



Marine Blue Architecture

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He reached the crossroad just before the blue house running. Her house. He paused and after he calmed down by drawing deep breaths, he shut his eyes, suddenly opened his heavy coat with his two hands and thousands of butterflies gushed towards the countless sky edges. They were flapping their wings stoutly and he could feel them as if they wanted to pick up winds from all over the world. He could hear them flying and imagine their irregular course. But he wouldn't open his eyes. This image would be only for her. Only for her marine blue house.

A marine blue house which became one with the horizon and brought down the color of the sky among fully laden olive trees and rough soil. Without a hatch or a yard, but with a slab-paved path, which was choked on soil five meters just before the house's front door. On soil, as he was also drowned in its marvelous marine blue and now breaths only through its image. Sometimes, he feels his body taking its shape. His feet sinking into the warm soil while his body, chest and soul becoming girders, steps and columns. His hands dipping in the sky's colour so that his body is daubed all over and she lives in his mind. Amalia. Amalia and her marine blue house.

Loukas, a fifty-year old man with a wide forehead and big ears, has been working since he was a peewee in the coffeehouse that he inherited from his grandpa. He barely met his father. He met the clouds, the poor guy, once and for all during the war in the 40's.¹ He adored his mother. Every afternoon they used to work in the coffeehouse, they would play hide-and-seek under the tables or in the kitchen. He likes a lot remembering his childhood. However, what had tired him all these years was the everyday contact with the same people. Amalia was for Loukas his revolution, his return to the beautiful years, the love. He loved his wife too. But not like that. Between his wife and Loukas there was no marine blue house. His stature does not betray a person with such neuroses. Neither himself would ever believe that such feelings could be developed between a man and a house. But he was refuted. The marine blue house dominated every thought he had.

In the figure of Amalia he felt his spine like a spring ready to toss its head in the arbor with a bunch of grapes in the mouth. And Loukas didn't like grapes at all. In the nights his dreams were dense, swarm of butterflies, and she was always present within them. She, who only came during the summers in the village though. Thus, in his mind he replaced her with the figure of her marine blue house. In fact, he wasn't late at all in doing so. One Monday of the previous summer he saw her in the little yard of his coffeehouse sitting with her parents, the Thursday of the same week the object of his secret lust has taken the form of a two-floor marine blue detached house. Besides, he is certain that this marine blue house a little outside the village, close to the grapevines, didn't particularly impress him in the past. On the contrary, he would say that he found the colour's selection city-like and rather bold.

However, from that Thursday and on, the house took other dimensions and his view about it was accordingly formed. He was continuously trying to find excuses to take the way to the fields. Such excuses that would not arouse suspicions to his wife and the families of his two children, who had lately built two rooms opposite to each other in the two sides of the crossroad on the way to the marine blue house.

Firstly, he had to take uncle-Elias with his truck to his hen-house, in order to put the hens in the little room with the stonewalls and the tin roof, later aunt-Fotitsa to her field in order to water the squashes and finally the mayor to check how many pillars were needed before electricity reached the marine blue house. Pillars, which of course meant that the house owners would have to dig deep into their pocket for only two months electricity during the summer and, hence, that it would probably be more preferable to use a power generator, but this was certainly not something the mayor would propose, since he would profit from supplying electricity that far and provide with electricity these little shanties, which two–three uncertain voters of him owned.

¹ The author means the Second World War.

The conversations and questioning would be continued under this tone, only to find the opportunity to see the white little truck becoming marine blue and then white again as the colour of the house was mirrored on it. However, a few weeks later the aunts, the uncles and the mayor run dry, since it was extravagant of them to pester every now and then Loukas for a twenty-minute distance.

Thus, while Loukas hadn't passed the house for days, its marine blue colour seemed to glow in his black eyes, giving them a warm colour, similar to the plays that the little water made over the coffee froth in the narrow cups of the coffee shop. Cups left for many hours on the tables' check oilcloths without Loukas showing the slightest zeal for collecting them. Because in the mind of Loukas there are only the marine blue house and Amalia or the marine blue house with Amalia inside or Amalia in the figure of the house or the house in the figure of Amalia or everything altogether, depending on whether any annoying uncles or not would come to trouble him with the current village news by sipping their coffees for hours.

The marine blue house prevailed in their relationship. Loukas succumbs without inhibitions. He lets it live within him, grow by his anguish, become gigantic by his love for Amalia. The marine blue house exists not only because Loukas discovered it in order to replace the absence of Amalia. It exists because Loukas succumbed to its magic, its twinkles with the colours of the earth and sky, its excellence.

He can't distinguish anymore whether he loves the house or Amalia. Whether it is love or something else. Jealousy. Pure jealousy. The marine blue house has Amalia within almost a hair's breadth during the whole summer. But he doesn't. He remains to dream her look endlessly. Whenever he's in the house, he's in her images, he's in the stories that grew her up, he's in her life during her absence. Fury. Fury, because everything this house achieved painlessly, he didn't even reach them. But this is not exactly the truth. Nothing came without pain. This house had a plan. From the very beginning it aimed at her heart. From the very beginning it wanted to throw her to bed. Desire. Desire for its colour, her lips, its yard, her breast, its roof, her eyes. Madness. Pure madness.

