

**antonella barina**



Listen  
Not the turning stars  
But the infinite space  
Between them

**TURNING**  
**The cities of the moon**  
**(a trip in Turkey)**



**edizione dell'autrice**

*My hands dance like a tree  
I whirl around like the moon*  
(Mevlâna Jalaladdin Rûmî,  
Mystic Poems,  
XIII century)

I visited Turkey, alone and veiled, in December 2000 to further my research into the feminine Divine. I intended to visit Antioch of Pisidia, scenery of the Christian legend of Saint Margaret, who studied since 1978. I expected to find in Cappadocia a representation of this saint, which I managed only a few hours before leaving. I meant to also visit the Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük (6800-5700), the primary site of the Aegean Sea and around the Middle East.

The trip coincided with the annual ceremonies dedicated to the Persian poet and mystic Mevlâna Jalaladdin Rûmî, father of the Whirling Dervishes. So I arrived in Konya just in time to the first dance. Turning.

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# **TURNING**

## **The cities of the moon**

### **1. WHY DERVISHES DANCE**

Why do Dervishes dance?  
To lose themselves in God  
Because it is Full Moon  
They give life to the Planets

### **2. KONYA**

Go to meet them veiled  
Something is laughing inside you  
and you still don't know what  
Go among them veiled  
You know who they are  
they know nothing of you  
Yes go veiled  
The moon behind the cloud  
Does not break her journey  
Go among them veiled  
You are beginning  
to know yourself  
If that is what they want  
go veiled  
They have made you the same as the others  
They have made you different  
Go to them veiled  
You have entered their city  
You have eaten their bread  
Go with them veiled  
Here you're in the circle  
dancing with them

### **3. MY PEOPLE**

Some call them a wild people  
driven from the beaches by settlers  
but the women of Sagir  
goddesses smiling like crescent moon  
Another kind of wildness  
Of barbarousness

### **4. ANTIOCHIA OF PISIDIA**

In the city of the Moon  
In the city of Men  
Signs rise in clouds  
and secret chambers open

## 5. PEARL

Lunar luminous pearl  
in the womb of a sleeping  
drunk dragon dreaming  
of giving birth to the moon

## 6. THE HOUSE OF MENANDER

In the meanders  
of the Menander' house  
Tethys lives  
Tethys with wings in her hair  
Tethys seawind  
Thetys naked  
The sea  
Around her fishes flying  
like my thoughts  
following a strange image  
of you  
Men  
god son man  
Moon

## 7. WARS

Sun born of Moon  
obscures her night  
Arms the armies

We live in a world where  
what is Moon is sin  
Where Sin, the Moon, is sin  
No longer Shamas for us  
No longer the Sun  
for the women

Wars

What happened  
to the dance of Lissa  
Sun and Moon in the hands  
a wheel turning on herself  
giving birth to the planets

Lady of the universe  
darkened by blood offerings

War songs  
War cries  
War gods

Sun against Moon  
Moon against Sun

The time when stars  
made war on the stars  
This is the sin

## 8. STARS

Elsewhere

High on the Karakuyu  
with open arms  
I touch both Sun and Moon

On the same stone  
the same dream  
Sunset and moonrise

An instant of marriage  
One star setting  
while the other rises

Every day every night  
A long dream  
A song

Stars

## 9. THESE ARE SIGNS

You know me  
A modern woman  
You find me  
at congresses  
near power  
But in me there is *other*  
Another semantic system  
We can call it  
*Ancient Woman*  
When I listen to her  
I understand other things  
These are signs  
When the door opens  
and the answer to your question  
arrives  
These are signs  
Before going to the mountain  
a black dog appeared  
watching us  
eye to eye  
These are signs  
Really the cat  
that follows you now  
is the one that  
first followed you  
Don't be afraid

Do not fear  
These are signs  
We can't know  
from whom or what  
If it is all  
a blank page  
we are reading it

## 10. ON THE TURKISH ROADS

Look, my Sicilian uncle  
is getting on the bus  
He's just like he was  
thirty years ago  
Miracles happen  
on Turkish roads

## 11. THE DOGS OF YALVAÇ

Goodbye  
Black dog of Yalvaç  
Goodbye  
White dog of Yalvaç  
I go to Haçilar on the lake  
I go but do not leave  
Mount Karakuyu  
Goodbye  
Red bitch of Yalvaç  
canine Artemis  
with long dugs  
I hope today as well  
they will offer you  
your daily bread

## 12. CROSSROADS

Trees with long trunks grow  
at Yalvaç's crossroad  
destined to firewood  
Behind the door of stone  
Beyond Antiochia city

## 13. ROSE SCENT

Scent of roses  
Of death  
In my dream  
Something is over

## 14. BACK

Stone teeth on the earth  
At Edçilar pass  
do not look back

## 15. BLACK EAGLES

Sagalassos  
on the mountain crest  
Crown of black eagles  
over my head

## 16. SULTAN

The bull dared the moon  
Horns dashed  
against the snowy Sultan  
Against memory

