



Filippo Parodi

# FLAMING CHILD



## Presentation

*Punctual  
I've partaken  
in a past that often seemed  
more yours than mine  
as not a part of me.  
Wandering and asking.  
Anyway just there.  
In the fog. In the passage.  
In the orgasm of the meeting.*

To float next to our inner child. To touch him by touching ourselves. To go as far as to lose ourselves into a “border vagueness”, in “the glare of a nebulous frontier”. This is the path between perceptiveness, psychoanalysis and magic which Filippo Parodi has undertaken by revisiting a wearing past, a gloom concealing ego traps and blaming archetypes. And through that darkness, beside the child – first angry, then an encouraging guide – the author walked, until he found a space of possible release. Hence his poetic testimony, almost in direct contact with the rapprochement process (and sometimes reconciliation) with childhood. A writing style more corporeal and immediate than his previous works. A writing in which the ancient desire to take off and play the game, even in the clear awareness of the inescapable travail of existence, resurfaces.

Original title:

*Per te soltanto, bambino*  
*Frammenti di emisferi e Tapping-ninne nanne*

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Velasco Vitali, *Edoardo* (2010), oil on canvas (195 x 194 cm.)

Filippo Parodi

# Flaming Child

*To Maria Neve, Luana and Edgardo*

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## Author's premise

My initial idea was to make an English translation of my book of poems *Per te soltanto, bambino – Frammenti di emisferi e Tapping-ninne nanne*, published in 2018 by Polimnia Digital Editions.

When I started to translate – although I didn't have a great control of the language, I had the presumption and the madness of not relying right away on a professional translator, at least not for the first draft – I realized that it was impossible for me to make a faithful translation, and what I was working on, pushed by a mysterious indomitable energy, was already the pulse of a creative process, the very beginning of something else...

To shift into another language, so different from Italian as for accents, syntax and grammatical constructions, miraculously set me free from some rooted stiffness and so, without any friction, new images arose, other horizons full of charme and surprise opened.

Moreover, I admit that my point of view had partly changed after a couple of years. For example, the still accentuated duality existing between the inner child and myself told in *Per te soltanto, bambino* had step by step diminished, and if in the original Italian version of the book I used to associate the child with a "you", rewriting the poems in English I instinctively replaced here and there that "you" with an "us", as to highlight a stronger union between both the two parts of me. I think my psychotherapists – the Sorceress who constantly appears throughout the pages, but also the fundamental one I have been working with for many years – would have been happy!

Other important or small changes in the choice of words have been then made to maintain a musicality in the poems. Even there all this occurred in a completely natural, quite inevitable way. It was extremely important to me that the poems, as a last result, carried the same rhythm as the original Italian ones, and that they could be read with the same tune and metric cadence, resulting almost like lullabies, litanies, spells recited by a children's choir.

Around all these reasons and circumstances this book came to light, the moment it was supposed to happen: as more and more often it seems to me to happen in my life, everything had already been decided and prepared... and I just had to hold the pen and make myself an instrument.



Child                      and I  
en-**chant**-ments and a-**stonish**-ments  
**chants**                      and    **stones**

*You want your freedom, make your freedom mine  
'Cause I got the style it takes (...)*

Lou Reed and John Cale, *Style it takes, Songs for Drella* (1990)

When Filippo first informed me about his will to rewrite *Per te soltanto, bambino* in English, meaning a faithful translation of the original text, I found, translating some texts he had chosen and highlighted as emblematic of the collection, a surprising possibility of both metric-prosodic and phonetic realization, also probably due to the structural quality of the original.

After a pause likely caused by arrangements with the publisher, Filippo later informed me that he intended to translate the book by “rewriting it”. That is to say, adapting it, in the new language, to the recovery of new meanings that would also mark the evolution of the parts at play, the “actors” on the stage of *Per te soltanto, bambino*. So the author was no longer requiring a faithful translation: he did not mean to renounce the suggestions of the new language prosodic game, nor any new semantic expansions, gaps or rejects determined by his life experience in space and time. So, extraordinarily *beautiful*, dissolutely *unfaithful*: Benedetto Croce’s voice was with us (and with our spirit).

