

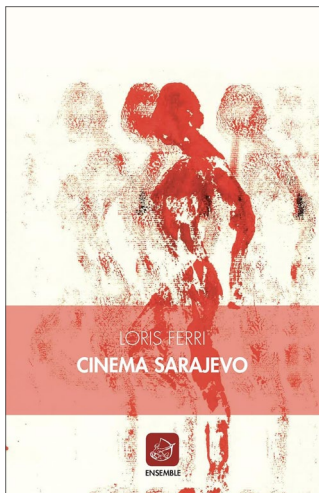


POETRY

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## Selected Border Poems

Loris Ferri



Ensemble 2022 (available on [Amazon](#))



Photo credit: Luciano Americano

### Artist Statement

These texts, published in the Italian collection *Cinema Sarajevo* (Ensemble 2022) and translated in English by Katie Webb, are born from a rib of the European project: REFEST, Images & Words on Refugee Routes (2018), which started in Sarajevo and developed in Croatia, Italy, and Spain, with eight Italian poets, sixteen Balkan photographers, and eight Spanish illustrators. These poems recount a cinema of lives with their pain, youthful dreams and delusions, the fear riding between two centuries, the truce of the war, and the desire for redemption beyond every exodus.

### About the Poet

Loris Ferri (1978) has published several books of poetry, including *Borderline* (Thauma 2008), with a preface by Gianni D'Elia; *Correspondences on the Margins of the West* (Effigie 2011), in dialogue with Stefano Sanchini and with a Note by Roberto Roversi; *Rom: Man* (Sigismundus 2012); *Poem of the Residence* (Sigismundus 2016); and his poems appear in numerous magazines and anthologies, including *The Arcane Charm of Betrayed Love*, a tribute to Dario Bellezza (Perrone 2006); *Italian Poets Underground* (Il Saggiatore 2006); *Poetry Against the Blockade*, with more than 100 Cuban, Italian and Venezuelan voices (ebook, Argo Libri 2020). He also worked with the literary magazines *la Gru* and *El Ghibli* and took the play *Song of the Marginalised* to theatres together with Frida Neri and Massimo Zamboni. In 2019 and 2020 he was artistic director of the Sponde International Festival. He has won the following prizes: Marazza Giovanni (2013) and Sédar Senghor (2017).

 [www.lorisferri.weebly.com](http://www.lorisferri.weebly.com)



I.

**I observe you men and women of tomorrow**

I observe you men and women of tomorrow  
that you are leaving, enraptured by the wind, between dreams and oblivion.  
The urgency of twenty years is your howl.  
When you hold an apple, so the world is enclosed in your hands.  
Like lizards, between the ditches, ready for the simple reawakening;  
do not be frightened of the last snow, alone, in the dripping

serum of illusions and ruins. Every body is a sanctuary  
of limbs, is the innocent anxiety of mouths orgasms flowers.  
The damp seed that takes root, principle of soil and vibration.  
First loves are budding; they have storms and are buzzing,  
tongues that taste of fire and honey. What awaits us, out there?  
Like rain it comes and goes every great season.

II.

**Respite**

It will be maybe for a few hours. To return  
to habitual, indolent gestures; almost simple,  
solid. Wash, brush our hair, go  
to gather wood. The deep scars  
are continents carved out of faces;  
There's no limit, imprint, and even if the collapse  
has emitted one of its breaths of respite, the cults  
of ruin await until the marrow.  
Today us, us loners. Naked bodies, breaths,  
words made of bread; and a vase of violets  
picked from among the rubble. More precious than the golds  
and an ultimate gift: being, finally, in the sun.

III.

**Often, the world, can seem frightening**

Often, the world, can seem frightening  
so you retreat, slowly, like an animal  
you skulk with the skin of the spirit torn from me  
in the cavern of a long night; there, in the total  
half-light, you contemplate the void, awaiting that they reach  
the peaceful silences of a new dawn, while you ask why is love  
so indecipherable and why do men live  
oscillating, like dry reeds, between treachery and horror.

Like this - while in the torment you squint each eyelid -  
you continue, crouched, to smooth the hair of this strange evil  
that poisons, from inside, whose shadow is your shadow;  
doesn't belong to other men. This ferocious beast of bile  
devours everything in fear, until it understands that it  
- the odious demon - is your comfort. In the sweet keeping of this carcass  
stripped of fascination for it; and even the light that settles  
to illuminate the gloaming harms you.

Until a hot rustle nestles in that pitiful den;  
sudden, that almost saves you, betrays its first mystery:  
and it is the smell of sun-cooked dust, that on the threshing floor  
of a dilapidated farm invades with prickly pears.  
It is a dream without dream that escapes death. So you leave it  
like a shy lizard - elude the anxiety of existence -  
and without words you fall in love with this simple breeze  
which, indifferent to the human, breathes freely until its silence.

#### IV.

##### Exodus

Not a nation, more than a nation, a migrant  
crowd with refugee heroes' ancient cheekbones  
moving as caravans of rags - mound  
of hunger blackened tongues - it reaches the places  
where small anthills, colonies of grasses and wheat,  
settled the windy sign of a border;  
slowly the new Homers emerge from an inhuman mob  
of barefoot souls, with their blind eyes, buried in fear,  
engraved in sickening water. Men devour the ground;  
and to the ground they return. Love has a time. Its time is the end.  
On the peaks, where the old goats dare not face  
the hollows of cliffs, hoist themselves as fences, in the mess  
of masses, rags of lousy bivouacs. The morning is cooking  
like a loaf of bread. Every little seed relies on the wind  
and to unknown cracks, before coming - with moist peel - to light;  
it becomes ear between ears. The day of wide bodies is gone.  
Around closed doors of disaffection, men are breeding  
men mixing themselves, children of one first god.  
Half-breeds sowing, along centuries of blood, their own flesh.  
A world has no borders but eyes. In which is celebrated  
the beginning of a mirage. The cosmos is born naked; descendants  
are born, they'll smell of turmeric and barley, darkness,  
berber pupils deep black. They'll be the footprints  
on the hard stone, the flavour in the fields of may,  
the wrinkles of grains set in the cracks of a pomegranate,  
the soil dug from roots; their mestizo faces will be the new god.