

Four Poems · *Silvino Poesini*

I CALL THEM THE GIANTS

these are the four village greats
some look like marquises some like counts

they hang out in a corner of the public square
—like mafiosi of lineage and name

on Sundays when they come down
all four stand side by side

they are punctual in their appointment
they speak in low tones

they leave Morra Indian file
and they go down the road, never by the customs;

the Morra people ask sarcastically “where are
they going, to Ronti or to the Baddia?”

one says “I don’t give a shit where they are going
I hope they croak pigging out on their bull, prosciutto, and cognac”

but a wizened old man is watching them through the bar door
and as they take off his eyes fill with tears

and as they go out of sight
he gets even sadder

he pulls away from the door in despair
and curses the Lord for having made him short of stature

he mumbles to himself and says
the four greats wouldn’t take me along because I’m unhappy

he lights then a cigarette to cheer himself up
he chews on it between his teeth like an ox chewing hay in May

buys a coffee goes out of the bar cannot find any peace
runs up to the door of Menco the baker

from there he gazes out on the road the four giants took
watches them to the Arcaleni turn-off then takes a step inside and
knocks on Maria's door

and if Maria is back he finds peace again right away
he does not think of the four greats because he likes Maria more

DEAREST THRUSHES

dearest thrushes on your way back to your country
make a circle around Tuscany
because that's where all the traps of the world are made

electric calls
and limed twigs
are set to get thousands of you in each roundup

have trust in me
I am setting you on a safe course
since by nature I am honest

therefore as you reach the top
of that mountain which is called Montanina, do a left
if you don't want to lose your lives

the road leads to Marzano, there
you can rest without fear
the inhabitants of that high place are all down in the plains

but be very careful you do not make the wrong turn
or you will end up in Caspignano
that ravenous valley