

## **A wall, a poem, a summer epiphany.**

Joey Skee (August 11, 2008)



I am reminded of Eugenio Montale's haunting poem upon discovering a simple barrier wall built by an Italian immigrant in Brooklyn during the 1930s.

Merigiare pallido e assorto

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presso un rovente muro d'orto,

ascoltare tra i pruni e gli sterpi



schiocchi di merli, frusci di serpi.

Nelle crepe del suolo o su la vecchia  
spiar le file di rosse formiche  
ch'ora si rompono ed ora s'intrecciano  
a sommo di minuscole biche.

Osservare tra frondi il palpitare  
lontano di scaglie di mare  
mentre si levano tremuli scricchi  
di cicale dai calvi picchi.

E andando nel sole che abbaglia  
sentire con triste meraviglia  
com'è tutta la vita e il suo travaglio  
in questo seguitare una muraglia  
che ha in cima cocci aguzzi di bottiglia.  
- Eugenio Montale



To lounge at noon pale and lost in thought  
against a scorching garden wall,  
to listen to blackbirds crackle and snakes rustle  
amongst the thicket and bramble.

To spy the lines of red ants  
in the cracks of the earth or among the vetch  
sometimes breaking and sometimes interlacing  
at the summit of minuscule heaps.

To observe between the foliage  
slivers of the sea in the distant pulse  
while the cicadas' tremulous scraping  
arises from the bald peaks.

And walking into the blazing sun

to feel a sad amazement

how all of life and its travails



is here on this pathway, a wall

topped with sharp shards of broken bottles.

Translation by Joseph Sciorra.

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<http://www.bu.edu/agni/poetry/print/2000/51-montale3.html> [5]

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### Links

[1] <http://newsite.italy.org/files/3815wallglass011218462986jpg>

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