Neochori, Lefktro, West Mani, 9 November 2026

Dear Nikos,

Dear George,

Today I am writing to tell you a story. A story that concerns you. It is a story of my own, from a few months ago. Its roots begin in this place, yet reach people far beyond it, where thought and lived experience continually nourish one another.

And as I bring it back to mind now, it feels as though I am there once again.

With hurried steps, making my way down from Gonatsa, I come to meet you there, at our rendezvous, at the little white house of Kalogria. From a distance, I see you as two figures. You, Nikos, stand still, watching George, who is saying something to you, gesturing with his hands and pointing something out, with that same vitality and force with which you describe him in your work.

I come closer. I look first at one of you and then at the other, with an insatiable gaze, wanting to hold on to as much as I can of this image. There is so much I want to tell you... Where could I possibly begin? So many thoughts, as many as the emotions that overwhelm me.

I step between you. I slip my arms through yours and, arm in arm, the three of us set off on a walk along the "golden sand", which at this time of year has the familiar look it has in the black-and-white photographs that have, from time to time, found their way into my hands... and I love that!

I catch myself becoming an observer of all three of us. I see myself talking endlessly. You, Nikos, listen attentively, trying to jot something down on the small white piece of paper you have taken from your left pocket. You, George, shake your head — now in puzzlement, now in disappointment, and now in admiration at everything I am describing to you.

The walk is long, as is our conversation. Time passes quickly, the hours...

I feel lighter for having managed to confide in you and share with you all that I had been carrying inside me for so many years. For having managed to express my gratitude to you because, through the way you lived your lives, through your individuality, your freedom of thought and your constant search, you remind me of the courage it takes to live life fully.

I will not hide from you that I carry both of you within me. At times Nikos prevails, in my tendency to withdraw and lose myself along the pathways of my mind, creating routes through which to channel my searching. At other times, Zorbas prevails, in a struggle through every kind of weather and circumstance. I call upon him especially when I need to find immediate answers to unexpected problems that seem impossible to solve. I have even named this approach the "Zorba Method": we keep calm, remain flexible, protect what truly matters, and keep going...

And somewhere here, I see myself in a small wooden boat drifting farther away towards the horizon. With a broad smile, I take in the image unfolding before me. You, Nikos, seated on the sand, are writing down everything I have just revealed to you. You, George, standing with your arms raised to the sky, answer me with an "opa." An "opa" that echoes across every peak of Taygetos, through every canopy of leaves, in every wave of the sea that comes and breaks upon the shore of Kalogria... in every golden grain of its sand.

An ΟΠΑ, with two vowels and a Greek Π — a "gateway" through the dead ends of our lives.

Vasiliki Kateri