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Grazia Deledda was born in Nuoro, Sardinia on September 27, 1871. At the age of eleven, her formal education ended (“I was eleven and in grade four, for the second time, not because I had failed, but because at the time, in my small town of Nuoro, there was no higher grade for girls in elementary school.”), but Grazia Deledda continued her studies, and she did so first with an Italian professor and then, in secret, on her own because her family greatly disapproved, telling her often: “you will never grow up, and never be good at anything because you read too much...”.

Notwithstanding their views, Grazia Deledda never stopped reading and never stopped writing; and, one day, encouraged by her teacher, she sent her work to a Roman journal, and it was accepted. In a brief memoir called *The azure veil*, from the book *Nell'azzurro, Novelline* (1890), which is almost impossible to find today, though fortunately, I found republished in the book *Onoranze a Grazia Deledda*, (1959) published by the town of Nuoro to honour the author, she states:

I was thirteen; I had already written a book, which is easy at that age; and I had found a publisher—which is even difficult for older authors—who would pay me! The title of the book was *Nell'azzurro*, short stories for children. I can't remember the stories—I've forgotten so many, even the more recent ones!—but I remember that the publisher sent me the proofs in an envelope he had written himself, and I cherished those long strips of frayed paper, and I kept them in a drawer, convinced they were a gift from my Patron, but I couldn't understand why they were printed so strangely: some were covered densely from top to bottom, others were just half a page long, and others still held only a few lines.

Dear me! I had never seen a proof before, and no one I knew could explain what I had hidden in my drawer, like a farmer near his breast, a viper in my bosom. But the editor sent other proofs with question marks, which began to worry me. What was I supposed to do? I wrote back saying I had received them. My Patron answered, a bit sarcastically, that not even Carducci took so long to correct proofs: he suggested I send the corrections if I wanted the project to move forward.

And I corrected: erasing, adding, but I did it in the “body” of the proofs, not in the margins! And the short stories were published with the printing errors, errors which, together with the original ones, got me the indelible reputation for being the most ungrammatical writer in Europe.

Unstoppable, determined, convinced that literature was her calling, Grazia Deledda went on to write novels, short stories, and poems; she produced theatrical works, essays, articles, children's stories, and even dabbled in translation (a work by the young French poet Camille Mauclair and the novel *Eugénie Grandet* by Honoré de Balzac¹). She depicted her adored Sardinia in words that expressed all her talent and all her love for her homeland; and in 1926, she was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature—the first and only Italian woman to receive this prize—and the committee explained their choice with these words: “for her idealistically

¹ Published in the series «Biblioteca romantica» by Mondadori in 1930 under the title *Eugenia Grandet*.

inspired writings which with plastic clarity picture the life on her native island and with depth and sympathy deal with human problems in general” (“The Nobel Prize in Literature 1926”).

Indeed, her extensive work was born of a desire to recount the world around her, the simple world of the ordinary people of her homeland; and it was her ability to portray that world that made her the great Italian author she is. And yet, Grazia Deledda has been almost completely forgotten. Of her numerous works, many have been lost, and only five books have been translated: Why? Why has this incredible woman, a woman who was ahead of her time, who was self-taught, who lived for literature, played a secondary role in world literature? I can find no answer and can only hope this will change.

The short work I have chosen to translate is called “Macchiette” from the collection of short stories *Racconti sardi* (Sardinian tales) published in 1894.

