

A mauve and darkening sea.
Here in this flame-barred bay
The fleets fought and the trapped
Athenians cried and died.

Ashen rocks and the roving grass;
Cyclamen, myrtle, marguerites.
A thistle spells the unity of the world:
Small, grey-blue, blind,
Starwise convergence.

Here Christ took Athena by the throat.
Her slaves in the stone quarries
Cut his enormous columns. An Emperor
Struck back through the virgin's eyes and missed
The thistle-seed, her light, her sight.
Greece died and lives
In a girl's cry.

KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

Note. Verse 1 alludes to the destruction of the Athenian fleet in the port of Syracuse in 413 B.C. In verse 3 there is one allusion to the fact that the cathedral at Syracuse incorporates the temple of Athena with its doric pillars; and one to the martyrdom of St Lucy, the city's patron, under Diocletian.