Lunch in the Vale of Tempe

Perhaps it was the perfect lunch,  
the souvlaki at the Castello Restaurant  
sauced by the legendary setting,  
the mild valley between Olympus and Ossa.  
From our balcony table we could look across  
to the Frankish Castle of Platamóna,  
and beyond to the sea squeezed from a tube  
labeled Aegean blue. Somewhere near the beach  
flows the spring of the Muses. We had a bottle  
of Macedonian wine, fresh, never sold for export.  
The Middle Ages named the valley Lykostóma,  
the Wolf’s Mouth, and looking at the castle, I could see why.  
But now it’s the Vale of Tempe again, where we ate  
our perfect lunch. On my desk I lay the two pictures:  
your face, a little dark, with the castle and sea very sharp  
over your shoulder; the other, with your face clear  
and the scenery blurred. For once I can have it all,  
foreground and background: the prints were made  
from the same negative, and the bright wine still flows.

BERT ALMON