

Lucky Luciano

No, I won't talk of his deeds,
I'll not pass judgment on him.
There is Man's law for that.
Besides,
He has been dead for years.

All I want is to be a while in the atmosphere
Of Castelamare.
I want to enter his mood,
As the afternoon passes
And the sky presses on
The bastard balconies of Palermo.

That is, I want to live
Just for a short moment
As if I were he,
Not romanticizing,
Not ascribing to him
A glory he never possessed.

To catch every subtle shade,
All the infinite nuances
Of his innermost thoughts.
And most of all,
The fury that has consumed him
Since he understood
There is no institution stronger than the State.

And yet he was trapped
Between his basic aversion
To organized bodies
And his thirst for power.

Perhaps I am mistaken
And this is no trap
But simply—
You fear something, hate it
And end up imitating it.

Dusk has faded.

His heart feels light.
Life has fallen back,
Slipping away like a deer.

So, I didn't want
To idealize him,
To number him among
The great outlaws,
To give him a place in History.
All I wanted was
To enter his mind for a moment.

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Translated by the author with Daniel Weissbort

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Since the sky started crying
I haven't been out-of-doors for thirty-one days:
By now the earth must be a pair of pliers
With tatters of human flesh stuck to its jaws.

I imagine myself on a see-saw, balanced so lightly
That if even an atom fell on it (let alone a bomb)
I would be hurled like a stone from a catapult
Straight back into the trap of Macedonia.

My people, are we God's voracious eye
Suspended in the air like a traffic-light
Which, as it blinks, directs the flow of nations?
Right now I'm only that greedy eye of legend
Which, on my side of the scale, outweighs the world.