Arriving at the monastery of Agia Triada[[1]](#footnote-1)

the company of cypresses ends, the road stops for thyme

bougainvillea and oleander to dress the pale pink stone;

starts a quiet majesty

for me to light candles again. This agnostic recites family names

that’s become a kind of prayer, hears the narthex1 echo round

and round my words to gilded saints,

they’ve circled this transcendent horos[[2]](#footnote-2) for centuries, but we leave the host,

wander out past the pause of gardens, to sit transfixed:

watch the pink ignite,

transform to orange in the late afternoon light, while my finger follows

the worn stone alpha, the blurred omega inscription: *First and last there was,*

*there is, there will be Light*.

Memories I re-live today whenyou call from the garden:

*The crocuses have made it through!* And looking out

see the first shy oranges,

the last pale pinks start

to stop this

winter light.

1. after Michael Longley’s A Hundred Doors, portico to Greek church, 2 horos Gr. ‘to dance’, large ornate chandelier, [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)