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Notte di San Lorenzo, La (The Night of San Lorenzo)

By Unknown

It's the night of Saint Lawrence,
my love...
the night of the shooting stars.
We Tuscans say that each shooting star
grants a wish.
Don't sleep yet.
What I wish tonight...
is to find the words to tell you...
about another night of Saint Lawrence,
many years ago.

THE NIGHT OF THE SHOOTING STARS

I'm very happy
to have performed this marriage...
because Belindia is expecting a child.
And you were both living in sin.
God only knows what's in store for us.
It's such a big risk to be here.
You're all dressed up,
and the Americans are nearby...
while the Germans are still here.
Get going.

No. I must tell you one thing.
If the Day of Wrath, the Dies Irae...
the end of the world...
is near...
and it is always near...
our duty, yours and mine...
is to survive.

You understand?

Let us pray.

At that time, I was only 6 years old.

I didn't know
whether I was afraid or fascinated.
Everything in those days
was so unusual.

My daughter can't leave like that.

- Let's go.

- She can't leave like that.

This poor daughter of mine.

What are you doing, Papa?

I want to celebrate this day, child.

We must all honor her...

my devil of a daughter.

Let me.

Here, pass it along.
I could go to the cabin.
Here is a slice for Ulivo.
Come here.
You're back, Nicola!
We jumped off the train,
but I fell badly.
Oh, shit.
- This is Bruno.
- Nice to meet you.
What are you guys going to do?
He's going to Palaia.
But Palaia is that way.
He wants to take me to San Martino.
But the Germans have mined it.
What about my home?
Green crosses show
which houses will blow up.
I don't know about your house.
There's enough for you, too.
She's my wife. We were just married.
Hektor smiled...
as did Andromache.
Tenderly, the hero cuddled his son...
and lifting him towards
the heavens, exclaimed:
"O merciful Zeus and all ye gods...
"allow this son of mine...
"to become preeminent...
"among the Trojans, and valiant in might.
"And when he returneth home
from battle...
"let men say,
'His father was never greater...
"and may his mother rejoice in that'."
Hektor!
Hektor placed his son
in his bride's arms...
and, moved by both laughter and tears...
she had him suckle her fragrant breast.
To you, Ulitto!
- Nicola!
- Nicola!
Come with me. Come.

No, this way is better.
You saw the cross?
The house has been mined.
We're hiding in the Miglioratis' cellar.
Anna saw you come.
Keep him here.
I'm going to check outside.
Those clothes!
When will it happen?
Don't know.
I'm glad the house will blow up.
If it does, we'll all move to Florence.
Yeah, Florence.
I'm sorry.
Don't ever tell Papa!
I am fine.
I am fine.
Come on, let us help you.
I'm fine.
Hello, Nicola.
Please.
Send them away.
I think the Americans are coming.
Wake up.
The Americans?
Galvano, the crank.
You'd better stop, sir.
They really believe it.
Should I?
You dumb fool, you!
I see them!
I never thought,
but you should have known.
They'll never forgive us.
Never.
Who's there?
It's me, ma'am.
Where are you going?
I'm going to pee.
You shouldn't play such jokes.
Not like that!
Good morning.
The Germans have summoned me.
The Americans are closing in.

They've landed at Montechiari.
Did you hear the cannons?
Last night a bomb hit the washhouse.
Therefore, by sundown...
you must all be at the cathedral.
Call my wife and wait below.
The Germans have ordered us all
to gather in one place.
I suggested the cathedral.
The piazza has not been mined.
Wait.
The Germans will shoot anyone on sight...
who is found outside the cathedral.

Tonight at 3:

all the houses they've mined.
Papa.
Duilio and Nicola can't go
to the cathedral.
They're deserters.
My house will be the first to go!
They'll blow them up at 3:00 a.m.
Mine will be first!
Give out the remaining food.
Bread and tomatoes.
Who knows how long
we'll be in the cathedral?
Go close the door.
I'm sorry about that joke yesterday.
We couldn't care less.
- Until tonight.
- Until tonight.
Donati from Montopoli?
From Montopoli, yes.
I stayed at your father's house once.
He and I were friends.
I'm Galvano Galvani.
When you visited us, it was...
snowing.
You were 13 then.
I recognized you.
How's everything?
Is the cathedral a good idea?
What a question!

