

Diego Gualandris *ANTARES*

3 October | 28 November 2020

Tale 01#

The other day a red supergiant and a disco, both called *Antares*, met. They went for an ice cream at the bastard uncle's shop chatting in a weird incomprehensible slang.

'Cume stut, bup o mup?'
 'Mup'
 'Parmarana?'
 'Non ho un centup'
 'Neanchup. Ti servono dei sup?'
 'Naum, graum. Farò un rapaum'
 'Mi so mpozzata? È peracalaure'
 'Nin ta praccapaura'
 'S'impazzaut'
 'Mah...Magari è mausen sequestrare un persausen'
 'Uno rauc perauc'
 'Chiaramanibe!'

They then decided to go kidnap someone, willing to ask for a lavish ransom and free themselves from poverty, after spending their only savings on that ice cream. It was a good one though.

'Have kids! Have kids! Have kids! Have kids! Have kids!'. Somebody prompted two young pigeons to procreate from the other side of the street. "... Have kids, now or never!'

The supergiant's cell phone started to ring intensely

'Chi cozza valo chiste?'
 'Cui?'
 '2013'
 'Incoro?'
 'Sa...'
 'Nin raspadara'
 'Ahaha! Nin ho un cattovo idoo'

2013 had a short fling with the supergiant that didn't end up very well.

'Sinto, hi n'idao' said the disco 'Siquastrioma 2013, li mittiomo nel garage del morbius'
 'Ahaha! Nin ho un cattovo idoo'

Obviously, they were joking. They actually knew very well who they intended to kidnap. It will happen next Wednesday. At ten to twenty-two they made their way to the former fruit and vegetables shop in via Sant'Anna, found in front of church whose writing on the wall says IT'S ME and the one to the side that says FRANCO.

The karaoke had started and the old shop with the yellow scraped walls and the smooth floor scented like detergent and pizza with pork and eggplant. A terminally ill dentist welcomed with open arms the two *Antares* and kept singing even while eating pizza and peach ice cream with vodka.

'Binvonautesan! Sin erriveti le rigiane del fasto!'

On the indistinguishable faces of the people present were red and silver glitter. An orange dim light mixed everything in one hectic and screaming mango-flavoured homogenized. Somewhere in the room the floor exerted a greater gravitational force. Many would slip and then tangle themselves like dalmatian or greyhound puppies. Liquids and shapes, both in the sky and in that former fruit and vegetables shop, mixed like molecules guided by an instinctive and necessary force.

The disco started to twerk while the supergiant laid two bottles of a delicious icy rosé on the table. An icy asteroid looked at the scene annoyed and intolerant, he was having a mental breakdown but in the end he started singing the song coming from down there:

*Cimo pramo
pi do pramo
t'omiréééé
Li to ovato
Li mo ovato
To diréééé
Simbro n sagno
Rovadirta, acchirezzorta
Li mo mona
Li to mona
Strongiare incheeeeer*

Seventy years ago, an insect named Aldo lived inside the chamber of a little wooden ektara from Populonia and for at least ten years he stayed still on an upper shelf in a big library, inside an orange bedroom, in a house white mayo.

'Gilda' the insect whispered to himself, just as he woke
'What...' he continued
'She didn't like the... mah', he threw his snout out looking at the door
'When is she coming?'; he was beating nervously the edge of the chamber with his paws.
'And then...' he sighed
'Those bites on the neck', the hairs on his paws stood up
'The asshole who did those to you...'
His wet jaws were trembling with anger.
'Bastard!' he came out of the den and started walking up and down the shelf
'Whoever you are...' he stopped looking at the bed
'...I will' he opened his violet wings
'Kill you'

He flew from the library to the bedside table drawing a trajectory in form of a camel. He landed clumsy on the slippery wooden floor tasting like detergent. He jumped from there to the red pillow on the bed. How many marvellous nights in that bed with his beloved Gilda...

