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## **Contrasts and Reconciliations**

Cavafy's poetry moves me at the level of an individual but also through my identity as a diaspora Greek, due to his use of historical context. Some times reassuringly and other times melancholically. It speaks to me through its sensitivity, through contrasts and reconciliations: the potential of a nation (and an individual) for greatness and pettiness at the same time, and the strife between the two; the dilemma between nostalgia and compromise, on the one hand, and extroversion and ambition, on the other; how areti (ἀρετή) and pleasure - or even lust- can coexist harmoniously; and how weakness or fear can be compatible with perseverance and dignity, though not without posing a challenge; above all, how one can embrace both the sweet and the bitter things in life, celebrating the former and lamenting the latter.