

Excerpt from
AND YOU SHINE¹

by
Giuseppe Catozzella

(E tu splendi, 2018 Feltrinelli)

English translation © 2018 by Anne Milano Appel

1.

To be honest right off the bat, my family and I were invaders in a land full of riches and beautiful things. We had secretly invaded a place that wasn't ours, to find work – this was what the nun in kindergarten told us, and because of the special relationship she had with God, she was never wrong.

That day – I was only four years old – the little black-hooded figure had pointed her finger at me. I had nightmares that night. The next morning, when I woke up, I swore I didn't want to be like my parents, someone who isn't welcome, who steals jobs and takes over the houses, parks, streets and all the amazing things: I would always be a person who was welcome, even very welcome, if you can say that. It took a lot of courage, but I prayed the Lord every night to let me find Him, and then that my mama and papa would learn an accent more like that of the North, so they wouldn't recognize us.

Then, after our mother – whose name is Rosalba, but everyone calls her Rosi – went ahead on life's road to wait for us in an even more beautiful place where everyone is happy, after she no longer lived with us, everything changed a little. She started talking to me with her voice inside my head, and at night before we went to sleep she sang goodnight to me and Nina, even though it was papa who was moving his mouth. We said "ciao, papa," Nina said "good night, papa," and I thought *goodnight, mama*, but I didn't tell anyone, only Nina. Once she'd confided that she did it too at first. Then she'd stopped, and when she said "ciao, papa" she meant just him.

Now I'm almost twelve years old, and we've lived on Via Gramsci since I was born, in a place on the outskirts of Milan that we call Milanox (because it's a cross between Milan and a bad place called the Bronx), where the people are all foreigners or from the south. In our building – which has ten floors and lots of apartments – they are almost all Pugliese and Sicilian, mixed with Moroccans, Indians and some Peruvians, but most of them are Calabrian. My family, on the other hand, is from Basilicata, from a village near Matera, and in fact we are a rarity.

I hadn't realized that we were orphans. One day the teacher said it in front of the whole class, and I was very upset. Not because of the thing itself, but because of the word, which I didn't really expect was meant for me. I even started sobbing a little, and everyone thought it was because I was an orphan, but as usual they didn't understand a thing. Then I stopped, and I shook my head no, but they still didn't understand, so I might as well

have been crying. Because I thought it was a word for kids who had lost both their parents and had been left on their own for good, but instead it's also used for kids like us whose mother decided to wait for us up ahead, to arrange things and let us find everything ready and shipshape. And besides I also have Nina, who is now my responsibility. That's why I sobbed, that was a word for unfortunate children and not for us, because Nina and I had everything. And so, I in fifth grade and Nina in third found ourselves orphans, which means that your mother starts living inside you instead of outside.

And then our mother is really funny, and likes to play bad jokes. Last year, for example, she made me fail sixth grade, and in fact this year I'm repeating it. When she still lived with us, she sometimes left us notes among the pages of a book or notebook: red cards with gold borders that she drew, like cards you send at Christmas time. They were her surprises, I guess, she enjoyed doing it. I pictured her, in the evening, in her nightgown, with all those curls on her head and the gold felt-tipped pens, while papa – whose name is Biagio, Gino for short – slept in the living room in front of the TV, with his copy of *Christ Stopped at Eboli*² (his Bible) resting on his stomach.

One day, the Italian teacher was having us write a composition. Michela was in the seat next to mine, bent over her paper. She was just about the only one in the class who was not a foreigner or a southerner, but she was beautiful, even if she was a bit pale, poor thing. One of mama's cards had slipped out of my notebook and I left it there between us to remember her. I sat there in a daze, staring blankly at the ceiling like a boob. Then I came to; I whispered to Michela and handed her the card. I had never let anyone read those cards, but I felt like it because Michela's little green sweater was a hillside covered with yellow daisies. She read it and burst out laughing, go trust women. The teacher started shouting. "Visconti!", who is Michela. "Corsano!", that's me. She marched right over and snatched the card out of Michela's hands. Then she returned to her desk. "Now I'll read it out loud, so we can all have a laugh," she said, and put on her glasses. "... So then, here it says ... *Do you know that you are in the drawer and dreams are outside?*" She stopped to think. "What does that mean?" *It means you're a nosy busybody, that's what it means*, I thought, but I didn't say it because I'm a gentleman. Then she turned the card over and read on the back: "... *which is the same thing one of my favorite writers says: 'If you really want to dream, wake up!'*"³ *Hugs and kisses.*"