## 17. CIRCLING

Snow on Dedego Dagilar  
Snow on Barla Dagi  
Black clouds against the sun  
Haçilar on Eğidir Lake  
Haçilar on Burdur Lake  
On every lake a village  
called Haçilar  
Around every lake  
a road like this one  
with a bus like this  
circling it

## 18. TURNING

Turning around myself  
I grow confused  
Looking for myself  
I get lost

## 19. LADY OF DOOM

Yesterday I was rich  
Today I have nothing  
Shining lady of doom  
the Moon

## 20. BLACK ECATE

Nameless  
horned with serpents  
stares at me  
Eyeless

## **21. ANA TANRIÇA**

*Me* of earthquakes  
*Me* of the double-edged axe  
*Me* on the throne of leopards  
*Me* with the moon and the bull  
*Me* of the beginning  
and of the end  
and of the returning

new awareness  
and ancient Mysteries  
leaven

Egg in egg  
seasoning below  
around the Black Stone  
of Kaymakli

## **22. HARMANÖREN**

Every Lake  
is the eye  
of God

## **27. THE TEMPLES OF THE GRAPE**

Daughter of the moon  
blood of Dionysus  
milk of lion  
The transformation of the grape  
was the most secret of all

Breath and time  
transmuting  
the happy humour of must  
into drunken vapor

There below  
the temples of the grape  
sheltered in the Earth

And the dance  
the song  
and the poetry

## **28. THE SEED OF THE TREE**

In the Dark Church  
bird feeds on it  
It flowers on the rug  
where Mevlana prays  
It protects the dovecotes  
of Ishtar  
To those buried  
it promises rebirth  
By nourishing it  
we become tree  
What a life  
in the little seed  
What a light  
in a little pearl

## **24. GELVERİ**

Wild horses  
beat inside me  
in the vallies of Gelveri  
Come to me

## **25. DERINKUYU**

A deep well  
swallows me  
Echoing air  
rotating

## **29. WHAT IS THIS CROSS**

North  
West to East  
South

What is this cross

## **26. KAYMAKLI**

In the rock cavities

I draw on the map  
Christ's tree  
Father and Mother

### 30. GÖREME

You cannot see  
In truth  
without seeing  
we can see

### 31. TO THE APOSTATE GIULIANO

Who knows  
what you meant  
by carrying from Pessinus  
the black stone of Cybele  
What message you sent  
to the world  
What you read  
in your failure  
Sometimes  
a delicate scion  
does not graft  
Yet the seed  
that is spat  
on the earth  
becomes a laurel  
Because of your dreams  
the nest of a stork  
now crowns you

### 32. ONE

Slow clouds drift  
over Uçhisar's rock  
There below I see *all the things*  
All in me  
*One*

### 33. DEATH

The illumination is  
a little death  
The great one  
may take us thus

### 34. AKBABA

What are we  
On a stone  
birdshit  
dust stars light

### 35. JAR OF WATER

I am a little jar of water  
on the mule's back  
And I am the water  
And the jar  
And the mule

### 36. MARGA

Looking for the pearl  
I turn from my way  
Turning to my path  
I discover the pearl

### 37. THE TURNING DANCE

The wind is turning  
I turn the corner  
I turn away  
I turn, a wheel  
Motionless I move  
turning into pearl  
turning into moon  
I turn myself into myself  
and turn turn turn  
in the whirling dance

### 38. IT DISAPPEARS

How the image  
of that is turning  
disappears

### 39. SHAMS

(*Among cushions, veiled  
with azure eyes she nurses  
her daughter*)

I succumb to the evening  
I retire  
Shining night of mystic union  
And definitive abandonment

Shams!

