



Photo Credit: Alessandra Capodacqua

1. it wasn't me, don't you see, in that crowd, it was not my hands, touching each other, not my hands, especially, I say once again, especially this, and I could not hold them, all those images, on the right and on the left, the pressure that rises, it wasn't me, I come back to tell you, I wouldn't have done it, I wouldn't have pushed inside, would I? I have not always been like this, the one you see now, with my eyes closed, my head slightly bent, it really couldn't have been me, dragging my feet, moving forward, because this counts, damn it, this always counts, who did what, who turned and answered,

who took the stone, turned it between his fingers, even that time, I couldn't be that, with the bloody lock, the right temple on the pavement, it wasn't me, it just couldn't have been me, what did I have to do with it, in the empty parking lot, behind the vending machine, what I was doing there, no, believe me, it wasn't me

2. because then, this too, then this also comes back, it's all coming back around, the same faces, the same things, making a wall, then the crushing, the pressure, on the eyeballs, on the sternum, it's a continuous push, because then it comes back, puts you in a corner, that noise, all night, that continuous noise, like a thousand needles, this too, then, returns, all day, that noise, that continuous noise, like a thousand cutters, open and closed, open and closed, because then it doesn't stop, see, you can hold your breath, you can, crouch, flatten yourself against the wall, you can, it's true, crash and burn, you can, it's true, crash and burn, you can, it's true, flatten, flatten, hold your breath, this too, then this also returns, the pressure on the eyes, the images that push, enter inside, you can, it's true, say that no, the same things, the same faces, no, making a wall, no, because then

3. then you hear them, they never stop, I tell you, they never stop, with their sly looks, always there, as if they wanted to touch you, as if they wanted, I don't know, something that I don't understand, they look at you, they look at you and they do not stop, then you feel them, because you notice them later, you feel them, their movements, those quivers, there is a whole code, you realize it later, only afterwards, there is a whole way, to quiver, pop the lips, there is a whole way, and they never stop, no, I swear, with their accents, the inflections that do not come back, you have to feel them, pay attention to them, it is their way, their way of looking, their way, and they never stop, if you are there, they are there, if you move, they, I say, just them, with those looks, those movements, the fluttering of the eyelashes, even those, there is a whole code, I tell you, as if they wanted, I don't know, something that I don't grasp, and they look at you, they look at you and they don't stop, then you feel them

4. good to know, it is in the gray, in the iron gray, that everything decays, good to know, the odds and ends, the particles, the subcutaneous track, in the iron gray, is the dominant tone, in the gray, and the dust, for example, on the edges, the dust in the cracks, the dust, for example, and all the rest, is in gray, see, the iron filings, even that, the stroke, the dominant tone, is in that, in iron gray, there is no escape, everything converges, everything returns there, and the hum, the continuous hum, of the great extractor fans, the fans that run, uninterrupted, I say, uninterrupted, day and night, what swirls, in there, what swirls, uninterrupted, even there, is the tone, the dominant feature, something that

swirls, you see, something that turns, uninterrupted, you see, in the gray, in the iron gray, it is always there, even in the air, at this height, in the spores, that everything, that everything converges, always there, in iron gray, always good to know

5. at this height, here, sometimes, only some things show themselves, only some, the others flicker, pass quickly, and they move aside, only some things, if they do not dodge to the side, if they do not remove themselves, only some things, with all the details, the precise shapes, the curves, only some things, and the rest nothing, look, only some, that you can count, with all the details, you recognize them, only some, at this height, the others enter, enter and they go out, one after the other, they don't stare at each other, only some things, only some, in our range, and always the same, it seems to you, always the same at this height, only a few things show themselves, just a clue, and you find them, and the intervals, you have seen, the intervals and cadences, follow a rhythm, you have seen, recurring, a sequence, a beat, you have seen, one after the other, they come back, one after the other, as if it were, I know, a refrain, as if here, sometimes, at this height

6. everywhere, you don't see, how everything, how everything happens everywhere, you don't see, for example, we are here, on this road, in this corner, you can imagine it, it's simple, we are here, and we had already been there, you can't go wrong, the coordinates, the angle of attack, we are here, right here, in front of that wall, the lime still fresh, and the distance is the same, it never changes, elsewhere, we believe, to be elsewhere, after all, but we are always here, we never moved, in front of the gate, behind the bar, here and everywhere, or, you don't see, the roughness, the friction that holds us back, are details, you have to be careful, they look different, would you swear, they look different, but it doesn't count, once again, it seemed here, right here, here and everywhere, you don't see, how everything, how everything seems defined, neat, and then nothing, it's right here, it's right here that it happens, it's right here, still, like everything, everywhere

