**Total Immersion** *by Konstandinos Mahoney*

Three days, a continent slips by; Dover, Brussels,

Munich, Belgrade, Athens. I’m mobbed at the station,

kissed, hugged, pinched, squeezed, Costaki!

Kαρδιά μου! Xρυσό μου! My Heart! My Golden One!

We drive off like film stars in Granddad’s limousine.

He takes me to pavement cafes, watches me scoff

honey cakes, flicks worry beads as he listens to

my anglo-flow, says he’s never met a boy who

talks so much, asks mum if he can borrow me,

send me to college, learn Greek.

Baptism day, I stand six years tall in a font for

dunking babies, shy skinny schoolboy in white

underpants. Crammed underwater, I surface to a

slathering of olive oil, taste sunshine, soil, mum’s

lettuce salads.

Dried and dressed; white shirt, blue shorts,

choir chanting, hearts crossed up down, right left,

right left, Granddad leads me three times round

in circles, then, gold crucifix flashing, out into the

dissolving blaze of Saint Constantine Cathedral Square.