeping low profile. I did not wish to have the word to spread, though I was not in debt or anything. Just wanted to avoid too much hassle while having a short stay at the capital. I rented a small room near to

Larisa metro station for just a week as I figured it would not take any longer to find a new vehicle and spend some quality time with Robert. The room was not too much but luckily the hosting landlady Antheia was the most welcoming and kind person for long time. Days turned into nights and the daily routine started turning heavier I had anticipated. There simply was not such a vehicle in the market that I was after. Some were almost brand new and way beyond my limits. Others seemed like jigsaw puzzles that had their pieces mixed bad. In the mornings Antheia served coffee and cherry spoon sweets as a topping on yogurt. Then I was away to continue the cruel hunt.

I had tried to reach Bob for several days but had not been lucky at all. I thought there was some trip or other on the way. After leaving several unanswered messages to the answering service I kind of felt strange. I realized I had to go and meet the man face to face in order to get a reply. I was not too certain about the address though. So I contacted the last know place I could imagine and called his daughter in Spain. To my great surprise she expressed being with his father in Athens as well. She did not give a strait answer as I shortly wondered any reason for Bob being unable to give reply for my messages. Well, after all we the agreed that all three of us should meet in restaurant on Persephone's Street. For some unknown reason Bob was not present to say hello but I left my best greetings.

The restaurant Mamacas is no different to dozens of restaurants in Athens but at least it is not on the most crowded and expensive area of Plaka. I ordered plain gin&tonic to wait for a while before agreed reunion. It was kind of funny situation since I had never met Joceley, the daughter of Bob. I only had seen a picture or two hanging on walls of Bob's home long time ago. But if they both arrive together it should not be a problem then. After a while as I was just sipping the last drops of my G&T in the bar I suddenly feel a tap on my shoulder and strangely metallic voice of a woman saying

- Pardon me, are you to meet Robert Kildare?

- Umh. Yes, actually I am.

- Hello, I'm Joceley, his daughter. Nice to meet you.

- Okay. Hello Joceley. So nice to meet you too. Umh.

- How did you guess who I am?

- Well, my father did tell me few things about, you know.

- I see. Where is he?

- Ah, he will be joining us in just a moment I believe, should we have a table at first?

- Yes, naturally. I have a reservation ready.

We took our chairs and sat down. We ordered few drinks and Jockey insisted having one for Bob as well even I did not see any sign of his arrival yet. Then we waited a little while in silence that soon became somewhat awkward. I started to feel pretty uncomfortable and was desperately seeking any suitable subject to start discussion on. Jockey helped me by taking a deep gulp of her Ouzo, saying

- Oh hell, I believe it's time for dad to arrive, what do you think?

I nodded in response with lifted eyebrow as she quickly opened her shoulder bag, grabbed there a deep blue velvet sack and laid that on the table. As she opened the sack I finally comprehended the terrible thing. There was an urn on the table with what remains of Bob in it. It struck me on the heart and brain. Robert James Kildare was dead.

Bob was always pretty much interested in sailing ever since he learned the basic skills from his stepfather back in shores of Maine. That must have been sometime in early sixties, the days in time when US started launching geostationary communication satellites. I

remember some funny stories Bob shared about his father and the guys desperately trying to get early satellites functioning like they were supposed to do. Well, after a few errors and several lessons learned they finally succeeded in doing that, I guess. Robert sailed with multiple sailing addicted groups, he deeply loved surfing and any other activity related to open waters. We went surfing and sailing several times as we had the great holiday in Laguna Beach long time ago. I remember him always being a hell of a skipper. Not matter if it was boats or business.

- He died about a month ago, I have been here for arrangements, cremation and else for the past two weeks now and will return home, to Ponferrada, within a week.

- No other relatives except some distant cousins back in US.

- Haven't contacted them, though.

- How did it happen?

- Well, like the usual way as it happens for most warm hearted and kind people. He was crossing a street and "Bang!" Died in jiffy, they say.

- Oh dear, holy sweet Mary and Jesus.

- Yep. I actually now have one request for you as you

so conveniently appeared here in Athens.

- Erh...

- It just popped my mind if you could take dad, or what is left from him and take care of the remains?

- Umh. Aren't you going to bury him?

- Here in Athens? Good heavens no and I sure won't keep him on the edge of the fireplace either.

- You know that we never were too close anyway and it's a bit too late start now, whadda you say? Make him rest in some quiet place he would have appreciated, okay?

- Okay. It's okay, I will do it.