7. just a moment, a moment of carelessness, I say, and you're out, completely exposed, and the others, those who pass by, the others inside, all the others you don't see, the others, they say nothing, with those silent faces, those empty eyes, the others say nothing, yet it happened, it happens, and it only takes a moment, only one, the spilling of blood, the swollen eye, whatever you think it takes, open and close, open and close, and you're already there, without realizing it, to rub the edges, to smash the face, and all the rest, all the rest does not count, the rest you pay for, does not count and you pay the price, the distraction, the dry run that doesn't, the carelessness, the absence of, everything else, everything else is expected, I say, and you are out, I say, wait for the

blow, prepare yourself to, as you can, wait, if nothing else, wait for, the dry throat, because you pay, every concession, every little distraction, you close your eyes, you are absent, that's done, again, the carelessness, and just a moment

8. since then, from that moment, you know, the moment when everything, when everything starts, the wheels are in motion, it's imperceptible, you may not notice it, you can go on, as if nothing had happened, as if, it didn't concern you, it wasn't you, you can do a million things, do as you've always done, yet it is there, under your skin, from that precise moment, it is there, advancing, gaining ground, you can pretend nothing is happening, look elsewhere, you can, close your eyes, put on a blindfold, you can, run like crazy, until, until nothing, you see nothing, everything flows, runs away, but you don't need it, not even this, if from that moment, that precise moment, something creeps, at a very slow, relentless pace, everything transforms, you can believe what you want, say what you like, but it is already different, already something else, the mutation begins, and then go ahead and say it, it's not me, not this, go ahead and say it, shout it out loud and, admit it, since then

9. I do not advance, I remain, you do not see, from where, from where I speak to you, and how, what do you think, I don't make it out, I am here, I look at you, I observe you, and I do not move, I go round in circles, moved aside, I try everything, everything, I try to get up, to get out, but I can't, and I swear, I don't have the strength, the breath, and I give up, I'm still there, always at the same point, then the fear, the fear that grips me, to know it, to see it in your eyes, confirmed, in black and white, always here, that I have never moved, the few steps, the hints, never moved, nothing, don't you see, from the beginning, always from the beginning, it is useless that you deny, that you say no, it is not so, that there is something else, it is useless if then, if with your eyes, if when you are silent, it is useless, you confirm everything, it is even worse, so I see myself, here in the hole, and you who speak, and go away, confirm everything, I inside, still, I think I am moving, making myself understood, I am in the hole, crushed, you see it, you confirm everything, I do not advance, I remain

10. it wasn't expected, not like that, no, it wasn't like that, the way it was supposed to be, that we imagined, it wasn't expected, that you and I, we didn't expect it, that it would go like this, the turn it took, and all the rest, the consequences, listen, I know, and I know that there is no remedy, I know very well, how things are going, that's just the way it is, even if you don't want it to be, to oppose, now, it wouldn't help at all, listen, you know, you too, that from a certain point, from that turning point, we do nothing else, we are nothing else, therefore, keep it in mind, even if no, it wasn't the way it was supposed to be, if we believed that we, it's all false, you know it, and it was just like that,

precisely to this point, that things, the situation, that everything would have led us to, to this and nothing else, you have to admit it, you can't do otherwise, I know it, and you know it too, so say it, we know very well, it was here that we had to, at this point, precisely, even if, it wasn't expected

11. it wasn't me, the one who ran away, it wasn't me, on the unmade bed, it wasn't my hands, definitely, the shape of the embrace, it wasn't like that, and the cobalt blue, on the walls, the smell of the room, the details, every little detail, please, it's true, there I was, I was there, I crept in, it's true, but it was like, as if I wasn't there, and the water in the jug, the running water in the shower, okay, I'll say it, the abrasions, were there, the scars, as well, the shadow on the forehead, it wasn't missing, the deviated septum, the details, I don't deny it, they correspond, therefore the reflection, on the roller, looked like that, there was everything, the height, the posture, the shuffling step, consider this too, and the cast, the shadow on the sheet, ash gray, everything matches, the prints, the lattice of veins, but what escaped, the immobile one, no, and the other one, against the wall, not even that, the one that runs wildly, the bloody lock, it wasn't me

(translated by Italo Testa and Andrew Heigh)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Italo Testa is a poet, philosopher, and literary critic based in Milan. His poetry books include: *Onda statica* (Zacinto Edizioni, 2022), *quattro* (Oèdipus, 2021), *L'indifferenza naturale* (Marcos y Marcos, 2018), *Tutto accade ovunque* (Aragno, 2016), *i camminatori* (Valigie Rosse - Premio Ciampi, 2013); *La divisione della gioia* (Transeuropa, 2010), *canti ostili* (Lietocolle, 2007), *Biometrie* (Manni, 2005), *Gli aspri inganni* (Lietocolle, 2004). His texts have been translated into English, French, Spanish,

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