She was his world, a landscape in which you could forever lose yourself in. Nobody knew her better than Aldo: in each of her eyes you could clearly see the shapes of those soft valleys, warm hills, sweet lakes, torrent and forests. He would have loved to move there one day.

A violent buzz suddenly burst into the room.

'Hey there Aldo! How are you buddy?' the hornet shouted
'Hear me out...!' Aldo screamed
'It was you'
'What did I do?' the hornet answered giggling
'Look... I...!' Aldo became red with rage
'Aldo what's up? Calm down'

Aldo was possessed by jealousy. He took off and grabbed the hornet by the neck. The hornet barely noticed his wet trembling claws and which were already shredding his neck.

'Let go!' the hornet screamed with a suffocated voice 'Are you out of your mind!?'
Aldo immediately let go, he came back to his senses and felt awful for his uncontrolled outburst of violence. The hornet ran away from the window coughing and stumbling through the air.
Then night came. It had been dark for hours and when the door opened a feminine silhouette appeared through the corridor's shade. 'Hey, I was getting worried. Where were you?'. The girl's silhouette was making weird gestures in the corridor's direction. 'Sweetheart are you alright?', Aldo was half asleep at the foot of the bed, he felt an inexplicable turmoil growing inside his yellow chest.

Another figure stepped into the room.

As tall as her, but for sure it wasn't Enrica, her hair was too short. Aldo was trying to connect that figure to one of Gilda's friends.

The insect could barely open his mouth that the figures started intertwining, mingling, before his eyes, Aldo heard their breaths fill the room, wet pops and rustles more and more rhythmic, more and more intense. His many eyes were wide open for a frozen circle. He thought he was losing his sight, but then the dark vanished and in that silent room those noises were ripping his ears.

'S... Sweetheart...' Aldo babbled.

The two silhouettes were clearer, cleaner, naked and finally they fell on the bed, looking like a giant black spider squirming in hunger.

Aldo couldn't feel his body, he was floating in a hellish fog. Staggering aimlessly, he came closer to the monstrosity that was killing his soul. He pushed through that flesh trying to escape those venomous moans but didn't realise he was getting closer and closer. He found himself in front of hairy hills where he instinctively sheltered. He found a hole and entered. He crawled for an infinite time inside the impervious tunnel where the air missed and his body seemed melting step by step. But finally all noises stopped.

A drum, deaf and intense, was playing madly at a fast rhythm. Aldo crawled until exhaustion and then he saw it: a huge flesh cocoon full of pulsing tubes. With his last strength he brought himself closer to the biggest tube and he tightened it with his claws up until breaking it.

A terrible wave overwhelmed him and, absorbed him in a warm red liquid, he felt far away a melody:

*Que te importa que te ame
Si tu no me quieres ya
Un amor que ya ha pasado
No se debe recordar
Fui la ilusión de tu vida un día muy lejano ya
Y represento un pasado no me puedo conformar
Si las cosas que uno quiere
Se pudieran alcanzar
Si me quisieras lo mismo
Que veinte años
Atrás*

Six minutes after Aldo was born again as a *beefsteak tomato*.

The other day Giancarlo the warlord met Giulio the warlord who, just like him, was having veil butter for a snack. They went to see the prince Samberrütt, both of whom were secretly in love with.

'Buongiarco pranco Samberrarco'
 '...'
 'Coccio?'
 'Nopie' Samberrütt said sadly smiling 'Suvvia pranco a noi puoi drarco'
 'Bè, uno scorpiozzo e' entrato nel mio castozio'
 'Nin ta praccapaura, sa ni starà trinquollo in un baco'
 'Temo di no purtrauco.. pesa 700 chilograuco'
 'Porcoplutarco!'
 'Già..'
 'Fanno scafo gli scorpiuti'
 Vongo'

Without flinching, the two warlords unsheathed their swords and entered dashing into the castle haunted by the filthy poisonous arachnid. The huge scorpion had half destroyed the castle's furniture. Yellowish stains of drool covered sofas, pillows, tablecloths, carpets, beds and chandeliers.

