

## Prologue

Following *Greece Is My Anthi*, a rich novel about Anthi and M finally meeting and falling in love, as well as Goddess Athena and Patrick, and other savoury characters, it was time to continue their tale in a second novel, which follows their adventuresome love story from their one-year tree (not paper) wedding anniversary (September 5, 2022) until M's programmed demise; I mean that of his body, of course; certainly not his soul, especially that Anthi is the one carrying it with so much love. By the way, I am M, and the programming may have changed.

I will start with five mantinades. A mantinada typically consists of a Cretan 15-syllable rhyming couplet (mantinades is the plural).

O Anthi, from here to eternity, and perhaps beyond!  
I wonder if the Cosmos will but benignantly respond.

*What did you ask of it, my M, though I may already know?  
I will always be with you, as long as you want us to flow.*

O my Anthi Kanéna<sup>1</sup> of Athens in heartwarming Greece!  
I wanted to know if souls need dark matter to live in peace.

*O my dear M of Montreal and our Athena's Athens!  
Souls may also need dark energy for their leveled fashions.*

O my dearest Anthi in the sky, my blue-and-white flowers!  
I cannot foresee my life without you, let alone the hours.

I will continue with five sensual mantinades.

O Anthi, from your encouraging hair to your ten long toes!  
I wonder if you can, from now on, avoid wearing most clothes.

*What do you really mean, my M, although I can surely guess?  
I will always keep my panties for you to bite and undress.*

O Anthi Kanéna of my chest and heart in my mind's Greece!  
You can also keep your blue bra as a persistency piece.

*O my dear M of my nous and always-loving Athena!  
My soul lusts after yours and together they void kanéna.*

O my dearest Anthi in all I am within and without!  
There is still one cute picturesque pleasure you did not lay out.

I will end this prologue with two pieces; a sonnet and an anniversary accompanied by another sonnet.

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### A Speck of Dust Over a Sea of Love

A speck of dust in the Universe I  
am but you are more than that my Anthi  
A sea of love in the Universe you

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<sup>1</sup> Kanéna, chosen by Anthi Psomiadou (<https://apsomiadou.medium.com>), means “none” in Greek.

are my Anthoula of yore riding high  
over streams of light all long and canty  
as I learn Greek and the meaning of *μου\**  
Are you really mine my love from within  
or do I have to share you with your Self  
When you look at me and your eyes light up  
and you move your hair to the left to spin  
my heart as if it had an axis shelf  
notwithstanding its lack of a backup  
or any semblance of being unscathed  
do I let myself fall in to be bathed

\* *μου* means “my” in Greek and is pronounced “mou”.

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### **Anthi’s & M’s First Wedding Anniversary - Married on September 5, 2021**



Designed using Canva

I love trees too much to call it a paper anniversary, so I will name it a tree one, especially that the wedding took place surrounded by olive trees. Close to 50 Medium writers and readers were invited, along with Anthi Psomiadou’s dog, with many of them attending, including the dog. Goddess Athena, Patrick’s divine love, officiated the ceremony, with Glaukopis, her owl, patiently leading the guests to their seats from the air.

Anthi and M; I mean me, are still living with Goddess Athena and Patrick, as well as Delphine, Anthi’s daughter, who shares a wing of the house with Eléni, my dearest narrator. Our life is heavenly in Athens, but there are pernicious external events that affect our lives like they do everywhere else. Goddess Athena tries Her best to help us cope with them, but She is Herself affected, although Patrick is the only one who witnesses most of

Her malaise.

Given the daily dire news around the world, Anthi and M; again, I mean me, decided to spend our first wedding anniversary at home. We will all help prepare a feast, similar to the ones we had organised in Crete, adding a few ketogenic items to our banquet. But before, in the early morning, we will take the long path to the Pantheon, avoiding the noon heat and witnessing again all the missing statues that are still crying, imprisoned in a British museum.

We will sing, we will dance, and we will eat. We will also talk about the lack of love in the world. Love surely blooms in many an abode, but it turns to gratuitous hatred on the global stage. I had mentioned dictators in several of my poems, but I neglected to emphasise the ones in the West. You may know who they are and discover them quite easily if you study the news carefully. But this is a celebration, and politics are not invited. I digress too much.

Anthi in the sky with flowers. They bloom; mostly in white and blue. I have noticed that almost everything that I do, I do for my Anthi. I am addicted to Anthi, but it is the best dependency I could have ever imagined. Anthi exhales and I breathe again. Anthi breathes and I feel myself in her chest. When I count her fingers and her toes, five at a time, also thinking of our Athena, I seem to grasp why we have sets of five and not of four or even three.

