

FINIS MUNDI
(THE EARTHQUAKE - FRIULI, MAY 1976)

Antonino Mazza*

It was too sudden, a random moment.

There were bursts and the turmoil of sparks.

Electric wires would first pull then snap
To fill the patient and watchful night
With flying fire.

The vast sky sat silently over the steep Alps, but at the groin
Of the Mediterranean thigh
The earth didn't yawn
If a fierce growl thundered
Inside the ground.
A roar of chills
Began to echo through the shattering hills.

It was too late
Gemonia cramped.
Against the unforeseen events
The houses clung
To the epileptic slopes
(Ice-cold, damp) the way nightmares shrill
Children's hearts.
Then,
As if 10000 mountains simultaneously cried: *JUMP!*
The mast of an ancient castle and the steeple
Cringed their eyes and in pieces
Plunged.

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Amid a wilderness of bells
And wailing skulls, the earth, like a shipwrecked raft hailed
Into the splintering ocean.

From the far-flung beaches
We watched a planet's explosion.

Moments after, emitting rays of tears and laughter