

Lucciola, Simone, *Bianco di Titanio*, Cosenza, deComporre Edizioni, 2014, pp. 80, ISBN 978-88-98671-08-3, € 10

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Bianco di Titanio consists of 50 poems, each arranged on a single page. The longest contains 14 lines and the shortest 2. The texts are followed by an *Appendice* titled *Imbastiture* with nine more similarly structured compositions.

The author's visual orientation is clear from the cover and the title. A painting by a well-known artist residing in Formia (Salvatore Bartolomeo) appears on the front against which we read the book's title: *Bianco di Titanio*. As we might expect, the abstract work is composed primarily of shades of white with some red and grey patches. In the copy dedicated to me, Simone Lucciola explained the title as follows: "Il Bianco di Titanio è, per sua natura, elastico, anche se tende a ingiallire nel tempo, contrariamente al bianco di zinco, che nel tempo invece si incrina: ecco perché nel processo di imprimitura della tela nella pittura a olio- si predilige la prima variante." ("Titanium White is, by its nature, elastic, even though it tends to yellow with time, unlike Zinc White, which, instead, cracks over time. Thus, for the process of priming the canvas in oil painting the first is preferred"). Since all the poems are intensely compact, there is, literally much "yellowed white" in this book. The *Bianco di Titanio* signals a poetics of fitting each poem on a page, so that the reader may instantly vision it before gradually reading and understanding its various semantic, rhetorical, playful layers of meaning. This approach could parallel the manner in which we confront a painting. This concept of layering as key to composition and understanding, whether written or drawn or painted is succinctly expressed in the following two-line eponymous fragment on page 50:

La strada era bianca di Titanio
cemento di un secondo cemento.

Another visual aspect (beyond the many examples of words referring to color and art or painting) may be found in the repetition of the geometrical adjective *quadrilateri*, four sided. Since the poems all fit on the page and are short, they are always four sided like a painting. Thus, they reflect the arts beyond their borders; the book begins and ends referring to the four sides or margins, the 54 *quadrilateri* and 6 *quadrilateri* (page 7 and again page 70).

We discover quite a array of linguistic expressions in this unique volume. As one might expect, traces of "classic" literature are distinctly present, ("come d'accecato Edipo/s'aggira tra gli asfodeli," p. 41), echoes of Dino Campana ("I palazzi medicei che si schiantano sulla passeggiata/aprendo al Lungarno che sprofonda nella notte eburnea," p. 48), and the marked use of words from

Japanese, (“Nel tuo azzardato tsujigiri verbale/la ricerca di una mano pietosa/ che ti affili il tantō, che ti accordi il kaishaku,” p. 19), English (“Peel slowly and see/ e fermarsi lì/ raggianti come un gatto,” p. 56) and foreign terms generally accepted in Italian such as “Di *découpage* in *découpage*,” p. 9 (Here we note the visual term *découpage*, cut out as in graphic art).

The extracts above obviously reveal a highly mixed linguistic register, but, they possess similar traits: they all contain word play, puns, similes, assonance and interlinguistic rhyme (“see/li”). In this context other sources and intertexts come to mind: Alfonso Gatto. A visual and profoundly literary poet with surreal vocabulary and phrasing. Lucciola also combines very different semantic fields (in a manner someone reminiscent of Amelia Rosselli) in these powerful poems with entertaining effects. The fragment cited above continues as follows: “Di *découpage* in *découpage*/l’anima mia scarnificata come un ossobuco,” p. 9.

Although the tone is frequently playful and ironic, many poems are acute portraits of human archetypes one might pass on a street. Youths (or politicians?) who follow vacuous trends and end up with nothing, are the object of the following composition:

Aveva le tasche piene di canzoni
poco o nulla orecchiabili
e non c’era sempre bisogno d’entertainment.
Finirà come i tanti sbandati
che cercano casa in un quartiere
tra le strette di mano dei ragazzini sdentati
che non si incontreranno più.
(p. 27)

We appreciate the reoccurring dark humor. Here is another typical example:

Rigagnoli di sopravanzo umano
perplessi nella palta della piazza
e a chi non soccombe si schiudan le tombe,
s’apprestin le bombe.
Sfilato il pugnale
la piaga si contrae sensuale.
Cala la sera come una ghigliottina.
(p. 40)

We have seen how *Bianco di Titanio*'s fulminating poems are framed by large spaces of *Titanium Whiteness*, which literally and then symbolically functions not only as support and layer but mirror, *specchio*, of the psyche: "Il destino ti aspetta bel bello al tabernacolo,/ [...] nel mentre ti ravvii allo specchio" (p. 35). In the mirror whiteness the words, images, music, and drawings are reflected back to the poet, to his "speleologia del ricordo" (p. 23).

We will conclude with the piece that evokes such mental mendering through the weave of a table doily ("Varchi cicatriziali lungo l'orbita del centrino") then through train tracks ("guadando il binario fuori sincrono"). The meandering becomes the act of remembering which is likened to the acoustic experience of listening to an old record ("vecchio microsolco") that "peremptorily explodes at the end." The metaphors, paratactic syntax, and contiguity of images connect to create a visual mechanism of a memory, its beginning and then its abrupt interruption.

Varchi cicatriziali lungo l'orbita del centrino
e il compasso deraglia a ogni giro di giostra
guadando il binario fuori sincrono
con la speleologia del ricordo.

Radiofonia fallace di un vecchio microsolco
che scoppia perentorio sul finale.
(p. 23)

Bianco di Titanio is Simone Lucciola's second book of poetry, his first appeared in 2010: *Disulfiram* (Perrone Lab, Roma). Author of many graphic novels, the most important are: *Campana*, a co-production with Rocco Lombardi, (Guida Edizioni, 2011; new revised edition: 2014) on the life of the famous Florentine poet Dino Campana, and *LO-FI* (GRRRzetic, Genova, 2010). Lucciola also sings with punk 'n roll band, *Blood 77*. Clearly his influences are therefore quite mixed. He attended the Liceo Classico of Formia before obtaining his degree (DAMS, *Discipline delle arti, della musica e dello spettacolo*) at the Università Tre in Rome. His graphic profession brings him into contact with another world of visual depiction and narration such as Japanese mangas, which have also had a significant impact on him as well.

Simone Lucciola's *Bianco di Titanio* is a necessary book for those who wish to discover one of the most vital, dynamic, and inventive new voices of Italian poetry today.

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