

Blok Illuminated: An Italian Memory

The bar, the tower, the shuttered house

Enveloped each in brilliance

Along the twisting road.

You will never return

Yet all will remain unchanged

Clear and sharp, in the sunlight.

I and Thou

To admire, yet not to envy,

To challenge, but never to despise,

To love, perhaps also to pity,

To transcend the singularity of the self,

To see in you the luminosity I see in me –

That self-same consciousness I possess –

The image of the self refracted through itself.

Yet not to require reciprocation,

Bowing to the asymmetry of the I and the Thou.

That is what is required of me –

And so, paradoxically, also of you.

The Doomed Environment

Through the doomed environment I stride

Musing on the violence

Done by my species

To the natural order.

From this current reign of idiots

There is no escape

Despite the obsessive dreams of billionaires

Feverishly plotting the overthrow of gravity

Or worse.

Nuclear war, climate catastrophe

Twin dooms

One quick, one slower

Scorched earth, baked earth

For both of which we have to hold

Ourselves responsible.

Nothing else to blame

Just us.

Butterflies and polar bears

Cardinals and catfish

All unknowing

Free of the very concept of doom

If only they could unite in protest!

Is it not monstrous that these innocent creatures

Should themselves be doomed

*Through the initially unthinking
But now deliberate actions
Of a legion of arrogant strutting bipeds
The product of a massive evolutionary error.*

*Yet, self-doomed
And knowing it
I stride on
Along with the rest
Into the furious future.*

With Apologies to C. P. Cavafy

*I see the days past
As a row of lighted candles –
Golden, warm, lively and enduring.
Candles of memory that can always be relit.
The days before us remain uncertain
An indefinite, but finite line of unlit candles,
The nearest yet cold, unmelted and straight.
I don't want to think about them; their form doesn't interest me,
Nor do I look forward to their future glow.
I look back to my lit candles.
Turning back, I rejoice
At how fast the line of light grows –
How fast the glowing candles of memory multiply.*

Eddies of intent

*Within the purposeless current of time
Eddies of intent occasionally swirl
Only to vanish with a smooth rapidity
Their fugitive meaning effaced in the unceasing temporal flow.*

Time Stilled

*A subjective experience offers a potential stasis
Within the flux of time,
Made real through a poem, a painting, a melody, a gesture.*

Epitaph

*My past grows vast
My future's much diminished
Everything considered
It looks as if I'm finished.*