Victory. Pure victory. Loukas had become the glove puppet of the marine blue house.

Of course Loukas isn't really bothered about all these, because there exists Amalia who has a secret look only for him. In this look there is room only for these two. They are closed within its silence and red poppies gush from their inside swimming in white waters and swift deers competing with each other on which is going to get them first. He is trapped within her secret look which immobilises every action or reaction of his world, and feels all his energy being accumulated, ready to burst.

Last summer he didn't manage to tell her a single word. Whenever he reached close to her to observe her better for some seconds, either her father or her mother would show up and start prattling on incessantly. About the moisture of the house, the tourists who made them feel dizzy with their voices in the beach, the mosquitoes, the money they threw in the middle of nowhere, about how much they had regretted. He saw her sulking at her parents' bragging and turning her head in the reverse direction. He wanted so much to gag them both and then turn towards her side, caress her head, her shoulders and then her chest. To clasp her in his arms and hear her heart beating faster. To feel her heart beating at his body. To give him its pace, faster and faster.

One of the last summer days she was going back to the city with her parents, he saw her inside a car, throwing back her hair and talking in her cell phone. Her parents got out of the car and greeted him. But Loukas was staring at Amalia and waiting for her to turn around and look at him. She turned, immobilized everything and left him breathing only after the car disappeared in the corner. He lowered his head, looked at the floor and sighed with despair. He sat in his chair inside the shop, buried his head into his arms on the table and started crying.

Neither himself knows how a year passed by until he saw her again. He wrongly believed that will quickly forget her. But he didn't take into account Amalia's look. Every time he closed his eyes she was there. Sometimes happy, sometimes surprised, sometimes tired. Every time he opened his eyes she was still there. Sometimes arrogant and blasé and sometimes erotic. Three seasons passed, but she didn't give him any room for forgetting it even for a moment. In the autumn he was crying in the corners of the shop, in the winter he boiled over every second coffee he made and in the spring everything became more and more intense again since he was visiting twice a day the marine blue house.

He didn't care anymore about excuses, or relatives, or his fellow-villagers. The house had had a regal role. He served it with consistency and love. He cleaned its garden, trimmed its trees, cleared again and again its path. And when he found the opportunity he caressed or kissed it, touched his cheeks and chin over its marine blue walls. He was talking with it for hours, telling it how much he loved it, how beautiful she was, how much he wanted to see her and how much he missed her. He imagined her around there combing her hair, walking and lying naked on the bench. But still in his fantasy he couldn't tell her a word. He followed her within distance and whenever she disappeared, he started crying. That spring, Loukas was falling to his knees and was crying in front of a house which was gradually becoming his most perilous enemy.

He was feeling very weak and had lost a lot of weight. Uncle-Elias, aunt-Fotitsa and the mayor were betting with the rest village on the amount of money Amalia's father had given to Loukas in order to take care of the house. They also noticed how

smart he was and didn't give any keys to the coffeehouse keeper obviously for fear that the boor would move into the villa. This time his fellow-villagers made sure that he had every excuse for his daily worship to the enemy. He didn't care about excuses anymore. After devoting all his thoughts and care, the enemy demanded his voice too. Loukas at the end of the spring stopped talking. He restricted himself in the basics of a dull life so that the days would pass without calling forth gossip. However, the more he was seeing his life becoming 'administrative', the more he was coming to a deadlock. So, normally there came a time he had to confront his opponent. Then he took the way to marine the blue house.

He found thousand unexpected allies by his side. The first one appeared a few meters after he left the village. He turned around his head for a while and was buried in his coat. Loukas started up, took off his coat but there was nothing. He smiled and put on his coat again. A few meters away other three allies appeared. They moved playfully for a little in front of his eyes and then they disappeared. He was scared and accelerated his step. But the allies would not abandon him. A little down the road, he would meet other five, then as many again, then other seven, then three and every time Loukas would meet an ally, every time he would move even faster. Short of breath, he reached the crossroad just before the marine blue house. The allies stopped appearing. He paused and tried to calm himself by taking deep breaths. Then he felt many gentle strokes on his body. Scared as he was, he closed his eyes; suddenly he opened his coat with his two hands and thousands of butterflies gushed towards the countless sky edges. He collapsed in the road and closed his ears and eyes with his hands.

Strong vibrations coming from the ground brought him back to his senses. He turned his head towards the house and saw the butterflies on the roof trying to lift it on the air. Without any second thought, this was a flight he couldn't miss. He ran over the house, shut the door behind him and then they took off. The strange flying object flew over the village thus giving the opportunity to Loukas to observe his family and his fellow-villagers. On the way to the city he focused his attention on a familiar car. She tossed her hair in the same way and looked indifferently outside the window. 'I love you', he cried out at her. She turned and looked at him. She smiled. 'I miss you' he cried out at her. She smiled again. Loukas felt happy. A butterfly fluttered in front of her face. The marine blue house disappeared in the sky.

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