

"Summer Solstice", by Giorgos Seferis, from *Three Sacred Poems*, Harvard University Press, 1969 (out of print), final passage:

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The white sheet of paper, harsh mirror,
gives back only what you were.

The white sheet talks with your voice,
your very own,
not the voice you'd like to have;
your music is life,
the life you wasted.
If you want to, you can regain it:
concentrate on this blank object
that throws you back
to where you started.

You travelled, saw many moons, many suns,
touched dead and living,
felt the pain young men know,
the moaning of woman,
a boy's bitterness -
what you've felt will fall away to nothing
unless you commit yourself to this void.
Maybe you'll find there what you thought was lost:
youth's burgeoning, the justified shipwreck of age.

Your life is what you gave,
this void is what you gave:
the white sheet of paper.