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Quartetto

Patricia Ranzoni

Pagina Dalle Note di Monteviasco
Page from Monteviasco Notes

*per via di sogno, cielo, strada principale, strada
piccolo, cavo, sentiero*

*by way of dream, sky, highway, small road, cable,
footpath*

Now – *grazie* to our young – electric maps to our *vecchio mondo* becoming new
– becoming one surprising round time and place we see.

First sounds on clear alpine air after setting foot where we can't believe we are
after two hours of expert hired speeding – narrow city and province roads
northwest of Milan – in and out of Switzerland – a familiar brook our people
surely fished rushing mountain-loud down – a rooster's universal yodel we
can't see pulling our eyes up the narrow field of cleared foothill terrain to signs
of work up the top showing our people are over us – working the stones – and
are these *capra* bells – through locusts and chestnuts – hearing our whole lives
what their wood is good for.

No *automobili* roads above the gravel parking yard in the woods – two ways by
foot – terraced *asino* path – hourish hike – or steep *funivia* ride saving strength
for walking once there.

And is not the cream and earth-colored owl swooping down as if off the
embroidered coat-of-arms of our ancestral *comune* to check us at the base of
the trail up descended from very ones roosting in these Alps when our
grandparents nested here – all of us one *albero di famiglia*?

And isn't Carlos' Rosalia hugging their region's characteristic heirloom basket to her heart gathering us in for bringing home – local design seen in pictures humming to us tales of longing – belonging – if we never hear another sound – song – in this place with their *bella* voices given Marco's interpreting – we are filled with the music of their beings – our being – on the boned ground of our buried – ancient spirit-worked stone-stacked heaven – humble – in the clouds – so old so new.

The Immigrants' Grandson Keeps Their November Faith in Maine

Beyond cobalt plates storing crimson blueberry leaves
and prized lemon peel drying for tea on his wife's
bread-making board, and their bowl of leached acorns;

beyond the window over his vegetable plots
where the barn used to lean before he could no longer
afford to restore or keep it up and the taxes; and
the old manure pile where his carrots and turnips
keep rooting below frost, the fruits of another
season's blisters put by in time;

a fierce-eyed North American eagle, broad shouldered
as two Canada geese, braces, legs wide on the gut pile
he leaves them, talons gripping for balance, hook beak
ripping and gulping rib meat and gristle strips from this
year's deer;

while overseas in the Mediterranean flyway,
farmers on the Italian slopes are spreading nets
and sheets and parachutes under the olive trees,
placing bets on how many kilograms each, listening
for the wild boar hunt, picking until dark, missing
without even knowing them, ours who left for America,
missing *them*.

Viaggio Gioia / Journey of Joy

***To have been their vessel has been joy.
To have been chosen for their life's journey, joy!
To have carried their children, joy!
To be carried here to their beginnings, joy!***

Joy beyond translation is the feel of his carved wooden spoon back home on the shelf of our cold cookstove altar to them this summer. Books, maps, pictures, treasures guiding us here. When we return, joy will be the flames that warm us there for the rest of our winters. All the more joy will be the touch of the spoon he carved for her and all her worn hands made with it in Alford, generations without end.

And all the more joy from the happiness we've taken in that farmstead where he recreated ancestral stonework and earthwork we see from this place. Where she kept the foodways and raised our father and grandfather, their son whose name we honor here on Mountagna Viasco ~ *Joseph Emilio Ranzoni* ~ *in whose life we've rejoiced with his "Cara Mia" Priscilla Ida* ~ *with us, in us*. And their other children and theirs and theirs whose presence we recognize here.

And back at their dearly loved place in Alford, we envision James in whom we exult for his respectful protection of their hard-earned legacy, keeping, keeping their dreams. And all who've lived on that hillside, from The First whose abiding ground it remains, just as this steep earth will always be their descendants' first home.

Joy higher than my words can reach is the realization of this journey
centuries deep, and the ten, twenty, fifty years' of vows we've added to theirs.
And the ecstatic satisfaction of showing you my people's greatest mountain,
Katahdin, on the way to yours. People who taught us not to be afraid.
The First and those who crossed oceans. Else how would we have had courage
to come? Thank you, blood of our blood, for the intense pleasure of your sounds.
The music of your voices and instruments. The great delight of your tastes
we'll carry back in our flesh. For the enjoyment of your stories, which is to say
ours. The whole of it. We promise to continue manifesting what you've
revealed just as Pasquale and Rosalinda still do. In their memory we eat
your crusts. Greens, roots, fruits. Savor your wild growing things. Your fish,
we hear, swimming three times – in your waters, your olive oil, your wine.

There is joy in accepting we don't know words to express this
but now know new ones. Old ones. A source for whispering the gratitude
of the ages. Here, these. Inadequate words we've brought. And stones.
Can you hear them?

Grazie, sweet land of our famiglia! We will take you home and tell.

Faith of Our Grandfathers and Mothers
Ranzoni and Morandi

Oh to have knelt where they knelt on sweet Monteviasco
which in these 50th Anniversary days since kneeling
to marry in Maine we did *oh we did!*

Climbing through locust trees and chestnuts, rooster music
and goat bells, we found the place they knelt to marry
before leaving for America in their century.

We send this Christmas message in 2010 to tell you
we were overcome by the devotion to The Birth
enspirited everywhere over there. In humble sanctuary,
glass, cemetery, stone. Above six-centuries-in-the-building
carved marble cathedrals below. To tell you

our ancestral mountain, natural and purely adorned,
is an unroaded green and rock Hallelujah! Our people
blessing us with shouts, arms, toasts, songs, stories, feasts,
tears we bow to, still, in our prayers and dreams.

What a place of Faith they left *what Faith!*

From it, this year and the rest of our years,
we send greetings of Awe and Amen.

About the author:

Mixed-blood Yankee, Patricia Smith Ranzoni ([Words from the Frontier - Poetry in Maine](#)), has had her unschooled documentary poetry published across the United States and abroad, including previous issues of *XCP: Streetnotes*. Books: *CLAIMING* (Puckerbrush Press, 1995); *SETTLING* (Puckerbrush Press, 2000); *ONLY HUMAN ~ Poems from the Atlantic Flyway* (Sheltering Pines Press, 2005); *PATRICIA RANZONI GREATEST HITS* (Pudding House invitational Gold Series, 2008); *HIBERNACULUM & Other North-Natured Poems* (OneWater Press, 2010); *FROM HERE Poems from Being Born in Lincoln, Maine* (OneWater Press, 2010); and *BEDDING VOWS Love Poems from Outback Maine* (North Country Press, forthcoming).