

Houston, Texas – January 17, 2022 – Press Release: Saint Julian Press is proud to announce a new book of poetry and translations – *Portrait Before Dark*, by poet Liana Sakelliou, translated by Alik Barnstone, which will be published on April 15, 2022.

Portrait Before Dark is an imagined dialogue between poet and arts patron, Edward James, and ballerina and 1920's star, Tilly Losch, which follows the course of their short, tumultuous marriage.



Poems in translation are like visas stamped in our passports to other countries. In *Portrait Before Dark* we are lucky to have Liana Sakelliou's fine poems translated by Alik Barnstone, the distinguished American poet at ease in Greek, lifting the barrier to a kindred world.

—John Balaban
Empires, Path, Crooked Path

Reading Alik Barnstone's luminous translation of Liana Sakelliou's wondrously surreal series, *Portrait Before Dark*, is to enter an imaginary garden with real people in it—a bewitching world that is part history and part mystery. The series is based loosely on the life of 20th c. art patron and poet, Edward James, but none of the magic and majesty of these poems is dispelled by any of the facts of James' life. Sakelliou is one of the most prominent poets now writing in Greece, and her marvelous lyricism has found in Barnstone a poet-translator of equal poetic gifts. To read this collection is (as one poem has it) *to mount the stairs of poetry into myth*.

—Cynthia Hogue
In June the Labyrinth

Just what is *Portrait Before Dark*? Dream, fantasia, magic, tapestry, embroidered ghosts entering a garden, or a forest of dangers. A poetry of myth. You are invited to the undersea palace, to a half-hidden love story. The adventure may be disastrous. Step this way.

—Alicia Ostriker
The Volcano and After: Selected and New Poems 2002-2019

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Saint Julian Press, Inc. * Houston, TX 77008 * Ron Starbuck ~ Publisher-CEO
Phone: 281-734-8721 * Email: ronstarbuck@saintjulianpress.com * Web: www.saintjulianpress.com

“Desire / fashions delusions,” writes Greek poet Liana Sakelliou in this fragmentary sequence of interior correspondences between poet Edward James and ballerina Tilly Losch. Set on James’ British estate, these brief bursts of restrained emotion recall the poems of Emily Dickinson and H.D. and the surreal paintings of Leonora Carrington: “Small ghosts enter the garden / and lay themselves out like fabric / for the embroidery needle.” Rendered in crisp and resonant English by poet Alik Barnstone, each poem, “touched by the thread / of a new story,” adds to the tapestry of a tumultuous relationship. *Portrait Before Dark* is like a hedge maze in which losing oneself leads to edgy pleasures.

—Michael Waters
Celestial Joyride, Gospel Night

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

LIANA SAKELIOU is one of Greece’s foremost literary figures, a poet, translator, critic, and editor. She is the author of nineteen books, most recently: *Alchemy of Cells in a Painting Atelier*, a bilingual edition in Greek and Romanian of her selected poems, and *Where the Wind Blows Softly* a poetry collection. She is the translator into Modern Greek of two of our most important American poets, Emily Dickinson and H.D. Among her awards are two Fulbright Fellowships in the U.S., the Stanley J. Seeger Visiting Research Fellowship at Princeton University, and a residency at the Casa d’ Escrita-Universidade de Coimbra, Portugal. Her poems have been widely anthologized and translated into ten languages. She is Professor of English and Creative Writing at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

ALIKI BARNSTONE is a poet, translator, critic, editor, and visual artist. She is the author of eight books of poetry, the most recent of which is *Dwelling*. In addition to *Portrait Before Dark*, she translated of *The Collected Poems of C.P. Cavafy* (W.W. Norton, 2006). Like Sakelliou, she is a Dickinson and H.D. Scholar. Her awards include a Senior Fulbright Fellowship in Greece, the Silver Pen Award from the Nevada Writers Hall of Fame, and a Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Fellowship in Poetry. She is Professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Missouri and served as poet laureate of Missouri from 2016-2019.

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