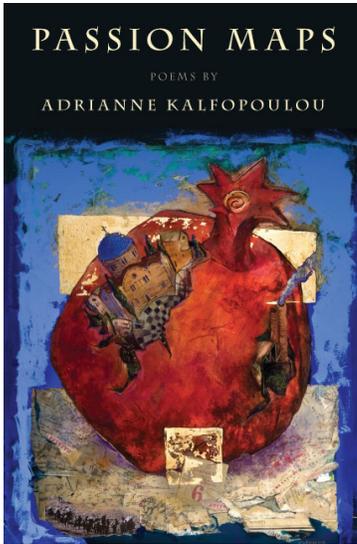


Passion Maps

POETRY BY

Adrienne Kalfopoulou



Passion Maps

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Adrienne Kalfopoulou

ISBN: 978-1-59709-158-9

Binding: Tradepaper

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Passion Maps is a lyrical cartography of historical and biographical experiences, of the poet's lived and imagined mappings. The poems in this collection chart a world itinerary of stopping places, or "stassis" – a transliterated Greek word for a stop or a pause – that journey the reader from locations of childhood memory to pauses of lost love, and lost life, through landscapes as disparate as Vietnam, Greece, New Jersey and the Balkans. As poet and critic Joseph Powell described Kalfopoulou's first collection, *Wild Greens*, "the best of these poems 'make beauty ache,' a phrase used by Frost to describe Yeats' poetry"; of this new collection Powell notes a range of "different types of utterance," of poems "ambitious and experimental" in a volume that is "tough, tender and honest throughout."

As *Passion Maps* suggests, these are poems of experiences that have mapped, as much as experiences that have become maps; there are the inevitable first cartographies of family: a father "stoic/ in brutal combat," a mother who "would have preferred to sing her words" that expand into the broader mappings of "bygone lives," and "the lyric ruin of cities," an America of "New World opportunity" and an old world of "whole towns/now erased by the grass." In Jon Tribble's *Crab Orchard Review* of *Wild Greens* he describes the "the bitter and the sweet" in the poems that "test our palates" and "remind us that the bread and meat and fruits and greens of life come with many flavors and at a cost that is as dear as it is worthwhile." The same could be said of Kalfopoulou's second collection though here we have the voice of a poet who has broadened her style to include more of the world.

Adrienne Kalfopoulou's rich second collection maps "an inner country" where history is intimate knowledge. Whether set in Greece, America, Turkey or Vietnam, these poems never lose sight of "the storm / beyond language" that is a living struggle, nor do they forget what it is to "swallow joy like champagne." Poetic range for this poet is not just formal, but also emotional, from intense lyrics like "The Street of the Aphrodite Hotel" to narratives in "Brides" and "Balkan Voices." The book teems with characters, and in a poem like "Neos Kosmos" whole currents of modern history flow through the filter of one Athenian neighborhood. Kalfopoulou writes as mother, daughter, lover and intellectual—international in her experience, fully-engaged, observant and, yes, *passionate*.

—David Mason

It is a difficult thing to write simply and eloquently with quiet and intense passion in ways that are unflinchingly personal but also fold the reader into the depths of history and myth. This is partly what Adrienne Kalfopoulou's poems do for me. They are also celebrations reminding me how words can perform acts of affirmation and joy no matter what griefs or complex experiences they contain. These poems attain the beauty of ritual.

—T. Alan Broughton

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Author Biography



Adrienne Kalfopoulou earned degrees from Brown University, New York University and a doctorate in American Studies from Aristotle University in Thessalonki, Greece. Her dissertation *The Untidy House, a Discussion of the Ideology of the American Dream in the Culture's Female Discourses* was published by Edwin Mellen Press. Her first collection *Wild Greens* was a finalist for the Red Hen Press first book award. She is the author of an award winning chapbook *Fig*, and a memoir, *Broken Greek*, a finalist for the 2007 Best Books Award from USA Book News. Her poems have been featured on *Valparaiso Poetry Review* and *Verse Daily*, and earned a 2006 pushcart prize nomination and the 2003 poetry award from *Room of One's Own*. A second poetry chapbook, *Cumulus* is forthcoming from Finishing Line Press.

Adrienne has been part of a group of faculty and administrators who helped pioneer an American undergraduate program at the fledgling Hellenic American University in Athens; at HAU she teaches literature and general education courses that encourage interdisciplinary thinking and creativity. Living so close to the Aegean is something she loves, but hates not being able to swim in it more often. Unlike what the ads promise the azure skies and sapphire waters aren't part of daily Greek life for Athenians, though she, like her fellow-Athenians, enjoy them when she can. Adrienne has also taught in the University of Edinburgh's international summer schools program (SUISS) where she was a creative writing tutor for three years, discovered the Scottish white nights and wonderful groups of international students. She is currently at work on a book of creative non-fiction essays, and a monograph of 19th century American influences on Sylvia Plath's work. Recent work appears in *Hotel Amerika* and *Prairie Schooner*.

Additional Information

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Adrienne Kalfopoulou is the author of *Wild Greens*, a poetry collection from Red Hen Press, and a prose memoir, *Broken Greek*. She has published two chapbooks, *Fig* and *Cumulus* and various articles and essays. *Passion Maps* is her second collection of poems. She taught at the University of Edinburgh's international summer school program for several years and in various writing workshops in Greece. Currently she is an Assistant Professor at Hellenic American University in Athens where she developed the general education program and teaches literature.

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