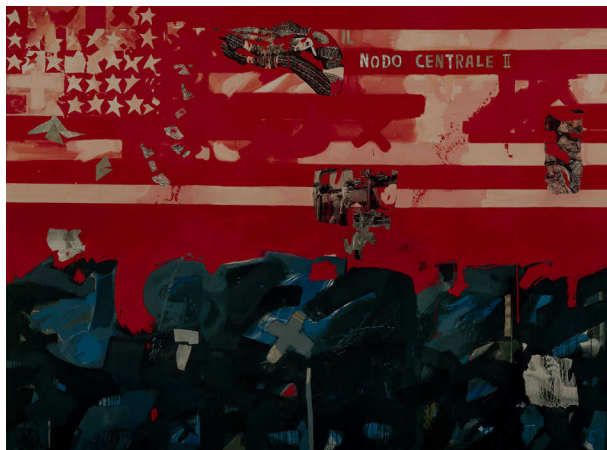


Giulio Stocchi



IN war time

Giulio Stocchi was born in 1944.

He studied philosophy at the State University of Milan and drama in the Accademia dei Filodrammatici in the same town.

His public poetical activity began in 1975.

From that time, and for many years, his stages were the squares, the factories occupied by the workers, the popular and political demonstrations; today, the theaters, the lecture halls, the universities: but always characterizing his poetry by a very original contact with the public.

With his particular sensitiveness for the peculiarity of the poetical sound, Stocchi published various records: *Il dovere di cantare* (National award of the critic), *Punto e a capo*, *La cantata rossa per Tall el Zaatari* (with the jazzman Gaetano Liguori), *Da sogni e da città*, also with Liguori.

He published with Einaudi the book of poetry and prose *Compagno poeta*.

*L'altezza del gioco* will be published in 2003.

He is a member of the Club Psomega regrouping artists, philosophers and scientists to study the inventive thought. He has participated with his poems and essays in the Club Psomega's books, *Il pensiero inventivo*, Milano, Unicopli 1992 and *La vita inventiva*, Napoli, ESI 1998, of which he is the editor.

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And the strike caught it  
majestically flying  
in its' liquid sky  
slowly fluttering its wings  
in the silent half- light  
that the sun scarcely released  
illuminating with its rays  
the dart  
that with a sudden start  
had pierced it with great  
difficulty we pulled  
this sea-eagle to shore  
fiercely fighting to escape  
from the iron the claw  
that nailed it how  
humiliated it appeared to us then  
out of its abyss  
trying to drag itself again  
powerless the harpoon wedged in  
and its' mouth opened dumbly  
with damnation or prayer  
towards the kingdom where it was sovereign  
and vainly with its tail wisping  
the air and suddenly it was cut off  
there at the root of its' poison  
but flundering it  
refused to die so  
we found a big stone  
and in silence we began to hit it  
seeking always to find  
safety and only was his silence  
broken by the dull blows  
and our panting breaths until  
with it's last wiggle  
black motionless fell back  
afterwards the animal laid  
in front of the sea leaving  
a long trail of blood  
that even the pounding surf  
could not manage  
to cancel

**Giulio Stocchi**

**In wartime**

*Watchman, what of the night?  
The watchman said, The morning cometh,  
and also the night:  
if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come*

*Isaiah, 19, 11, 12*

*If this remains as is  
you are lost.  
Your friend is change  
Your companion-in-arms  
the dissension*

*B. Brecht*

*... when they shall see the smoke of her burning,  
Standing afar off for the fear of her torment,  
saying, Alas, Alas, that great city of Babylon, that mighty city!  
for in one hour is thy judgment come.*

*Revelation, 18, 9, 10*

The pain of the humble the unjust  
paths the patient those who  
sustain the weight of the world  
the wave that vanishes on the beach  
a shivering of wind the prayer  
in this valley of tears Oh Lord  
that in the night rises trembling  
as in silence passes the moon

*oh my  
son  
my  
son*

*I'm carrying you in my arms  
and your years have become so heavy for me  
son*

*like three keen daggers of absence  
to stab my heart*



The poplar in the wind. Waves and  
dreams. The thrushes' song  
echoes from his top limb

In the distance a circling wall. The mist  
has spun in silence its wool. Days  
and seasons: children and the aged

Sailing slowly the heron on his sea of wind  
and the question "who comes? who comes? follows him  
it obsesses him, it pushes him higher and still higher.  
The small child in front of the mirror stops  
for a moment playing with her mothers' shawl

