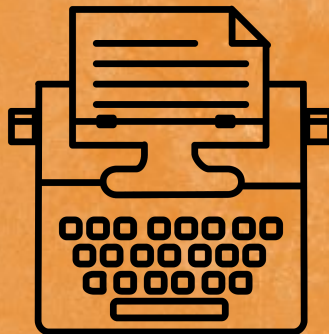


Title:

Author:

Occupy Climate Change (OCC!)

*Creative story
entry*



FORMAS



Avellino 2200

By Anonymous

Richard and Mary were lying naked on the bed, a pillow separating them in the vain hope that it would block the heat from their bodies. They loved each other very much, but on that rainy day, with 55-degree temperatures, they did everything not to touch each other in order to avoid further sources of heat. It was not, however, the first time the heat won out over their love.

- Shall we go to see the sea in Novanapoli? - Maria suddenly asked, lashing that silent veil lined only by the slow flow of sweat on their bodies.

- In this rain? Are you crazy Mari? and then I don't think the FCPs (Popular Control Forces) would agree- answered an estranged Riccardo.

- I know, Riccà, but it's been raining for fifty-nine days in a row, I can't take it anymore staying indoors waiting for the URA (Food Supply Unit) to come and deliver the package to us. -

After the first ten days of uninterrupted rain, the authorities in Avellino had decided to shut down all non-strategic public centers and had imposed a ban on people leaving their communities unless authorized.

- Mari, what if the URA comes and doesn't find us? What do we do? We don't eat or drink anything all day? And then the URA would obviously report immediately to the FCPs-.

- Ricca' we had another climate war, now you're worried about a day without eating and some reprimands? Besides, we still have some water left, we'll be OK. -

- It's precisely because I went to war that I want to rest easy now. -

- You want to be quiet? Then I'll touch you and we'll see- said Maria with a playful air of defiance.

- Please, Mari, it's hard enough to stand the heat as it is, then you go crazy too? -

- Then let's go to the sea! Come on, it will be worth it! - Maria insisted

- No!

So, with a feline snap, Maria threw herself on top of Riccardo and began showering him with caresses and kisses but which at that moment were instruments of torture rather than demonstrations of affection.

Riccardo was unable to extricate himself from his partner's warm grip, trying hard to shrug her off and babbling various moans and pleas until he had to give in.

- So what! Let's go! Just get off from me! - and so Maria, with a contented and satisfied air, put an end to the "torture." - C'mon, let's go by bike too, we'll only take a little while-Maria offered him the content, knowing how annoyed Richard was to walk even a few hundred meters. Normal for someone who, in his three days of work was forced to walk 5 km, all the way to Piazza Macello, since Maria needed the bicycle to go to Benevento.

Not so normal, however, was the name "Macello" for a square, if one did not know that in that place, three centuries earlier, in the 1920s, thousands of cattle a year were slaughtered and baked; a few decades later the slaughterhouse had given way to the "bus" station, the ancestors of the NS (supermagnetic shuttles), until it became , later, the most important production and distribution center of vegetable meat in the Italian Ecotransfeminist Republic (REI), as well as Riccardo's place of work.

-Mari, I thank you for the bike offer, but in my opinion with 'this rain if we take bikes we will end up dead (jamm a fini' o campo santo)! -

- And how scary you are! And to think that my ancestors from Avellino had to travel at least an hour to go to the sea, you now, even though you live in Avellino, it's just a stone's throw away you're afraid of a little rain? - Maria often teased Riccardo about his attitude, which she playfully called hyper-prudential.

- Yes, but they at least could take a bath, they were more motivated to go. We if we just strain that sour water with our fingers we're likely to get our hand out from the sea with three more fingers - retorted Riccardo.

- For that you always have to thank your ancestors who, like you today, sat on their asses on the couch in their comfortable private homes while the first climate crisis was going on outside and they didn't even notice.

-Ah, that's it! When they did, if they did, something good it's your ancestors, if they were jerks (strunz'), they are my ancestors? - Riccardo tried to retort but knew it was only a matter of time before he had to resign himself in the dialectical confrontation with Maria. Besides, she taught Marxist philosophy at the 'Marielle Franco' State Academy of Environmental Disciplines in Benevento, and dialectic was her bread and butter.