She took off her glasses and looked at Michela. "I don't understand what these stupid, prosaic words have to do with the theme I gave you. I'm surprised at you, Visconti." Then she looked at me. "Not at you however." I felt like I was about to have one of those violent fits when I imagined blowing up the world. No one can insult my mother. You have to be on your guard, you never know. I got up, I wanted to go out and punch a fist against the wall. The teacher stood in my way, and I ended up

bumping into her. She was slammed against Michela's desk and fell to the floor. No one breathed a word. She gave me a withering look, then she picked up her glasses and checked them: one lens had a bad crack in the middle. She put them back on, calmly stood up, and straightened her blouse and skirt. "Now you're coming with me to the principal's office," she said. Then she continued evenly, "I'll have you suspended, Corsano. And at the end of the year I'll fail you. So help me God, I will." She kept her word, even though I was an orphan, so I asked myself what good it did me.

An orphan and a dummy too, we laughed about it at home. In fact, since mama decided to go ahead of us, this is what we did. Since she's the one who always plays jokes and we laugh – and since she always says "life is a film with only one part and it ends badly too" (which means that the only thing you can do is laugh about it) – well that evening we laughed and laughed. The next day the beating would come, but oh how we laughed the night I was failed! Papa even uncorked a bottle of wine and got a little tipsy (since he'd lost his job it happened often), you could tell because he laughed at my jokes.

Anyway, because of mama's note the summer that just passed, which was supposed to be the first time I spent my vacation at a summer camp with my friends for three weeks, it all fell through. But it wasn't a bad thing. In the sense that I can now tell you all about that summer, because something happened that I never would have imagined and that changed my life. And when things change for someone, then maybe they can change for everyone.

So then, one evening at the beginning of June, papa tied a ridiculous bracelet on our wrists with the name of the destination – mama's parents' house – and sent us off to that godforsaken village in the hills of Basilicata, the place from which he and mama had escaped many years ago.

He put us on a bus headed for Matera and returned home, without even looking back.

2.

The sun was dawning slowly amid the hills, and with the first light Nina and I woke up. We had arrived in Basilicata. It was another world: in one night everything had changed.

The higher the bus climbed along the curves, the more woods and olive groves opened up below. All around us were hills of yellow wheat. When the ravines appeared, Nina and I rubbed our eyes and started getting ready. We were almost there. Those ravines, those ridges, those valleys were huge clay lions with gaping jaws.⁴ When we were little, Refè and I used to play in those colorful, red, white, yellow and green ravines. We pretended to be cowboys riding on mules, like in the movies. They were our canyons, and we had to protect them from the kids of the neighboring villages. We leaped about like crickets: everything was ours.

Arigliana perched there, clinging to a wooded mountain, between two distant rivers, the Agri and the Basento, above the smaller Olmo that cut through the valley and joined them. A village of fifty stone houses and more or less two hundred inhabitants. For hundreds of years nothing had happened there.

As we came around the last bend in the Chianosa wood, we entered the village.

The piazza was the same as always, deserted, with the Norman tower back there. Waiting for us was Nononna, and when she saw us she ran to meet us and hugged us tightly.

Nononna, too, was the same as the year before: her blue smock came down to her knees and below it the skinniest calves in the world stuck out. Her eyes were two little black dots. She was beautiful, even though her belly was a little big: she looked like a pigeon and she laughed with joy as she squeezed us. She wore her hair done in braids, like a true Viking warrior, but rolled up on the back of her neck. Once she had loosened them and her hair was very long.

Nononno instead had stayed at the top of the slope that leads to the house. He waved to us from a distance. He, too, was the same, very skinny, with a full head of closely cropped white hair, like an army general. Who knows what old people think, if you ask me they feel bad when they see children, because kids look different each time and they are always the same: I hope I will never get a bad disease like old age.

Our grandparents live on top of a hill, in a big stone house that has belonged to Nononno's family for many generations. They owned land, but when grandpa was young something happened that we are forbidden

to talk about, and they lost everything. Nina and I love that house because it's really big, and the walls are thick, like in a cave. In the upstairs dining room there is a gigantic fireplace that over the centuries has heated the house and cooked the soups. Hanging from the top is the blackened iron chain, the *camastra*, to which the pot is hooked. When I was little and we played hide and seek, I used to hide in there and nobody would find me.

