

Sotto la filigrana vivente, sotto il cappotto con i lunghi peli che si mischiavano ai suoi lunghi capelli.

Una bambola ad uso sessuale, vascello degli dei, divisa esattamente a metà.

Restava stesa sul divano. Protetta solo dalla perfetta recisione rifletteva la stanza arredata da Marco Polo sette anni prima.

Lui sognava come si sarebbe sentito vedendola morire per overdose. Non ci sono prove né ha alcuna idea di quali siano i sintomi, ma rimaneva sulla sua faccia un ghigno trasparente. Io avevo fissa dentro le pupille l'immagine della piccola fiala di vetro trasparente, distinta da quel segno sinistro che usano i farmacisti per distinguere un tossico. La fantasia eccitata mi suggerì: e se lei avesse già bevuto?... Quel sudore.

Dentro il terrario: luci al neon, un albero completamente sommerso sotto l'acqua, con un unico fiore che si apre alla fine di ogni ciclo e mostra una vongola all'interno. Ogni volta che mastico mi rompo un dente sulla perla opaca.

-- Carlo Marchetti

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Mirrors turning into glass houses that reflect and expose the poverty of those forced to enter. Look at them, they're poorer than us. But we are also poor. Solidarity. Empathy. Condescension. Relief. A display-window. Riccardo's first commercial exhibition. Grey sweaters. Cheap tropes signalling power and intensity. A staircase made by an imagined junkie, furiously crinkling his base materials into some kind of order as a means to reassure himself that there is something to hold onto. And whereas in past decades a son might have been startled by an image of the Virgin Mary appearing on the first layer of his mother's lasagna, now a divine symbol of upward mobility manifests itself for the socio-economically emancipated.

And then there is the furniture, disgusting souvenirs from a more innocent age, carrying the fossilised DNA of conversations that—if not regretted—are at least stained. The Slender Man dragging Mies van der Rohe once more from the grave to make him finally disappear.

The neutron bomb, a weapon developed towards the high-fever end of The Cold War, was a low yield thermonuclear weapon in which the burst of neutrons generated by a fusion reaction is intentionally allowed to escape the weapon, rather than being absorbed into its other components. A

radiation bomb, with low explosive energy but massive fallout, targeted specifically towards military and civilian populations with an eye towards keeping infrastructure intact.

A weapon, according to Asimov, “desirable to those who worry about property and hold life cheap.”

Or, according to Brezhnev, “A capitalist bomb.”

His aggression, his insecurity, and yes, even the stupidity: the look on his face as he is explaining something to me about Renaissance contracts and the amounts of blue stipulated therein, and I couldn’t care less because—more importantly—somewhere out there a boy hasn’t responded to my text messages! It all condenses here into a wonderful fire, cleaning out the social filth that marks our daily interaction and leaving these burnt out shells of accumulated past experience we both agree to call work.

It is important here to remember that the people who produce works of genius are not those who live in the most delicate atmosphere, whose conversation is the most brilliant or their culture the most extensive, but those who have had the power, ceasing suddenly to live only for themselves, to transform their personality into a sort of mirror, in such a way that their life, however mediocre it may be socially and even, in a sense, intellectually, is reflected by it; genius consisting in reflecting power and not in the intrinsic quality of the scene reflected.

To give you a more personal perspective: when he talks, there is a sort of mushy sound to his pronunciation that is charming because one senses that it betrays not so much an impediment in his speech as a quality of his soul, a sort of vestige of early childhood innocence that he never lost. Each consonant he cannot pronounce appears to be another instance of a hardness of which he is incapable.

Life lived once again with the fear of conventional warfare.

-- Julien Nguyen

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