

Timothy Liu

### **MY LAST NIGHT ON RHODES**

A blood moon waning above the Cretan sea,  
the rhododendrons stirring less as the Meltemi  
dies down. Yes, there are tourists, but where  
are there not tourists, and I among them, happy  
to discover that the Greek I daily butcher  
is not required in this place where they speak  
in my own tongue. An island nowadays seems  
little more than the people on it, but hasn't that  
always been true? No one around here claims  
to own the moon – ah – isn't that the beauty  
of a place where you can slowly peel back all  
the layers – ruin upon ruin – a crumbling mosque  
where a Byzantine church once stood after  
pulling down a pagan temple whose columns  
are still intact if you dig down deep enough  
in a place where little of anything else survives,  
I think, on my last night on Rhodes, happy  
for the simple fact that I'm able to leave  
not a single trace of my lonesome self behind –