

FOUR POEMS

by Franco Buffoni

White, Red, All-in-a-Row

White, red, all-in-a-row,  
The toy cars down the shaft...  
Summers, my mind dallied  
With them in the shade,  
In secret, I drove them every day  
In the display-windows too...  
Finally for Christmas I got six,  
three red, three white, all-in-a-row  
To drive where I willed  
On the balcony, but soon  
I forgot them and next Noel  
Gave them away  
To a real child...

Now over Catania in the sun  
Listing in descent to land...  
It's as if I touch, toy with them  
From up here  
White and red amid  
Flat roofs, some sycamores,  
Two pines, display windows...  
At the third pitch, suddenly  
Soaring again...  
I give these away too  
Forgot them  
I'm big, play no more –  
If only I could wish...

What's the Sky Like?

What's the sky like?  
It has six clouds, I think of the child  
Today, in the State smoke shop  
She was holding out a ten thou bill  
For a pack of MS and an instant lottery ticket  
Dead serious like at her first communion  
With that patience little women  
Of refractory clay bear for  
The Father. Right where you don't want it  
Her fingerprint will be immortalized:  
White Carrara backdrop sky cloud in six strokes  
Sign of the albatross around the neck.

### Arsago Moors

The chestnuts in the Arsago moors  
At the edge of the gravestone woods  
200 meters from the cemetery boulevard  
Smell of cats. He got lost there,  
He was 20, it was early afternoon  
But in winter, dark faster,  
He wound on and off that path  
The show was obliterating, sure  
It was snowing, that's why he went  
To scrape some moss  
For the manger scene...

Track after track  
Traced every nowhere  
Under chestnuts and dark white snow...

At home they figured he was playing pool  
In his tennis shoes and green tee-shirt –  
Their golden boy.

### To the English Language

Chanting in the syncopated loops  
Of the conjugated languages  
To oppose the inane hollow thuds  
Of the ex-tongue of Chaucer  
Still perplexed in the palate  
As the «u» escapes and doubles  
And you can't hear the «r» any more...

One should know more about  
The destiny of verb endings –  
How splendid, that «en» of the plural!  
Limpid lichens under ice,  
Bulletin board lamps,  
museum schedules.

*Translated by Justin Vitiello*