

Diego Gualandris  
*ANTARES*

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*Tale 02#*

Seventy years ago, an insect named Aldo lived inside the chamber of a little wooden ektara from Populonia and for at least ten years he stayed still on an upper shelf in a big library, inside an orange bedroom, in a house white mayo.

'Gilda' the insect whispered to himself, just as he woke  
'What...' he continued  
'She didn't like the... mah', he threw his snout out looking at the door  
'When is she coming?'; he was beating nervously the edge of the chamber with his paws.  
'And then...' he sighed  
'Those bites on the neck', the hairs on his paws stood up  
'The asshole who did those to you...'  
His wet jaws were trembling with anger.  
'Bastard!' he came out of the den and started walking up and down the shelf  
'Whoever you are...' he stopped looking at the bed  
'...I will' he opened his violet wings  
'Kill you'

He flew from the library to the bedside table drawing a trajectory in form of a camel. He landed clumsily on the slippery wooden floor tasting like detergent. He jumped from there to the red pillow on the bed. How many marvellous nights in that bed with his beloved Gilda...

She was his world, a landscape in which you could forever lose yourself in. Nobody knew her better than Aldo: in each of her eyes you could clearly see the shapes of those soft valleys, warm hills, sweet lakes, torrent and forests. He would have loved to move there one day.

A violent buzz suddenly burst into the room.

'Hey there Aldo! How are you buddy?' the hornet shouted  
'Hear me out...' Aldo screamed  
'It was you'  
'What did I do?' the hornet answered giggling  
'Look... I...!' Aldo became red with rage  
'Aldo what's up? Calm down'

Aldo was possessed by jealousy. He took off and grabbed the hornet by the neck. The hornet barely noticed his wet trembling claws and which were already shredding his neck.

'Let go!' the hornet screamed with a suffocated voice 'Are you out of your mind!?'  
Aldo immediately let go, he came back to his senses and felt awful for his uncontrolled outburst of violence. The hornet ran away from the window coughing and stumbling through the air.

Then night came. It had been dark for hours and when the door opened a feminine silhouette appeared through the corridor's shade. 'Hey, I was getting worried. Where were you?'. The girl's silhouette was making weird gestures in the corridor's direction. 'Sweetheart are you alright?', Aldo was half asleep at the foot of the bed, he felt an inexplicable turmoil growing inside his yellow chest.

Another figure stepped into the room.

As tall as her, but for sure it wasn't Enrica, her hair was too short. Aldo was trying to connect that figure to one of Gilda's friends.

The insect could barely open his mouth that the figures started intertwining, mingling, before his eyes, Aldo heard their breaths fill the room, wet pops and rustles more and more rhythmic, more and more intense. His many eyes were wide open for a frozen circle. He thought he was losing his sight, but then the dark vanished and in that silent room those noises were ripping his ears.

'S... Sweetheart...' Aldo babbled.

The two silhouettes were clearer, cleaner, naked and finally they fell on the bed, looking like a giant black spider squirming in hunger.

Aldo couldn't feel his body, he was floating in a hellish fog. Staggering aimlessly, he came closer to the monstrosity that was killing his soul. He pushed through that flesh trying to escape those venomous moans but didn't realise he was getting closer and closer. He found himself in front of hairy hills where he instinctively sheltered. He found a hole and entered. He crawled for an infinite time inside the impervious tunnel where the air missed and his body seemed melting step by step. But finally all noises stopped.

A drum, deaf and intense, was playing madly at a fast rhythm. Aldo crawled until exhaustion and then he saw it: a huge flesh cocoon full of pulsing tubes. With his last strength he brought himself closer to the biggest tube and he tightened it with his claws up until breaking it.

A terrible wave overwhelmed him and, absorbed him in a warm red liquid, he felt far away a melody:

*Que te importa que te ame  
Si tu no me quieres ya  
Un amor que ya ha pasado  
No se debe recordar  
Fui la ilusión de tu vida un día muy lejano ya  
y represento un pasado no me puedo conformar  
Si las cosas que uno quiere  
Se pudieran alcanzar  
Si me quisieras lo mismo  
Que veinte años atrás*

Six minutes after Aldo was born again as a *beefsteak tomato*.

Diego Gualandris (Bergamo, 1993) lives and works in Rome. He graduated in Painting in 2018 at the Accademia Carrara di Bergamo.

Recent exhibitions include: 2020 – Quadriennale d'arte 2020, *FUORI*, curated by Sara Cosulich and Stefano Collicelli, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome (upcoming); *ANTARES*, ADA, Rome. 2019 - *The Italian open*, Galerie Rolando Anselmi, Berlin. 2018 - *Caradrio*, with Riccardo Sala, Tile Project Space, Milan; *Il vello d'oro*, Giorgio Galotti, Turin; *Figure di spago / Pratiche di narrazione*, curated by Caterina Molteni, Fondazione Baruchello, Rome;

*L'isola portatile*, curated by Caterina Molteni, ADA, Rome. 2017 - *Gattacornia*, Altalena, Maccagno. Residencies projects include: 2019 - Castro, Rome; Painting Workshop, Nuoro, Quadriennale di Roma. 2018 - Residenza la Fornace / Autunno, Spino d'Adda. 2016 - VIR, Viafarini in residence, Milano. He has been awarded the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant in 2020.