There are so many views on translation methods and I feel that every translator must choose the one they find most suited to their personal tastes. That does not mean that all translations are perfect, but rather that no translations are. Dante Alighieri was convinced that nothing harmonized musically could be translated without destroying the harmony. Giovanni Pascoli talked of translation in terms of an inside and an outside (where the inside, the soul, should remain the same and the outside change, like clothing) (261); Luigi Pirandello thought translation was like taking a tree from one terrain and planting it in a foreign one where the leaves and flowers (the words) “although never the same again” would have to rustle and shine in their new “ideal aura”, because, he said, “the more we try to make it preserve its original luxuriance, the more pitiable and scant it will appear...” (115); Antonio Gramsci said that to be able to translate it was not enough to translate literally but to know the terminology of the culture of both languages to provide each culture with an understanding of the other; Benedetto Croce spoke of translation as something that “diminishes or spoils [...] putting the original in a melting pot and mixing it with the personal impressions of the person we call translator” (76); Valerio Magrelli describes translation with a “minus one rule”, where at least one thing must be lost for it to be translation, and he uses the anecdote of Abbè Galiani, an eighteenth century Italian philosopher who stated that when we bow to one rich man we are inevitably turning our backs on another.

I agree, in part, with all these theories. I believe that translation means taking a tree and moving it to a new place and using the tools at our disposal (our ability to write in the target language) to make it rustle and shine, and that by trying to keep the original form, the original luxuriance, we inevitably make it pitiable, and so, we must change the outside, the clothes, and leave the inside, the soul. I believe that knowing the words of a language without the culture behind those words is useless. I certainly believe that something is always lost, especially in poetry where to respect one literary device, you must almost always lose another, and that perhaps by bowing to one man (striving to achieve one thing, whether that means the literary devices, intent, syntax, etc.) we inevitably turn our backs to another. However, I don’t believe that translation diminishes or spoils the original; and I don’t think that by translating something harmonized musically the harmony will necessarily be lost. If that were the case Grazia Deledda’s work could never be translated well and that would be a terrible shame; her landscapes would remain accessible only to Italians, and that would be dreadful; and I would not be able to present “Macchiette” here.

“*Macchiette*” presents difficulties from the very start: how do we translate the title? I decided to leave it in Italian.

Macchiette literally mean small splotches, stains or spots, sketches, or copses. It is also the root of the word “*Macchiaioli*”; and so I understood the text to be Deledda’s way of ‘painting’, in different moments of the day, the land she loved so much: like the *Macchiaioli*, whose paintings are “*macchie*” of colour, of light—where beauty lies in the contrast between light and shade, and everything is absolutely realistic. So, this piece too is all light and shade.

It is more like poetry than prose, and in it, Grazia Deledda paints one day in Sardinia: the domestic scenes, the landscapes, the homes, family life. She gives the reader a glimpse of that life, takes us there, invites us to live that day with her.

She expresses the day in five different scenes: the break of day, noontide, sunset, night, and late night; she depicts these five moments of the day like a *Macchiaiolo* would paint the scene. And the effect is magnificent, and poetic, and her words are strokes of colour and *macchie* of light; and, as in a painting, everything is measured, vivid, perfectly expressed. She uses numerous poetic devices to achieve the perfect picture: visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, and kinaesthetic imagery, similes, metaphors, assonance, alliteration, consonance, personification and so on until we visualize her Sardinian day so perfectly that we feel as if we have visited the land and met the people. We feel the heat and shiver in the dark; we feel the young girl's lethargy, and the young lady's piety; we wonder about the man and woman in costume (Were they together? Does it matter?); and we are enlightened by what she says about the little shepherd boy at the very end of the work, about his poetic essence there, alone among the deserted plains.

These glimpses of life, these *macchie* of light were beautiful to read and difficult to translate because once I read them I knew exactly what I had experienced but could not possibly be sure I could make others experience it too in "another terrain". For a translator can sometimes be blinded by the original; we may, therefore, have to walk in the darkness, groping for words that will bring a similar light to others.

So, something was, perhaps, lost and something wasn't, perhaps, as harmonic; but all I can hope is that this new "tree", different but similar, can touch heartstrings like it did mine.

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Macchiette
(da *Racconti sardi* 1894)

Grazia Deledda

I.

Albeggia. Sul cielo azzurro cinereo d'una dolcezza triste e profonda, curvato sull'immenso paesaggio silenzioso, passano sfiorando larghi meandri di un rosa pallidissimo, via via sfumanti nell'orizzonte ancora oscuro. Grandi vallate basse, ondegianti, uniformi, s'inseguono sin dove arriva lo sguardo, chiazzate d'ombra, selvaggie e deserte. Non un casolare, un albero, una greggia, una via.