The neighbors radio grumbles  
an un-comprehensive oracle  
hund peop died dis nigh  
ease and by

From his branch the thrush has flown. The poplar is alone almost  
sleeping. Even the heron has gone  
In the sunset, hardly turning the color of blood, comes  
whistling amongst the fields a scanty figure  
agitating in the dim light gesturing with wide opened arms

*son*  
*they snapped you*  
*so that I will never again see*  
*the spring of your smile*  
*son*

*and softly growing*  
*the promised texture of your days*  
*son*

**The seeding of the harvest**

Those who once  
lived  
who once loved  
who once dreamed  
who once doubted  
with arms wide opened  
lie lifelessly  
on the ground  
with eyes  
fixed towards the sky

The voice that cries  
peace  
is lost in the silence  
and only a wind  
responds

Over the ruins  
of the city of those  
who once  
lived  
who once dreamed  
who once loved  
who once doubted  
traces  
its enigma  
the smoke

And its written  
in the seeds  
the indications  
of the harvest

*son*  
*they tore you from me*  
*to leave me*  
*speechless and sleepless*  
*between the nets of the night*

*son*  
*for nine months*  
*we talked together*  
*you confiding*  
*your secrets of water to me*  
*and I*  
*the land of the future*  
*son*

They burned everything: houses  
stalls, sheds, with animals and country folk  
still alive inside

In the sky there was much smoke. I'm not sure why  
but I thought of soap bubbles, of kites.  
It was a Tuesday

In the courtyard they put us in two rows  
and my neighbor hit me with the butt of his rifle.  
They took the old people to the woods.  
My shoulder hurt me when we departed.  
We heard the sound of many gunshots

The journey was long. When we went inside  
a soldier touched my hair. There were many  
grates of ammunition, a light bulb  
and a cot

Afterwards they gave me something to eat.  
We'll do it again now, they told me.  
I didn't feel anything when I went to the window: the  
fields smoked, in the distance there was a row of trees and a white cow.  
And then I cried

He stares at the phone  
puts a rose in a glass  
he sits  
contemplates the books on the shelves  
then the spot on the ceiling  
mechanically he reaches out his hand  
turns the radio on  
songs  
advertisement  
he changes the station  
a voice is reading  
the news of a siege  
on a far away city  
indifferent numbers  
children  
women  
he sighs  
he empties the ashtray  
he returns to his seat  
he turns the radio off  
he stares at the phone

**For future memory**

*...where the dead walked and the living were made of cardboard.*

*Ezra pound*

-I-

We who knew and shrugging  
our shoulders saying "oh it's nothing!"  
not wanting to believe in the madness  
and continuing in our personal affairs  
intent until the day turned to twilight  
absent-mindedly reading every morning  
the news of the up-coming horror  
as things that didn't effect us  
the sound of a remote catastrophe  
somewhere on the map of Africa  
or of the vanishing of winged reptiles  
and from the statistics however  
we were precisely informed  
of the increase of the percentage rate  
of the profit of the war industry  
and we thought "it's all too complicated  
it's enough arranging lunch and dinner engagements"  
and we preferred believing in the astral signs  
to decipher our destiny and the wager  
and while the clues multiplied  
and voices from several parts  
put us on our guard we were much too occupied  
disputing if the movie stars normally wore  
or not under pants and frankly  
annoyed we ran to plug our ears  
with head phones and songs  
but we were the first to console ourselves  
when pleased by the exhibition of muscles  
we felt safe with the strongest  
and only mumbling "its their problem"  
watching bombs and missiles falling  
on others like us with arms and legs  
and tranquil in our sunrises and sunsets  
we returned to crowd the streets  
and we continued to walk in circles  
to walk in circles to walk in circles  
until there was no longer anything left

*slaughterers of children*  
*jackals of rubble*  
*tigers who disembowel women*  
*to break*  
*to quarter*  
*to sack*  
*to burn*  
*to butcher*



Do you remember?  
It was near the fallen  
elm  
or perhaps  
on the sea shore  
we were amazed by the world  
for its persistence  
the line of the clouds  
on the horizon  
even  
and the brilliance of the colors  
and the wind  
as a child running  
following the sun  
and then  
suddenly in the distance  
the dry snap  
of the hunt  
and the barking of the dogs  
in the thick of the woods  
the hiding prey  
and the footsteps  
and the silence