The only sound from outside is the bells that chime the hour. In the evening, the crickets sing in the countryside, and from the balcony you can see the lights of the other villages on the tops of the hills.

Everything is suspended, and dances. Arigliana is in a nativity scene.

But the thing I like most about Arigliana is its smell: the smell of stone in the sun.

In addition to the house, our grandparents were left with the store out in front – where Nonnonna still works, even if she's decrepit like all old people – and a lot of land too, though it's dead and useless.

Nonnonna was always bringing home little birds with broken wings, or baby turtles, or chicks, which she put in shoeboxes with air holes, so Nina and I could watch them and feed them as much as we wanted. A few years ago she'd brought home a green and yellow budgie and had taught him to say "Pietro," which is my name, and also "Nina," and the bird would say them at least ten times a day. So now grandma said "do you want a little sparrow?," and she was cheerful. Nina instantly replied "yes, we want one, we want one!" I too think there's nothing better than being cheerful, even if you are sad.

Grandpa, on the other hand, is always cross. When he scolds us (and he scolds us a lot), Nonnonna reproaches him, and he tries to silence her too but he can't, because grandma is invincible. Because his family's lands were dead and no longer of any use, grandpa had a bee in his bonnet that wouldn't leave him in peace. For sure he's the only old man in Arigliana who is as scrawny as a grasshopper, and everyone in the village knows that it's because of his rage, never mind diabetes. Still hanging on the wall in the kitchen, along with the sifters, frying pans and *spasa*, the board on which grandma makes pasta on Sundays (Nonnonna's homemade pasta is the best thing in the world), is the plaque on which, when it all happened, grandpa had decided to carve his resignation and his rancor.

CHRIST NEVER CAME THIS FAR,
NOR DID TIME, NOR HOPE,
NOR REASON, NOR HISTORY.⁵

It's a sentence from *Christ Stopped At Eboli*, which is grandpa's Bible as well as papa's, and for Nonnonno it signifies the injustice of his

land, forgotten by God and by men. And all because of zi' Rocco, the uncle we can't talk about at home.

"Yes, but we paid. We've always been decent people. Peasants, before being landowners. We never stopped scraping and hoeing," Nononno says, the rare times when zi' Rocco comes up in conversations. He loves to say the word *possidenti*, landowners, he rolls it around in his mouth like a mint candy, but the "s's" whistle in his dentures, and me and Nina laugh like crazy. *Possshidenti*. Every family has a nickname, and Nononno's family's name had been just that, *Possident'*. But after he'd been ruined, grandpa had threatened anyone who kept calling him that, and eventually the nickname died out. In the village they use the one given to grandma's family, which is *Alicett'*, anchovies, because when they were little they looked a bit like tiny fishes. So every now and then some old man, when we pass by his house, calls us Pietro and Nina Alicett' and we like that a lot. Pietro and Nina Alicett'. I never told her, but Nina, too, looks a bit like a little salted fish.

"It must be because they stopped scraping and hoeing, that they still have everything and we have nothing," Nononno needles him, and they start arguing.

"I don't go around poisoning other people's lands! I didn't kill half the lands in Arigliana!"

I never heard anyone argue like those two. They bicker about everything, but when it comes to zi' Rocco, grandpa really sees red.

Once, when I was seven years old and you can see he considered me old enough to be his heir, Nononno had led me to the highest point of the village, the upper piazza – where the wine caves are and where you overlook the valley – and he'd told me everything. Every last detail. Only once. I never forgot it. After that he never spoke of it again.

From up there you could see the Olmo river, a very long snake that wound through the fields from one side to the other. By then it was only a jumble of stones, but it had once been full of water. "Beyond the river was our land," Grandpa had told me, pointing to the open valley. Past that dry snake the land was all barren, yellow, burnt, abandoned. Dead. It was disturbing to see. At the center of the desolate expanse was a crumbling farmhouse. "At one time that was my life," Nononno had said. "And before me, that of my father and my grandfather, and earlier still, that of his father." His great-grandfather had built it, and had called it Masseria Lucania. It was the first farmhouse in Arigliana. Theirs, the first family of *possidenti*. Now it was nothing but piles of bricks that kept the large wooden roof beams still standing.

