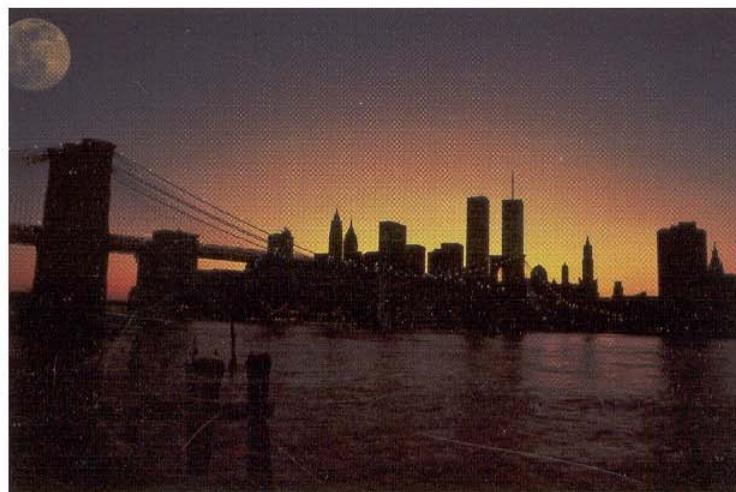


FLAVIA PANKIEWICZ

# AMERICAN ECLIPSES

POEMS



TRANSLATED BY  
**PETER CARRAVETTA**

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY  
**JOSEPH TUSIANI**

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Mille e mille parole.  
Poliedri di teorie.  
Parallelepipedi di dati.  
Storia che Si attorciglia,  
pozzi profondi di pensieri e sudore.  
Per niente. Per caso. Per fede.  
E scrivere. E non dormire.  
E scrivere ancora.  
Prende forma il pensiero.  
Si materializza.  
Fluisce. In una Sola direzione.  
Tutto converge. Tutto.  
I grandi pensatori. I piccoli protagonisti.  
Gli oppressi del mondo.  
Quelli che vogliamo Salvare.  
Quelli da riscattare.  
Pagheremmo con la vita.  
Voglia di rivoluzione.  
Ansia di combattere l'ingiustizia.  
Di scovarla. Di accopparla.  
Di restituire alla vita equilibrio e bellezza.  
Quello che non c'è per i dannati della terra.  
Voglia di creare paradisi per loro.  
Per te.

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Thousands upon thousands of words.

A multiplicity of theories.

Pyramids of data.

History coiling upon itself,  
deep wells of thoughts and sweat.

For nothing. By chance. In trust.

And writing. And no sleep.

And keep on writing.

Thinking taking shape.

It comes to life.

It flows. One way.

Everything comes together. Everything.

The great thinkers. The little guys.

The oppressed of the world.

Those we mean to save.

Those to redeem.

It would cost us our lives.

A longing for revolution.

Eagerness to fight injustice.

To snuff it out. To slay it.

To restore balance and beauty to life yet again.

What's not there for the wretched of the earth.

Desire to invent heaven for them.

For you.

## ESODO

Andarsene da Se stessi,  
strappare radici,  
amputarsi le braccia  
e andarsene.

Lasciare le luminose terre promesse  
per nebbie pallide e pacate.

Troncare. Dimenticare.

Fare la vita a pezzetti  
e buttare il Superfluo.

Tuffarsi nel profondo dell'anima  
a cercare la perla preziosa:  
disfarsi della chincaglieria,  
subito.

Chincaglieria abbagliante come gemma,  
fatua come il vapore dei tombini di New York,  
sterile come un sogno stupefacente,  
piena di fascino,

del fascino d'un travestito.

A che serve inebriarsi  
di divinità dell'antica Grecia,  
osannare crocifissi  
o invocare Buddha?

La terra Si è inaridita sotto il peso  
della sua leggerezza.

Tutte le luci di Manhattan Si sono spente.

Long Island è sprofondata nell'oceano senza lasciare traccia.

I suoi abitanti sono partiti.

Uesodo è completo.

## EXODUS

Leaving oneself behind,  
tearing one's roots,  
Cutting one's arms off  
and go away.

Leaving luminous promised lands  
for pale and pacific fogs.

Ending it. Forgetting.  
Cutting life up into bits  
and throwing away what is unnecessary.

Leaping into the depths of the soul  
in search of a precious pearl;  
getting rid of all the paraphernalia,  
quickly.

Paraphernalia that blind like a gem,  
fatuous like the vapor from New York manholes,  
fruitless like hallucinating dreams,  
richly fascinating,

with the fascinatinn of a transvestite.

What's the use of getting drunk  
on ancient Greek divinities,  
celebrate crucifixes  
or call out to the Buddha?

