

Bideas.org, December 2023

Excerpted from "Passus" by Benvenuto Lobina, Ilisso, 2010

Pour again

Pour again, "yay!" Only this
today gladdens my heart.
Christmas has come
and not even this year which for so many years
I have been searching for it in vain, not even this year
I have found it.

Ancient nights
of Christmas, nights
White with snow, black with darkness,
sitting around the fire
with mother who from time to time
ajar her window to hear
the chimes of the Midnight Mass,
then filled with glasses a plate
of ferros malt
and would pass drinks:
to Dad who told stories of his country,
to Luisicu who told stories of the trenches,
to Uncle Bori who drank without saying anything,
to everyone else, and half a glass
to me, the youngest.
And when the last chime was heard
by lantern light, we would open
a path in the untouched snow
going to the church.
How beautiful the church was that night,
how much joy I felt in my heart
kneeling before the altar.
(I, too, have been
angel with cardboard wings,
I too have sung
"Gloria in excelsis Deo"
before the Crib).

Afterward, one by one,
the candles went out,
the snow melted, and in the mud
and in the darkness of unfamiliar streets
I got lost.

And since then, I've been looking for him and I can't find him
even within my heart
the Little Child of that Crib.