

ANTONIO PORTA

Piercing The Page

Selected Poems 1958–1989

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EUROPA RIDES A BLACK BULL

I

Look out, inhabitants of earth,
beware! from the words of the Great Ones
comes a landslide of lies, they babble
up there, instructing the void.
Put the private, individual voice
in a safe place: tomorrow it will be
taken away, as with many already,
and lament echoes the clinking of glasses.

2

Bullets blaze in the piazza, the activist's
car drives madly; the hand was lifted
from the pocket was seen blown open.
Out of the sterile gardens the holiest
angel rises, in a few minutes
they seize him and it's all over.

3

The forest prospers on the belly
of the powerful: who can never see
the horizon for all their intrigue!
Underwear flutters on the flagpole,
goodly officials take a balloon ride,
they observe streets and houses from above,
men are such useful ants,
the confused mob, goodly
officials, brains made of soap,
sliding merrily over the houses.

4

An accident, they say, every hour,
one day when there was school in the air
an odor of garbage, the grocer's
oranges grow on the piazza.
The gigantic tire (the insect
once destroyed like this)
levels ears eyes voice,
the shoes dangle from the branch,
the rubber from the skid mark smokes.