These days,
who can tell what's good or bad?
I thought it out.
I thought it out.
When it's dark,
I'm going to look for the Americans.
I don't trust the Germans.
Don't you trust our bishop?
I thought about that, sir.
But a German was killed here
the other day.
Nobody knows who did it...
and the Germans are vindictive.
Starting tomorrow, they'll shoot anyone,
young and old alike.
Death is everywhere these days.
I've made my decision.
If anyone else agrees, we'll go together.
Wear dark clothes. We go by night.
Not the dogs.
They make noise.
We'll have to leave them behind.
I hadn't thought of that.
Mama's coming with us.
And me? With whom do I go?
The sun will set in five minutes!
Wait.
Wait a minute.
First we eat.
Why not later, by the washhouse?
You're eating now?
We'll have to start out very quickly,
without stopping.
In the past days, they didn't eat much.
Need some strength.
- Let's go.
- Let's go.
Forgive us.
Forgive us. We are such fools.
We are scared.
Forgive us. We are scared.
We are such fools.
Good luck.
That's our dog.

Can you hear him? It's Wolf.
That's him! That's him!
Let's hide. Go, go, go!
It's us!
- We are coming with you.
- It's us.
We are coming with you.
- Is that you, Corrado?
- And you, Belindia?
Where are you?
When will San Martino blow up?

They said 3:

Come, Cecilia...
make yourself light.
If we stay quiet...
we'll hear the bombs.
Rosanna...
do you feel
you've been through this before?
Yes.
I wish it were already 3:00 a.m.
I can't stand it.
I'm a fool.
I keep thinking...
that they'll blow up
the cockroaches in the sink.
Don't cry.
We'll start all over again.
I don't want to start over.
God, I've never asked for anything.
But at least save the mattresses.
No, God, let the houses blow up.
I've waited for an hour.
I never had so much fun.
How could I have wanted
our house to go?
With the yellow sofa...
the staircase...
the entrance.
That wasn't San Martino.
San Martino's to the right.
Seemed like it to me.
No. The explosions came

from somewhere else.
It was San Martino.
Definitely San Martino.
The wind carried the sound to the left.
Our rosy San Martino fades away.
We're going that way.
Mama, I'm so hot.
Take it off.
Hey, Corrado!
Bruno should've reached
the Americans by now.
Who's Bruno?
A man with whom you should fall in love.
Why didn't you bring him?
- Is Bruno dark?
- Bruno means "dark."
So what? I was blonde as a child.
The English!
Don't eat so much. You'll get sick.
Did you yell, "It's the English"?
The English, yes.
But it's the Americans that are coming.
No, the Sicilians.
Sicilians?
The Fifth Army has a unit
of Sicilian-Americans.
I heard that in Florence.
Sicilian. Sicilians?
Like you.
You're the only one
who hasn't thrown it away.
I won't throw it away
until my husband is back from India.
I won't.
You're such a pig.
Let's find those Americans.
What's wrong? You ate too much?
Mara, come back! Come back!
Mara, come here, Mara!
Where are you going, Mara?
To the Sicilians.
Friends!
A stone hit me.
- How'd it happen?

