

POETRY

X-humation

by Athena Melliar



"Barock" by Martin Swoboda

A docupoem (Sestina)

Shall we walk? I'll be your guide here,
in the most chthonian rooms, *stanze of dei morti* — dead
you'll ever be: Follow me through Syntagma
Square, pretend we're in Athens, meaning in a hurry.
No one notices how we absorb everything from the stomach
of their shadows. Famished kin. Mourning fountain. Hunger.

Police lining. Railhead of grease. Bitter saliva on stela: Hunger.
Greece is swallowing her children. Lop your limbs, here
swallow them — Greece is a crease around the mouth of time — stomach
this and render yourself chronist, absurdist of the dead,
demimonde documentarist. *There is no hurry*
to be had, we're in the middle of this phrase that stays Syntagma

Square. Now only doctors' orders: "Syntagma,
you are strongly urged to refrain from talking to the hunger
striker. Wear a mask." That's all they say and hurry
away in this *chronica maiora*. Take a look, here,
underneath the table of contents orders of the dead
fork: *hear your stonechild drop in the lining of the stomach*,

an army of "I have no oxygen's" marches on your stomach;
see engines rage through Syntagma
Square. To be in the space-time continuum of the dead
doesn't spell we're alive: we're sucking with great hunger
the bosom of their haggard shadows; it feeds this here
dream adsorbent of a burning sleep paralysis. Hurry!

The Square cements its structure in a hurry
in Tempi railways, hungry fireballs, a Titan's stomach.
Inside it there's the mother of all seasons, here
the saltpetre fountain of tears demands Syntagma,

the daughter of warm seasons or else hunger —
the word has a familiar ring to it, dead-

ly enough to kill, *hun- hun- hunger*. Let it hug you dead-
ly enough to grasp authority in a filial way. Hurry,
myths make all the difference when all you've got is hunger.
Who can swallow all this on an empty stomach
and not puke ashes? Not I. When we first became Syntagma
Square, I told you we're in the middle of a phrase here

that never moves further than here, though we're not undead
yet in this Syntagma formation, only in a hurry,
in an army of 57 marching on a striker's stomach, antihunger.

Syntagma Square, 21 September 2025