The very first poems suggested to me by Filippo, already as English elaborations he himself had been working on, astonished me for his amazing ability to lay the verse in the cultural detachment granted by the new language and dictated by his evident necessity both of an intellectual and human research into the relational mechanisms of the child inside the adult and the adult who works in the maze of psychological signs and functions relating her or him to the world: it was more than clear that something had been changing, and was in progress; something, in the process of re-treating the texts, had evolved over in the dark corners of the encounters with childhood, with the “Sorceress”, with the memory and the remembrance, with the trading exchange between adult and child, as well as between the

child, the adult and the “Tip-Tap Therapy”.

The English language detains, as known, the extraordinary gift of potential exportation in supranational understanding, and in this regard, my sincere compliments also go to the publisher for supporting the plan of Filippo Parodi, an author energetically open to trans-communication and the exit of the text from the page links and cages. Let the writings fly as far as possible, *oralized* towards the singing and the enchantments of the scop, the aedo, the troubadour and the nomad vate. Filippo has that strength, that secure attitude which I have personally experienced reading with him live in public and presenting his books. He is a modern scop, Dylan Thomas, Bob Dylan and Lou Reed themselves would have probably noticed his vocal spin.

This new book is a result of a rhetorical detachment, a pre-rhetorical emotional tension, maybe pre-maternal even, or rather post-maternal, which poem after poem allowed the author to progress towards an *alienated* self-recognition. Between 1948 and 1949 Samuel Beckett, born in Foxrock, not far from Dublin, to an Anglo-Irish family, decided to write his *En attendant Godot* in French in a similar but opposite operation, from the English of his origins to the estranging French which along with Italian he had started studying when he was fifteen years old, before moving permanently to Paris at twenty-five. He was certainly looking for an anti-rhetorical diaphragm which would soon allow him to lay the foundations of the *Theatre of the Absurd*, renouncing the use of his deep knowledge of the English language as the acute philologist, linguist and Irish poet and writer he was. Only under a very different light may we observe Giacomo Leopardi's adoption of ancient Greek, which as Giuliano Gramigna reported, was rather an attempt to an *ante litteram* “encryption of data”: the poet made use of it in order not to be so easily understood by his family members and relatives in his most indecent or inconfessable thoughts.

Filippo Parodi's work is rather an objective and truthful game of mirrors undoubtedly of extreme interest for readers of any gender and sex, nationality and cultural trend, perhaps even of all ages, even preschoolers, if we think of genial operations like Lewis Carol's, who ten years after the publication of his *Alice in Wonderland* conceived a text of lesser physical entity, yet of just as much narrative, linguistic and aesthetic delight, with his *The Nursery Alice*, in his own words aimed to “Children aged from nought to five”. Certainly the attempt was to export the text beyond the initial limits of usability of the first *Alice*, while with Filippo Parodi's *child on fire* the bet is purely linguistic and semantic... but who may really know? Some time has passed since the child of the “Tip-Tap”, and something has perhaps shifted forward. The adult has continued to be an adult, while the child followed the maze path among visits to the “Sorceress” in a meanwhile renewed complicity, and revelations, earthquakes, breaks, dreams, visions,

car rides, *punches on the train*, amazed memorial enchantments.

So *Flaming Child* is not just a four-hand translation, but a careful, passionate, fraternal operation of rewriting with two hearts, two brains and other doubles working side by side in a perfect-imperfect harmony. Just as in my teaching job I admire and protect the first and yet I adore and support the last, in life as in literature I always aspire to the Perfect result and yet I protect and practice the all-human (maybe after all divine as well) art of Imperfection. Starting from poetry, the queen genre of perfect *Non-Perfection*. I admire in Filippo similar qualities, which determine the value of our friendship and *Wahlverwandtschaften* – but he conjugates them in his own completely independent and unrepeatably style thanks to his immense competence of *Krautrock*, *Progressive*, *New Wave*, as well as *Rock*, *Pop*, *Disco Music*, *Easy Listening* and so on, something which has undoubtedly contributed to solving more than one metric, prosodic and structural problem in the re-creation of this *Flaming Child*. Those musical genres are his own territory: I did nothing but listen and keep the canonical structural elements of the transition, the passage.