- Why are you here alone?
I was looking for you.
You're the Sicilians from Brooklyn?
Help me, Tuminello.
- Tuminello?
- That's him.
Your name's Tuminello?
- Mine, too. Mara Tuminello.
- From Castelbuono?
From Castelbuono.
- I'm related to Salvatore.
- And me to Assunta, Rocco's daughter.
Take me to America.
I'll take you to Brooklyn.
Where?
It's here.
So much snow...
it makes me dizzy.
It was a girl!
I saw something move.
What aim! You got her in the head.
At least she died instantly.
- Good morning.
- Good morning.
I've looked for blackberries,
but there aren't any left.
We found some blueberries down there.
Didn't we, Dad?
Your mouth is still blue.
The rest of you, listen to me!
We know he wasn't alone.
Right, Dad?
Go back to San Martino!
Galvano Galvani,
take them to the cathedral.
Or we'll kill them all!
We're going...
but we'll be back. Right, Dad?
I'm coming!
We know he wasn't alone!
Right, Dad?
We're going back.
Or she'll have it here.
In the cathedral,

your bishop will protect us.
I'll take them just outside San Martino.
Corrado, wait.
We're going back,
but my mother-in-law can't keep up.
I'll take care of her.
Leave her at the Meridiana house.
She was born there.
Forgive me, but I'm afraid out here.
Say something, at least!
- Say something!
- Let's go.
What should we do? We are leaving?
First we'll bury the Sicilian girl.
Belindia!
If it's born...
The baby, if it's born...
you never know, what will we name him?
That's right!
Any name you want.
My father's name.
What was it?
God! What was my father's name?
Giovanni!
There aren't enough hosts for all of you.
There's been so much confusion.
Even if we divide the ones in here...
they're not enough.
Over there.
Let me think a minute.
We...
We have the bread.
Not the bread!
The Scardagli woman's right.
That's your name, isn't it?
Scardigli.
Scardigli, then.
Whoever has any bread,
break it into many pieces.
I'll consecrate it...
and He will help you.
What Saint's day is today? What Saint?
If you don't know, who does?
Saint Cyriacus!

We'll remember this unusual day
as the Day of Saint Cyriacus.
On this Saint's Day,
in the summer of 1944...
we all sought salvation
in the House of God.
Do not forsake me now.
My piece is too big.
What do I do? Chew it?
- Where are you hurt?
- Where is Luciana?
Stop. I said stop.
Stop. Stop.
Let me go.
I'll do it alone.
Alone.
Alone.
We kept going,
although we didn't know where to.
We couldn't hear the cannons anymore.
But Galvano wouldn't give us a break.
I could only think
of a wonderful thing that happened to me.
Signora Concetta...
couldn't stop at the house
where she was born, the Meridiana...
because it was burning.
That's when she put
two gold earrings on my ears.
She said,
"On a little girl, they'll be safer."
Cecilia, are you afraid?
When I'm afraid, do you know what I do?
I recite this rhyme:
"Dirt and soil. Job had a boil.
"Medication, medication.
Add some chicken defecation.
"And the dog and cat doo-doo.
"By tomorrow you'll be through.
"Sigh and moan.
"Stump of tree.
"Severed vine. Leave me be.
"Rise up, run from here.
Make my warts disappear."

They even carry away the dead.
No, I'm just tired. It'll pass.
- Where are they from?
- From Briolo.
- And the Americans?
- No Americans around here.
Just Germans everywhere.
Where are you going?
What about the bus?
It's mine.
They took it.
I've been following them for five days.
Sooner or later they'll abandon it.
And I'll be there.
It's my bus, my life!
I'm sorry.
You're all hungry like me...
but I need them.
Thirty eggs.
I figured it out.
One a day.
And in 30 days the war will be over.
I'm gonna make it.
You forgot your shoe.
I'll stay with you.
Where else would I go?
Five...
Five days since I spoke to anyone.
Five days...
without talking.
To find the Americans...
you have to first find Dante.
Dante's band of rebels.
Bandits.
Where?
By the Arno River.
Where are you going?
Come with us.
He's dead.
Come back.
He's dead.
What do you mean, nothing?
Nothing over here.
Thank you.