*A Sonnet for My Heavenly Anthi*

It has been a year, my Anthi, my life,  
Yet it feels like six months and even less.  
I still do not believe you are my wife  
When I awake to your morning caress.  
We live together in our nightly dream,  
Regaining consciousness till the next one.  
In wakefulness you are also a gleam,  
As your gracefulness like the Sun is spun.  
O Athena! O Universe! I know  
My love will endure more forthcoming woes.  
Yet with every amorous apropos,  
Your gestures turtle them as each one slows.  
Anthi Kanéna, my blooming flowers;  
I wish all our minutes would last like hours.

[\*To zēimpékiko tis Eudokías \(The Zybekiko of Eudocia\)\*](#)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yeC7N80wZas>

## Part 1 - Over a Year of Bliss

*To be or not to be*  
and  $(x - 2)(x + 2) = 12$   
appear like bizarre bedfellows  
Indeed  
But then  
to live or to die  
and  $x = 4$  and  $-4$   
make more sense  
What do I live fo(u)r  
and what will I die fo(u)r  
For yo(u)  
my dear Anthi

Our two-month honeymoon in Portugal, Iceland, Tahiti (Pora Pora; there is no B in the Tahitian language), and Crete, two weeks each, continued in Athens to become over one year of bliss, and it is far from any finish line. Anthi agrees as far as I know.

“Come on, my M! You know beyond any doubt that I agree, my love.”

O my Anthi; I do know! But I did not want our love story to appear as perfect as it is. Our readers in the real world may take offense, being mostly used to tragedy befalling every love story. You are certainly not a Juliet and I am no Romeo.

“O my M; I have your soul and I will never let you go.”

Do you remember the pellucid water of Pora Pora, which permitted us to contemplate their plenitude and expose our immemorial unimportance? (I am not sure that Anthi meditated upon the latter, but yours truly was immersed in it like a ray.)

“I do, my M. How could I ever forget its abundance and the feeling, although exaggerated, of our humility in comparison?”

I stand corrected, dear reader. How could have I doubted her? She is perfect, at least in my eyes and those of all lifeforms who know her even just a little.

“She will forgive you, dear M,” our Goddess Athena told me in my mind.

I know, my Goddess, our Athena. Perfection will remain your domain, and thus Anthi must be singular in her perfection as a human.

“She may not have loved you if you did not at least approach it in her eyes, especially that she does not consider herself to be perfect, as you well know and have written about,” beautiful Athena replied.

I love you, Anthi, from every angle; at least those that I was able to trace and then contemplate.

“I saw it in your eyes and in the way that your fingers caressed my skin, even in the dark, even in our dreams, my M.”

We never dreamt about fire, except when we were close to the Sun. I want us to ride in a chariot, but instead of horses, I want the chariot to be carried away by flames. We could descend into the sea and come out wet, ascending back to the sky.

“A chariot of fire and I, sitting against you, to feel even warmer. It would be another first. Our Goddess will surely make it happen, my M.”

“You will dream it tonight,” Athena whispered in our minds. I had a few tears for some reason. Perhaps wishing for Athena everywhere; a real Goddess. Anthi was also touched; even feeling it in my soul.

It was strange to hold the reins of five flames of fire within a blue-and-white chariot, which seemed to hug us with warmth and comfort. I offered Anthi the reins, finding myself behind her, trying to bury my head in her hair, more in love with her, if at all attainable, and happy to be alive.

At one point, we were slowly racing on the rings of Kronos<sup>3</sup>, Anthi screaming, Moses, towards each side, and I; I mean M, listening to the sound of her voice, praying that I will be always able to hear it.

I realised that I could pray to Athena. She would never ask for it, since she would never need it. But I seem to need it and want to pray to Her because I love Her; we all do. There may be a human need to adore someone or something. I adore, Anthi.

We rode in many shades of sky, from blue to space dark, in clouds and emptiness, led all along by fiery flames, feeling our chests but not our souls. They have been together for many years. Our souls feel each other. We do too through our minds and our senses, but our souls are external; some would even say, superior. Some scales cannot be compared. A good question to entertain is whether we would prefer to be humans or souls. Humans may need souls but souls may not need humans.