The earth turned arid under the weight  
of its own lightness.

All the lights in Manhattan are out.

Long Island just plunged into the Ocean without a trace.  
Its inhabitants are gone.  
The exodus is complete.

## ECLISSI AMERICANE

Il sole Si è oscurato  
e l'universo, immobile, ha smesso di respirare.  
Tracce di buio inestricabile.  
Presagi di gelo perenne.  
E poi il nero incantesimo Si è dipanato.  
Il movimento ha trionfato sulla stasi.  
L'energia ha travolto il silenzio.  
La luna e il sole hanno ripreso le loro rotte.

Non ho più paura.  
Il vento ha smesso di ululare.  
La tempesta Si è placata.  
Sulle linee terse del paesaggio  
Si ridisegna il sorriso.  
Avró alberi e boschi e fiori  
di cui inebriarmi.  
E cavalli, per galoppare nel sole.  
Avró acque limpide in cui nuotare  
ed infinite proiezioni planetarie  
Si disegneranno davanti ai miei occhi.  
Avró gatti accoccolati ai miei piedi  
nelle notti d'inverno.  
Raccoglierò fragole  
e sentirò la freschezza della rugiada,  
sull'erba, sotto i miei passi.

Non ho più paura.  
Avanzerò imperterrita  
in nebbie fitte ed acque turbolente.

## AMERICAN ECLIPSES

The sun darkened

and the universe, motionless, stopped breathing.  
Traces of inextricable darkness.  
Omens of perennial ice.  
And then the black spell unraveled.  
Movement triumphed over stillness.  
Energy overrun silence.  
The moon and the sun returned to their course.

I am not afraid anymore.  
The wind stopped wailing.  
The storm subsided.  
Against the terse lines of the landscape  
a smile is drawn up again.  
I will have trees and woods and flowers  
to inebriate me.  
And horses to gallop in the sun.  
I will have clear waters in which to swim  
and endless planetary projections  
will outline themselves before my eyes.  
I will have cats crouching at my feet  
during winter nights.  
I will pick strawberries  
and feel the freshness of the dew  
on the grass, under my steps.

I am not afraid anymore.  
I will walk tall  
amidst thick fogs and roiling streams.

Avrò paesi da visitare  
e intere popolazioni da abbracciare.

Non ho più paura.  
Ci sarà legna da ardere nel mio camino.  
Avrò navi spaziali per crociere nelle galassie.  
Camminerò Su tappeti arabescati  
e correrò contro vento, con forza.

Non ho piú paura.  
Il mondo mi appartiene  
ed io appartengo al mondo.  
È una simbiosi perfetta,  
senza interferenze.  
Le tempeste di mare  
saranno onde dolci con cui giocare.  
Gli uragani  
Solo deboli venti da governare.  
Spegnerò incendi  
come fossero candele.  
E scioglierò la neve di tormento polari  
col calore della mente.  
E sentirò con gioia la morsa del sole  
in estati torride,  
senza bruciarmi.  
E il buio non sarà un tunnel a senso unico  
perché tutte le direzioni condurranno alla luce.  
Nulla puó piú temere  
chi ha attraversato un'eclissi.

I have countries to visit  
and whole populations I want to embrace.

I am not afraid anymore.  
There will be wood to burn in my fireplace.  
I will have spaceships for galactic cruises.  
I will walk ora arabesque carpets  
and will run against the wind, with determination.

I am not afraid anymore.  
The world belongs to me  
and I belong to the world:  
it's a symbiosis  
without interferences.  
Sea storms  
will be sweet waves to play with.  
Hurricanes  
are mere winds to subdue.  
I will put out fires  
as if they were candles.  
And I will melt the snows of polar blizzards  
with the heat of my mind.  
And I will feel the joy of the grip of the sun  
in torrid summers  
and not burn myself.  
And the darkness will not be a one-way tunnel  
because all signals point toward the light.  
Nothing can frighten you anymore  
if you have witnessed the eclipse.

FLAMA PANKIEWICZ is a creative writer and freelance journalist born in Lecce of a Polish father and an Italian mother. She is the founding editor of Bridge Apulia-USA, an Italian-American magazine which she has edited since 1996. Contributor to the cultural page of *La Gazzena del Mezzogiorno*, one of the main dailies in Southern Italy, she has written from and about the United States of America paying special attention to the subjects of literature and Social issues.

She wrote for ten years for the most important Italian equestrian magazines and has also published a few biographies in *Cavalli e Cavalieri* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1981) and *Border to Border* (Milan: Ed. Equestri, 1988), a novel inspired by a true story.

PETER CARRAVETTA is Professor of Italian and Comparative Literature at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York and Head of the Faculty of European Languages and Literature at Queens College.

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