Solo viottoli dirupati, muricciuoli cadenti coperti di musco giallo, un rigagnolo dalle acque color di cenere stagnanti fra giunchi di un verde nero desolato, e bassi roveti, estese macchie di lentischio le cui foglie riflettono la luce cilestrina dell'alba. Dietro, sull'altezza bruna del nord biancheggiano grandi rupi di granito grigio e la cinta di un cimitero.

La croce nera disegnata sul cielo sempre più roseo, domina le vallate deserte: e pare l'emblema del triste paesaggio senza vita stendentesi silenzioso sotto la curva del cielo azzurro-cinereo. Albeggia.

II.

Sotto il bagliore ardente della meriggiana la cantoniera bianca dal tetto rosso, tace, dorme: le finestre verdi guardano pensose sullo stradale bruciato dal sole, e giù dal cornicione di un turchino slavato calano frangie d'ombra d'una freschezza indescrivibile. Lo stradale bianchissimo, disabitato, dai mucchi di ghiaja sprizzanti scintille al sole, serpeggia per una vasta pianura coperta di boschi di soveri.

In lontananza, alte montagne a picco, velate di vapori azzurri e ardenti, chiudono in circolo l'orizzonte infuocato. Sotto l'aria ferma, irrespirabile, nello splendore piovente dal cielo di metallo, i soveri nani,

Macchiette
[Shades of Light]
(from *Racconti sardi* 1894)
Grazia Deledda

Translated by Mati Colarossi

I.

Day breaks. In the ashen, azure sky, sadly gentle and profound, arched over the immense silent landscape, pale pink meanders sweep past, dissolving ever more slowly into the still, obscure horizon. Great low hills, rolling, uniform, chase each other for as far as the eye can see, splotched in shade, wild and deserted. No farmhouse, or tree, or flock, or road.

Only rocky paths, walls in ruins covered in yellow moss, a rivulet of stagnant, ash-coloured waters among the desolate, green-black rushes, and low brambles, and stretches of mastic trees whose leaves reflect the pale blue light of dawn. In the background, along the brownish northern summits, great crags of grey granite and the walls of a cemetery gleam white.

The black cross etched against the ever more rose-coloured sky dominates the deserted valley: and it seems to be the symbol of the sad, lifeless landscape stretched silently under the arch of the ashen, azure sky. Day breaks.

II.

Under the fiery glow of noontide, the white roadman's house with its red roof is silent, dozing: the green windows look pensively onto the sun-scorched road, and down from the faded turquoise cornice hang fringes of shade of indescrivable freshness. The extremely white road, uninhabited, with its piles of pebbles flickering sparks in the sun, snakes through a vast plain covered in cork tree woods.

In the distance, tall, sheer mountains, veiled in vapours azure and ardent, close the blazing horizon in a ring. Under the still air, heavy, in the cascading splendour of the metallic sky, the low luxuriant cork trees

lussureggianti, progettano corte penombre verdastre sul suolo arido, sui massi, tappezzati di borrhaccine morbide come peluche. Una fanciulla è coricata appunto su uno di questi massi, supina, le braccia e le gambe semi-nude.

La sua persona esile e ben fatta spicca sul verde tenero di quel tappeto naturale, e i fiori rossi di broccato del suo corsetto un pò lacero sanguinano nella penombra del bosco. Nel caldo asfissiante del meriggio, nel costume consunto e misero, stuona meravigliosamente la carnagione della fanciulla, di una bianchezza fenomenale, tanto più che sotto il fazzoletto giallo si vedono dei capelli nerissimi, e sotto le palpebre stanche due occhi di un nero cenerognolo foschi e impenetrabili. — Chi è? — Impossibile saperlo: ella non fa il minimo movimento nel languore spossato del caldo, e forse sogna, forse dorme, bianca e silente come la cantoniera vicina, sotto il bagliore ardente della meriggiana.