The two put on their acid rain suits and left the room. Without being seen by Mrs. Agata, the delegate for the management of the Gramsci Hostel, they slipped out and got on their bikes.

Novanapoli Bay was a 15-minute bicycle ride from Avellino and was named after the city of Naples, which had been completely submerged by the Tyrrhenian Sea the previous century. The last stretches of what was the Neapolitan province, however, had disappeared for good a few years before the ecological revolution in Brazil in 2148 (the year from which the new Marxian calendar begins). That same revolution that had broken out in the former Italy in 2151 and ended only in 2181, after the Second Climate War, between the militias of the ecotransfeminist revolutionary party and the pro-government militias led by the Democratic Party.

The bay began in the Baianese area, formerly part of the province of Irpinia, but the Neapolitan refugees who came to Avellino in the second wave of migration in 2112, had obtained, after the first climate war of 2126, that the bay be called NovaNapoli to pay homage to what, for them, was once the most beautiful city in the world and now devoured, with all its splendor, by that very sea so praised in the past.

The bay was accessed by crossing the former Monteforte Irpino nuclear power plant, decommissioned after the famous regional protest of 2079. Riccardo, whenever he had the

chance, would gladly tell that story, feeling somehow connected: his great-great-grandfather had been one of the initiators of the protest that erupted after an earthquake severely threatened the plant's stability. The nuclear disaster was averted only by a miracle or a stroke of luck.

They rode their bikes past the two dilapidated cooling towers that had now become a landscape element of the Avellino landscape, two more high ground among the already numerous mountains that enclosed the valley.

Riccardo and Maria arrived at NovaNapoli, risking falling several times because of the rain. They climbed a small turret to admire the view from above and leaned against the railing that overlooked the sea directly.

The rain was still beating violently and there was a strong wind, but the view of the sea managed to make up for that atmospheric discomfort they had suffered for too long.

- Did you see that it was worth it? - said Mary in a relaxed tone and with smiling face upward, seeking the caresses of the wind. She finally felt reborn after days and days of seclusion in the house.

- I must agree with you again this time- replied Richard, also satisfied, but more by the happiness on his own companion's face than by the sight of the sea.

The two of them spent several minutes in strict silence, letting themselves relax by the sound of the waves violently crashing on the plinth below them. For Richard and Mary, the violence of the waves represented not the threat of a rough sea but the opportunity to discover the charms of a nature that, although altered and exhausted by long centuries of harassment, still held the full force of life.

It had already been several decades since the acidity level of the oceans had become too high to allow bathing; there was no stretch of coastline that was not bordered by railings and prohibition signs. Many generations had never experienced the enjoyment of a dip in the sea, including the generation of Riccardo and Maria, now in their 40s, who had recently learned to swim in Avellino's new municipal pool.

It was perhaps the realization of this missed experience that made Maria's gaze suddenly change, absorbed in contemplation of that stormy gray sea: an uncontrollable impulse was threatening her newfound tranquility, as if those crashing waves were knocking insistently inside her, she sensed their call deep inside her veins.

It was a matter of a few moments, and with the same feline impetus with which she had thrown herself at Richard a few hours earlier in bed she launched herself from the railing to be welcomed into the arms of the sea.

-Mari!!!- screamed terrified Riccardo, who did not even have time to observe the scene that Maria was already flying toward the water.

Fear had immobilized Riccardo, but it was only a matter of moments before he too joined her in the water.

Riccardo with his eyes half-closed and burning began shouting Maria's name, wiggling all over the place, but receiving no response. Only seconds later, he heard her name called by a dim voice in the distance: -Ricca!! I'm here, come on!

Riccardo breathed a sigh of relief at seeing her a few meters away, but fear was already beginning to give way to anger.

-Mari' but you are all crazy! How did you come up with this bullshit? Did you want to die? - Riccardo was furious, as much as he was fatigued by the violence of the waves that were slamming him left and right, dragging him under. Those few compulsory swimming lessons in sea readiness were saving his skin.

