

THE BRONX UNBOUND

OVVERO I VERSI BRONXESI

Poems by Angelo Zeolla



BORDIGHERA PRESS

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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 d'ò 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.

[2]

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.
Scraped 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
corrupted by blond dye
and blue contacts in eyes. beauty

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?