"On this side of the river, instead, is zi' Rocco's land." Nononno was barely able to utter that name, and afterwards he spat. It was a stunning expanse of different colored rectangles, the fabric of a very opulent dress. The tractors were raising clouds of dust, seeing them at work lulled you. In the center stood the gigantic farmstead. Then grandpa took a breath and continued. I never again saw him so agitated. His hands

were trembling with rage as he spoke, I noticed it because he was stroking my head.

Zi' Rocco had emigrated to Germany, then he'd returned to the village. Over there he'd learned how to make money: he was going to stop selling the fruits of the earth, as his father and his grandfather had done, and would manufacture preserves for the supermarkets in Northern Italy. To do so, however, he needed to eliminate any competitors.

He had not thought twice about it. Taking advantage of the feast of Ferragosto, when the whole village gathers in the piazza to watch the fireworks and the din of the rockets covers everything, Zi' Rocco had rented a helicopter and with his henchmen had sprayed the area from above with poison. In just one night he killed all the lands beyond the river: the lands belonging to Nononno and a few other small property owners. After a few weeks the plants had begun to get sick. Three months later there wasn't an olive tree left, not a vine, not an ear of wheat, a walnut tree, a bean plant, a pumpkin, a tomato, nothing at all that bore fruit. Everyone knew it had been Zi' Rocco, but nobody had proof. The debts that grandpa had taken on to buy more lands and more livestock were so great that, when he was unable to pay because of failed deliveries, the only thing left was to sell off his animals and equipment. Keep the land, but sell everything else. And go bankrupt. Shut down the Masseria Lucania forever.

After that Zi' Rocco had started underselling his wheat, olives, grapes, nuts, fruit, tomatoes and vegetables at a loss. All of it. Thus, those who still had a little bit of land on this side of the river had also gone under, one by one: they couldn't match his prices. That's when he showed up at their doors: neighbors, cousins, relatives. He bought their lands for next to nothing.

Within the span of just four years, he was the only one left producing. Thirty hectares: all the land between the village and the river. Then he'd set up a preserves factory, and to add insult to injury he named it Masseria Lucania. At that point, those who had worked for Nononno went to work for him. They had no choice. Zi' Rocco paid them little more than what they needed to live.

Nononno had never set foot in what was left of his lands. The pain of failure had been so great that the lands were dead along with him.

When he'd finished telling me, grandpa tightened his grip on the railing of the upper piazza, his hands like claws.

Short as I was, I turned to look up at him. Grandpa was gazing into space, staring at the countryside. His eyes intent, his hair razed like a soldier's.

“Don’t tell your grandmother I told you,” he’d made me swear. Then he smiled, but you could see it was a forced smile. All the same, I kissed my fingers crossed over my mouth.

3.

Nonnonna's store is really great, it's one of the few reasons visiting Arigliana is worthwhile.

It's an enchanted world. She sells everything in there: toffee, colored toilet paper, Felce Azzurra bubble bath, peaches in syrup, peeled tomatoes, cigarettes, loose cinnamon and horseradish, San Carlo potato chips, buttons, all types of pasta, cotton swabs and the most fragrant handkerchiefs in the world. Everything is wrapped in a magical good smell, then in sheets of newspaper. That's the only thing newspapers are used for at the Nonnonni's house, apart from a magazine with its name written in red, which grandpa subscribes to and which I like too because of the women in bras and panties.

Everyone drops by the store, it's a meeting place rather than a place to shop. People, old ladies especially, go there more or less just to talk, and that isn't very good for business, even if the Nonnonni have the lowest prices – and are very proud of it.

For me hanging around the store has always been convenient, because everyone comes by there, even my friends, though I awaited them a little nervously as always. Nina, on the other hand, is less shy, and the very day we arrived she went to ring the bell at Judge Lopiano's house, to see the little perfect twins Valeria and Imma, and then at the butcher's house, where Pasquina lives, a tomboy instead who even swears sometimes. Refè was the one who, like every year, I wanted to see most again. I kept wondering if he had changed. At our age nature plays funny tricks: overnight, before you know it, you find you're an adult.

