

TO MY BROTHER

... March 10, 2005, just before 6:00 pm. Elena, my brother's wife, tells me that Angelo has had a heart attack...

... while I went to confirm his death, as if in a flashback, a flood of hyper-clear images filled my mind from our childhood and the subsequent close daily exchange of thoughts and opinions, artistic affinities and collaborations...

... especially clear was the memory of when we lost our father in March of 1952 (he was a fire fighter, and died surrounded by flames on Monte Tabor, suffocated by acrid smoke); the memory of that ringing doorbell, brutally casting our mother, our two sisters and we brothers into the depths of sadness...

... the memory of our difficult childhood, characterised above all by our mother's enormous effort and hard work to keep "the band" going...

... you were already in secondary school, and it seemed right to us that you should be the one to continue your studies to become a teacher. And you did, with excellent grades, I remember perfectly, you distinguished yourself as one of the youngest teachers in Canton Ticino...

... and I recall the sparkle of joy in our mother's eyes when you took one of your first paychecks and bought us a naphta stove to warm the house a little; gone were the days of leaping, freezing, under the blankets, armed with scarves and heated stones...

... then came my adolescence, passed under your protective wing, my choice of profession and the "family meeting" to tell me that we couldn't afford to enrol me in high school, never mind the Academy of Fine Arts or studying abroad. And so it was, with your cultural help, that I was able to undertake instead the path of the self-taught artist, which required greater effort and dedication than usual, cultivating other trades in order to survive.

... and then we were grown-ups - you a poet and writer, but also a perspicacious critic of art, of the goings on of Italian Switzerland and the nearby peninsula; your poetry aimed at discovering our roots, but also at pushing past the border, eliciting the interest of Vittorio Sereni, who published your collection of verse, *I compagni del cribbio*, in 1965 for Mondadori as part of the "Il Tornasole" line...

... I remember you socialising with Giuseppe Raimondi, Mario Rigoni Stern, corresponding with Giovanni Raboni, Carlo Betocchi, Mario Luzi, Eugenio Montale... things that would have swelled anyone else's head, but not you. No, you remained 'til the end with your feet planted firmly on the ground...

... our exchanges of ideas on art and our determination to create an art centre run by artists: the Galleria Pannelle 8, which led to the subsequent formation of the homonymous group...

... your dedication as an elementary school teacher, despite having the titles and qualifications to aspire to more prestigious posts, never abandoned you until the day you retired. I remember well the ease with which you could explain the various subjects with great drawings...

... and our artistic collaboration: your poetry and my graphic works, whether engravings or screen prints, which came together in a perfect symbiosis of word and image...

... then came 1994, the year your health collapsed because of a mistaken diagnosis connected to a surgery you underwent. In addition to affecting you physically and morally, this also influenced you culturally: from that moment forward, your poetic voice was characterised by pessimism, vented in the 257 poems you left for us to find, upon your death, on the worktable in your studio in the form of a typescript (yes, in 2005 you were still using an old Hermes Baby manual typewriter), edited and corrected by your own hand, ready to print.

... I accepted the implicit invitation with pleasure and set about honouring your memory with the posthumous edition of *Taedium Vitae 1986-1997*. I also created the Angelo Casè Fund with the aim of preserving your library, so well organised into Prose and Poetry, more than 12,000 volumes, all donated to the Municipality of Maggia (our mother's birthplace), which is cataloguing them to eventually make your collection available to the public through the constitution of a municipal library...

... and now you're with me in Venice, in the church of San Stae; I took the liberty of selecting 26 of your poems, 26 of your testimonies dating from 1960 to 1997. If you were alive, I don't know if you would have agreed to be part of this important exhibition that encapsulates more than 40 years of my activity as a painter. Now that I myself have arrived at the journey's end, I felt obliged to involve you in this adventure as a witness and important presence in my artistic evolution.

... *your brother Pierre*