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Renzo Novatore

Noontime Songs

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And yet the voice of reality tells me: The Czar dead, Lenin rises . . .
The royal guard abolished, the red guard comes . . .

Yes I am a dreamer of the impossible, but I practice Anarchy, I don't dream it. I have condemned today's humanity, and I stretch the bow of my will to realize myself against it — not within it. For now I quench my thirst only at the spring of my inner beauty.

Oh, my unknown and solitary brothers, what will there be for our distant children?

And yet there must be future for evil too, because the hottest noon has not yet been discovered for man.

If today our "fate" damns us to live against the world, why couldn't their "fate" tomorrow choose them to dance freely over the earth?

"Tomorrow!"

But today?

All that is left for us today is to howl the tragic No of our negation and revolt. Through the realization of our individuality; through the conquest of our freedom; through the full and total possession of our lives! Because we — vagabonds — are the inassimilable ones of revolt and negation!

Because I don't feel with the mind of the crowd. I don't suffer the pain of the people. I don't believe in a possible social harmony.

I feel with my own mind, suffer my own terrible pains, believe only in myself, in my own deep sorrow. This sorrow that no one understands and that I love, that I love through hatred and contempt for the human lie. Because I love this sorrow of mine. I love it as I love everything that is my own. Like my ideal lovers, like my unknown brothers, like my distant children.

XI

So where are the ones — the geniuses or maniacs — who know how to live and die, alone and liberated, shouting — consciously and knowingly: “I” “Today” “My freedom” “My realization”?

Oh, my brothers, where are you?

Oh, “cursed” breed, when will your deep “humanity” be understood? But then, does all this need to be understood?

Doesn't the purest beauty still live ignored?

XII

How terrible is my tragedy, how strange and deep my mystery.

I still dream!

I dream of friends never known, lovers never possessed, ideas never created, thoughts never thought, men never experienced, flowers never smelled, forests never hiked, oases never discovered, suns never seen. . .

I dream!

I dream a great, tremendous revolt of all those who have grown pale in the long wait. I dream of the satanic awakening of those who live in chains. . . I must be beautiful to light pyres in the night! . . . To see death's centaurs running through every land ridden and spurred on by tragic heroes who've grown pale in the long wait. To see the spirit of revolt and negation dancing supreme over the world! . . .

Alas! I am still the eternal dreamer I always was! . . .

I

“Verily, there is yet a future for evil too. And the hottest noon has not yet been discovered for man.”

— F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*¹

I am alone, I am alone! Alone and distant. . .

But what does it all matter?

Yes, what does it matter to me?

The vast and boundless wilderness stretches out around me, and here — amid the sun's golden rays — firs and pines sing their strange songs composed from symphonies of silence and the music of mystery. . .

I am singing too.

I am singing the song of my bleeding truths for all the bloodstained minds. I am singing the song of my greatest, most desperate noon: I am singing the dog day poem of my hottest summer! . . .

But I sing only for my solitary and unknown comrades; I sing only for my distant children. . .

For my heart is not longer a spring garden dotted with fragile and fragrant roses; for my heart is no longer a vermilion jewel box full of virgin dreams.

Anyone who has sung the morning poem must sing the noontime poem. And I am singing it! I am singing the dog day songs of my hot summer.

II

Once I dreamed. . .

It was the first joyful spring of my youth!

Those were good times! . . .

A mysterious ideal flapped its invisible wings over the ethereal waves; fleshy tears were enlightened by spiritual laughter; within

¹ I have chosen to translate this as it appears in the Italian, where “noon” is used in place of “south,” because obviously Novatore is playing on the word “noon.”

me, human sorrow was transformed into a harmonic dream of future beauty! . . .

I dreamed great dreams of justice and freedom . . . of brotherhood and love . . .

And I lived for this dream; I fought for this dream . . .

My mind was completely covered with fragile, fragrant roses, and my heart was a vermilion jewel box full of virgin dreams! . . .

My eyes glowed with a red and golden light, and my faith was a dramatic, emotional “Yes” that believed and hoped . . .

Yes! Then I believed . . .

