migration to Toronto secured for thousands of Southern Italians. Likewise, in our analyses of the resiliency of immigrant families in withstanding new world pressures and in carving out their own lives, we ought not to forget that this was sometimes achieved at great emotional cost, and that women in particular suffered emotional and psychological scars engendered by the difficult early years.


3 On women in Southern Italy see, for example, Jan Brogger Montavarese, A Study of Present Society and Culture in Southern Italy (Oslo, 1971); Constance Cronin, The Sting of Change: Sicilians in Sicily and Australia (Chicago, 1971); Ann Cornelson, Women of the Shadows: A Study of the Wives and Mothers of Southern Italy (New York, 1970).

4 Corriere Canadese; Teledominica.

5 Unless otherwise stated, all of the case histories have been culled from the confidential files of the International Institute of Metropolitan Toronto, PAO.


7 Corriere Canadese; Toronto Telegram; Toronto Star; Toronto Globe and Mail (October 1955 issues).

8 Interviews (confidential, names withheld).

Ave

The intelligence of hands without books,
made thin by famine, war,
and arms to the elbow in the blood harvest of California grapes,
sleeping in the hay of concentration camps,
new wine in the new world,

eating hay,
the Germans raging

as the Americans ran up Italia’s calf,
your father planted his body like seeds,
that buried the soul of a man in a single
parts here and there on Annonella’s roof
for the last day’s rising,
for hybrid grapes.

Hands made plump by pasta
and the keep appetite of Canadian winter,

working hands,
the desire for grandchildren, a prayer,
called coarse by detergents,
smoked in the flames of votary candles,
the friction
home scrubbed to shining, mortgaged,
or of assembling the wiry parts of small appliances,
dressed in marigolds and pink asters,
the fiction
the chocolate factory, stale, the
car, the bungalow, the
d söyled with the friction
the dream packaged in the potato
dressing in the new world,
the intelligence of hands,
dressed in marigolds and pink asters,
the intelligence of hands,
the sharp-eyed needle darning the drapes
made coarse by detergents,
that robe a pink future on the western
the intelligence of hands,
that robed a pink future on the western
the desire for grandchildren, a prayer,

as if the world
the desire for grandchildren, a prayer,

yet pampering the self-satisfied rex,
the desire for grandchildren, a prayer,

mamma, the reputed intelligence of your sex,
the desire for grandchildren, a prayer,

lies in the blood’s eclipse of the mind,
the desire for grandchildren, a prayer,

three other selves,
the desire for grandchildren, a prayer,

for the last day’s rising,
the desire for grandchildren, a prayer,

A Strange Grace

For my father’s mother

Love always dressed herself in black.
She was a fat old woman with dark eyes.

Love always loved me best,
herself in black.
She was an octogenarian, love, a

and her heart tracked for many miles barefoot in its slow orbit in the space
of her universe
and the miracle of a child’s
on the horizon, a cry ripped
of the nurturing darkness,
the dream packaged in the potato
dressed in marigolds and pink asters,
the dream packaged in the potato
dressed in marigolds and pink asters,
the dream packaged in the potato
for hybrid grapes.

and the precocious day chattering and

and the precocious day chattering and

as if she couldn’t shut up for a second,
as if she couldn’t shut up for good,
as if she couldn’t shut up for a second,

her heart tracked for many miles
as if she couldn’t shut up for good,

barefoot in its slow orbit in the space
as if she couldn’t shut up for good,

of her universe
as if she couldn’t shut up for good,

and the miracle of a child’s
as if she couldn’t shut up for good,

sunset birth, unfolding
as if she couldn’t shut up for good,

the dream packaged in the potato
as if she couldn’t shut up for good,

on the horizon, a cry ripped
as if she couldn’t shut up for good,

of the nurturing darkness,
the dream packaged in the potato
as if she couldn’t shut up for good,

a free fall with a strange grace toward
the dream packaged in the potato
as if she couldn’t shut up for good,

another
the dream packaged in the potato
as if she couldn’t shut up for good,

kind of darkness,

and the precocious day chattering and

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