This child now flames in the primeval darkness as a powerful character who informs and seduces the adult, attracting her or him out of the shadows and, not daring to push, stimulates to the next step. That flame is a *non-fatuus ignis*, vocated to arouse wonder and enchantment, amazed sense of the danger of an unfinished love dialogue. Yes, this burning child brings us clarity of vision, it is the flame of pagan sacrifice renewing the form and reinventing the spirit of some visible, invisible, anyway ready-to-listen god who metamorphoses the prototype of the *Puer Aeternus* into the evolution of the “Puer Post-modernus”, an infant poet and linguist ready to carry the timeless young flame throughout the world.

Giancarlo Sammito

*The ball I threw while playing in the park  
Has not yet reached the ground (...)*

Dylan Thomas

## POEMS

We met  
all the time  
in a border vagueness

in the trap of the chest,  
within bleak entrenchments.  
In the crash of the present,  
on the solitary track.

But really  
at the end  
in the light-blue of the voice.



You challenge my whole chest  
insisting with your kicks  
but just for you, on Fridays,  
I walk down in the morning  
the tree-lined boulevard  
– and often snorts the step –  
that about in half an hour  
(of low and soundless houses,  
disheartened balconies,  
and mouldy lace-trimmed curtains,  
quite squashed and hammered  
flowers in the vases)  
leads us to the palace,  
the light-green final one  
where, on the sixth floor,  
with a smile is waiting  
our unequalled Sorceress,  
healer, perfect heart:  
we follow her so lacking-in-judgment magic fingers  
that always carry us  
and package the solution.  
The pie that,  
she guarantees,  
is nearly fully cooked.

Throughout the afternoon  
you're so devoutly moaning.

I try hard to corrupt you

no longer good or evil.

Only clear projections  
that glow towards the evening

where  
a sloshing carnival  
seems to wait for us.

The pie  
in the sun mouth  
you invoked  
from down the well

is wholly mine now  
I can eat it  
you want more.

The frosting in the males,  
in women watching us:

the same way  
you once watched  
the dazzling starry treats.

Under our small soles  
let the asphalt keep on  
drilling us and shattering  
also let the wheels  
threaten friction sparks,  
landslides of reality

I lay my sweetest palms  
on your exiled shoulders

then look at the father  
burning in the driver seat

later at the impervious  
distant mother neck.

Look now: you are melting  
in a resigned tenderness.  
Or maybe it is a grown-up  
hysterical full laugh?

Will you get on that  
boundless carousel?

Wouldn't you get on?

Through my hands what do you do?

*Not today* you seem to say  
then you start to strum  
glowing roaring veins.

You're curious  
indeed.

It is in the writing  
that I say I'll meet you.  
But you ignore the words  
only you perceive  
the cold or the heat  
the anguish, the relief.  
You would entirely drown me  
in my blood of alphabet.



The Sorceress  
this morning  
on the back of my hands  
was beating more decisively:  
I tried to cooperate.

Indeed it seems to me  
you're pacifying yourself.

You are just swinging now...  
I couldn't even say where.

The day he was going  
to kick and punch the train...

he often swears, my child.  
He can't stand any more  
the father who has thrown  
his wretched son to earth

even not the seasons.

That present without present.

Of course  
I had to dance  
for him the step of patience  
renewing lullabies  
of Tapping, hemispheres:

at times I look so stupid

mostly if I am  
in the subway,  
at the dentist's,  
in the swimming pool.

Beautiful my child  
when he falls asleep.  
I feel, all of a sudden, less serious the jaws.  
Nearly able wings:  
they're raising me once more.  
Me frivolous to hope not suddenly to fall.

At the Sorceress  
a while ago  
I have left my chair.  
As she suggested me  
I approached the closet  
and laying on it my hesitant inexperienced palms  
(more stable were my feet)  
I began to push...  
then  
little by little  
along the chewed cervical  
it seemed to me as blurring  
the harpoon of such alive  
fingers of playgrounds  
or still burning on the blackboards  
  
frying on a school desk  
  
and Sisters eyes to Heaven.

