



JOSEPH CAMPANA

## THE EVENING PICTURES

*screen*

Click on your images: what's here coming into focus? It's 1953: someone's young, someone's beautiful and new. Who can say how long the picture will last, but this is *Life* this is how things are to be. In what colors will you wrap yourself, in 1967, Givenchy no longer the order of the day, and some other woman wraps herself in flame: a torch in the night of a war that never started and wouldn't stop. She burns, she burns, she burns me. I am still but not aflame.

*passport*

Someone's stamps instruct you as to where you're allowed to go, and, therefore, where you have in fact gone. Rio, Cairo, Istanbul. Paris, Rome, London. If you were smart you'd have several, and false pages in the back so you can cross all sides. Why you leave it here before you, as a cup of tea cools, as the screen stares and the keys stare and the screen asks you who you're about.

*stand*

Some things are designed to hold. As for others . . . There were dark clouds gusting down. There was soot and ash pelting down and harder bits that felt like they might be bone. The whole sky lit red and orange and flickering and the bodies fleeing (those that could) and the flame pooling and a dark rage eating away and away and oh and oh, you say, oh, it was only Catania, only a volcano.



*keys* Metal sharpens to hold in the hand. We have heard of strange devices in the hands of enemies who appear to be our friends. We have heard that there are devices capable of opening weaknesses of any shape or size. The devices we fear are so small they would fit in the average pocket and be virtually undetected like virus, like bullet, like radio.

*letters* Lost in the night of a foreign embarkation: it is so difficult to read landscape. It is so difficult to have the patience to know which figures are friendly and which ambiguous. It is exhausting to slide your hand over every surface and bend down to listen and bend down to listen and bend down to hear what is actually passing on and in a surface.

*clips* There are clicks of binding and clicks of separation. One hears the former in clothes and chains. One hears the latter in bullets and doors. My sources are embedded and indicate that in thick tangles of bodies there is no time at all to stop and say which click is which. Then, there is also the shutting off of sound.

*pictures* You thought you were done with pictures. You thought you understood fire. The ultimate sacrifice may be asked of any on behalf of a larger body, whether that sacrifice shall be exacted from the self or from another. I could sit and wait forever, pretending to burn and be burned, but I would have nothing to say to your patience, which is a kind of compassion that cannot come from the sky. Prostration or protestation: you cannot speak of either from experience. Someone in a far country to which your eyes have peered in curios-



ity looks back without even looking, and with an  
eye, with a wreath of flame shows you love.

*dusk*

Something falls on capitals foreign to you. You  
can spell little of them. Will darkness drop quietly  
or will it come with backing? The wind sweeps  
down. The wind sweeps down from hollow bod-  
ies. Bodies they open and open. Is there nothing  
that can come forth or have you lost the art, the  
hearing of what is saying?