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Persephone's Nightmare¹

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There where the pennyroyal sprouted and wild mint and the earth sent forth the first of her cyclamen now villagers haggle for cement and birds fall dead into the kiln.

There where the initiates joined hands devoutly before entering the sanctuary now tourists toss their cigarette ends and they go to see the brand new refinery.

There where the sea became a blessing and a benediction was in the rustic sheep's bleat now to the shipyards trucks are hauling empty shapes iron children and metal plate.

Sleep in the earth's embrace Persephone and never retrace your way to the world's balcony.

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¹ Translated from the original Greek of Nikos Gatsos (1911-1992). In this song, which he wrote for Manos Hatzidakis to set to music in 1976, Gatsos evokes the landscape of Eleusis, just west of Athens. In antiquity the devotees of Demeter and Persephone came to this sacred destination for initiation into the mysteries of rebirth and regeneration; it has now become an industrial wasteland.