Refè, who on his baptismal certificate is called Raffaele, lives right below Nonnonna's house, so for sure he or his sister Mariangela or his little brother Donatino must have heard us arrive. In the yard there is a low door that opens into the *lammione* where they live. Almost every house, beneath it, has a large, damp room without windows, three or four steps below ground, full of mold, where animals were kept at first: donkeys, pigs, hens. Refè lives in the *lammione* of the Nonnonni's house, where the donkeys used to sleep after bringing Nonnonno's grandfather and father home from the fields every night. Outside, on the wall, four strings of red peppers and garlic bulbs hang from rusty iron hooks, left to dry. Near the door there is a *pilozza*, a kind of basin carved into the stone: at one time they washed clothes there and animals drank from it, later we played in it, pretending it was our Formula One cockpit.

Refè is poor, and every so often he goes around wearing my tee-shirts that mama used to give him without saying anything. The first time I saw him wearing one of them, I'd tried to snatch it off him, even biting him. "Give me back that Superman tee-shirt, it's mine!" I hollered.

“It is not, it’s mine!” Refè yelled.

“It’s mine, you’re a thief!”

“Is your name written on it somewhere?” He’d stared at me, his eyes like those of a wolf.

I’d torn it off him, biting him on the ears and wherever else I could. I did the things he did, even though he’s a year younger than me.

While Nina and I were filling a bunch of little cloth sacks from a tin of fennel seeds, Domenico and Enzuccio, two cousins who were carpenters’ sons, rode up to the store.

I jumped off my chair: seeing them immediately did away with my shyness. Their eyes were always the same, both of them cunning, two bright beacons. Domenico was on his red Vespa (souped up with a 250 carburetor and a big rig’s converter), and he revved the engine and honked the horn. They had really gotten big. At fourteen and thirteen they already looked like a couple of teenagers: they had beard growth. I was eleven and I was still a kid, I kept waiting to develop. Every morning I peered in the mirror looking for a mustache, but nothing. The year before Domenico used to make his fingers into a pincer, grab my pecker, pants and all, tug it and say “is it growing? Huh, is it growing?!” It hurt like anything, but it still didn’t grow. I dreamed of having a really big one, so the girls would spread the word and then line up to touch it.

When he saw me, Domenico’s dark eyes glittered even more. He turned off the Vespa and said “you’ve gotten big, Pietri”, but you could tell he didn’t think so, and Enzuccio his cousin burst out laughing. “Oh sure, maybe next year!” He practically split his sides laughing.

“I’m already big,” I said, and they laughed even harder.

I stayed in the doorway of the store and we started joking a little. Domenico had doused himself with aftershave and smeared a ton of brilliantine on his curly hair, and Enzuccio too. They were cousins but they looked like brothers. They could be a couple of movie stars, with their chiseled features, square jaws, straight noses, and almond shaped eyes.

While we were talking, Refè came out of a backstreet in the little square with the fountain, his steps abrupt and heavy, his hair shaved down to practically nothing.

I recognized him immediately, even if he didn’t seem real to me. I wanted to call to him, but it was like my voice got stuck in my throat. He seemed like an apparition, as if there were a light around him. We watched him as he approached, stocky, his head lowered, he always looked like he was thinking about something or other.

When he was a few feet away, Domenico said “Refellu”, which was like saying hello. But he looked him up and down with an air of superiority: Refè was on his way back from the fields: he was dirty and smelled of animals.

Enzuccio called him by the nickname *Sanaporce*, pig fixer, because Refè’s family had always gone around the village castrating other

people's pigs and sows. Now it was no longer done by hand, but the nickname had stuck. Once when we were young, Refè had done it to show me. The pig is easy, the testicles are outside, you just have to tug them and they come off. For the sow, instead, you have to make an incision in her flank, pull the entrails out with your hands and rip off the attached ovaries. Then put everything back inside. After ripping them out, he had thrown the two little balls to Lupo, the old German shepherd he spent his days with. Lupo had devoured them. Then with a huge needle, Refè had sewn up the incision. The sow grunted and returned to her companions.

Refè made believe he hadn't heard Enzuccio, because that wasn't a nice nickname.

Then with a gesture Domenico said the hell with him, and restarted the Vespa; he honked the horn to say goodbye to grandma, revved the engine and the cousins took off.

When the noise of the motor had faded away, Refè went past the store and said "good evening, zi' Beatri" to Nononna.

Only then did he notice me standing beside the door: he hadn't recognized me. Nina waved her hands from the counter, so then Refè thought about it, realized who we were and smiled. That kid lived in another world.