III.

Il sole tramonta: dal villaggio in festa giunge un rumore confuso, vago e lontano, sino alla stanzetta tranquilla della casa del contadino.

La finestra è aperta sul poggiuolo di mattoni crudi su cui tremola alla brezza del tramonto una povera pianticella di basilico, che pare sorrida anch'essa, benchè sola e dimenticata, fra la letizia dei casolari neri e del cielo d'oro. Oh, i luminosi orizzonti! — La vallata verde circonda il villaggio, e la vegetazione in fiore olezza e risplende fra la nebbia ignea del sole al declino.

Dal piccolo poggiuolo di mattoni crudi si domina una viuzza strettissima e altre casette piccine, annerite dal tempo, i tetti muschiosi, via salienti sino al vecchio maniero spagnuolo, la cui facciata di stile moresco rosseggia in viso all'ovest, gli spalti cadenti perduti fra gli splendori del cielo, come il ricordo della triste dominazione aragonese nella luce dei nuovi tempi. — Nella casetta più vicina al poggiuolo la porticina nera è chiusa, ma al di fuori sta

project short greenish shadows onto the arid soil, onto the boulders upholstered in moss as soft as fur. A girl is lying on one of those boulders, on her back, her arms and legs half-bare.

Her slight, well-proportioned figure stands out against that soft, green, natural carpet, and the red brocade flowers of her somewhat tattered bodice bleed out into the dim light of the woods. In the asphyxiating midday heat, in her worn and tattered costume, the girl's complexion, of a phenomenal whiteness, stands out magnificently, more so because, from under her yellow headscarf, tufts of extremely black hair can be seen and, under her heavy eyelids, two cloudy black eyes, dark and impenetrable. — Who is she? — Impossible to say: she doesn't make the slightest movement in the drowsy languor of the heat, and maybe she is dreaming, maybe she is asleep, white and silent like the nearby roadman's house, under the fiery glow of noontide.

III.

The sun sets: from the festive village a confused, vague and distant din rises up to the silent room of the farmer's house.

The window is open onto a raw brick terrace on which a poor little basil plant trembles in the evening wind; it too seems to be smiling, although alone and forgotten, amid the bliss of the black farmhouses and the golden sky. Oh, the luminous horizons! — The green valley surrounds the village, and the blooming vegetation smells sweet, and it gleams in the igneous fog of the setting sun.

The small raw brick terrace overlooks an extremely narrow lane and other tiny houses, blackened by time, with moss-ridden roofs that climb to the old Spanish castle, whose Moorish-style façade blushes red as it faces the west, whose falling bastions are lost amid the splendours of the sky, like the memory of the sad Aragonese domination in the light of recent times. — In the house nearest the terrace, the small black door is closed, but a crown of dry figs is hanging on

appesa una corona di fichi dissecantisi e sul davanzale della finestruola un gatto dalla schiena tutta abbruciata contempla solennemente sulla via, dove passa solo una donnina in costume, dal viso color di rame, allacciandosi bene il corsetto di panno giallo e di velluto viola cesellato. Dentro la stanzetta del poggiuolo un giovine, anch'esso in costume, piglia il caffè. Ha posato la chichera verde sulla cappa di una specie di vecchio camino, e ritto dando le spalle alla finestra, beve a centellini la prediletta bevanda.

È malato, ma sul suo viso biondo, pallidissimo, da convalescente, sta dipinta un'intima voluttà, il benessere di chi si riaffaccia pieno di speranza alla vita, dopo una lunga malattia. — Il letto di legno, dalle coperte di percalle a fiorami arabeschi, basso e duro ma con una fisionomia tranquilla, tipica, diremo quasi sonnolenta, le sedie grigie, il rozzo guardaroba rosso, la cassa nera di legno scolpito a strani fiori e animali antediluviani, la tavola coperta da un tappeto bianco, adorna di vassoi e chicchere, tutto sorride intorno al giovine contadino convalescente, nella pace beata della povertà felice, nella luminosità del tramonto di rosa. In alto, sulle pareti tinte di calce, una innumerevole fila di quadretti a vivi colori scintillano soavemente nel polviscolo d'oro, e i vecchi vetri della finestra ardono come lastre di orpello al riflesso del sole che tramonta.

