

Conversations with my yiayia.

“Unlovely? No. Plain, perhaps,” Yiayia says.

Wisps of mockery drift.

I stroke her angular cheekbones with rough thumbs.

When darkness shrouds my dreams, Yiayia lights my way.

Respect.

Honour.

Within a honeyed dreamscape we share a stone wall, the remains of a village which sang happy songs before war came to the island and a small girl in pink dress and ringlets.

A bee swarm clings sloth-like to an olive bough on the hillside above a sheltered sea. As a good man lovingly encircles his woman's waist with strong arms, so the bees encircle their queen, as they have since mythic times when Eros' honey-tipped arrows filled hearts with ardent desire.

Spectral, rainbow hued, wildflower heads bob in the breeze. Carven stones from broken homes provide lop-sided homes for fragrant herbs. Signature essences filling honeycombs, a natural bounty upon which Yiayia raised her family.

Faithful and true, the scouts serve their queen.

Would that I was so blessed.

Olive branches hanging heavy with flower wait for salt-tinged winds to spark vital congress, flower to fruit. Ten thousand blossoms feeling a fleeting caress upon velvet petals. Many will fail in their union.

Yiayia says, flowers sing to the bees who reciprocate the song of love, desirability intensified.

An unscented blossom was I, over-looked in the cycle of fruitfulness, singing a dull song to no-one. A bloom slowly fading until warm winds carried my song to willing ears.

Now, a sacred trust betrayed, the warmth inside me growing. The truth will soon thwart all disguise.

A boat rests upon shingle below. He returns but not alone. He climbs, alone. The age whitened skull of my Yiayia smiles, mocking forlorn hope.

Tomorrow the bees will have moved on.

Tomorrow I will have conversations again with my yiayia.

I will remain.

We will survive.