I believed in brotherhood; in human redemption; in love . . .

“The self-elevation of men . . .” “Elevation of the masses . . .” “Ascent of the people . . .” “Sublimation of humanity! . . .”

Ah! that great poem of dreams, my youth!

III

Along the path of all those born to great and generous labors — to the promethean “virtues” of thought — there is a liberating demon hiding, waiting in ambush.

I also had my hidden demon, and one day he was lying in wait for me, smiling and sure . . .

He told me, “I am the eagle in the heights and the diver in the depths . . .

“I come from past eternity and head toward future eternity.

“I am eternal Evil, because I am Sorrow. I am the tragic No! that perpetuates itself. The negating and demolishing spirit; the liberating and creating revolt! . . .

“I am man’s roots, the I of life. I am the negating spirit of your most subterranean depths. And when I come out from my frightful cavern to ride the centaurs of the wind and make my truths howl over the world’s back, phantoms die and men grow pale.”

You still cry out your calls for crucifixion against me. You cry out against the savage egoist, but I am not moved. I sing my iconoclastic songs of negation and revolt. I sing my noontime poem.

— The dog-day poem of my hot summer!

IX

For me, Anarchy is a means for achieving the realization of the individual, and not the other way around. Otherwise, Anarchy would also be a phantom.

If the weak dream of Anarchy as a social goal, the strong practice Anarchy as a means for individual realization. The weak created society, and society gives birth to the spirit of the law. But the one who practices Anarchy is the enemy of the law and lives against society. And this war is inevitable and eternal. It is inevitable and eternal, because when the Czar falls, Lenin rises; when the royal guard is abolished, the red guard comes . . . Anarchism has been, is and always will be the ethical and spiritual heritage of a tiny aristocratic horde, and not of masses or peoples. Anarchism is the exclusive treasure and property of the few who hear the cry of a “No” without arguments echoing in their most subterranean depths!

X

I belong to the most extreme breed of intellectual vagabonds, to the “cursed” breed of inassimilable and restless ones. I love nothing that is known, and even friends are the unknown ones.

I am a true atheist of solitude, a loner without witnesses!

And I am singing! I am singing my songs woven from shadow and mystery . . .

I am singing for my unknown brothers and for my distant children . . .

I have freed myself from the slavery of love to feel free in my hatred and contempt . . .

Oh my solitary, unknown brothers, don't you hear, in your darkest depths, the roar of a "No" without arguments?

Well, this is my "No," my brothers.

VIII

A long series of macabre visions passes before my eyes.

They are the baleful and monstrous phantoms of my old faith.

They have bloodstained mouths and grip the dead in their bloody teeth.

The dead who fell whispering "tomorrow! . . ."

The first dead one said: "I burned and robbed in the name of God, and I died for his glory, killing."

The second one said: "I burned and robbed in the name of my fatherland, and I died for its grandeur, killing."

The third one said: "I burned and robbed for the good of the people, and I died for their freedom, killing."

The fourth one said: "I burned and robbed for the good of humanity, and I died for the love of it, killing."

The fifth one said: "My mind was filled with a great sublime ideal. I dreamed that all human beings were free, great and happy. I wanted freedom and equality, love and brotherhood to take possession of life and dominion of the world. And to realize this dream — which the world didn't want to understand — I robbed and burned and died, killing."

And behind the corpses of these five murderous slaves, five portions of the world stand divided, ready to slit each other's throats while traveling down the same road.

. . .

God, fatherland, society, people, humanity? Ideal future?

But I am a reality, and I live today!

Is war the reality of life? Indeed! But I am not a sacrificial animal. I don't want my spirit to be a slave; I don't want my body to be sacrificed on any altar; I don't want any monster to crush my bones. You still cry out your anathemas, whether priests of the people, servants of the fatherland or apostles of humanity.

IV

The demon told me this about my most subterranean depths. This one who is able to tell terrible truths that draw blood . . .

Once god was the tyrant.

Then came the family and society, the people and humanity!

But I spoke with one who comes from past eternity and is heading toward future eternity . . .

And I recognize these baleful phantoms . . .