-Mari' but you're crazy! How did you come up with this nonsense? Did you want to die? - Riccardo was furious, as much as he was fatigued by the violence of the waves that were slamming him left and right, dragging him under. Those few compulsory swimming lessons in sea readiness were saving his skin.

-Ricca', come and see what I found underwater! - Maria seemed to be completely immune to the swirl of waves above her. That excitement was giving her a strength she had never had before.

-I do not give a damn (Nun me fotte un cazz)! Let's get out of here before we come to a bad end! - shouted Riccardo, already facing the shore that was a few dozen meters away.

The two began with great strokes and no small effort to swim and within a few minutes they were safely on shore.

-But how the f**k did you decided to do that? - as soon as he set foot out of the water, Riccardo immediately resumed verbally lashing out at Maria, who was not at all interested, however, in her companion: all her attention was on what she had found in the sea. -Ricca', shut up and come and see! -

Riccardo crinkled his eyes, both in burning and disbelief at Maria's words.

-But what did you find that was so important? -

-It would appear to be an old sweater, it was caught on the branch that scratched me when I dived to the seabed- replied Maria who was scrutinizing that object with particular attention: it was a faded brownish color, and seaweed and shells were caught between the holes in the fabric. Who knows how many years it had been there

- A jersey? It looks like just a very old rag to me! So many were recovered with archaeological research decades ago! - Riccardo could not indulge that enthusiasm, distracted by the filth dripping from that garment and understandably still reeling from the scare.

-But what rag and rag, it's a T-shirt! Who knows how many years it had been there at the bottom of the sea! - Maria retorted.

-All right it's a T-shirt but now throw it away it's filthy! -

- But how do you get it! We have to take it to the Museum of the Remains in Naples! - Maria protested, hoping to have found something of value.

- They will have plenty of these "relics."

- Let's take it anyway, the museum delegate is a colleague of mine from the Academy, her name is Rita, surely she can tell us something. -

Richard pointed out that the museum had been closed, like every other service, for fifty days now.

-That's okay, we'll go directly to Rita's commune- there was nothing for Riccardo to do, that day Maria was irrepensible, there was no way to make her desist from her ideas. Even the rain, which kept falling from the sky insistently, could no longer do anything to stop her.

-All right, I will come with you (t' accumpagn') but at least first let's go to the Shower Center and take off this crap from our skin (ra cuoll')- continued Riccardo- although I imagine, they won't be very happy to see us again since already day before yesterday we used the service- Riccardo's remark was not at all unfounded since the Hostel's Shower Center was only accessible twice a week. Twice-a-week body cleaning was actually a recent "achievement"-a few years ago acid water transformers had been tested and put into operation. Not enough was being produced to meet daily use, but through equitable redistribution a service for all citizens was guaranteed.

The two took their bicycles and headed for the hostel.

-Goodness! How did you two get yourselves together? More importantly, how did you allow yourselves to go out without permission? - the Hostel delegate reacted shocked and enraged at the sight of the pair.

- Taking water from the rain was not enough for us so we decided to take a dip in the sea...-Richard replied with annoyed irony.

- Into the sea! Has the heat gone to your head? That water is toxic! Do you want to put the whole hostel at risk?

- Of course not! - replied Riccardo - precisely for that reason, since we would like to avoid turning into other beings could we use the shower service again? -.

- You took a shower yesterday couldn't you...-not even time to finish that Riccardo pressed her- Yes yes, we know that, but you see, is it better one less shower for others or another bacterial outbreak around? - Riccardo was appealing to the fears of Mrs. Agata, who had already faced such situations several times in the past.

The delegate thought about it for a few seconds, just long enough to imagine a very unpleasant scenario for the hostel, after which she waved for the two to follow her.

She led them to the shower center where she set up the water purifier just for the two of them.

-Make it quick, mind you! Try to use as little water as possible- Ms. Agata warned them after which she took her leave.

Cleaned and refreshed, Richard and Mary went up to their room, and when they opened the windows they saw, to their enormous amazement, that, after no less than 59 days in a row, it had finally stopped raining, or at least the sky had taken a break.