He'd grown a little taller, but the shorts and tee-shirt were the same ones from the year before, blue with white stars and planets. He was more evasive, even though he was only ten years old.

Finally we looked each other in the eye. "Refè," I said. He stared at me and smiled again. This time it was his real smile.

Then he said he was going to wash up.

Grandma spoke gently, "Refellu', how is everything?" But she was too late, he was already around the corner.

Still, my grandmother's tone made me feel jealous. Between them (and between Refè and Nononno even more so) they shared the bond that unites people who work the land. I was left out. The truth was that I loved the fragrance of the earth, the smell of mud and chicory, of horseradish, I loved the steaming boiled corn on the cob with salt that grandma brought us in the evening, I loved watching the tractors plow and the combine clean up, I loved running among the corn stalks and playing cowboys in the ravines. But I didn't like working the land, waking up at four in the morning and breaking my back to till, plow, hoe, weed, fertilize: those were the things that Refè did.

Then Nononna said she had to go to the storehouse to check on new arrivals, could Nina and I take care of the store by ourselves for a while. We said "sure, grandma, go on, go."

As soon as she left, we looked at each other.

That was just what we'd been waiting for. Every year that was our ritual.

We knew what we had to do.

We looked out the door, no one was coming.

On the wall in back, in a corner, there was a black cabinet that was always half-closed, except in August, which was its month: then it was wide open.

Slowly we approached.

"You open it," I told Nina, and she was already shaking.

"No, you."

I screwed up my courage. I rapped sharply on the two doors, from underneath, and they opened together.

The Black Madonna of Viggiano was still there, under the glass bell: motionless, wide-eyed, frightening. The Patron Saint of Lucania.

In front of the bell jar were two dim red electric candles and a votive picture. But that Madonna was black, she did not look like the mother of Baby Jesus, who had blond hair and wore a blue mantle, like a princess.

That one struck terror into you.

"What are you doing ?!" A voice thundered loudly.

We jumped back, frightened.

It was Nononno.

He had entered the store and we hadn't even noticed, standing there frozen before the scary eyes of the Madonna.

"Be good, you two, don't start making trouble. Otherwise I'll take you to Menzasignor!"

Nina put her hand in front of her mouth and I too shivered. Darn our grandfather!

Menzasignor was a creature who really existed and was terrifying. She lived in a big haunted mansion near the Nononni's house, behind zi' Salvatore's house. She was a noblewoman who had died two hundred years ago, when her husband had cut her in two, and who, after she died, had wandered around the village in search of her husband so she could revenge herself. But since he had fled, she'd returned to live in the mansion, and took out her revenge on anyone who came along.

She did her little deed at the neck. Zap!, a clean slash. The signal she gave to those she chose was unmistakable: a little light. If you suddenly saw a little light you were a goner. Done for. Kaput. Menzasignor's mansion was so dangerous that no one in the whole history of Arigliana had ever gone in there. It was uninhabited, protected by a hefty black gate, dark curtains at the windows, a lawn with three-foot-high grass and a yard full of trash.

When I was little I saw lights everywhere, and for whole nights I didn't sleep. And even now, it sometimes happened. Not even Nononno would ever have had the courage to approach that mansion, far from it.

That creature would come and grab him too. However, now that mama was no longer living with us, maybe she would see to protecting me.

¹ The title is based on a phrase found in *Lettere luterane* by Pier Paolo Pasolini (p. 63 of Einaudi's 2003 edition): "Ti insegnano a non splendere. E tu splendi, invece" ("they teach you not to shine, and you shine instead).

² Carlo Levi's *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, published in 1945, is an account of his political exile, from 1935-1936, in the remote region of Lucania (now known as Basilicata) in southern Italy.

³ "Si vous voulez vraiment rêver, réveillez-vous...": from *Au bonheur des ogres* (1985) by Daniel Pennac.

⁴ The clay landscape of Basilicata is scored by erosion-caused ravines and gullies, called *calanchi*. In Levi's *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, it is referred to as the "moon-like landscape of Calanchi."

⁵ "Christ never came this far, nor did time, nor the individual soul, nor hope, nor the relation of cause to effect, nor reason nor history." Carlo Levi, *Christ Stopped At Eboli*, Frances Frenaye, tr. (Farrar, Straus and Company, 1947; Macmillan, 2006), p. 4.