IV.

E cade la notte! Nella chiesa miracolosa, nel famoso santuario ove la folla immensa è passata senza lasciare traccia alcuna, la penombra si addensa, livida, fredda e piena di mistero.

In fondo, dai finestroni bizantini, piove un acuto albore azzurro sul pavimento di mattoni a mosaico il cui smalto ha vaghi riflessi d'acqua stagnante: in alto, sull'altare bianco, una lampada di cristallo vermiglio spande tremoli chiarori rossastri che scendono e salgono sui fiori pallidi, sui candelabri dorati, sulle colonnine doriche di diaspro della nicchia coperta da un

the outside, and on the window ledge a cat with a singed back is solemnly contemplating the lane where, one sole, bronze-faced woman in Sardinian costume is passing; she is buttoning her bodice of yellow flannel and violet ciselé. Inside the little room off the terrace, a young man, also in costume, is having coffee. He has set the green saucer on the mantel of what looks like an old fireplace, and standing there with his back to the window, he sips the cherished drink slowly.

He is ill, but depicted on his blond, pale, invalid's face there is secret pleasure, the wellbeing of one who looks upon life full of hope again, after a long illness. — The wooden bed, with its gingham bedspread covered in arabesque flowers, is low and solid but comfortable looking, typical, almost drowsy, we may say; the grey chairs, the rough red wardrobe, the black chest with its strange chiselled flowers and antediluvian animals, the linen-covered table adorned with cups and saucers, everything is cheery around the young convalescent in the blissful peace of that contented poverty, in the luminosity of that sunset of pink. High up, on the whitewashed walls, an endless row of lively coloured frames shimmer softly among the golden specks of dust, and the weathered window panes burn like spangled bands in the reflection of the sun as it sets.

IV.

And night falls! In the miraculous church, in the famous sanctuary where the immense crowd has passed without leaving even the smallest trace, the half-shade becomes denser, livid, cold and full of mystery.

At the back, from the large Byzantine windows, an acute azure pallor rains onto the brick mosaic floor whose glaze has vague reflections of stagnant water: above, on the white altar, a vermilion crystal lamp spreads tremulous reddish beams that fall and rise on the pale flowers, on the golden candelabras, on the Doric columns of jasper in the niche

panneggiamento cereo a mazzetti azzurri, di damasco.

Superbe trecce nere, tutte nere, narratrici di romanzi e di drammi immani o pietosi, — gioielli d'oro e d'argento, stupende membra di cera, mani di vergini cristiane di una suprema e morbida soavità, e colli bianchissimi ed eleganti da veneri greche, pendono sulle pareti gialle e polverose. — Qui ancora troviamo una fanciulla, ma non è più la popolana sopita nel meriggio del bosco. È signora: vestita di bianco, inginocchiata sui gradini dell'altare, la fronte sulla balaustrata, le mani strette convulsivamente una con l'altra nel fervore della preghiera.

Le pieghe morbide del suo lungo vestito dalle alte maniche alla Margherita di Valois, cadono al suolo con abbandono artistico da statua, e biancheggiano soavi nella penombra rossastra della lampada notturna.

Il volto pallido della fanciulla, i grandi occhi castanei e profondi esprimono una disperazione straziante, cresciuta dalla tetra melanconia del crepuscolo morente. Oh, qual grazia chiedono mai quegli occhi al santo miracoloso nascosto dietro la cortina di damasco come un re orientale? — Ecco, ella s'alza al fine, e uscita sulla spianata si ferma immobile davanti al parapetto che guarda nella valle.

