

## ARISTOVOULOS

The palace weeps, the king weeps,  
King Herod mourns inconsolably,  
the whole city weeps for Aristovoulos,  
who so senselessly drowned by chance,  
playing with his friends in the water.

And when they learn the news in other places,  
when it spreads up to Syria,  
even among the Greeks, many will be saddened  
and the poets and sculptors will grieve  
because they have heard of this Aristovoulos,  
and never have their fantasies of an adolescent  
equaled the beauty of this boy.  
And could Antioch claim a statue of a god  
like this child of Israel?

The First Princess, his mother,  
the greatest Jewish woman, wails and weeps.  
Alexandra wails and weeps for the calamity.  
But when she finds herself alone her sorrow changes.  
She moans, rages, reviles, curses.  
How they tricked her! How they deceived her!  
How they finally achieved their goal.  
They destroyed the house of the Hasmoneans.  
How did this criminal king pull it off,  
the schemer, the villain, the scoundrel?  
How did he pull it off? What a diabolical plot  
so even Miriam didn't notice a thing.

If Miriam had noticed anything, if she'd suspected,  
she would have found a way to save her brother—  
she's a queen, after all, and would have done something.  
How they must be triumphing now and secretly glad,  
those vicious women, Kypros and Salome,  
those vulgar women, Kypros and Salome—  
and to be powerless and forced  
to pretend she believes their lies,  
not to be able to go to the people,  
to go out and to shout to the Jews,  
to tell, to tell how the murder was committed.

[1918]