



BRUNELLO MAFFEI

THE ETERNITY OF THE INSTANT

L'ETERNITÀ DELL'ISTANTE

(FORTHCOMING), PAGES 125

Rome in the Fifties and Sixties:

a great Italian narrator presents paradoxical stories whose shrewd and witty irony make them highly enjoyable reading

From these eleven short stories, some very topical questions emerge, in which language has a key role. Maffei captures just a few instants in the lives of the characters, who sometimes get into tight corners. With brief strokes of the pen, he draws the character of each one and introduces the particular features that make each story end inevitably the way it does. And the enigma remains.

In the story *The Girl and the Chameleon*, two friends were to stay the night in a boarding house, in a room with three beds: the third bed was to be occupied by Babette. "The girl was mad, she sunbathed and never went brown", and kept a live chameleon in a box. But Babette got into bed with one of the two friends instead. Franco was tired though. He loosened his embrace of the girl and lay motionless on top of her. Babette bore it a moment or two, then looked at him harshly: "You're soft," she said, "I should have known!" She went, leaving Franco, who "tried to sleep, but couldn't", with the chameleon. Dawn was already breaking at the window, he heard Babette's voice and the sound of a lorry setting off. Never make a friend and never be soft with women!

Brunello Maffei
LA STRADA
DI VIAREGGIO



THE VIAREGGIO ROAD

LA STRADA DI VIAREGGIO

(2002), PAGES 148

What Federico Fellini's imagination did for the region of Romagna, Brunello Maffei's writing has done for Versilia and Viareggio. Here, the noted scriptwriter describes in an extraordinarily "visual" manner figures who accept the beautiful and the ugly in life without the slightest sentimentality. It is the beginning of the twentieth century. "Viareggio, the squalid village inhabited by escaped convicts and the desperately ill with malaria, was changing", and was about to become a seaside resort. It is on the threshold of this rebirth that the life of Ancilla, the infant abandoned on the beach by an unknown bather and brought up by an old peasant woman, begins. The road and seafront of Versilia become the theatre of a change that is always in progress and never ends...

Born in Viareggio, in Tuscany, **Brunello Maffei** moved to Rome in the Sixties, where, as a scriptwriter for radio and television he began a long partnership with RAI, the Italian national broadcasting company, and wrote for theatre and cinema. He has published a number of articles and essays in the review "Roma ieri, oggi, domani", and his novel *La contessa Lara* (The Countess Lara, 1992), which was inspired by the extravagant life of the Roman poetess Evelina Cattermole Mancini, was brilliantly received at the Todi Festival.