Ashes  
ashes  
ashes  
in your silence  
lies my scream

Keeping a hold of the ropes end  
remembering the path taken  
the turns  
and the steps  
or how we came  
to those dim lighted rooms  
with papier maché masks  
abandoned on the ground  
and still the perspective  
of hallways  
and pictures  
and vaulted ceilings  
the cigaret butts  
in the ashtrays  
even the smallest  
clue  
the deadening buzzing of voices  
an evening  
to cross at last the threshold  
of that bare room  
where following the whim  
of the cards  
is the wisdom of the players

*until  
here and there  
their peace  
amongst the ruins  
for a long long time went pecking  
the wide open eyes of the dead*

Night in this city that rises  
from a remote clash in the streets  
at the foot of the look-out tower scanning  
the unavoidable hour the pulverized  
dust that circles soothing  
the broken flickering of the lights  
the repeated question the challenge  
babel against a sea of wind  
a wager of cries future  
rustling of snakes in the grass  
insects in this tiny amphitheater

At long they discussed the pros and cons  
all mourning the great disorder  
the menace that hovered above. At the end, they came  
to a decision, the inhabitants of the city

They started to erect everywhere instruments of death,  
you saw mild-mannered men invoking blood, and  
in the courtyard were raised the gallows, and  
for their fear they gave the name justice

Therefore, what they had wished to abolish, the war,  
they imposed its laws, its merciless march

They became merchandise, digits, swallowed up  
by the spreading numbers, ghastly  
reflections of a deaf mirror, sinking down  
in spit of themselves into the whirlpool.  
And the rest, you can simply ask the wind

**For future memory**

-II-

It was daytime  
     it was nighttime  
         it was something  
     it was absurd  
         it was a sigh  
             it was a flame  
 it was a cry  
     it was silence  
         it was a flash  
             it was something  
         it was a whirlpool  
             it was a wind  
                 it was lightning  
 it was a brick  
     it was running  
         it was the city  
     it was croching  
         it was in the belly  
             it was screaming  
                 it was everywhere  
 it was disfigured  
     it was skin  
         it was a storm  
     it was emptying  
         it was a child  
             it was on the street  
 it was from the sky  
     it was in our sleep  
         it was fragments  
             it was a child  
                 it was at our throats  
                     it was the time  
                         it was unjust  
 it was something  
     it was bursting  
         it was an arm  
     it was steel  
         it was a sore  
             it was the city



it was sudden

it was a crib

it was in the belly

it was collapsing

it was forever

it was dust

it was everywhere

it was violet

it was running

it was the asphalt

it was from the sky

it was swelling

is was the mirror

it was sudden

it was a wall

it was on the street

it was silence

it was a beam

it was hissing

it was a claw

it was silence

it was a hand

it was the mirror

it was screaming

it was a child

it was the time

it was bursting

it was in the belly

it was absurd

it was the city

it was a beam

it was everywhere

it was distorted

it was croching

it was running

it was screaming

it was something

it was from the sky

it was sudden

it was

silence

it was

the city

And this was the way in which  
my bad-day occurred:  
in an open field I was fallen by a lance  
high reared against the horses the sky  
hoarse dust and panting and stones  
closing themselves around my wound  
of arms of iron and of greed the circle  
that rose lastly with dead eyes I saw and  
the beautiful maiden her dance and her walk  
to my last abyss unsealing the door

Absence name of mine  
my remorse Ornella  
thirst of my land  
never-ending water non  
returning time lost  
sand between my fingers  
caravan of silences  
in a latitude  
of a memory  
my desert  
my sunset  
my emptyness  
western star  
towards a shadows' path  
and over the burning city  
in wide circles the flight  
of dark birds  
that your smile  
ignores

*why this silence  
which alights on your lips  
like a butterfly of ice?  
And your eyes  
looking so far beyond  
tell me  
which never-ending minute  
are they pursuing?*

*Dead!  
Dead!  
Dead!*

All is calm  
nothing has happened  
it seems

All is as usual  
flickering  
in the dark  
the windows

Lit up

All  
    is as  
        usual

Only  
in a distance  
somebody assures us  
that he heard  
something

Almost  
a slight  
cry

Of this death that in the blazing dream  
traces the thought or the scanned face  
as in an endless depth  
where the echo breaks on your beloved  
name and on the pond's edge the grass  
dampened by the moon slowly moved by this wind  
ripples and from the heedless kingdoms comes  
a remote sound of the west  
turning over again  
in the hourglass of its extinct stars

**The central node**

-I-

*The United States of Dollars*

The streets and skyscrapers  
 are born from pain  
 offices with numbers  
 and computers  
 doors  
 elevators  
 desks  
 and all the lights of New York  
 of San Francisco  
 of Detroit

America the proud  
 built on the blood  
 of silent generations  
 on the hard work  
 of the Indian  
 the Negro  
 the Chicano  
 born from the massacre  
 of the children of horses  
 and of plains

Home of the dollar and the rifle  
 how many were lost  
 in the copper  
 and saltpetre mines  
 so as to open  
 the hell of your bars  
 where an entire population  
 of drunks  
 stagger  
 in front of a mirror?

