

A Long Term Voyage.

By Federico Sabatini

Ageing is not worthy, he thinks. What about dying young. Too painful for my mother. He always thinks of his mother when he feels sad. Or guilty. Thinks she would suffer more than him in sensing him suffering. He thinks he only wants to be happy to make his mother happy. Wants to be beautiful to please his mother. His mother's only creation.

He wants to be beautiful when the world is too ugly. People are too ugly. He is too ugly. I am ugly too.

He takes off his hat while walking fast along linear streets. He is alone. But can still hear the voice of the people he's left at the table. Without listening. He has shaved his head. Off. Is this forever. You should slow down your pace. Try to see this new town. It grows threatening. At once. How can I watch if everybody is looking at me. It's not true. Mere exaggeration. Or unbalancing proportions. And perceptions.

Keep suffering in a very quiet, very polite way. "Le bon-ton de la souffrance". Should laugh at this. Could have laughed, once. But not now. Now the inconsistency has taken over. It seems. It's true. I don't see anything anymore. I know I am going to the disco. It's not me though.

Is this really pain, he keeps asking while walking. He feels the world is still, while walking. He can't stop. People are frozen while they move. Some of them sing while sitting on the floor with bottles in their hands. They look very young. But they are probably my age. He puts his hat on. Touches his skin. It is dry.

Tiredness. Infinite. Enclosed in blood vessels. Closed. Mysteriously.

Memories of a former bohemian writer. Then writer. Then bohemian. Only. I don't like this. This is not right. This was not supposed to happen. Like so many things in my life. Too many things, maybe. And this me is still going to the disco. Walking a long way along marvellous baroque. Unable to see.

I still don't know why my inner voice is now speaking two languages. It's shame. Cannot hear such and such in my own language. It is obvious. My twin voice comes from years I spent in another country. Another country. It is my only heritage. All the rest has vanished apart from a very few blurred spots of unreal images. That I could have easily dreamt. And, instead, I'm dreaming of death. Again. Killing or be killed seem to equal. *Ormai*. I see myself dead and it's not painful as it was before. I see myself dying and I think of my mother. How can I be loved if I can't love. I can't love for I can't see. I want to see, so very much. Even these unreal images. But flashing inside my eyes. Inside. Or insight. No, kein insight my friend, he said to me once. Neither sight, nor insight. This is only your reverie. Your only reverie.

I sit on a bench, again. Old people talk about music. They are elegant, they are real. They have lived. Spent years of daily sensations. If only I could love everybody as I am loving them now. This bench is not helping though. It makes me feel my weight against it against the floor. There is always something depriving my loves. This unreal city. Have I really chosen. Or was I driven by excess of lucidity. It is like madness, after all. Admit this. My lucidity is my madness.

These buildings are extraordinary, his best friend said. Royal, he thinks. Immaculate marble. It smells of clean. You want to touch. Or caress. Sophisticated facades wrap my feelings. In a square. With theatre. Café. Bookshop. Librerie française. Shakespeare. Deorsola. What are you doing, fool. You are not the only one. I know, I am only the last one. But definitely the less capable. Maybe the most sensitive. Intuition is not enough you know. My thoughts have to breathe. To rest in peace. Silence. I have written this. Already. It means I have lived it. Was it really on my skin. Or was it theatrical. Experiencing ideas as on a stage. With no audience. Grotesque, maybe. Useless pathos. I have told this to my wife millions of times. Useless pathos. Wasted contortions. Wasted emotions. Which disappear. And leave scars, I used to say. But they only leave changes. And time, in my empty and spacious hands.

Where have I landed. Or ended. Have I really ended. Like in a movie. But with a curtain. Opera, maybe. Or maybe, only operetta. Stop denigrating your life. Think of the intensity of your lives, my wife said. It's hard, I mumbled. Think of your capacity for feelings, my friend said. It's very sad, I thought. You're better than many people around you. Yes, I am. But what counts if I am just older than them. So much older.

I see this city as if I have come back to it from a long term voyage. And, yet, it's a new city. A city I don't know at all. And I feel so much alone when I don't know things. Lonely, also. Withdrawn from others' lives. I can't draw people nearer. Have I really become this, I can't help asking. So very aged all of a sudden.

I'm just writing out of sadness. Or lust. My sentences have become my ejaculations. With no orgasm though. This is the only truth. With no other meaning concealed. No veil to be taken off.

Here I am. Still, smoking another cigarette before entering. Even if I have just smoked. Even if my tongue is still burning. I need to smoke another one. And to look at this luminous entrance. At these sparkling mouths smiling at my blindness.

I am not liking these people. I don't fancy them. But I need to have sex. I still hear the voices of the people I left at the table. Blurring with my own inconsistent one. I know beyond that door there will be tormenting music. Contorted movements. Blazing alcohol in the air.

It feels I have walked for a second. I have been sitting for ages.
With nobody around.