- At last, Ricca! - Maria was seized with irrepressible contentment while Riccardo with his usual annoyed humor merely said -Uà, couldn't it stop raining when we went out?! And what he fuck! -

- Now we can go to Rita's right away and show him the shirt-not even time to enjoy that view for the first time free of rain, after so many days, that immediately Maria's thoughts turned to the heirloom she had found in the sea.

- What's gotten into you today, Mari? You don't stop for a minute! - Riccardo asked in an annoyed tone but Maria did not even dignify him with a glance, grabbed her shirt and headed out the door signaling for him to follow her.

He could not believe his eyes, he had no effect on her that day and all he could do was remain silent and follow her wherever she said.

The sun's rays were slowly managing to make their way through the gray clouds that continued to threaten a resumption of the thunderstorm, but all the tenants of the Hostel were already on the street rejoicing and hoping that that interruption might really be the end of that seamless rain.

- Where does this Rita live? - asked Richard who was pantingly following Maria as they descended the various floors of the Hostel.

- At the Luxemburg commune, near the photovoltaic park. We will go with the NS - Maria answered.

- We cannot take the shuttle, the ban is still on! - replied Riccardo immediately.

- True, but now I contact Rita from the Hall to get special permission. A few weeks ago she told me the prefect has granted her, as the director of the Museum, the possibility to have special permissions if necessary. She will certainly do us this favor. -

Her eagerness to find out what the heirloom in her hand was led her to quickly come up with a solution to whatever impediment stood in her way.

- I don't think that's very fair. Can't we go another day? Only now it has stopped raining, maybe the situation will normalize- Richard did not even give time to respond that he immediately continued- Okay, today it is useless to try to reason with you. I give up-. He had finally understood-.

At the contact center of the Hall Maria asked the manager to put her in touch with Rita Genovesi of the Luxemburg commune... -Hold on a few seconds- the manager told her.

- This is Rita, who is this? - said the voice coming out of the earpiece.

- Hello Rita, this is Maria from the Academy-

- Hi Maria, how are you? Did you see, it finally stopped raining! -

- About time too, I couldn't take it anymore! By the way, I just wanted to take advantage of this interruption to come see you. I need to show you something I retrieved from the sea. -

- At sea? How is that possible? - Rita asked with legitimate amazement.

- I'd explain everything if you could get me an authorization to take the shuttle and join you. I just can't wait. -

- Yes, of course, no problem! Give me five minutes and I'll get it to your local council office. Give me the address! - Mary's prediction about the director's availability was correct.

- Thank you from the bottom of my heart! The address is 47 Ramiro Marcone Street, Gramsci Hostel. -

- Perfect! Five minutes and the authorization will arrive. See you in a few. -

- See you in a little while - the contact broke off.

Maria and Riccardo stood waiting waiting for the manager to hand them the code to insert in their key card and show to the Shuttle driver.

-You really get it all today, Mari! - said Riccardo with a smile of amazement plastered on his face.

- Did you have any doubts? - replied Maria feigning a pseudo-vanity that never belonged to her.

- Here is the code, have a nice day! - said the manager.

Maria and Riccardo were waiting for the shuttle in front of the hostel as they watched their tenants celebrating and dancing in the street not caring that the ban was still in effect.

- Here it is, it's coming! - Riccardo caught a glimpse of the NS coming hurtling down the magnetic tracks in the distance.

The shuttle stopped in front of their feet and the two climbed onto the platform that slid from the bottom of the shuttle.

- Key, please- said the driver to the two.

Maria gave their key card and the driver entered it into a display on the dashboard. A white background appeared on the display with the words, "I, Rita Genovesi, following the provisions of the prefectural ordinance, authorize the* applicant* Maria Iermano and Riccardo Picariello to exit the Hostel and use the Shuttle for work purposes."

- Perfect, you may board-

The two settled into the seats at the back of the completely empty shuttle. Riccardo leaned his head against the window, tired and reeling still from the waves of the sea that had tossed him hither and thither, while Maria leaned on Riccardo's shoulder clutching in her hands the T-shirt he watched without ever taking his eyes off her.