How loud did he scream  
 the crucified black man  
 during your blazing Saturday nights  
 of ropes and steps  
 clenched between the whiskey breath  
 of hooded men  
 of bibles and hymns  
 before the belly of your supermarkets  
 could welcome your children?

How many die  
 in the multicolored banana plantations  
 of Guatemala and Salvador  
 while the neon signs  
 turn on and turn off  
 of your million night clubs?

Who will keep account  
of the bullets in Cochabamba  
where Bolivia falls pierced  
slowly bleeding  
so that it's tin  
can be transformed  
into sparkling cans  
of your weekends on the lawn?

What stories does the moon tell  
amongst the shacks in Caracas  
in the Villas Miserias of Buenos Aires  
between Rios' pawing favelas  
while your young lovers  
endlessly hug each other  
on your park benches?

America of numbers  
and multiplications  
clothing but half of the continent  
the central node  
of the worlds' misery  
you've dug for so long  
the tunnels in the earth  
so wherever is ordained  
the profit of the stock market  
only panting and sweat  
become free men  
pulling along the wheel  
of your thousand gears



There's always  
a wall to cross  
a passport  
a control  
a sudden terror  
that you've forgotten  
why you find yourself here  
in this place and not  
elsewhere  
an endless line  
of suitcases  
something  
to show  
the breath of others  
that warn you  
like a dark  
menace  
the stamp pounding  
on the paper  
allowing you  
to exist  
a neon light  
a door  
a clock

**The Central node**

-II-

*This America*

And this is the heart that beats  
of the thousand hanged men  
on the streets of this America deformed  
in this America that laughs that robs  
that is an immense postal office  
where figures are lined up  
and counted in columns  
where he who has is  
and he who hasn't can drop dead  
where subsidies with oily teeth  
bite the flesh of noontime  
where messages continuously arrive  
where you build and you demolish  
and you build so you can demolish  
where you walk  
and walk  
and walk

This America that's a claw  
planted in the heart  
of the land and of the sea  
this America which is the hell  
of the skyscrapers  
the neon signs  
the bars  
the pool tables  
the freeways  
the whore houses  
the sweaty arm pits  
the grey hound buses  
the holy men  
that chew gum  
that spit gum  
that kill  
that get killed  
who move from one place to another  
wearing uniforms  
leaving for foreign countries  
who come back  
who don't come back

This America  
who owns machines  
and machines  
and machines  
who reflects itself  
in the dark corner of a motel  
who spralls out on the bed  
with opened legs  
selling itself  
who counts dollars in the shadowed lews

who no longer recognizes the rain  
who has lost its sunsets  
who beats in the head of children  
who burns  
who rapes  
who fabricates machines  
to sell coca cola  
in every corner of the world

This America  
without smiles  
without a skirt  
without pity  
this America ticking  
that has become  
a gigantic stock market  
with calculators  
with doors  
with offices  
and secretaries  
with book-keepers  
and engineers  
with death in every street  
with immense card-indexes  
with flags  
and Columbus Day  
with majorettes  
with tears  
with steps  
with gloves without hands  
with shirts without faces  
with shoes with no feet

This America  
that plays and beats  
that stamps  
that indexes  
that calculates  
that is an immense belly  
that chews  
that digests  
that shits dollars  
that gathers dollars  
that stashes dollars  
in deep safes  
this America  
who travels the world  
with a dagger in each hand  
and fifty wounds  
the dark half without lights  
in the entire continent

And we were pushed by this strange wind  
falling with our clothes and our tattered  
rags caught in the trees  
useless questions in breathless silence  
where we awaited the light and day didn't come  
but only descending steps towards a sea  
crossed by sea-gulls in endless  
screeching in far away islands

**For future memory**

-III-

As we have lived  
we have gone

After  
    us  
        cities  
deserted  
    intact

The droning of machines  
surviving

nobody  
    to  
        mourn us

*my baby  
my hope  
my gladness  
he who was born so tiny  
but like a tree  
to grow tall towards the sky  
to look and to know*

