

Translations from Alexandria
John Rodenbeck

FROM C. P. CAVAFY

INTERVENTION OF THE GODS

Now this will be done and then that, until
At a certain point our ways and deeds will
Be such and such. Living for here and now,
We'll cope in the only way we know how,
Trying harder the more we muck things up,
Thus making total chaos. Then we'll stop.
And it's then that the gods will intervene,
As they always do. Down from their machine
They'll come. And some of us they will not touch;
Others—suddenly, skyward—they'll dispatch.
And after they've made order they'll retreat.
And then this man will do one thing and that
Man another and likewise other men
Their things. And we'll start all over again.

[1899]

ON THE ACTUAL SITE

of a house, above all, of gathering places, blocks of flats,
which I see when I go for a walk, year after year,

I have brought you into being, both in joy and in sadness:
with so many circumstances, so many mundane things.

And you have become—perfectly—changed into feeling for me.
[1929]