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Where Are the Real Italians?

[1]

Pizzeria burned down,  
Newspaper reads: reasons unknown.

Giuseppe sits in his dark apartment,  He’s home alone.  
Stares intensely at the picture of Nonno on the wall,

In a gilded frame suspended  
by a rusty nail  he plunged through so it would not fall and shatter into little pieces that would lodge under foot.

The black and white photo stares back.  
Eyes brimming with the hope of the next life,  
Face worn out like Giuseppe’s, but Nonno didn’t do no dope.

A do stanno i suoi amici?  Sono spariti nella sera cercando quel tesoro di paradiso.

Runs his fingers through his hair all that greasy mess. Confesses his sins aloud,  
acts out a scene to that film:  
You Talking to me?
Cuz I got an offer you can’t refuse.
Live and lose.
Eat or be eaten.
Come back you dumb Guinea or you’ll catch a beatin!

But They were devoured,
devoid of their culture
their cadavers rotted
as the vultures circled

souls risen but gone forever,
gazed at the picture of Nonno,
Once more, faded just a bit.

Memories die man!
Peppino’s sick o’ that shit!

Takes a sip of the juice calms him down just a bit.
It’s a trip.
Volare nel blu dipinto di blu.

Turns on the tube,
Pacino is on! Serpico
he’s that cop, right?

De Niro, Raging Bull,
That La Motta could fight.

Right!!??!
Peppy he’s that dumb Dago losin’
his temper.
The Wop slingin’ the Pasta.
He fights with a knife.
Stabbed his brother for
fuckin’ his wife.
That’s life.
What can he say or do but
ask the question:
Where are the Real Italians?

Mandolins sound!
Soil plowed with the peasant’s blood.
Such hallowed ground,
Clothes sewn with the red thread to
ward off the evil eye.

Where was it when they hit Ellis Island?

Giuseppe quietly asks coming down from the
mental cloud he rides.

Confides to the heavens,
asks for advice, and
wishes soon to converse with angels.

As a young boy Joe
studied Italian
never could get the accent straight
more Guido than Guinea

[3]

hated when The Zips
called him *R’O’ Mericano*

He always wanted to be *Un Italiano Vero.*

Months changed and Years passed had to make that cash fast, with high school done he found a job on the street where numbers were run.

He lowered himself to a lowly miser. Scrapped up enough dough to go to the other side, the Old Country.

On his arrival survival ceased, Joe was just another tourist, an outsider from the inside.

Sands of time turned to glass it shattered and lodged itself under foot shooting pain up to his brain causing blood curdling screams of:

WHERE ARE THE REAL EYETALIANS?

Rolls a joint, takes a puff of the Buddha seed He’s trippin’ off some Jamaican weed.

Looked at *Nonno’s* picture once more.
Dulled eyes still visible
but no more face worn out without the use of dope.

He’s flippin’ like a staggerin’ wino
and starts buggin’ out, seein’ these
apparitions and shit!

Clemenza’s got gun in hand.

[4]

Tommy’s got the power to amuse also a short fuse.

Marty finds his pleasure in devouring mamma’s lasagna.

He hears Chico Marx speakin’ in that broken English/broken Italian,
as il Bambino falls asleep over that poppy seed *papavero*.

Looks at the picture once more, no eyes
filled with hope nor face worn out not by the usage of dope.

A cold hush fills the room
as the frame falls through the air the rusty nail
could no longer bear the weight it had borne for all those years.

Pascal’s poetry was bold.

DiDonato’s Christ was buried in concrete for tasting a forbidden fruit so sweet.
Electricity flowed through the air as Sacco and Vanzetti burned slow.

And where are you Carlo Tresca on this damp night? Where are you Joe Petrosino? Rotting in Palermo’s alleyways?

Behold the olive skinned black haired beauty corrupted by blond dye and blue contacts in eyes.

There was never a deeper stare than those of her black opaque eyes. There was never a sight so fair, as the shattered glass from the frame lay scattered over a blur that once was a vision that told of a thousand hardships and triumphs.

In robe and bare feet, of reality he was no longer aware

[5]

as his feet planted themselves on the fragments of glass an epiphany revealed itself to him in his high mass.

It faded slowly to show us the error of our ways. But the days are long
gone and persecution would no longer last and we would make that money fast losing ourselves in all that success, leaving our descendants to cope with all such distress, brought upon them by the question of:

Where are the Real Italians?

And he peered down to his feet as the floor ran red with his blood his body slowly crumbled his last words he barely mumbled:

Shards, so many little shards, and so light—where do I fit into the starry night?