

Kyriakos Charalambides was born at Achna, Famagusta, in 1940. He studied history and archaeology in Athens. He took courses in drama in Athens and broadcasting in Munich. He lives and works in Nicosia where he is head of the Cultural Programmes Service for Radio at the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation.

**Works:**

*Πρώτη πηγή*, 1961 (First Source)

*Η άγνοια του νερού*, 1967 (The Ignorance of the Water)

*Το αγγείο με τα σχήματα*, 1973 (The Vase with the Figures)

State Prize for Poetry.

*Αχαιών ακτή*, 1977 (Achaean Coast)

State Prize for Poetry.

*Αμμόχωστος Βασιλεύουσα*, 1982 (Famagusta Regina)

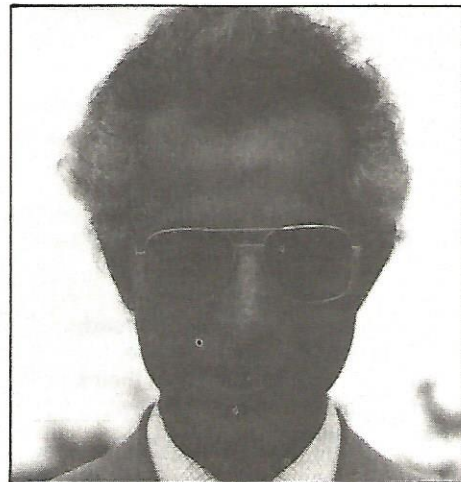
State Prize for Poetry.

*Θόλος*, 1989 (Dome) Athens Academy Prize

Many of his poems have been published in periodicals and anthologies in Cyprus and Greece and others have been translated into other languages.

## Kyriakos Charalambides

Athens  
Academy Prize



He has also written and published essays on literature. He has repeatedly been invited to and taken part in poetry readings, meetings and seminars in Greece, America, Yugoslavia, Holland, England and Bulgaria.

He is one of the most notable representatives of contemporary Cypriot poetry.

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## DOME

### At his Daughter's Wedding

She had three hundred acres of land in the occupied area  
and her father in the depths of the East.

Luckily, she was to marry a good boy.

During the wedding ceremony  
no one noticed her father.  
He slipped in unobserved through the porch and stood  
behind a column in admiration.  
Afterwards he dried with his sleeve  
his torn and shabby tear.  
They took him for the village idiot  
and left him alone and in peace.

The wedding's over and "every happiness".  
They collect sweets and loukoumia,  
each one gets into his car, they vanish.

The loving father goes too  
to the Green Line, stoops as he passes through  
and takes his place in the earth once more.

January 1983

*Loukoumia*: traditional small cakes offered at weddings in Cyprus.

*Green Line*: the line which divides Nicosia into the free and occupied areas.

### In the Prisons of Sinope

Twenty fish in a soup plate  
have wine before them and bread;  
they gaze at the sky of Sinope,  
conceal powerful fire within their fins,  
find an ancient coin in the bowl,  
Heracles killing Nessos.

And now they stand as waterless mountains  
without human rights and trees.  
"What you have in mind" they say to the guard,  
"do it quickly..." But he doesn't.

Easter Monday 1978

**The title:** This announcement was re-published in a French newspaper on the Wednesday before Easter 1978: "Twenty Greeks from Cyprus are being held secretly in the prisons of Sinope on the Black Sea".

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## The Last Bus

How can a bus have room  
for the greatest names in the world,  
George, Andreas, Yiannis, Costis,  
whom would you choose first, tear that would touch  
the little light in the eyes of God?

And when the last bus arrived  
and the parents like many-eyed angels were seeking  
a resurrection with their children,  
you heard weeping and lamentation which, starting  
from the inmost circle, ends  
in the yard of a house; there the animals  
took up the lament with their lowing  
striking their hooves in despair.

The last bus; and there it goes  
into the area carrying many bodies.  
Full of flags; with their folds  
they touch the half-mast photographs.

Haven't you seen my son? Does it remind you of something?  
This is his daughter, three years old, he's holding;  
Her name's Evroula. Haven't you seen him?

The last bus; and what doesn't it have!  
Boxes, which when you open them you throw  
to those who are without parcels - they take the paper  
like a cloak for the soul and after they nail  
a lake of blood to the place where they dismantled  
they plucked out all its six wings.

August 1983

**The Last Bus:** this poem is about the last bus which would bring to the reception area in the grounds of the Hotel and Catering Institute in Nicosia the last prisoners from the prisons in Turkey (December 1974).

## The Song of the Olympians

Day drowned in coolness. The mother from Lymbia  
goes to her daughter-in-law Vassiliki and says:  
"Michael won't come back, I know;  
get married daughter, now you are in the flower of your youth".  
"And how do you know, mother? Where did you learn it?"  
"Foreboding tells me; a year has almost passed."  
The daughter takes off her mourning and puts on white,  
walks to the church as if for a funeral  
She bears a child and gives it the dead one's name.

A true story

May 1984

**Lymbia:** a village in the Nicosia district built on the ruins of ancient Olympia.

**A year has almost passed:** according to the unwritten code of behaviour one who has lost his or her spouse can marry again after a year.



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## The Heads

We walked without a head  
four or five of us, incognito.

Although we were without windows and doors  
and railings, mothers scented us  
and stammered "My son".

Madam, Your son I never knew.

But they insist and begin  
one with saliva, one with tears  
and the third with the earth of her heart  
to shape tales about their children  
and knead beloved heads.

Afterwards we yoked them to our shoulders  
and wore them, willy-nilly.

What a fine head I have today.  
And mine... and mine too ... now all together:  
How fine our heads are, mothers.

What a perfect copy, what a sound  
of love and adoration! A head of clay,  
a head of copper, a head of gold and enamel-  
a miracle! Doesn't it suit me? It does, it does...  
stand over there. I like your head, child.

Then, when everything was about to end,  
there is no road to salvation with ringleaders.  
Because there appear at the corner of the road  
disorderly footballers, they kick heads  
of the enemy's skin, the ideas that nested there  
spill out, ribbons of red  
and blue and yellow and green.

The mothers stand and watch the dawn  
of history and the great cave.

June 1983