

ALESSIO SCREM

## **SONNET OF THE MERCHANT OF DREAMS**

Meravês das meravês, a chi!  
Io vent il segrêt cal fâs ben durmî.  
La mê mercanzie mai no si romp,  
sigûr che di not voreis un biel sum!

Denti a ogni ampole an d'è un savôr,  
sceglieit une in base al colôr.  
Cul ros si insumisci di fâ l'amôr,  
cul blu si svole, cul vert si è un flôr.

E dopo al è il blanc, forse il sum miôr.  
Ma cjalâit . . . ! Ognun toli il so colôr,  
che ancje pal presi chi si fâs favôr!

Il neri, mi splâs, al è dut finî.  
Speravi, cul scûr, di rivâ a guarî,  
che a fuarce di sums no rivi a vaî.

*Translated by Joseph Pivato*

A marvel of marvels is here  
I sell a secret that's good for sleep  
My dream merchandise does not shatter  
Guaranteeing a feast each night on a platter.

In each cruet are different flavours  
Choose yours based on their different colours  
With red, dream of being a lover  
With blue, fly; with green, be a flower.

And then white, the best dream of all  
Be careful when choosing your colours  
Make certain the price's in your favour.

I like the black, but its gone now  
I'd hoped for a cure there lying  
That dreaming I could stop my crying.

## WHY IN CARNIA ARE THERE SINGERS AND POETS

Parcè mai ancje in Cjargne an d'è cjantôrs e poetes  
tra una stirpe di rocs e di lavoradôrs?  
Il lavôr al dà onôr sa las mans no restin netes,  
e la pene no vâl la pale, il scritôr il muradôr.

Cheste è par lôr une credence sclete:  
“Vûl sudâ sanc par furnî la cantine.”  
Emplade la panze, ma cu la schene plete,  
no gjoldares neancje un plat di regjne.

Preferis la quartine, lavorâ cu la plume  
ca gote il sudôr su une rime busàde,  
e pensâ, distirâ sul prâ, come in tune scune,  
la biele armonîe di une gnove balade.

Par lôr nol è lavôr sta poiâs in sdravaç,  
e cj pòntin il dêt, e cj tirin un clap:  
“Paltròn che tu sês, precîs di Michelaç.  
Nome mangjâ, bevi e la a spas!”

“Ma io sei a chi par cjatâ la mê Muse.”  
Ma lôr noi capîs, si inrabin, ai rugne:  
“Vonde monades! Ogni scherz une scûse!  
Un pugn in tun vòli, viodarâs po' ce ghigne!”

“A vâl plui la pratiche che la gramatiche.”  
“No cun peraules, ma nome cui fatz . . .”  
Cheste la recite che simpri ai mi repliche  
e ogni gno fâ par lôr l'è da matz.

Di cert mi daressin da vivi l'infier:  
il fâri d'estât e spalâ nêf d'invier.  
Ma quant che la sere si bêf ta balere,  
mi disin: “Poete, intone une biele!”

Parcè mai ancje in Cjargne an d'è cjantôrs e poetes  
 tra una stirpe di ròcs? Io lu sai ben.  
 Forse un forest al sa dal so ingegn,  
 però ancje al cjante, e al bêf, il Cjargnel!

*Translated by Joseph Pivato*

Why in Carnia are there singers and poets  
 Among the descendants of stubborn workers?  
 Labour is honourable if your hands don't stay clean,  
 A pen is not worth a shovel, nor a writer a bricklayer.

For them this is a sincere belief:  
 "You have to sweat blood to fill the root cellar."  
 To fill your belly but with a broken back,  
 Never enjoy a dish fit for a queen.

I prefer a quatrain, working with the pen  
 That drops sweat on a kissed rime.  
 To think, lying on fields like in a cradle,  
 The beautiful harmony of a new ballad.

For them it's not work lying down relaxed,  
 Finger pointing, they throw stones:  
 "You layabout, just like lazy Michele,  
 just eating, drinking, and amusements."

"But I'm here in search of my Muse."  
 But they don't understand, get angry, and grunt:  
 "Enough stupidity, every trick is an excuse  
 a punch in your eye, then see your face."

"The practice is worth more than grammar,"  
 "Not with words but with action."  
 This the recitation they always repeat,  
 And everything I do is the work of madmen.

Certainly they want me to live in hell:  
Blacksmith in summer, snow shoveller in winter  
But at night when we drink at the bar  
They ask me: “Hey poet, recite us a verse!”

Why in Carnia are there singers and poets  
Among descendants of the stubborn, I well know:  
Perhaps a stranger knows about his creativity  
But also to drink and sing, the Carniello!