Squeezed in the morning  
among your mom and classmates  
you would have loved someone  
to come and rescue you:  
the highest humiliation  
and it was there that you started  
to breed and feed your scream.  
But waiting for the angel.  
And the angel wasn't there.  
I wasn't present either.  
Who knows how you got by...  
anyway you managed  
as well – didn't you? –  
to invent some kind of thing...  
In the scream you proceeded.  
Why cry and deny it?

Punctual  
I've partaken  
in a past that often seemed  
more yours than mine  
as not a part of me.  
Wandering and asking.  
Anyway just there.  
In the fog. In the passage.  
In the orgasm of the meeting.



You were born and I desired that!  
You were born, my chest is calm.  
In the glare – you were born! – of a nebulous frontier.  
You were born, the time has come!  
You were born, the world is glaucous.  
We're exalting – you were born! – upon a meadow heartbeat.

Voices that  
you throw to me

so different carillons  
they never stop they never stop they never stop they never stop!

Where on earth has nestled  
the camouflaged truth?

Now where is it gasping  
for breath  
in this beehive?

At home  
against the closet  
I push and push again.  
I'm making sure that nothing  
is happening around.  
Indeed its doors can pick us up

they contain us.

I breathe deeply  
as I push.  
You won't fall  
my child.

You were going to punch  
that fucking train which  
departed unexpectedly  
three seconds in advance.

*They would have emulated us!*  
You did nothing but repeat...  
If I appeased your flames  
it was merely by chance.

But the Sorceress, one hour ago, moving a few fingers  
to the right and to the left  
incessantly repeated  
that I'm strong  
I'm in control  
I will take care of you  
and that – there on the track – I brilliantly showcased  
that I'm really able  
to brake, I am a person!  
A plausible and adequate person among people.  
The people  
– sure, the people! –  
they were as much astonished...

Would they have exalted us  
at that station without strawberries?

For sure  
they wouldn't have  
denied that applause,  
the proper recognition  
to all your bitter business  
of frenzies and implosions and barren pallid whines,  
you thunder in my breastbone  
because I've sabotaged you.  
I've held the worthy gesture  
detaining the forearm  
with my sissy coward, soggy vapid grip  
but you would have succeeded  
you macho, you pure anger!  
A punch against the train  
to say: YOU AREN'T DEAD!

She shakes her head, the Sorceress.  
You whisper she's embittered.  
Indeed she seems so shady...  
there's nothing – says – heroic  
or masculine in smashing  
a punch against the train

and to your showing off  
I can't stop being an audience.



I always tell new names  
every time I'm going back.  
I wonder how the Sorceress  
can really keep me up,  
with her biro she stops everyone,  
arrows, endless bridges,  
pieces, then beehives... maybe constellations.

From the mountains of filled papers  
here it comes a wave  
of barracks and apnea,  
it's rising, it's a barrier!  
Untouched and faded pies:  
the lack is curling up  
above my baby-thorax.  
The morning so enormous.

I'm chanting lullabies  
and perfecting the technique  
through the morning fish bones  
to adorning puddles  
which turn into elevators  
if you randomly come down.  
That's it, we arrive, kicked by butterflies  
at liquid magic lawns,  
at the pine and porcupine,  
the witch cat and the elves,  
now a cloud is bending.  
Necklaces of bluebells,  
mushrooms, tadpoles, pebbles.  
I manage to delight you:  
you're laughing through my neck bones.

At times  
my child and I  
can understand each other.  
It happens  
for example  
when suddenly he's tired  
wide opening my crying  
then watches on the edge  
as I keep on running after  
vivid pinks and yellows.  
Not without shyness  
here I coast a green,  
I try to grasp the blue:  
I take it by the scruff!  
He doesn't brake, my little blond.  
He follows me bouncing.

Does he meet himself in me?  
Neither yolk nor egg white.

You won't interrupt me  
at the time when the voice  
will have to be majestic  
more light-blue and transparent.  
You'll be listening to me  
in the audience, over there.  
Startled but so cosy  
faces, we can reach them.

It would be quite magnificent  
if step by step, at last  
you could stretch yourself  
above my rising chest  
and delicate, the pharynx:  
now it is our stage.