The two warlords exchanged an accomplice look.

'Il mastro ì ferato'
 'Pribabalmonta ì giò marta'
 'Mh...'
 'Quinto scimmiotta?'
 '6000 EYPΩ'
 'Indoti!'

6000 EYPΩ was a really big amount to bet. They both were practically risking the monthly subscription to the scooter-cloud.

'Li vado!' Giancarlo shouted in a low voice 'sembra un grosso sacco dell'amanbracca, pieno di occhi, aculei e misciotte' 'Raccapraccamacapricciancanatenete... comunque ho vinto lo scommasso' Giulio mumbled. The scorpion noticed their presence, its eyes simultaneously rolled towards the two petrified warlords. Three eyes on Giulio, four on Giancarlo and the last one stubbornly stuck on the monster's shapeless genital organ, which he couldn't stop admire it since its birth.

It probably would have stopped a little after.

At two to twenty-two, Kevin (the scorpion's name) shook its deadly arm and the dripping blade could only suggest the worst of deaths. Blades, shields, dodges, serrated claws, catarrh and the old castle with red scraped walls and the chess floor smelling like sweat and pizza with pork and eggplant. The two warlords wiggled more hysterically between the creature's clutches. 'MmmmMmMmuori!' Giulio babbled energetically saddling it with his sword inside the belly.

The eyes of the rotating scorpion closed one after the other in six seconds. Only one struggled to close. The one which wouldn't stop orbiting around that sort of slimy funnel under the abdomen.

Fiup! An ebony arrow with feathers of pigeon, crow and seagull, stuck in Kevin's good eye and it finally collapsed muttering something about an orangutan. Prince Samberrütt held in one hand a bow made with narwhal's bow. In the other, a silver microphone. He was also wearing very beautiful sunglasses.

While Giancarlo clapped, Giulio was fixing the room. He had already chopped Kevin's remains, switched on the oven, vacuumed and cleaned the floors.

The prince, inspired like never before, turned on his cylindrical chamber. A sweet arpeggio suddenly came out of it and magic words started scrolling on the room's scraped wall, crawling like water between rocks of a fountain:

*Ave Maria! Jungfrau mild
Erhöre einer Jungfrau Flehen
Aus diesem Felsen starr und wild
Soll mein Gebet zu dir hinwehen
Wir schlafen sicher bis zum Morgen
Ob Menschen noch so grausam sind
O Jungfrau, sieh der Jungfrau Sorgen
O Mutter, hör ein bittend Kind!
Ave Maria!
Ave Maria! Unbefleckt!
Wenn wir auf diesen Fels hinsinken*

Diego Gualandris (Bergamo, 1993) lives and works in Rome. He graduated in Painting in 2018 at the Accademia Carrara di Bergamo.

Recent exhibitions include: 2020 – Quadriennale d'arte 2020, *FUORI*, curated by Sara Cosulich and Stefano Collicelli, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome (upcoming); *ANTARES*, ADA, Rome (upcoming). 2019 - *The Italian open*, Galerie Rolando Anselmi, Berlin. 2018 - *Caradrio*, with Riccardo Sala, Tile Project Space, Milan; *Il vello d'oro*, Giorgio Galotti, Turin; *Figure di spago / Pratiche di narrazione*, curated by Caterina Molteni, Fondazione Baruchello, Rome; *L'isola portatile*, curated by Caterina Molteni, ADA, Rome. 2017 - *Gattacornia*, Altalena, Maccagno. Residencies projects include: 2019 - Castro, Rome; Painting Workshop, Nuoro, Quadriennale di Roma. 2018 - Residenza la Fornace / Autunno, Spino d'Adda. 2016 - VIR, Viagarini in residence, Milano. He has been awarded the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant in 2020.