Sul cielo tinto di croco e di smeraldo si elevano i monti neri e la luna spunta fra le loro creste frastagliate. La rena della grande spianata scintilla ai primi raggi della luna, e il villaggio si profila laggiù, fra le agavi grigie e i pioppi argentei della valle, mentre il santuario spicca sul cielo violaceo del nord, coi due grandi finestroni bizantini che paiono due strani occhi di bronzo smaltati al riflesso dell'oriente fatto splendido dall'alba della luna.

Dietro, le terre di mezzanotte, immense campagne opime, valli dirupate in cui ruggia il torrente, e montagne sulle cui cime domina la leggenda, si stendono vaghe e indistinte come un sogno, nella luce vaporosa dell'ultimo crepuscolo, e i forti borghi solitari riposano fra i lentischi cinerei

covered by a waxen, damask draping in azure moiré.

Superb black braids, all black, the tellers of tales and tragedies either dreadful or piteous—jewels of gold and of silver, stupendous wax limbs, hands of Christian virgins of a supreme and supple delicateness, and the extremely white and elegant necks of Greek Venuses, hang on the yellow dust-covered walls.

Here too, we find a girl, but she is no longer the country girl slumbering in the noontime in the woods. She is a lady: dressed in white, kneeling on the steps of the altar, her forehead leaning on the balustrade, her hands held together convulsively in the fervour of prayer.

The soft folds of her long gown, with its high, Margherita di Valois sleeves, fall to the ground with artistic, statue-like abandon, and they shimmer softly in the reddish shade of the nocturnal lamp.

The girl's pale face, her large and deep brown eyes express heart-wrenching desperation, amplified by the dark melancholy of the perishing twilight. Oh, what possible grace can those eyes be asking of that miraculous saint hidden behind the damask curtain like an oriental king? She gets up finally, and when in the open space, she stops, motionless in front of the parapet that looks out over the valley.

Against the saffron and emerald tinted sky, the mountains rise black and the moon appears from between their craggy crests. The sands on the vast plain shine in the first rays of the moon, and the village can be seen down below, among the grey agaves and the silver poplars of the valley, as the sanctuary stands outlined against the violet sky to the north, with its great Byzantine windows looking like two strange eyes of bronze glazed by the reflections of the east made resplendent by the dawn of the moon.

Behind, the mid night lands—immense fertile meadows, precipitous valleys in which the torrent roars, and mountains on whose crests legend reigns—stretch vague and indistinct like a dream, in the vaporous light of the last

della pianura o su i greppi neri delle rupi scoscese.

La fanciulla bianca guarda al nord, e grandi visioni misteriose, sogni arcani e profondi le attraversano gli occhi pensosi perduti nell'estrema lontananza; e il suo volto pallido, il suo vestito marmoreo paiono d'argento nella nivea luminosità della luna sempre più bianca e fulgida a misura che cade la notte.

V.

Nell'alta notte plenilunare tre cavalieri passano al galoppo attraverso il sentiero delle montagne rocciose. La canna dei loro fucili brilla alla luna, e i cavalli nitriscono nel profondo silenzio del paesaggio sublime.

Lontano, le nuvole salgono dal mare di madreperla sottilmente pennellato nell'estremo orizzonte, salgono lente sul cielo d'orpello del plenilunio, azzurre e diafane sul fondo bianco dell'infinito.

Sulle cime delle alte montagne rocciose la neve disegna un profilo iridato, fantasmagorie marmoree e miniature d'oro degne dei versi d'Heine, ma le querce annose fremono al vento di tramontana che susurra tette leggende e storie di sangue fischiando fra le gole dirupate e le grotte di granito. — Il sentiero asprissimo attraversa tortuoso le rupi immani e i macigni neri che assumono fantastiche forme di torri gotiche rovinata e di dolmen coperti d'edera e di rubi, reso più pericoloso e pittoresco dalla luce della notte. Sotto il bosco i raggi della luna piovono a fasci, come getti di diamanti, proiettando aurei arabeschi e damaschine orientali sulle felci bionde ondulate dal vento: attraverso le querce brune il cielo lunato ha un aspetto così incantato coi suoi gemmei splendori che richiama al pensiero i cieli impossibili delle novelle da fate; e i ciclamini, i verbaschi, l'usnea dei tronchi impregnano l'aria d'un acuto profumo da foresta tropicale. — Oltre i tre cavalieri che attraversano il sentiero, neri, muti, avvolti nei loro cappotti bruni dal cappuccio a punta, come cavalieri erranti da epopea medioevale, un piccolo mandriano

twilight, and the strong solitary hamlets rest among the ashy mastic trees of the plain or the black crags of the steep cliffs.