Can we fall asleep within a dream? It appears to be the case, since Anthi and M; I mean me, fell asleep in the chariot, as it was flying from the Moon to Earth, as far as we could remember. We awoke a few hours after dawn, both smiling with a plan in mind. We cannot travel in space while awake, but we can travel on Earth, and much more easily in Greece. We had mentioned before our wedding that we would visit every pillar and patch of Greece, and now, we could live up to it.

There are many more islands than those shown on the map below, but most of them are uninhabited. We had visited Crete more than once, so we decided to follow a clockwise ellipse, starting after Crete, the big island at the bottom of the map, and ending, one eventful evening, back in Crete, where our love for each other began to bloom.

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<sup>3</sup> Kronos is the original Greek name of Saturn.



Blue Vector Map of Greece<sup>4</sup>

Like a Rorschach inkblot, one could perceive something else looking at this blue map of Greece. O Greece! You were much larger before the ways of the world carved pieces out of you, as they did from your monuments. While your sculptures will be returned to you one day, your lost territories will probably not, unless Zeus also returns, with the other Gods and Goddesses, and demands their return. Goddess Athena lives with the times and her wisdom would never allow her, as far as we know, to even entertain such a thought.

Thus starts our new adventure from a chariot of fire to a car of flowers, with a boat of sea from time to time, a plane of sky occasionally, and always a dream of remaining ensemble (together) no matter the current ways of the world.

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[Vangelis - Chariots of Fire](#)<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <https://freevectormaps.com/greece/GR-EPS-02-4001?ref=atr>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ay\\_h0JNiyxU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ay_h0JNiyxU)

## Part 2 - Greece Is My Anthi

Aunt Athena, as Delphine, Anthi's daughter and happily mine after our wedding, calls Goddess Athena, blessed our journey around Greece, promising again to take care of Delphine, with Eléni's help, on the days that we would be away, and to both join us with Patrick on our meeting days once a week if we remained away and not back home for a short visit, Zeus willing, of course, in all directions.

Greece includes around 6,000 islands and islets stretching across the Greek seas, of which, 227 are inhabited. The Ionian Islands lie along the mainland's western coastline, consisting of sixteen large and small islands covering an area of around 2,200 km<sup>2</sup> (847 mi<sup>2</sup>), namely, Antikythira, Kythira, Antipaxoi, Paxoi, Ereikoussa, Ithaki (Ithaca), Kalamos, Kastos, Kefalonia (Cephalonia), Kerkyra (Corfu), Lefkada (Leucas), Mathraki, Meganisi, Othonoi, Strofades, and Zakynthos (Zante).



Our journey's clockwise ellipse starting after Crete, the big island at the bottom of the map, led us to Antikythira Island — it was too small to visit — and then to Kythira Island (278 km<sup>2</sup> [107 mi<sup>2</sup>]; encircled on the map), our first stop following a one-hour flight from Athens. I was a little anxious knowing that Goddess Athena could not protect me from potential roaches at such a distance but somewhat relieved that it was October, the beginning of heartwarming autumn and the period during which the roaches begin to hide from the cold. Anthi smiled upon hearing my reasoning in her mind, assuring me that she would take care of any inopportune roach. I had to kiss her, of course.

Kythira Island (partly pictured below) bathes in three seas, namely, the Aegean, Ionian, and Cretan, and is the birthplace of Aphrodite, the Goddess of Love, according to Hesiod, a Greek poet who lived during Homer's time, around 2,500 years ago. Kythira also happened to be a source of inspiration for several artists, including the French poet, Baudelaire, and the Greek filmmaker, Angelopoulos.



Photo by G. Filippini for the Greek National Tourism Organisation<sup>6</sup>

Did we miss the wine festival at Mitata, a village in Kythira that celebrates the taste and smell of fermented grapes every August? We did, but spirits are not ketogenic (keto) and Athena would not have been around to keep us sober in case we did taste some if not all of the wines, namely, Arikanas, the rosé; Kydonitsa, Petrolanos, and Roditis, the whites; and Toukoumaki, the red.

The taste of your lips is better than any wine, my Anthi.

“Which lips are you referring to?” Anthi asked with a smile that could light any darkness.

Both sets, my love, but I was referring to your mouth.

“I know that you were, my M, but I was not sure.”

It looks like we will not be seeing much of Kythira today, my Anthi.

“Let us at least see the Moudari lighthouse in Cape Spathi. It is one of the tallest in the Greek seas. It reaches 25 metres (82 feet) in height and dates back to 1857; that is unless you want us to see it in our dream tonight.”

