

Three Selections from
Rogo

Through Clenched Teeth

A shadow still, a shadow which does not disappear
like a discussion full of propositions,
and this sky without victory for anyone,
warm hands, the mouth bitter with loving.

Useless to talk to you, my unknown deaths,
useless to search for you, you men of the earth,
for the excessive earth which hides your sky,
yours alone is the sky for which we suffer the whole earth.

All the earth and mistakes which are trying because trivial,
the slaughter like walls of clay in whose shelter we hide,
with a scarlet handkerchief we wipe up the blood so as not to see it
with a white one the tears so that we do not cry.

With a longer stride we commit tiredness, to what?
The rose in a sudden whirlwind finds the spring in a desert
and the seasons save themselves from the cannon but not from the
gazes of men
who perhaps only exist on earth through an imbalance of lies

like the wind in a barometric distortion.
We also wipe up tears with words,
with the most entrenched arsenal, with friends who climb the
stairs.
And we invent the idea of going to bed, to invent something,

while we feel that life truly divides from death,
there is no doubt, but we are tired all the same,
as when tired of music we listen only to instruments.

15th of April, 1944

Snows and Tears

Snows and tears set ablaze, in the heat
of blood rise again the cities
and the stained walls which hands
no longer hold up: my pain
no longer knows how to blend, as indistinct
embers this wind can scatter it here and there.

Screws can melt,
lights break doors, chinks
like ever vaster rivers carry us away,
but why walk abroad to keep ourselves
in this smell of spent fire,
to falsify the heart as an horizon
at our desolate turn to watch?

The nights are undone like candles
in too much fire, overcooked
are the fruits of Africa and Asia, the flowers in the vases
of prisoners, so far distant
is the hand that you extend to me it could seem a farewell,
and the sea crashes in our illuminated glasses.

January, 1945

Particulars

Land and sea frozen with pain,
for a little longer conserve silence.

Memories are not things that happened,
perhaps they are on the hands
of those who cannot go on to kill, of those who cannot drink
a little more without drunkenness,
memories are not like swords
which the more they penetrate liberate
from injury, memories consume
the sun the moon the breathless steps
of those who return, or of the dog which meanwhile licks
a faithful lacerated leg, memories
still come after or before life.

O inconclusive spectre, o gorge of tears,
dispersed in you I wanted to look at myself
and I wanted to arrive beyond you.
Only death could have you,
remember you always a little further on past life,
why disobey the orders not to stay hidden,
why hide oneself walking indifferently?
And I no longer know who I am, but only what I do,
and I also know this: I will not ask pardon
for what I do, for the deep passage of abandonment.
Sun and moon are tired of living on our memories,
we have grazed fingers, atonal gestures, deaf thoughts,
we want to use in a painful act
the confusion of which we are not worthy,
but we do not want to cross unknowingly
the boundary of certainty, the line of rest.

Land and sea frozen with pain,
for a little longer conserve my silence.

February, 1945

Piero Bigongiari
Translated from the Italian by Theodore Ell