

The snail artist

Essay by Leonardo Caffo

Of this world, of its sudden slowness, sometimes everything weighs on me. I escape, I watch it as I run, but I wonder: where do I go?

Where does an escape lead?

There is an outside, an inside. I am small, I feel small: free, liberated, liberating. And I escape, fast. Or slow? To the outer eye escapes what is instead obvious to the inner one, that the movement that entraps is not so different from the movement that breaks chains. Clear, sudden, is the way that opens no other way. The snail started again, never able to see me in the moments spent here with me. Is there an inverse of the emotional of the eye, that is, the visual of the heart? Perhaps pure and simple lives like hers, my new friend's, insofar as they like to assemble gestures as if they were planes, movements without goals, allow us to make such objects, voices or cries, resonate in a reverberated and concrete space.

These kinds of lives, which I hope you have also known though you have not been able to attend my slow half well, making us feel walls and an emotional interior provide us with an operational hope. Now, these emotional effects of visions reverberated from the heart and prolonged in the wake of sadness that the snail spread in the leaf often leave, in the memory we retain, a trace that is no longer just visual but sonorous. It is the sound of the love we have missed while knowing that sooner or later the galaxy of Andromeda will rain down on us in collapse.

My new friend had her own method of affection and love. She never followed a real liberated-liberating or superior-inferior script, she kept everything in her heart and mind and at the end she would come home with a new smile of art. In our humble shell-shaped home as a child, we would spend hours and hours creating my fictional characters, bringing them to life between the folds of a bill. Those were wonderful years, although the character of others was not the easiest for me it is really sad that you could not experience the silent encounter. Your species has never received anything. The relationships of your life form are constructed, falsely emotional and made of morbid, sticky bonds in which nothing is ever talked about, they are completely lifeless. If they were movies they would be cinematically uninteresting and infinitely boring.

I, on the other hand, improvise in life, perhaps, but with emotional materials that go back quite a long time: to my curious childhood, to the way I tried to question the world by crawling. Geniuses

are slow and collect piles of things in their minds for years, then all of a sudden put them into what they do, and sure, finally, they definitely have more difficult and articulate lives than average people. But is it worth it? Ours crawl, yours block them. Then again, one can also make use of what one has already seen in fantasy to deliberately make gestures that fracture the real and make it tremble. This was especially my case, reasoning from purely aesthetic attitudes to try to tend toward ethics: you outside eyes are also part of the novel I was imagining.

I could have taken the last floor of this story of ours and bound it with the words "He who goes slow goes steady and far ..."

Life forms, in daily existence, create images of the real referring to what they like, even when what they like makes them suffer. We artists therefore have the right to create what we like. I therefore show entities that make other lives, and I move in opposition or analogy to theirs: only that what they live, I make my escape like as well. Like when I climbed the pot knowing I had nowhere to go, and it was beautiful because of that. In the trails left in which I put everything that can serve my art-making, I also put a sentence from Proust, if I feel like it. Why make a scruple about it? In search of lost time, that is, the snail. Isn't life already so sad my public? Is it not already so sad to have been your daughter in any market?

Seek me, then. I am everywhere: I am the sudden thoughts you have at night, the flash of sadness while you are at the dinner table, I am the sideways glance you have while observing the world, I am the love you feel toward every creature, I am the legend you make of yourself when you feel special, I am the strength that will protect you when you too are cooked.

I am the snail artist.