The shuttle departed; Riccardo scrolled through the sights of his town and had a hard time imagining how that immense concrete constellation of dilapidated private houses and abandoned buildings was once part of an area that his ancestors from Avellino called the Verde Irpinia, as reflected in archival documents. There was very little left of green; the building speculation of the 1920s had wiped out much of the greenery of the province, which was renowned throughout former Italy for the many agri-food products it exported to the world and of which there was a memory left in archival documents, from tasty chestnuts to sought-after cheeses, from the famous peanuts to delicious alcoholic beverages, the latter banned after the world water crisis of 2090.

It was a matter of ten minutes and the shuttle, which had meanwhile filled up with only two more people during the one stop, arrived at its destination.

They got off at Francesco Tedesco Street and headed in the direction of the photovoltaic park, one of the few energy production centers of the 2000s still in operation.

The Luxemburg commune was a cluster of five glass buildings that formed a semicircle around a large collectively cultivated vegetable garden, a source of much-needed food for all of the commune's tenants, who had decided to give up their share of the URA food parcels.

Mary and Richard entered the commune's collection center and asked the doorman to contact Professor Genovesi to announce their arrival.

-Good evening Mrs. Genovesi, I* Mr.* Maria Iermano and Riccardo Picariello are asking for you,|| the doorman communicated through the intercom.

-Have them come up! Thank you, Fabrizio- replied the principal.

-Section C, extension 7- the doorman showed the two the route they were to take and politely took his leave.

With great ease they reached the door of interior 24 and knocked.

-Hello Maria! Please come in! -

-Good evening Rita! This is Riccardo, my companion-

-So what brings you here? What did you have to show me that was so urgent? - Rita asked.

-Urgent, actually, nothing. In fact, I apologize for what might have seemed to be precisely an urgent matter, the truth is that I very much want to know about this old T-shirt I found at the bottom of the sea. -

-Deep in the sea? And how did you end up there? - The principal obviously asked in amazement.

-Let's forget it, it's 'na long story- intervened Richard who didn't feel much like remembering what happened a few hours earlier.

-All right, I won't insist- said Rita who turned to Maria in a whisper -then you tell me in private-.

-Here you go, this is what I found. I'm sure you'll be able to give us some elucidation about it.
-

-Let's see what it's about right away- Rita took the T-shirt and laid it on top of a light table. With brushes she began to remove the most superficial layers of encrustation after which she dipped it in a chemical solution and let it soak for a few minutes.

Maria anxiously followed the operation waiting to discover the story contained in that T-shirt.

Rita lifted it with two pliers at either end, and against the light, like an ancient photo-imprinted film, fragments of an inscription slowly began to appear.

"Buit" were the first letters to stand out on the front of the shirt and nothing else; on the back, however, more could be glimpsed. More letters in block letters on the top of the jersey, precisely in the center. It was quite easy to read "DONA" but what could be glimpsed underneath instead was still too faded to read.

Rita shuddered; she had the feeling that she had seen that pair of lettering somewhere before.

-I'm sure I've seen something like this before but I can't remember where- Rita signaled with her head to Maria and Riccardo to come closer to see them as well.

Riccardo began to look curiously at the T-shirt but limited himself to a quick glance and then retreated to thinking on the sidelines. Maria, on the other hand, could not take her eyes off the writing that she repeated under voice over and over in the hope of enlightenment.

-It could be anything- said Richard.

-Certainly, but what are archaeologists for? - said Rita alluding to her known skills as an archaeologist.

Several minutes passed and the only thing they were certain of was that the two inscriptions were both stumped even though there was no sign of the other letters completing the two words.

-Waiting for us to come up with an idea, why don't you tell me about this dip in the sea? –

Rita persuaded Riccardo to talk about what had happened in the morning and hung his shirt along a horizontal bar.

Maria continued with the story, offering to relieve an exhausted Riccardo, but, having reached the moment of the plunge into the water, she omitted the real reason that had prompted her to jump in. She reported only that she had leaned out too far to observe below her so much that she lost her balance and ended up in the water where Richard had not hesitated to jump in to save her.

-Good thing you both didn't get hurt! - said Rita and continued -You didn't tell me the most important thing though, where did you go, to Salifornia? (the bay on the other side of Avellino, named after the sunken city of Salerno.)

