

# Murmurs and cries from the underground

I have to get away from my home  
thoughts have saturated the room leaving no space for  
oxygen  
have you ever tried to walk hand in hand with restlessness?  
and if this began to shadow your every step, what would  
you do?  
the worst is to sense the answer without being able to  
scrape up the courage to act.

I am speaking of work, understand?  
that part of the day taken for granted  
or rather to be served as a punishment.

Why condemn yourself to a time suspended  
spent with your eyes on the clock waiting to die  
so as to be reborn a few breaths later?  
existence as hourglasses to live to the utmost  
but only in the moments granted by the hand that turns  
them over.  
have you ever wept thinking about all the sand that you've  
let fall, oh so slowly?  
haven't you shaken with rage at having allowed gravity  
to be in control?

Anxious for freedom, spasms and tremors, blurred  
vision, tinnitus, salivating like a dog,  
I am hungry, and they throw me crumbs in the mud  
not smiling with your dirty face, not saying all is well  
that's how it should go!

I get no consolation in knowing that the shift will end,  
that the weekend will come  
that there will be days off, rest days and holidays,  
that I will have the right to sick days  
**I AM SICK NOW!**

I get sick every time that an alarm forces me to get up  
that I don't get to choose when I leave and return to my  
house  
every time that I pass over the same miles, that I obey a  
boss  
that I put on a mask to face imposed human interactions  
every time that I take that envelope wondering if it was  
worth the pain.

I wear a ball-and-chain, have a yoke on my neck, blinders like a horse,  
a repertoire of overused metaphors, not one original expression  
I have stability to maintain, taxes to pay, vices and pleasures that aren't free  
a repertoire of pitiful excuses  
not one plausible argument  
I have shelves of illuminating books, a reality that speaks clearly to me,  
and a youthfulness with a short fuse,  
but an arsenal of doubts and fears that keep me motionless.

What else shall I write then?  
nothing more for now  
*I have to go to work.*

[*Blatte*, June 2015]

Stopping to reflect, now more than ever, seems a waste of time. In the tumultuous succession of events, with which even our most up-to-date smartphones seem unable to keep pace, the only possible watchword seems to be: Just do it. But *do* what? This I still don't understand. If you listen around, everyone seems capable of talking about everything: an opinion on every event, a solution for every problem, from small-time drug dealers at home to

global terrorism. And I, who ceaselessly have the feeling that I don't understand shit, observe and plod on. I can cope with the apathy of the many, most likely because I have no deep relationship with the many, mainly due to my arrogance. But "the comrades" are the ones who block my sun! the assemblies, the fliers, the blogs, the initiatives, the rallies, the actions ... the benzodiazepines! Perhaps these are what I could truly make use of.

Yes, because there are immigrants turned back at the borders, Western bombings over half the world, security alarms and restrictions of individual freedom, Rojava under attack, racism, job insecurity, repression, and a measureless list of other fronts of struggle. There's something for every taste and every ideology. The one who hesitates is lost, the one who reflects too much is an intellectual, and the one who does not throw himself into the fray is a collaborationist.

If these really are the rules of the game, for now, I'm out. I tried to take on the role of the anarchist militant, seeking for a long time the facet of anarchism that most suited me. I have recognized "comrades" and done things "as comrades". I don't spit in the vegan plate from which I have eaten, I simply stop for a moment, even if out there everything proceeds straight towards catastrophe.

I see persons who talk fervently of things happening on the other side of the globe, but let crimes and abuses go on under their noses; persons convinced that they are fighting an invisible enemy or one immeasurably larger than them, who in the meantime behave in an authoritarian and despicable way with those around them; persons, promiscuous in expressing solidarity to every exploited individual, who mess up relationships and are alone

or cling to a few exclusive ties; persons ever intent on propagating better, possible societies because in fact they are deeply dissatisfied with their existence; persons who shout at others to free themselves from their chains, and then run back to the job, to the family, to their jails.

I have been and still am one of these persons. I want to stop being this!

Our lives burn fast without leaving a trace. Our gaze is turned upward and away, while around us all becomes a void. By dint of climbing and taking shelter at ever purer heights, the earth is finished, and we are fighting among ourselves about who should rush down first. I'm about to go back to the valley to reflect on what to do, perhaps I'll even find a (traveling) companion.

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\* Unfortunately, a word play is lost here in English, since the term used in English for a fellow subversive is “comrade” (*compagno* in Italian, but the term for a person one chooses to travel with is “traveling companion” (*compagno di viaggio* in Italian). – translator

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