No, my Anthi. We need as much reality as we can grasp in our lives, although I know deep within that you are the greatest reality I could have ever hoped for.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.visitgreece.gr/media-kit/image-bank/>



“I feel naked near you even when I am fully clothed.”

It is surely one of your countless qualities, dearest Anthi. Greece is my Anthi, and thus, so is Athens and every other part of this heaven, including this field where the lighthouse stands, overlooking many shades of blue, both without and within.

“O my loving M! You are the lighthouse in my heart where our souls live together as our bodies finally do. I carry your soul but you carry our love around your chest, including your wooden heart that I worry may break.”

I often think that I am continuously dreaming when I see you smiling at me. I need to touch you to negate the feeling of fiction that keeps haunting me. I even asked our Athena about it, and She, of course, kissed me first before revealing that my heart had been weakened after so many years without a soul to sustain it, and that I did not die because you were the one unknowingly sustaining me. Our souls had met many years before our bodies, and the love between them must have been reflected through time and our growing minds.

A lighthouse may not be what it used to be when ships and boats ruled the seas and only birds sailed in the skies. It can still guide skiffs and the like that may lack modern, almost foolproof instrumentation, but during the day it can become an observatory for lovers in the wind and those looking for absolute blueness.

Kythira offered a lot and perhaps too much. Chóra, its picture-perfect capital, presented a castle from both the Byzantine and Venetian periods, housing the island’s historical archives, coupled on its outskirts with an archaeological museum to taciturnly provide artefacts of prior lives and their living tools.



Photo of Chóra by G. Filippini for the Greek National Tourism Organisation

Palaiochora, a town in ruins, once the Byzantine capital of Kythira, was built on a hill and protected by cliffs a short distance from the shore but unseen from the sea. It was blown up in 1537 by Barbarossa, the much-feared pirate who made the Mediterranean his domain.

The cave of Agia Sofia Mylopotamou, 100 metres (328 feet) long, covering an area of 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> (21,528 ft<sup>2</sup>), includes chambers with beautiful stalactites and stalagmites as well as 13<sup>th</sup>-century murals signed by Theodoros, a Byzantine painter.

Anthi’s eyes sparkled in this cavern, becoming one with the stalactites and stalagmites; a mosaic of animate-inanimate natural beauty, enchanting M; I mean me, beyond measure. I could never love anyone more than Anthi, progressed in my chest; the beginning of an

alexandrine, perhaps.

Potamos, Kythira's largest village, proposed and extended architectural and culinary feasts, including character buildings and quaint lodgings, as well as *rozedes* (a traditional sweet made with semolina, thyme honey, sugar, almonds, cinnamon and cloves) and shots of *fatourada* (a local liqueur made from tsipouro, cinnamon and cloves).

Kythira is coated with numerous windmills and watermills in midst of natural wonders, such as the Amir Ali springs and the Kakia Lagada gorge, as well as beautiful beaches like the one we basked on at the Agia Pelagia village. There is also a small, unforgettable fishing village called Avlemonas, with picturesque pieces of heaven.



Photo of Avlemonas by G. Filippini for the Greek National Tourism Organisation

It was time to leave Kythira after three nights and two days. I wonder if we will be able to see most of Greece within a year, since I need more than a lifetime to see my Anthi.

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Greece is a destination for everyone. You do not have to stay forever, but you have to visit her at least once.

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[Konstantinos Argiros - \*Athina Mou\*](#)<sup>7</sup> (My Athens)

(Translated from Greek)

Lost somewhere in the straits towards Filopappou  
Where the city manages not to rush  
In the centre, the round of death began, Saturday night

A wind piercing my body  
Me wetter than my coat  
But I am desperately looking for you in my Athens

The smoke has taken me from the park  
From the balconies, jasmine and evening primroses

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ba3fOvIruU>

An out-of-tune lantern just as it catches Tsitsani  
So many years, every night and it's not enough  
One would say it became my routine  
But I am desperately looking for you in my Athens  
A wolf in the night howling loneliness  
Tonight, even the weather got along with me  
And since the rain never turned to hail, it sweetens  
It's been months since you've been away from me  
And the doll I had in my shop window is blurred  
But I am desperately looking for you in my Athens  
The mourning bell of Loubardiaris is tolling  
As if to tell me that we lost it today too  
The Moon has returned to its nest, and I've noticed  
On a bench with hands on a pillow  
My mind is tied to my guillotine  
But I am desperately looking for you in my Athens  
A wolf in the night howling loneliness  
Tonight, even the weather got along with me  
And since the rain never turned into hail, it sweetens  
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