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Louis Fratino

*La scorza*

13.09.2025 – 25.10.2025

Della romantica tuta  
oh non amai solo la scorza.  
Ma proprio la dolcezza ch'è sperduta  
fra le montagne della forza.

Sandro Penna

Not only did I love the length  
of hide in the romantic coverall.  
But oh the tenderness overall  
tucked away between peaks of strength.

Translated by Jahan Khajavi

LA VITA MORTA

Each man I've wrestled with till dawn has been angelic —  
In the flesh or merely in a dream.  
If strength the reliquary, sweetness is the relic —  
Rolled into a ball. The higher the scheme,

The greater the form — as sculpted figures, made of other  
Stuff, more human than a corpse may seem.  
When I held the body of my younger brother —  
Hard as marble, flesh that wouldn't yield,

And cold — no spark remained there that I feared to smother  
With my kisses. Everyone I've peeled  
Out of his working clothes has, tenderness & brawn,  
Equally whole joys, to me revealed.

I have imagined, on the verge of being drawn,  
A breath from sleeping boys who cannot catch you  
Creeping up on them, whose sole role is to fawn.  
And every angel I have seen, a statue.

Jahan Khajavi