

The pezula and me

Tzannis Sifneos



Five steps above ground, there where spring sows it with daisies and poppies and the summer deserts it to be walked on by lizards. There is my *pezula*, behind the table, five steps above ground, next to the entrance and outside the kitchen. White-washed and immobile as if it has begged *Panagia* - mother of God - for a miracle. When I was little I thought they built valuables inside the *pezules*, the short-thick-white-washed-walls outside the houses. Something they wanted others not to find, not to see. Comfortably, they sat on the *pezula* ; to guard it and become protectors of their own secret. A talisman totally theirs. With time I came to the conclusion that

pezula was a space without danger, a space for their unspeakable desires. A place of banishment. Safe for the ones building it. Safe under the weight of their bodies.

In Greece desire is penalized. It is hunted down and penalized. Especially if it steps into forbidden grounds, like those of homosexuality. When the time came to build my own *pezula*, outside my own home, I did not build my desire inside it; only its bones -and instead of hiding it I placed my desire on top of the thick-white-washed-wall, and defined it with names of men. Then I positioned my head on it as an offering. Some years later, that is a few months ago, because of the performance, *Rehearsing Sex*, which took place in June of 2006, I placed my head on a table once more. A performative table - which was a space of consent. A space a few centimeters above ground which did not sow flowers but ancient bones; existing there to remind you the lives they had lived. The theatre is built above an ancient burial ground. These were the bones which climbed on to the table. They could have been those I had built inside the *pezula* . Maybe there were. Bones and skulls together for the first time within the same space. I came face to face with the bone-structure of desire. How did the bones come out? Could they go back in? If the bones extract themselves and meander what would happen to desire? What would the meaning of daisies and lizards be if desire was not defined by the names of men?

My first reaction was to look at the bones silently, with horror and guilt that did nothing but betray an intimacy lost inside the years passed. I was afraid not because intimacy was lost, but because the bones looked at me with a stare usually found in the eyes of an abandoned child - not child at all but abandoned father. The father that did not meet my expectations and so I denied him. With him I denied the child of no father. Bones and skulls and desire and father and mother and lovers and the boy me, on top of a table, bodies without members, or rather dismembered body parts. The only body existing there, was the *soma* of a disarming sleep. The only body to deliver. And when sleep delivers, dreams awake. And the dreams turn into ancient artifacts which re-write the history of the body, which re-constructs the *soma* . Decoded bodies with discourse as code. How easy it is in Greece for a discourse of freedom to be enunciated clearly from the lips of a homosexual? Could there be a gay way, a system, not in any need to hide inside or behind the *pezules* ? Could there be a way to stand on top of the *pezula* without your head as an offering to the homophobia of others and even worse to your own? It would be a lie for me to deny my own homophobia despite its transsexual nature. How apparent can that discourse be? And what can the *pezules* carry inside of them for a gay man to articulate himself in Greece? The *pezules* is not a simple, conventional bench built at the exterior of a house, but a limit, a borderline between private and public life, a theatre stage that bears the enactment of

private life in public view - the storefront of a whore house in Amsterdam.

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