We won't come back  
In this time  
which is ours  
there's no map  
there's no footstep  
there's no path

Only  
a glass sphere  
for some  
a handful of snow  
a slow-moving landscape

Or a photo  
or a letter  
or a pin

And an endless rope  
for the others who  
hold it they squeeze it  
following it with their fingers

The majority  
the terrible  
the unrelenting

We won't come back  
that is certain

There's no map  
there's no footstep  
there's no path

But we remember  
The worn coin  
between our teeth  
a question

In this time  
which is ours

All equally silent  
with faces turned towards the stars

*and following his destiny  
to wander the roads of the world  
my baby  
look  
look at my baby  
his life  
scattered in the dust  
with all of his treasures*

*Dead!  
Dead!  
Dead!*



Turn thee unto me and have mercy upon me  
     for I am desolated and afflicted  
 Consider mine enemies for they are many  
     and they hate me with cruel hatred  
Psalm 25, 16, 19

Dogs have compassed me  
     the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me  
 They pierced my hands  
     and my feet  
Psalm 22, 16

And speak peace to their neighbours  
     but mischief in their hearts  
 Give them after the work of their hands  
     according to the wickedness of their endeavours  
Psalm 28, 3, 4

Hear the desire of the humble  
     to judge the fatherless and the oppressed  
 That the man of the earth  
     may no more oppress  
Psalm 10, 17, 18

The wicked said in his heart: I shall not be moved  
     for I shall never be in adversity  
 He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages  
     in the secret places doth he murder the innocent  
Psalm 10, 6, 8

Though an host should encamp against me  
     my heart shall not fear  
 Though war should rise against me  
     in this will I be confident  
Psalm 27, 3

For the needy  
     shall not always be forgotten  
 The expectation of the poor  
     shall not perish for ever  
Psalm 9, 18

The sky is high  
at the pond's bank the dog  
sniffs in the wind

Suspended crickets  
resume their song  
large echo slow light

In the water's reflection  
an elusive wing  
lightly draws  
the arabesque the wake  
to the fish and then vanishes

The road in the countryside  
unites horizons and  
sheaves a little dress comes forth  
granting a song

I will give my flower  
to the one who will cherish it  
born will be my star in the zenith night  
rotating it will fall lying  
at the feet of my love

All that has meaning and often  
forgotten is that in the end  
everyone has the right to live  
the world the time that he's given  
knowingly nourishing the memory  
of a flower perhaps a geranium  
or a cloud on that specific day  
like a sigh over the lake  
when grasping our hands  
in a pledge of hope  
and that our precise task  
on this earth in nothing other consists  
if not to protect a flower  
a cloud a sigh

How it is so  
unimportant  
to quit smoking  
for example its already  
an excellent  
system or doing  
gymnastics also  
could be  
a start  
the essential thing is  
to find a lever  
a pretext  
that will help you  
exist  
outside of yourself  
something in which to  
compare yourself with  
a resistance  
even a small one  
a modest exercise  
and above all everyday  
imposing yourself to go  
out of the house  
dedicating at least  
an hour  
for a stroll  
amongst streets and  
plazas where walks  
a possible  
fraternity

**The never accomplished**

And there will be no more ruins  
if we search inside ourselves  
so as to finally be reborn in  
a new life  
the shadowy parts defeated  
by imploring hands grasping  
like for the very first time touching  
everything  
and inventing names with the wonder  
of a childhood that opens itself to the world  
to the wind scattering the seeds of dreams  
so as to build the foundations of future  
constructions  
denying the cages that constrict us  
in long calculations  
in dust  
in clocks  
in the crumbling  
sand of our time  
where everyone looks  
slantingly at the other  
and destruction is the law  
fragments the reason  
and hatred the result

And here is the task  
that awaits us

The  
    never  
        accomplished

That which will make  
true  
all that we live  
alive  
all that we hope

The water flows  
and the stone remains

With her doll  
along the river side  
the child walks on  
whispering a song  
...pretty little nothing  
who will be queen  
will be the moon  
will be the star  
and the wind will take you  
away  
sewing you a dress  
of violets and dew  
my wound I will entrust to you  
so as to blossom like a flower  
with you I will be sovereign  
in the realm of dawn  
a dancing eagle  
on the outskirts of the sun  
subtle grass  
caressed by love  
taciturn butterfly  
blazing with color  
pretty little nothing  
who will be queen  
because the world welcomes me  
in an amazement of laughter...

With her doll  
along the river side  
the child walks on  
whispering a song

And the stone remains  
but the water flows on