### 40. LISTEN

Not the turning stars  
but the infinite space  
between them

## NOTE

- 1. Dervishes:** mystic men, their turning dance (*sema*) is a form of communion with God; **Planets:** the dance may date back to a sacred astral ritual.
- 2. Konya:** sacred city of Islam, in the heart of Anatolia, where Mevlâna Jalaladdin Rûmî lived, one of the greatest mystic poets of the world literature.
- 3. Sagir:** mountain village above Yalvaç, where a temple of the moon is supposed to have existed; **like crescent moons:** the half-moon is the symbol of Men, Anatholian god of the moon; the sign persists in the crescent, the islamic half-moon.
- 4. Antiochia of Pisidia:** the Roman city near Yalvaç, connected by a sacred way to the overhanging temple of Men; **Men:** the cult of the young Anatholian moon-god intersects with those of Artemis, Demeter, Cybele; **secret chambers:** the caves under the temples.
- 5. Sleeping dragon:** guardian of the pearl or mystic treasure, like the female dragon Illuanka asleep by wine in the hittite pantheon, or the dragon that appears in the Christian legend of Margaret of Antiochia, patron of the birth, whose name means pearl, due perhaps to distant and indirect memories of birth mysteries.
- 6. Tethys:** pre-hellenic creatress goddess of the sea and of the rivers, nurse of Dionysus, correlated to the moon.
- Menander:** Μέν-ανδρος (Μῆν-αγύρτης, priest of Cybele).
- 7. Shamas:** Mesopotamian god of the sun; **Sin:** Mesopotamian god of the moon; he also is the Sun of Mevlana; **Lissa:** Goddess of Dahomey of the sun and of the moon that doesn't ask bloody offerings.
- 8. Karakuyu:** mountain of the temple of Men, over Yalvaç, the ancient Antiochia of Pisidia, in the last full moon of 2000, while the songs of the evening pause of Ramadan rise; **moonrise:** when the moon rises.
- 11. Black dog:** the dogs are impure in Muslim tradition, however Mevlana preached to them and they understood; **Haçilar:** neolithic site, near Burdur; **Artemis:** prehellenic goddess of the birth and the moon; in Hellenistic representations, goddess of many breasts; **your daily bread:** the offering of bread, divine bread, the dispensation of bread.
- 13. Scent of roses:** traditional Anatolian perfume, scent of the bodies of Christian saints carried from Anatolia.
- 14. Stone teeth:** the teeth of the dragon, the bones of the earth, a transmutation forbidden to watch, secret of childbirth.
- 15. Sagalassos:** ancient city above Isparta.
- 16. Sultan:** Olympus mountain, in the north of Yalvaç.
- 17. Dedego Dagilar, Barla Dagi:** between the lakes and Konya.
- 20. Nameless:** Burdur Museum, unidentified exhibit n.1366. It could represent the triple Ecate, in her night hierophany of black moon.
- 21. Ana Tanrıça:** Anatholic mother goddess, that of Çatalhöyük; now in the Ankara Museum; **Me:** the Mesopotamian name of the attributes of the goddess; **earthquakes:** the eruption of Hasan volcano, reproduced in the paintings of the neolithic city.

**22. Harmanören:** a place over great Lake Eğidir.

**23. Tandır:** arcaic Turkish oven, dug in the rocky ground to cook flatbread (*yuca*), surrounded by vessels of different dimensions and functions.

**24. Gelveri:** the name means "come to me", epithet referring to God in the mystic poetry of Mevlana.

**25. Derinkuyu:** the greatest subterranean city of Cappadocia, in Turkish "deep well".

**26. Kaymaklı:** subterranean city, rich in ovoid cavities, devoted to the cult of wine and oil; **Black Stone:** circular, anthracite, cupellated, from the valley of İhlara.

**27. The temples of the grape:** the more ancient levels of the subterranean cities of Cappadocia, such as Derinkuyu and Kaymaklı, have rooms for squeezing grapes, which are stored in surrounding rooms;

**Daughter of the moon:** the transformation of the grape, connected to the lunar phases; **milk of lion:** sacred alcoholic drink; **breath and time:** in one of the dervish customs, the same word, *dem*, means wine, breath and time, being the trasformation of must assured in the hypogaeum by the sapient system of circulation of the air and by the right time of sedimentation.

**28. Dark Church:** the name of the Cappadocian church with a painting of the symbol of the seed which grows into the tree of life, together the dove (in Greek περιστέρα, from the Semitic perasch-Istar, bird of d'Isthar).

**29. Cross:** marking the intersection of the sky with the earth, the tree connecting them.

**30. Göreme:** a place in the centre of Cappadocia, the name means "you cannot see".

**31. The black stone of Cybele:** carried by Giuliano in Rome to favour the cult, destined to die out; **the seed:** the propagation of faiths proceeds like pollination; **the nest of a stork:** a stork has built her nest at the head of the monument to Giuliano, in Ankara; in many traditions the stork is symbol of immortality.

**32. Uçhisar's rock:** the highest monolite of Cappadocia.

**34. Akbaba:** in Turkish vulture, the animal who tears flesh from, represented in the frescoes of Çatalhöyük.

**36. Marga:** in Latin pearl, in Mahāyāna terminology the way.

**37. The turning dance:** "to turn" means to whirl, to turn on one's own axis, to wheel, to change direction, to transform and to transform oneself, and to translate. "Turn" means, amongst other thing, a round, rotation, bend, fold, but also stroke, start, crisis, evolution and even revolution of the planets. A dance that children execute spontaneously. The whirling dance.

**39. Shining night:** the night of 17<sup>th</sup> december, end of the annual dervish ceremony, dedicated to Shams, or Shamas, the "sun" of Mevlâna Jalaladdin Rûmî, mystic lover.