

Gianmaria Testa

"Sottosopra"

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Much more than the ground beneath my feet
here I miss voices and the city
and I miss you, because I haven't seen you
since I've been here
We went up before the shift ended
to the factory roof to see
whether from up there we could finally see
the one who got us fired
the first day he took off almost hurriedly
with us above and the others arguing below,
but whose faces are those above the roof
and what do they have to look at?
Then the patrol car came tearing in,
and a little boy waved from a window.
before night fell,
the television crew set up shop.

But no, I'm not coming down
not even the television
can make me come down
no, I'm not coming down
you go ahead
and go on television.

Like passers-by during a sudden downpour
crammed into a doorway's only shelter
the people downstairs crushed themselves
around the eye of the broadcast.

'A relative of mine was up there on the roof.'
'outsourcing's to blame as far as I'm concerned'
everyone wanted the microphone
to say something on television,
and while darkness sank into the streets
and onto the gates and railings of Turin,
and the light had gone out on the balcony
where that little boy was,
I thought for an instant that I saw you
among the others showing solidarity down there,
but it wasn't you and I stayed up
on the roof camping out.

days and nights have gone by since that day
and there's traffic in the streets again
only rarely is there someone who lifts their gaze
and watches me watching.

My comrades have gone, too, and I understand them
it isn't so easy to stay
if there's someone waiting for you,
if you have someone you can tell things to.

And so, all alone now, I keep watch on my own
and I no longer care about getting down or going back
or even about knowing
who got us fired.

Unchanging days go by and I don't count them.
let them take away the breath of those who follow them
closely
I'll stay here and, for now, make do
with a little boy's wave.

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