Alfredina.
What happened?
Wait, I'll do it.
Is it true that you're related
to Galvano?
A peasant made noble forgets
her relatives.
We'll sleep here.
Poison ivy!
You bitch!
What are you doing? Dilvo!
Where were you?
In San Martino.
How long have you been looking for us?
For three days.
What about the cathedral? And Belindia?
- I don't know.
- How come?
I don't remember.
- Do you have a fever?
- No.
No, I left Belindia and the others...
outside the town.
I don't remember the rest.
Cecilia?
Gino? Gino Bulleri?
What are you doing? Harvesting?
What about you?
Where are you headed?
We're trying to reach the Americans.
Do you need any help?
Do you know a Dante?
They say he knows the way.
Do you know him and his gang?
That's us.
You!
What do you mean?
That's us, and that's Dante.
The one with the vest.
No. Today, I can't take you anywhere.
Tomorrow, Bruno will take you.
After we've finished.
- Bruno Marini?
- Yes, from Volterra.

What's happened here?

The Fascists and Germans want our wheat.

- But where?

- We're hiding it in the woods.

No, where's Bruno?

He's around. Just look.

We're helping these families.

If you'd help, too, we'd appreciate it.

We hadn't planned on it, but we'll help.

Hurry.

At noon the Germans fly overhead...

and we'll have to hide.

Bruno.

Hello.

No, give it to me.

You've changed so quickly.

My eyes are red.

From wheat?

We haven't slept in three days.

Today, we'll help you.

Rosanna's here, too.

We're going to the Americans.

Did your feet heal?

I'll stay here.

Put it down.

- Is that Bruno?

- Yes.

He fell asleep.

Stop that.

They'll be back.

Stop.

Come here and sit down.

Everyone from San Martino

who decided to stay...

has to change his name.

- Change it? Why?

- It's safer.

- Can I pick my own name?

- Yes.

I'm thinking.

For instance, my name is Bruno.

But now I'm Biondo.

I'm San Martino.

Juliano.

I like changing names.
I never liked mine.
Dilvo.
Can I be Bruno, although it's his name?
That's all right.
I'm Achilles.
He never lost a battle! Right, Nina?
You, Achilles?
But where's your sword?
In your sheath, my Helen of Troy.
I don't even know if it's a name.
Requiem.
Call me Requiem.
Lion.
Orangutan.
Owl.
Fur.
That's a nice name. And you?
I...
Giovanni.
Giovanni.
Your feet are so pretty.
They're the only pretty things about me.
Otherwise, I'm ugly.
You're not ugly.
You don't have to console me.
I was born ugly, and I've stayed ugly.
What you don't know...
is what it is to be ugly...
and yet to feel beautiful.
Maybe it's the way the men look at you.
You understand that,
even though you're a virgin.
And still...
Still, if the Germans fly over again...
one, the one I choose...
the one I want...
and I won't be a virgin anymore.
That night was August 10, my love.
The shooting stars...
the night of Saint Lawrence...
when wishes are granted.
But none of us thought about it then.
The next morning...

before the others woke up...
Renata and I went to pee.
You have a vivid imagination.
American.
Americans.
God, my head's spinning.
I'm dizzy.
You're not used to them, Papa.
- Over the hill.
- No, through the woods!
The Fascists!
Leave it.
I'll show you.
- Giuseppe!
- Rosanna!
Does Mama know you're with them?
Move away! Rosanna, move away!
Move away, Rosanna!
Nicola!
Give yourself up!
You give up!
You've killed me.
- Who's winning?
- I am looking for Bruno.
Who's winning?
Grandma's been wounded.
Some water.
I'll say Mussolini as often as I like.
I'll say Mussolini as often as I like.
Bruno! Biondo!
Over here.
Stay down.
Papa!
Let's get out of here.
They're killing us all!
Hold on!
- Cut, cut.
- His hands, his hands.
Show yourselves!
I know you all!
Show yourselves! Luigi! Giuseppe!
And you...
Dilvo Senesi, I recognized you.
And I know you, too.

