

Il *mangiamoi* di Teresa Mundula Crespellani
de Aleni Serra

The priest who goes to bless houses (1)

In the quiet of the street in the Marina
with smell of beans and cooked fish,
of roasted gobies and sea bream
all of a sudden, a commotion arose.

In the corner of the street
Appeared the priest going to bless,
he entered the first doorway in a row,
he will come right out.

High from the balconies the comrades
stick out their heads, looking into the spot
indicated by other comrades.
One asks the others for news.

From the doorways of the basements, the children
come running out of them, in clusters,
they show themselves eager to see and know;
they distribute themselves around like buttons.

They want to know who the altar boy is,
if it is some little companion;
they want to know who the priest is,
whether it is the President or Priest Loi.

He is the President for sure:
he is cute in the way he walks,
you can recognize him even if he is facing backwards,
you can tell by his cape and hat.

The altar boy, with the starched rochet,
next to the priest looks like a dwarf,
puts on airs because he is being watched,
clutching the basin with his hand.

He is observed and envied
by that whole group of boys;
he looks at them haughtily, wordlessly,
although they are from the same neighborhood.

The mistresses rush inside the houses
To make beds and sort;
to finish cleaning and dusting
For the house must figure well.

What does it mean that this year came
on Easter Tuesday? he delayed,
last year he came on Holy Saturday,
maybe the priest is recalled.

If he is the President of Saint Eulalia.

will certainly not look at the mess,
but he certainly sees even if he doesn't look like it,
he is awe-inspiring because he is also a confessor.

One looks for change to throw coins
Into the basin, that they make noise, for figure,
and that altar boy, who knows,
who does not stretch out his hand to take money.

The altar boy does not stretch out his hand
But he does not leave to look at the water,
he wants to see if the money is a lot
And if they put bad coins.

At the knock of the door as at a trumpet sound
Everyone goes to open and greet,
Grandmother almost bumps into the priest
For wanting to hurry!

The priest throws holy water;
every corner of the room is cleansed,
Lucifer flees in despair,
not even the little tail remains.

Mangiamò, or angiamò, or mangiamoi is a word used in Cagliari to indicate the priest who goes to bless houses on Easter days. A nursery rhyme that was widely used "magiamò chilissò, chifanè (3), a scone with egg to the altar boy and five cents to the bucket of holy water," are words that come from the Byzantine rite of the Epiphany lustral water.

(1) We present the poems according to the spelling Su Sardu Standard, SSS - the standard Sardinian - with some poetic license, mainly the paragogic (words cannot be shortened) and the 'd' turned to 'r' according to Cagliari usage, to leave the reader with the author's intended sound.

(2) Agata Rosa Maxia (2014), Dizionario del dialetto cagliaritano, CUEC, pg.149

(3) chifanè: indecipherable word we find in a nursery rhyme sung during the blessing of houses. A.Rubattu, Ditzionaiu, word: *epiphany*.

Sources:

Incussa: poesias.it/poeti/mundula_crespellani_teresa/mundula_crespellani_teresa.htm

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Sa poesia sarda, http://web.tiscali.it/i.pilia-wolit/poesia_5.htm