

Menelaus' Woman

Naturally I was surprised to see her, but there she was,
Striding toward the taxi stand at Venizelos airport,¹
Regally indifferent to the hot-blooded men
Who gaped at her body with ineffectual lust.

I soon came to think her ubiquitous,
For in whichever town or village I stopped,
She somehow contrived an appearance.

I spied her in a jewelry shop on Crete.
Luckily for me her disguise slipped away
When she tried on a gold necklace of ancient design.
I knew at once she was Menelaus' woman.²

I saw her dash through Athens Center with a boyfriend
On their excited way to something—probably sex.
Of a sudden she threw her head back with feral abandon
And the flash of dark eyes illuminated the Greek night.
In that electric instant I understood the Trojan War.

Gerald J. Massey

¹Venizelos airport is the international airport of modern Athens.

²Helen of Troy was the wife of King Menelaus.