A triumph of the adult  
you couldn't run away from.

analytic on the left.

Synthetic on the right

Visual or tactile.  
Spindle, little prayer.

I'm drawing near the child  
a laughter shakes inside.

It may be  
that I'll be welcomed  
perhaps he's going to play.

Organized on the left

vibrant on the right.

The brain stem now is sipping  
a mighty tender glimmer

the room already fluffy

the needle and the wire...

I'm returning on the set.  
I save you in the present.

A father  
you remind me.  
Another one  
I know.  
Trying to match them  
we struggle all the time.

Hence  
you hit your feet  
  
your feet above my breastbone.

In my turn  
I don't reply  
  
in some neon lingering.

I draw you  
just before  
the Sorceress hill eyes

paper that lit up  
among the muffled ruins.  
Red and orange fill  
your shrinking shape of sounds.

Down there you don't know,  
don't know about me yet.

I've learnt  
with no jokes  
more or less  
to incorporate  
a light-blue reprieve  
a green meadow calm

aside  
I'm spreading them  
with the Tapping blows.

Improvised  
on my arms  
merry little rain.



It seems nearly to slide down  
but your roots are deeply fixed.

I'm swaying  
– that is true –  
you profit it and lead me  
across slippery gleams  
of ashy boneless days.

I will learn  
to astound you:  
in my whispers  
dew.

In truth  
you are right:  
I cannot carry you.  
Again, years later,  
what a struggle doing that!  
I blame you. Or ignore you.  
The getaways I plan...  
But here you are today  
with light-blue intentions.  
Funny yard, you have  
already passed my rockslides  
and all the hammered necks,  
a fountain of illusion.

*A piece of cake* you seem to say

a bow, a flight you teach.  
Swarming guiding stars  
in your skies of raspberries.

You would have found yourself  
twelve years old and wandering  
bereft of a present  
but a much more lively future  
already there to fondle you:  
shop windows and TV.  
Still turned off, the body.  
Diligent. Acquitted.

The ancient leitmotiv.

The scenting expectation.

The idea that might suddenly  
reach and overwhelm us  
that dazzling day wriggling  
in the oven now.

And you push a bit, expand,  
brighten barks to me.

The Sorceress is foaming.  
Is she congratulating me?  
Since our first appointment  
I've been doing  
– she insists! –  
a very well done job.

The ankles, for example,  
I've stopped screwing them.  
And in the eyes you play.

How delightful  
now to lie  
upon  
the earth kisses.

Lost  
in the warmth  
  
grain that satisfies us.

GO AHEAD

I say and say  
beating down the knees  
with the palms  
– the eyes shut –  
I follow you

you levitate  
above an old worn out  
and yet sharpened world.  
But the scene is dressing up  
with pulpy iridescences.

I am like a tree  
whose trunk is constituted  
by myriads of concentric  
vibrant throbbing circles.

Every circle, now, takes part to the next.

The strong song propagates  
from the focus I woke up.



A tip-tap made by the Sorceress  
on my hopeful knuckles  
to everyone belonging:  
whose is this body now?

And these legs  
– whose are they –  
holding an occurrence?

Floating, we take off  
between the hemispheres.

The facade  
you more or less  
every morning  
used to stare at  
with punctual affliction  
in the kindergarten yard

as a sleepy whip  
is now handing back  
on my feeble lingering  
a resigned humiliation.

It was just your fantasy  
to spare you at the time.  
Just the same fantasy  
you are now embarrassed for,  
which you're trying to bury  
as if my own ribcage  
for jest or because done  
became an endless rug.

You and I  
levities  
who have been  
for years  
learning every day  
to hold on  
to the ground

when you want to fly  
I always try to stop you.  
Every time I'm floating  
you grasp on to the collarbones.

Children fingers on  
my cheeks  
on the forehead.

They're pushing, ascertaining.

I stay still

no opposition.

They'd like to understand  
how far  
I am existing.

With them now I discover  
that I can be so vast.

We hang  
over the lake of  
desirable distress.

I take you to the woods on Sundays for a stroll,  
into a Turkish bath, even into clubs.  
For you I play guitar: sparkles, opalescences.  
I make you sleep and cover up, fairy tales for us.

