

Paolo Bartoloni, Views & Reviews: Franco Buffoni, in Heat 8. Australia's International Literary Quarterly 1998

(...) The ingredient which makes Buffoni's poetry so original and compelling is its a-spectacular, simple, linear, pared down, direct, unpretentious, demystifying tone exemplified by the following extracts:

*The nunnery in via Marcantonio Colonna
Was built in the 30s. And my aunt,
Who worked in the establishment
She started when the war ended
Has been there since 1946*

*Since then she has gone out three times to vote
(divorce, abortion and '48)
And twice to go to hospital.
You need a permit to vote.
And for the hospital as well.*

(Franco Buffoni, "Suora Carmelitana")

Language is not here self-aggrandising and narcissistic, but rather articulated around congruous syntagmatic knots and idiomatic expressions in which words are not the central catalyst, but rather referential communicators. In choosing an inconspicuous language, this poetry not only makes a stylistic statement, but also diverts attention from the alluring centre stage of "power", redirecting our gaze toward the quotidian, indeed "banal" elements of everyday life. If this literary attitude can be linked to previous experiences (for instance "i crepuscolari" in Italy or Ponge's poetry), it is also a conscious departure from the hollow rhetoric characterising much of Italian life of the eighties. Here, simplicity and irony go hand in hand. Irony is mainly used to uncover the limits of language and to demystify its claim to truth and power.