-No no, we went to Novanapoli, it is closer to our hostel. - Maria replied.

-There the view is stupendous! What a pity about that city, the historical archives describe it as one of the most beautiful cities in the world two centuries ago, and I must say, from what we found doing the archaeological salvage expeditions, they probably had a point.-Rita was a profound connoisseur of Submerged Naples, all of her youthful work had been focused on the recovery of Neapolitan art that came back to life, thanks to her archaeological research, within the Museum of the Remains of Naples.

- My maternal great-great-grandparents were from Naples-said Maria-My grandfather used to tell me many stories about his grandparents. One of the most peculiar things that stuck with me was that they were culturally very attached to the old game of soccer. Just think, they had made it almost a religion with even their own prophet, now the name escapes me, a certain Mar..., , Maro, Mara...-

-DONA! - exclaimed Rita aloud, who immediately sprang to her feet and ran to the shirt in excitement.

In the time of a chat the chemical solution had made other elements appear on the back under the writing but this time it was easy to decipher. They were the outline of two neighboring numbers "1" and "0."

-Maria you found Maradona's jersey! - exclaimed Rita elatedly who immediately ran to the other side of the room where there was a cabinet from which she kicked out a trunk.

Rita opened it and picked up what appeared to be a booklet.

- This is a photo album, in the twentieth century they used to collect photographs when they were taken with analog cameras. I received it as an inheritance from my grandmother in Naples and she from her grandmother in turn- explained the principal to the two- I knew I had seen that shirt before and as you can see from this photograph here there are several- Rita showed them an old and faded photograph depicting several people celebrating with scarves and flags and wearing what appeared to be the very same shirt that Maria had found.

-On the front it says Buitoni- Maria observed.

-Yes, that was the so-called sponsor, a capitalist practice that was widespread in that century- Rita clarified. And she continued-Maria, your grandfather was completely right when he said that the game of soccer was a religion in Naples and Maradona its prophet, they were a fundamental piece of the culture of that people of the past centuries. Neapolitan art of the late 20th century and early 2000s is full of works and statues depicting the face and exploits of Maradona; he was portrayed especially on the walls of every corner of the city. Together with the so-called patron saint, San Gennaro, they were the two deities that Neapolitans believed

watched over the entire city. Difficult to explain that kind of veneration to a person of that time we can only succeed by making a comparison with monotheistic religions. As we read from various writers, Neapolitans sacrificed their time, their money, often and willingly even their health, in order to go and see Napoli (the city's soccer team) play, and especially in the days of Maradona. For many it was an obsession, a disease, a reason for living, it meant everything-.

- Then we can call soccer the opium of the Neapolitan people- Maria said, quoting Karl Marx.

- No less, the Neapolitans were able to worship someone who all in all kicked a ball! - Riccardo had been in religious silence the whole time, but he could not hold back his astonishment at what seemed to him to be true mass madness.

-Yes, Riccardo, that's right,|| Rita confirmed to him, -But for the Neapolitans Maradona represented much more than just a soccer player. You have to know, that Napoli won its first soccer championship, or as it was popular to say then "scudetto," thanks to Maradona's soccer exploits. For the Neapolitan people that fact meant so much. It was a source of pride, but also of revenge on all of Italy, especially northern Italy.

In the twentieth century there was a strong discriminatory attitude toward what had been called southerners since the mid-nineteenth century, particularly toward Neapolitans. It dated back to the issue of the so-called "imperfect unification" of Italy. So yes, Maradona was a mere footballer but he gave hope and pride to an entire people. And Maria, today, brought back a unique and priceless artifact of Neapolitan culture.

Rita paused for a moment and then continued visibly moved-My grandmother, of course, never got to see a soccer game, even in her day it was a game no longer played, but even she, a woman of 2088, had been passed on all the culture and legend of Maradona. Although she knew nothing about soccer or what a scudetto was, she once told me this sentence that I understood well only after studying Neapolitan culture--"Rita, the Italian ecological revolution was like Maradona's scudetto, no miracle!" - Rita stopped talking and grabbed a handkerchief to dry her eyes.

- I told you it would be worth it-said Maria giving Riccardo a kiss.