Ah, and I have seen them drink so many rivers of blood, sweat and tears along the road of the centuries! . . .

I have seen them devour so many mountains of corpses! . . .

So many! . . .

And every dead person who fell whispered "Tomorrow!"

"Tomorrow?" God and tomorrow" "Humanity and tomorrow" "The people and tomorrow."

But today?

So where is my hero?

— Where are my solitary and unknown brothers, where are my distant children, those — either geniuses or maniacs — who know how to live and die alone and liberated, shouting — consciously and knowingly: "I" "Today" "My freedom" "My realization"?

V

I am alone, I am alone! Alone and distant . . .

A high fever hammers my brow, and a new thirst burns me; it burns my mouth . . .

The plebeian wells are now too far for me, and the virgin springs are still unknown mysteries to me . . .

I am still an Arc. When will I be a Peak?

. . .

The light of dusk.

I hear a bird's song; I watch it fly through the melancholy clearness of an agonic Evensong and dissipate below in the velvet blue of distant shadows.

From a certain association of ideas, I also seem to see the winged dreams of my youth dissipating down there in the distance, far away among the sad, mournful shadows of oblivion . . .

VI

It was nothing. A nostalgic shadow of memory merely passed through the vivid light of the dog-day morning of my hot summer day.

Now it's all passed. The fever hammered my brow, the thirst burnt my mouth. I bent myself over the cause of my "need" and my "thirst," quenching them in the springs of my hot blood and the rain of my bitter sweat." This pungent self-drinking made me intoxicated with a mad delirium that exalts and transforms.

Now the miracle of my noontime tragedy is accomplished.

I have fallen like an Arc, I rise up like a peak into the mystery of the wind and the glory of the sun to speak the heroic words of my exalted transformation and my madness.

VII

I spoke with the shade of my "first" solitude. She told me: "You dreamed brotherhood with your eyes closed in the fog of faith, but when you opened them in the sun of reality, you saw the tragic drama of Cain and Abel."

I spoke with the shade of my "second" solitude, and she told me: "You called for pure friendship so sincerely, but when you eagerly strained your ears to hear the answer to your call, you heard a sharp, metallic jingle answer you. It was the vile sound of Judas's thirty silver coins, still sounding over the world."

I spoke with the shade of my "third" solitude, and she told me: "You desperately called for real solidarity between all human beings, and at your desperate cry, sardonic, sinister laughter, made of slander and scorn, answered."

I spoke with the shade of my "fourth" solitude, and she told me: "You addressed so many songs and poems to the love between man and woman, but this love has become a covert war between the sexes."

I spoke with the shade of my "fifth" solitude, and she told me: "You believed that the I could become the we, because man needs society."

"But don't you see that this need is precisely what makes man a slave and unhappy? Did you think there was a way? But there was no way . . . Life is a closed circle (paved with the dead weight of the many and blocked by the eternally brutish majority) within which man is damned to a perpetual war of vital conquest and individual possession. The living man has never had, does not have and will not have anything but what his individual what his individual force and his own capacity for power authorize him to have." And since — like you my malicious reader — I dropped my head at this statement, my fifth solitude began to talk again, continuing like this: — "Woe to anyone who, from pity or compassion for his old self, fears the light of the new I that is coming. You tremble with dismay and fright. You are unsure and indecisive like something trembling on the edge of an abyss . . . Could you be a christian nihilist? Does the tragic fatality that weighs on the reality of life frighten you? Could you be one of my enemies? Well, if so, lay your cause — like good christians — beyond life; but I teach placing life beyond good and evil. There, where the liberated I throbs and blazes. There, where the negating spirit rises up against the idea of society and condemns it; there where the true loners sing freedom in war!"

And when the shadow of the fifth solitude disappeared, the "sixth" one came and started talking to me like this: "I am the shadow of your self; kill me if you want to be alone without witnesses. The seventh solitude is waiting for you. She will tell you the extreme secret. She will unravel the riddle of the ultimate mystery for you."

...
The "seventh" solitude talked to me. But what she said to me remains one of my secrets. Who gives me the words to tell the mysteries of my deepest, innermost realities?

Who would understand me?