

Under the First Moon

Lc 16, 9

Part One

GMT 1:30 A.M.

Sudan, 3:30 a.m. local time.

The new moon was born this night. It is still small, only a little slice, but it is golden.

Its light is enough to illuminate everything.

Our new life was born this night. Now it is only a mere hope, but it is golden.

Its light is enough to illuminate our smiles.

The volunteers from Caritas arrived, they gave us something to eat and they loaded us on to this bus. They took us out of our hell.

That's enough! I don't want to think about what has been. From today onwards I will only think of the future.

Kira feel asleep almost immediately. She sat herself down by the window, leaned her head on my shoulder, smiled at me and closed her eyes. I cannot sleep. I could stay awake all night and listen to her regular breathing, feel her warmth on me, and just look at her?she's so beautiful!

Even if I wanted to sleep I couldn't. I'm too hungry. Kira ate the little package of food that Caritas gave to me. She divided her own among her little brothers: "They are so little! It's not right that they should suffer from hunger, they have to grow." I managed to convince her to eat my part by telling her that the sight of all of that blood had turned by stomach. She believed me. There! I did it again. I thought about the military massacres again.

Only the future. From today onwards I must only think of the future.

New York City, 8:30 p.m. local time.

I have never been in such a beautiful elevator dear!

It takes a quarter of an hour to reach the top floor, you know. It's obvious that the armchairs should be comfortable.

It seems unreal that one can have supper with the whole of New York below you. It's wonderful!

I love you Nadia, and our honey-moon will be fantastic, because you deserve the

best.

Thanks Ale!

Come on! Don't hug me like that, everyone is looking at us?in America they are Anglo-Saxons, they don't show their feelings in front of everyone like us Italians.

Sorry.

Ah, the top floor, we've arrived, come on Nadia.

I can't believe it! I've never seen such a beautiful view! That's the Statue of Liberty, what is that tall building there, Ale?

The Empire State Building. And those are the Twin Towers.

Look at all the lights! The moon seems useless and you can't even see the stars, but you don't even miss them!

Part 2

GMT 3:00 A.M.

Sudan, 5:00 a.m. local time

I must have slept a bit! It will be dawn soon. The dawn of the first day of our new life. I should try and sleep a little more! Tomorrow will be a very tiring day. But how can I sleep with this hunger?

Kira is beautiful! She's still asleep on my shoulder. Now she's smiling. Maybe she's dreaming, it must be a beautiful dream! Our new life?

My arm hurts, it's been still for too long. I am afraid of waking Kira up if I move it, she could lean against the window, but I want to feel her here, leaning against me. I was so terrified that the soldiers would find her hiding place, when they attacked our village, that I didn't want to leave her alone for even a second. I dare not think what those Muslim dogs might have done to her if they had found her.

But she's here now, in my arms, safe. I can smell her perfume, I can hear the beating of her heart.

I am a lucky man.

We will be taken to a refugee camp, but it will only be for a short while! I don't know how, but we will get to Italy, perhaps by passing through Albania.

The missionary taught me Italian? "Cume stai, fratello? Bene e lei???"I'll find a job and we will have a baby. Who knows what Kira will be like with a big belly? Wonderful! I'm sure of it!

I begin to caress her right arm, her ebony skin is so soft! I could nearly take a bite out of her! The hunger is making me have strange thoughts!

There, laying on her chest is the cross that I made for her. She never took it off, not even when showing everyone that we were Christians could have meant death for her. She told me that it was like having me close to her heart, that it would remain there forever.

When I told her to take it off because it was dangerous to wear it she told me that she felt safer with Jesus near her.

It's nice to touch her curly hair. It's so long, so soft. I wish we would never arrive at our destination so that I could continue caressing it.

It's day time now and we will stop for breakfast and the hunger will cease to torment me.

I don't want the daylight to wake Kira up, but there are no curtains in this bus. It's been travelling for so long. There, good cloud! You have positioned yourself right between Kira and the sun, now she will be able to sleep some more!

New York, 10:00 p.m. local time

-Nadia, you've left half of you caviar behind, don't you like it?

-It's really nice, Ale! But I don't want to put on weight. Even though I am already on a diet, I am trying keep myself in check!

-I really admire your self discipline, you know. I always eat everything, and you can see the evidence from the size of my stomach!

-Your stomach doesn't matter! You're so good! You know? At the beginning I fell in love with you thanks to your interests: Amnesty, WWF, "Commercio Equo"

-By the way dear, what do you think about donating a portion of the money from the wedding presents to Caritas? There is an emergency in Sudan now: The Muslim Military forces are attacking various villages in the south. It's a massacre. Money is needed for the refugees.

-Sure Ale, it is the least we can do for those poor souls.

-I knew that your big heart wouldn't let me down!

-Do you want a dessert? They do an excellent tiramisù here!

Part 3

Some Months Later

Rome, 17:30 local time

-I'm a bit late Nadia, the traffic is a disaster here, even the traffic lights at the Trionfale are red. I'll hang up now, there is a Moroccan guy here who surely wants to wash the windscreen for me. A big kiss..

-How are you, brother? Nice car, dirty windscreen?

-Ok, but hurry.

-Here.

-Thank you brother! God bless you.

Michele

Senigallia 30/01/2001

<http://www.epicuro.org/michele/racconti/>