I never found new vehicle nor it did not matter at all. I felt devastated after vigorous loss of long time friend. We were remote in relations but he showed to be rock solid companion for adventures and really special soulmate. The significance of the issue made me do the quick decision and I had promised Joceley that I would take care it all. The return from Athens was not made with lightest heart. I had a plan how to fill the last wish of Bob's daughter. As the ferry stopped in Kalymnos Island, I stepped ashore among the people leaving. I went around the harbor and chatted in a nearby bar for renting small boat, preferably with sail on it. Luckily it

did not take too long to have a deal for two days sailboat rent. The boat was straightforward design with wooden hull and Bermuda rig with retractable keel. Pretty easy to sail alone in lighter wind. There was also a small outboard motor attached to the tailboard. I then made some preparations for outdoor overnight stay at the local grocery. I also bought two extra anchors and plenty of rope as well as some other equipment from nearby diving shop. All the things had tourist pricing in place but very little did that matter in my thoughts. I could have had all these from Athens with the fraction of cost but as I had just sold the only vehicle for transportation I decided look everything up onsite.

I packed everything in and went out to the early evening waves. I had calculated the time for reaching the farthest tiny island in between Kalymnos and Pserimos on the northern top of Plati in three to four hours as there was nice steady north-west wind and the distance was less than 6 nautical miles. I first used the tiny outboard engine but as soon as I got away the protection afforded by the island I reached for both sails and lowered the centerboard. That is a lot more convenient construction than a daggerboard as it is less vulnerable while going on shallow waters or entering shore.

There are two bays on the western side of this very

small piece of land. I anchored to the one little deeper in south and gave the place the name of the St Xnamya Bay. St Xnamya was the name of my rented boat and suited me well since I did not know any other name for this remote location. It was over 10 meter deep and crystal clear in the center. I went swimming and checked all anchors for good grip. The little island and this bay gives nice shelter from northern winds and as the bay is facing mostly south-west it has plenty of sun. The idea of eternal sun rays caressing over Bob's acid-proof stainless steel urn thru clear water made me feel warm. I sipped another gulp of highly overpriced Larsen cognac and let the remains slowly sink. With the abundance of ancient Gods being my witnesses I knew I was doing the right thing.

Godspeed, Bob! May your soul rest here, in peace. I'll bring you a good pot of Glyko Karpouzi as we meet again.

My grandfather's hat is in the garden

This morning awaked with a wet water color painting like sky over the eastern horizon. A pink curtain in the distance revealed that the sun was slowly gaining power over the rain filled clouds. I found the forecast for the week to come looking quite promising. I wonder if we are over the winter yet?

Villa Invisibl  is recovering from winters storms and even the garden is still at sleep it all anticipates another great summer ahead. Today it is, however, another grey clouded Saturday. My wife has arranged a little evening get-together with Elias and Wenona. I expect to have some Mojama with Domaine des Salices Viognier for starters but actually having a hard time thinking of the main course. I usually serve cured raw salmon for starters. It's a delicacy you don't tend to get around here too often. It's also simple to prepare though the salmon is hard to find. I believe the Deneley family has tasted this speciality enough anyway. This is how I end up with having Mojama instead. Tuna is luxury still pretty easy to get but I have read Mojama used to be from dolphin long time ago. I never have had a chance to taste such. I

could try to imagine if dolphin and whale meat are alike as they say. Whale was all right for me even I do respect the general idea of “*save the whales*” generation. The preparation of Mojama seemed a bit tedious at first with long sun drying. I found good place for that in a corner of our covered terrace. Low hanging rays of the sun and ever famous gentle steady breeze of southern periphery of the Aegean sea.

Last Christmas we received some post cards from relatives. Pile of those did fall out of the chocolate cookbook of Trish Deseine’s. After refreshing memories along with snow filled landscapes and greetings I started browsing tiny selection of cookbooks in the bookshelf but ended up searching the house deepfreeze for Kamchatka crab. Could not find any. The last were most likely eaten during the new year as usual. Instead of crab I found half a dozen of fatty partridges and then, with a flash of Perdix, the dinner menu was decided.

“We just did not realize that the most dangerous thing man can do is to taste the possibility of happiness: having once done so he continually demands new doses.” – Göran Schildt (1951).

The rain pours softly as we go along the beach. My

peaked cap with NASA meatball logo is becoming utterly wet. The salted air is fresh and it smells exceptionally good. I most likely never get tired of these western shores of the island. Walking the shoreline always holds a juvenile excitement of finding small treasures. It's not the treasures but the overall feeling that attracts. It's not about the end point but the voyage. One got to enjoy the rain while it lasts. Soon, within two months, the clouds will transform into huge jet planes crossing with grumble over our heads. The sun will burn everything and millions of foreign people will graze the streets and market places. The yearly transformation back and forth from deep off season sleep to the ridiculously crowded holiday season rushing all over the island is just one thrilling spectacle to follow.

Looking like today does not want to clear up. The persistent rain casts circles into ever widening puddles. The sea is getting even more restless and pushes great waves that will ease as soon they hug the sturdy beach just before the next in line follows. I let the rain to wash my face as we walk hand in hand towards home for picking up few herbs from the garden greenhouse.



Somewhere on the other side

Slow turn of 360 degrees on the square will reveal the magnificent spectrum of architecture, history and sheer humane genotype. To me it's addressing loudly all in its purity often invisible to occasional visitor too lazy to strain ones head with such philosophy.



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