You're Giglioli from Marzana!
You've already killed me, Giglioli.
Why mess up my face?
My God, Senesi!
Go, go, go, go!
Stay right there!
Go away!
Away!
"Dirt and soil. Job had a boil.
"Medication, medication.
Add some chicken defecation.
"And the dog and cat doo-doo.
By tomorrow you'll be through.
"Sigh and moan. Stump of tree.
"Severed vine. Leave me be.
"Rise up, run from here.
"Make my warts disappear."
That's enough!
Enough.
The Marmugis are hiding in the orchard.
One of them climbed up the cherry tree.
Down! Down!
I won't!
I said, come down!
Father, where are you?
- Come down!
- Can you hear me?
I hear you!
I hear you!
Kill me.
Not him.
He's only 15.
Not him.
He's only 15.
Shoot. Can't you see how he's suffering?
We hiked all the way to Saint Angelo.
The farmers gave us shelter
for the night.
They reopened their houses.
We were all so tired...
that we forgot our fears.
This shoe is finished.
We're going, Papa.
They put us up somewhere else.

Nearby, in a hayloft.
Are you feeling better?
- Yes, I feel better.
- See you in the morning.
Till tomorrow.
- I brought some pillows.
- Thank you.
Are you crying?
Because your children left?
Your wife's still here.
You're man and wife, aren't you?
For 30 years.
Anyway, there's water here.
Goodnight.
Sorry, Concetta...
but she was too curious.
- I'll call her back and explain.
- No, don't bother.
It's the war.
You tore your dress.
You should've had your wrists bandaged.
I must have bruised your shoulders.
I'm heavy.
You're stronger than I am.
Go ahead. You talk.
No, it's not important.
I'd never have expected
you and me to be...
together on a bed, talking this way.
Strange.
My heart's also beating very fast.
I'm filthy,
and I'm dirtying up the bedcover.
I'll sleep on the chair.
I'm also filthy.
I'll stand by the window
while you undress.
Did you know...
as a boy, I had a crush on you?
I think you knew.
Love doesn't hide easily.
I knew.
What are you making me say?
They made us drink too much of that wine.

Exactly.
And tomorrow may never come.
I'll undress behind the closet.
Undress where you like.
After what I've seen,
a naked man won't scare me.
You're not embarrassed?
Are you?
But I'm a man.
I am embarrassed.
How many of us will be able
to keep going tomorrow?
- Tonight, no one sleeps.
- I'll sit up with you.
You're tired.
Try to sleep a little.
We're both tired.
This could have happened 40 years ago.
It would have been better.
Yes, I'm missing three.
With all my teeth,
it would have been better.
Let's go downstairs.
Tomorrow morning.
No, leave it on.
Last night, we were liberated.
The Fifth Army, so they say.
They entered Marano, Palaia, and Muriolo.
They won't come up here. We're too small.
The church bells tell you
which towns are liberated.
We'll go to see them further down.
You'll meet them
on your way to San Martino.
Your people downstairs
are getting ready to go.
It's raining, and the sun is shining.
Come.
Signora, catch!
Galvano!
What's the rush?
They're lending us wagons.
There's room for you.
- So suddenly?

- Why should we wait?
Why not tomorrow?
There's no need to hurry now.
Duilio!
Let's stay a while.
It's nice here.
He wants to wait for tomorrow!
Until it stops raining!
You'll get soaked.
We won't get soaked!
Signora Concetta!
Papa, what's going on?
You're not coming?
Go ahead. I'll catch up later.
What's so important here?
Nothing.
What do you mean, nothing?
I'll fix my shoe. Then I'll leave.
Galvano stayed on
for three more hours...
alone with many thoughts...
while we made our way back
to San Martino.
My story ends here, my love.
I don't know if things happened
exactly like that.
I was only six then,
but the story is true...
and even true stories can end well.
Sleep now, darling.
Let me look at you.
You're beautiful when you sleep.
"Dirt and soil. Job had a boil.
"Medication, medication.
Add some chicken defecation.
"And the dog and cat doo-doo.
By tomorrow you'll be through.
"Sigh and moan. Stump of tree.
"Severed vine. Leave me be.
"Rise up, run from here.
"Make my warts disappear.
"Dirt and soil.
"Job had a boil."