Admit it, without memory sometimes we get lost  
and vivid is the breath, I land upon blond wrists.  
I lead you along tracks of nice and snowy noise.  
We share the gentle sun there inside the manger.

You talk to me, I ask you more slowly to repeat,  
I'd like to understand, anticipate your heart,  
to extract that perfume and try to recreate it  
through the daily act of crossing my apneas.

Some mornings I get up  
and you can find me already  
walking on the street

the body so obedient.

Loyal, almost new  
the existing in the steps

and the sky immensity  
at last  
no longer rumbles.

Then I start to follow  
irreparable whiteness

the weakness of outlines  
is cheery and absolves me.

I continue on my way

the sun shakes its behind!

You have moved somewhere else.

Or maybe I forgive you.



## Author's note about Tapping

The poems collected in this book are a “poetic testimony”, resulting from my long experience with psychoanalysis and later with EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), a structured psychotherapy method, very effective for the treatment of disorders related to traumatic events and various psychopathologies including anxiety, depression, somatic symptoms and panic attacks. According to this clinical methodology, throughout a bilateral sensory solicitation by means of a sequence of ocular, tactile and auditory stimulations called Tapping, a sort of harmonization takes place in the patient's episodic memory, a better communication between the cerebral hemispheres that leads, as a final result, to overcoming anguish, fear, guilt or suffering associated with a particular experience.

In a similar way, in EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques), a self-help technique to rebalance the energy system indicated not only for a psychological discomfort but also for the treatment of physical pain and illness, Tapping – in this case only by means of the fingers – is used on some parts of the body corresponding to the Chinese acupuncture points.

But with Tapping it is also defined a guitar technique where the notes are played directly on the keyboard, without pinching the strings. Beginning in the early Seventies, then acquiring considerable popularity, this process was widely experimented by Genesis guitarist Steve Hackett. In *Shadow of the Hierophant*, a track that closes with rare magnificence the 1975 album *Voyage of the Acolyte*, the succession of sounds becomes dreamlike, hypnotic, immeasurable. By awakening the right hemisphere (which is said to be the creative and imaginative one), Hackett's Tapping sometimes comes close to a mantra or a lullaby. For a moment it would almost seem to contain, to embody its distant meanings, giving rise to a unique, unequivocal release.

## Profile

Filippo Parodi was born in Genoa in 1978. In 1986 he moved to Milan, where he currently lives. He graduated in Aesthetic Philosophy in 2003 with a degree thesis focusing on the themes of verisimilitude and “the wonderful” in poetry. Since 2007 he has published his writings in *The End*, *Haute Food* and in the international poetry and research magazine *Zeta*. In 2012 he won a competition organized by Gorilla Sapiens Edizioni and his short story *Il proprietario* was released in the anthology *Urban Noise*. For Gorilla Sapiens he also published in 2013 his first book *La testa aspra*. He later wrote new short tales and poems for *Verde Rivista* and *Ultrafilosofia*. In November 2014, together with Massimo Bacigalupo, Peter Carravetta and other scholars, he was invited at Palazzo Ducale in Genoa to take part to the conference *Terribile la parola: i filosofi sono succubi del problema-parola*, celebrating the forty years of research and work of the philosopher-poet Raffaele Perrotta. In 2016 some of his verses were included in *The LivingStone*. In 2017 he published poems in *Limina Mundi* in the section *Canto Presente* and in *Il Foglio Clandestino*. The same year he began to collaborate as a redactor with Edizioni del Foglio Clandestino and for Fondazione Mario Luzi Editore he published the collection of poems *La panchina senza angeli*. In October 2017 he was called for a reading from his newly published book at Villa Buzzati in Belluno, for the closing event of the visual poetry exhibition *Voci visibili nel granaio – 42 Poeti Visivi per Dino Buzzati*. In 2018 he published for Polimnia Digital Editions the poetry collection *Per te soltanto, bambino – Frammenti di emisferi e Tapping-ninne nanne*. The following year two poems from this work were translated into English and published by the editorial staff of *Slow words – people and stories from this world*. Hence the author’s idea of completely rewriting his last work in English.

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