

Betel in English

Hi Franco,

Shane here from Recent Work Press. Thanks for providing your wonderful poetry for this anthology. As we are finalising the production of the book, please find attached your proofs from Divining Dante for your perusal.

We are on a tight deadline, so if there are any changes required, please get in touch with me by **28 July 2021**. Otherwise we will assume that everything is ok with you.

Very best

Shane

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Trittico scientifico tr. Moira Egan

At the time of the dolce vita

Unlike mosses and lichens
Cryoconite—that dark sediment
Visible in summer on the surface of the glaciers—
Preserves radioactivity for a long time.
From the glaciers of the Caucasus to the Arctic archipelago,

Passing through what remains of the glaciers of the Alps,

Cryoconite preserves, in abnormal quantities,
Cesium-137 dating back to Chernobyl—1986—
And even the isotopes of plutonium and americium
And bismuth-207 traceable to nuclear tests
Carried out at high atmosphere at the time of the Dolce Vita.

Like the lungs of ex-smokers,
That also remember what their owner has forgotten,
Cryoconite emerges as the beast-conscience of the short century.

The acne eruptions of Eleanor of Aquitaine

Who was the last to leaf through them For what they were?

Larkin would ask At the news that the prayer books

Have become the breviaries

Of fingerprints.
Virus pestilences tragedies and famines
Open up on a biological horizon
From medieval illuminated manuscripts.
The parchments written on buckskin and deerskin
Are excellent for studying the genetics of animal strains.

They tell a story of migration and human DNA,

Climate changes and viral infections.
Handled, embraced, kissed by thousands of people

Centuries after their creation

Medieval books are a hard disk of monks and scribes,

Noblewomen, poets, and knights
With the nasal staphylococci aurei
And the propionibacteria from the acne eruptions

Of Abelard and Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Erbium and Dysprosium

Erbium and Dysprosium,
The atoms subjected to the great frost,
Have recently entered the Periodic
Table of the Elements:
We got to minus 273.15 degrees,
Very close to absolute zero,
The Italian Research Council proudly asserts.
The properties of the zero friction liquid
Are reached only through the workings of the cold,

MIT echoes, harshly.
And I listen to them with admiration,
My windpipe, too, is curious.
Erbium and Dysprosium are two boys
With very strong magnetism.
They cough a little, then go away.
They return as Cosma and Damiano and they are saints.

Franco Buffoni