The white girl looks to the north, and great mysterious visions, arcane and profound dreams, flit across her pensive eyes which are lost in the extreme distance; and her pale face, her marble-white gown look like silver in the snowy luminosity of the ever whiter and effulgent moon as night falls.

V.

In the high, plenilunar night, three horsemen ride down a rocky mountain path. The barrel of their rifles shines in the moonlight, and the horses neigh in the profound silence of that sublime landscape.

In the distance, the clouds rise from the mother-of-pearl sea, finely outlined in the distant horizon; they rise slowly into the spangled moonlit sky, azure and diaphanous against the whiteness of the immensity.

Along the ridges of the tall, rocky mountains, the snow paints an iridescent profile, marbled phantasmagorias and golden miniatures worthy of the verses of Heine, but the ancient oaks tremble in the north wind, which whispers dark legends and tales of blood that whistle through the precipitous gullies and granite caves.

The extremely steep path twists through the colossal crags and the black boulders that assume fantastic outlines of Gothic towers in ruins and dolmen covered in vines and ivy, made more dangerous and picturesque by the light of the night. Below the woods, the rays of the moonlight rain down in bands, like sprays of diamonds, projecting golden arabesques and oriental damascening on the blond ferns, rippled by the wind: through the brown oaks, the moonlit sky looks so enchanted with its gem-like splendours that it calls to mind the impossible skies of fairy tales; and the cyclamens, the verbascum, the usnea on the trunks fill the air with an acute scent of tropical forest.

Besides the three horsemen, black, silent, swathed in their brown coats with

con la sua greggia popola ad un tratto la solitudine infinita delle montagne. Seduto sotto una rupe, insensibile al vento che fischia nel limpido plenilunio, guarda le pecore pascolanti nella notte chiara, intento al loro tintinnio monotono e melanconico vibrante fra i burroni erbosi e le pietre muscose, fra le eriche selvaggie e i tronchi divelti dalla procella.

Il piccolo mandriano è brutto, il volto oscuro come l'albagio del suo ferrajuolo, ma nei suoi occhi cuprei dal bianco azzurrino e l'iride piena di un languore profondo, splende un raggio pensoso che è tutta una rivelazione: forse il piccolo pastore è già poeta e nell'interno della sua mente vergine e selvaggia come le montagne rocciose su cui scorrono i suoi giorni deserti, gusta più che qualsiasi artista colto e fine la poesia ineffabile, piena di voluttà sovrumane e spirituali; del silenzio azzurro dell'alta notte plenilunare.

their pointed hoods, like errant horsemen out of the Middle Ages, a small shepherd with his flock suddenly occupies the infinite solitude of the mountains. Sitting under a cliff, insensitive to the wind that whistles in the limpid plenilune, he watches his flock graze in the clear night, attentive to their monotonous and melancholy chime which vibrates among the grassy bluffs and the mossy boulders, in the wild heather and the trunks uprooted by the storm.

The small shepherd is ugly, his face as dark as the cloth of his cloak, but in his copper-coloured eyes with their pale-blue whites and their irises full of profound languor, a pensive ray, itself a revelation, shines: perhaps the small shepherd is already a poet, and in his mind, which is as virgin and wild as the rocky mountains on which he spends his deserted days, he enjoys, more than any cultured and refined artist, the ineffable poetry full of superhuman and spiritual delight, of the azure silence of the dead of that plenilunar night.