

Poems of Yannis Ritsos · *Translated from the Greek by
Edmund Keeley*

Inertia

He sat alone in the darkness of the room smoking.
Nothing was visible. Only the glow of his cigarette
moved slowly now and then, carefully,
as though he were feeding a sick girl
with a silver spoon, or as though he were treating
some star's wound with a small lancet.

Fever

Small squares in perpetual motion, one penetrating the other,
one emerging from the other: building, unbuilding,
a city of windows on windows; right and left the two corners
rising asymmetrically and just beyond,
noiseless, the great collapse in the midst of noiseless motion, while
the three lean dogs grew more distant in the successive squares
smelling foreign dead and their great staves to the far end,
there where the woman, naked, raises the skinned hare in front of a
mirror.