

IN THE CELLS OF REDEMPTION

by Federico Buono

Premise

On May 12, I will undergo a trial for armed robbery, after being released on house arrest order. I have said to the lawyer that I refuse defense, but he told me that he has to do his job. Although I had not signed anything, and have claimed responsibility for the robbery, in my experience and in the continual anti-juridical study, in the courtroom before the judge and the cops I was considered a “right.” Just as the house arrest order is also a right, even though I did not choose anything. As a point of debate — without occluding any limit to a “limit,” one has to ask oneself if in the extreme case evasion and fugitive life are the form of total refusal?

Catapulted into a present absence, and in a reality of static form in the existent, I end up in a background in the remaining profundity within a dark cell of redemption.

What do I see? And see with my “sight”?

Am I able to listen and/or hear in a privation of perspective?

My deadening feet and my legs — nodding the absolute perceptual void — in a compulsive movement the diffusion of events.

It is as if my legs had a major role in my moving, but are they still part of myself, in the moving of my body?

I enter on a Saturday afternoon into the cells of redemption, but after a few infinitesimal minutes, I do not know what moment it is and at which point and what time.

Compressed by a force induced producing induced subordination, I look at the walls — imprinted with images drawn with the blood or vomit of my “predecessors” — by myself.

Moment by moment — in an immobile instant — I introduce the act of depersonalization, in the same absence of “perspective,” inside of the security cell.

I hear a voice that seems to come from a world of imaginative allusions.

I hear, and what do I hear in this hearing?

The voice calls me and asks me, “Need anything?”

In the cells of redemption, there is nothing except an iron bed with a rancid blanket.

Yes, there is something else, it is above, it is a sort of black box, from which the “voice” comes. This sort of relic contains lights that are always on, and a microphone from which the voice can be heard.

“Yes,” I say, “I have to go to the toilet.”

In the cells of redemption, there is me and there are for walls that emanate the odor of soporific redemption.

Outside of the static cell, a corridor lined on both sides with cages as high as the ceiling.

And always great neon lights that eat away the moments where the eye turns in search of “something” to see.

I go back in and begin to hear noises that never stop.

“Rain?” I think. Then I realize that I couldn’t possibly know, in any way, but I discovered in my last trip out of the cell, that it is the water from the toilet, which in a continual circle never stops running.

Silence. The nothing forms the temporality of the silence in a deformed time.

In the cells of redemption, the silence grips the voice in the intimacy of one's own "being," and presses it in a vice, where in a moment this silence brings to life nightmares in a layered form, which eradicate experience and suck out the lifeblood, in what is being experienced.

Half-sleep is the dream that moves reality around the redemptive cell.

But in the cells of redemption is there an "around"?

In half-sleep there forms in a continual intertwining of imaginings, a world populated by innumerable visions that appear and disappear.

I turn over, I lay on one side of my body to not feel too much pain in my bones, which the iron cot press into me, in a compression of my-individual-self.

I hear again the voice, "above" me: "Need anything?"

Did I call it?

I don't distinguish what I hear from what I had heard.

I often hear the iron gates opened, and a spectral figure arrives, in uniform, who looks me in the face, which must be something abnormal.

To me, "Do you want to eat?"

In the cells of redemption, one cannot eat — and although I am not hungry, I consume the rancid pasta given by the cop, even though it is difficult.

In the continual "ups and downs" of the depersonalizing act, I have a kind of intuition, and I ask the cop for the time:

"It's 5:50 PM," he tells me.

"Ah, I thought it would be 2 in the morning," I respond.

It was my belief, based on my having been counting how much had passed, since my entrance into the cells of redemption.

Within, in the cell, the imagination darts from one place to another in a "given" moment.

Before walking away, the cop says, almost considerately, "Try to rest."

"Ah yes, rest?!" I think.

The cell's security door closes, producing inhalation of dullness into my imprisoned body.

I try to walk in order to make a bit of motion, but cold is pressing, and there is also a fan that never stops.

I sink into the deep and into the recesses of the cell of redemption.

Silence... I hear a pounding: "Who is that?" I ask myself. I think I am alone — in passing through the corridor I had seen three empty cells — but I find that there had arrived — without my having heard — someone who complains, and wants to go to the toilet.

I take advantage of this moment, to go as well, and to see who my temporary corridor-mate is, but no, one at a time — the atonement is continuous, and it becomes the fasting of the thought.

Only to end in having fully atoned.

Back in the cell, I lie down, I cannot do anything else.

Do I fall asleep into a continual half-sleep, or is the half-sleep my sleep?

At a certain point I see in the lining of the rancid blanket, imprinted among the folds in brown, a depiction of skulls and skeletons, arranged in various positions.

Am I awake, or not?

I place an arm over my eyes to reduce the headaches that the always-on lights produce in a continual march of their depersonalizing effect, in a moment which I do not sense how it can be passing, I hear a voice again.

But it does not come from above, I hear it around me.

But it seems that I recognize it, it is the voice of Maurizio, my Nihilist-egoist affine, and he tells me in a series of references:

"Cerberus stands guard at the gates of your personal Inferno."

Am I awake?

Indomitable creature
conquered in the body only by Force:
“The redemptive void
stripped of the lives of all those who dare
in a recurrent excessive dazzling
of a white and luminous death
hours overhearing
an individual labor
that Cerberus that stands guard
at the gate of your personal Inferno.”¹

“Maurizio?!” I ask, not feeling anything.
Am I awake?

I laugh, I feel a warmth at the base of my forehead, in an instant of lucid madness, but it goes as it came, and like a shadow that falls I hear again the water of the toilet that never stops...

But around me, in the crevices of the cells of redemption the silence envelops the walls — and I go back to sleep in a perpetual nightmare.

When I go to take a piss, they bring me the food, and I ask the time: “It’s 7 PM,” the cop says.

Tomorrow I expect the trial, and in this static but moving moment, I think of what to say to the public advocate who they have given me without my choosing to take him.

“I deny the right,” here is what I will say.

My thoughts in the successive hours intertwine in a myriad of fragments of psycho-attitudinal intuition.

I wake in the morning and I go to the trial, and in the end though I wanted to oppose it, my limited strength does not allow me to decide.

The handcuffs rattle at my wrists as affirmation of the depersonalizing act, and the persistent light assails me in a series of reflections...

In the cells of redemption have I experienced nightmares, or reality?

1. from “La Fatica” by Maurizio De mone